

**CHIASMATIC CHOROLOGY: NISHIDA KITARŌ'S DIALECTIC OF
CONTRADICTORY SELF-IDENTITY**

A Dissertation

Submitted to

The Temple University Graduate Board

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

by John W. Krummel

August, 2008

©
by
John W. Krummel
2008
All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

CHIASMATIC CHOROLOGY: NISHIDA KITARŌ'S DIALECTIC OF CONTRADICTORY SELF-IDENTITY

John W. Krummel

Doctor of Philosophy

Temple University, 2008

Doctorate Advisory Committee Chair: Shigenori Nagatomo

In this philosophical work I explicate Nishida Kitarō's dialectics *vis-à-vis* Mahāyāna non-dualistic thought and Hegel's dialectical philosophy, and furthermore in terms of a "chiasmatic chorology."

Nishida's work makes ample usage of western philosophical concepts, most notably the terminology of Hegelian dialectics. Nishida himself has admitted affinity to Hegel. And yet content-wise the core of Nishida's thinking seem close to Mahāyāna Buddhism in its line of thought traceable to the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras*. The point of my investigation is to clarify in what regard Nishida's dialectic owes allegiance to Hegel and to Mahāyāna and wherein it diverges from them. Moreover to what extent is Nishida's appropriation of Hegelian terminology adequate in expressing his thought? The work explicates the distinctive aspects of Nishida's thinking in terms of a "*chiasmatic chorology*" to emphasize the inter-dimensional and *placial* complexity of the dialectic.

In summary two overarching concerns guide the work: 1) The relation of Nishida's dialectic to its forebears — Mahāyāna non-dualism and Hegelian dialectics —;

and 2) The distinctness of that dialectic as a “chiasmatic chorology.” The work concludes that while Nishida, in his attempt to surmount the dualism of Neo-Kantianism, was led to Hegel’s dialectic, the core ideas of his dialectic extend beyond the purview of Hegelianism. Content-wise his dialectic is closer in spirit to Mahāyāna. While Nishida admits to such commensurability with key Mahāyāna doctrines, his thought nevertheless ought not to be confined to the doctrinal category of “Buddhist thought” *both* because of its eclectic nature that brings in elements drawn from western and eastern sources, thereby constituting his work as a “world philosophy”; *and* because of its creative contributions, such as the formulation of *basho* and its explication in dialectical terms. What cannot be expressed adequately in terms of Hegelian dialectics is the concrete *chiasma* of what Nishida calls his “absolute dialectic.” Moreover its founding upon the *choratic* nature of *basho* not only escapes the grasp of Hegel’s self-knowing concept but extends beyond previous formulations within Buddhism.

DEDICATION

To my father John William Krummel

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following for providing help, advice, support, and/or encouragement concerning this work in one form or another: Dr. Shigenori Nagatomo, Dr. J.N. Mohanty, Dr. Mahmoud Ayoub, and Dr. Joan Stambaugh. I would also like to thank my parents who provided me with support and understanding as I embarked on my pursuit of a second degree.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	IV
DEDICATION	VI
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	VII
LIST OF FIGURES	IX
INTRODUCTION	XI
 CHAPTER	
PART I: PRELIMINARY STUDIES	1
CHAPTER 1: FROM ARISTOTLE’S SUBSTANCE TO HEGEL’S CONCRETE UNIVERSAL: THE DEVELOPMENT OF NISHIDA’S DIALECTIC	3
CHAPTER 2: HEGELIAN DIALECTICS AND MAHĀYĀNA NON-DUALISM.....	29
PART II: DIALECTICS IN NISHIDA	60
CHAPTER 3: PURE EXPERIENCE, SELF-AWARENESS, AND WILL: DIALECTICS IN THE EARLY WORKS (FROM THE 1910S TO THE 1920S).....	63
CHAPTER 4: DIALECTICS IN THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF <i>BASHO</i> (FROM THE LATE 1920S TO THE EARLY 1930S).....	74
CHAPTER 5: THE DIALECTIC OF THE WORLD-MATRIX (FROM THE 1930S AND 1940S): ACTING PERSONS.....	104
CHAPTER 6: THE DIALECTIC OF THE WORLD-MATRIX (FROM THE 1930S AND 1940S): THE DIALECTICAL UNIVERSAL.....	124
CHAPTER 7: THE DIALECTIC OF RELIGIOSITY (FROM THE 1940S).....	172
PART III: CONCLUSIONS	204
CHAPTER 8: NISHIDA AND HEGEL	206
CHAPTER 9: NISHIDA, BUDDHISM, AND RELIGION	244
CHAPTER 10: THE <i>CHIASMA</i> AND THE <i>CHŌRA</i>	283
CHAPTER 11: CONCLUDING THOUGHTS, CRITICISM AND EVALUATION	309
BIBLIOGRAPHY	358

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
The Dialectic of <i>Basho</i> as a Dialectic of Vertical and Horizontal Inter-Determination	292

INTRODUCTION

Thesis

Many who have read the writings of the seminal philosopher of the Japanese Kyoto school, Nishida Kitarō have been mystified by his enigmatic assertions regarding “contradictory self-identity,” “unity of opposites,” “inverse correspondence,” “continuity of discontinuity,” and “self-negation,” which seem to shamelessly defy any allegiance to the logical law of non-contradiction. In this work I propose to explicate Nishida’s dialectics (*benshōhō*) — a dialectic of mutual “self-negation” (*jiko-hitei*), which results in his notion of “absolutely contradictory self-identity” (*zettai mujunteki jikodōitsu*) — *vis-à-vis* Mahāyāna Buddhist thought and Hegelian dialectical philosophy, and furthermore in terms of what I shall call a “chiasmatic chorology.” What I mean by the latter phrase, in brief, is that Nishida’s so-called “dialectic” seeks to express the concretely real in its complexity that proves to be both a *chiasma* of (over-)inter-determinations and a *chōra* that makes room for these determinations. Nishida as a philosopher was concerned with the perennial questions of metaphysics — questions concerning the one and the many, identity and difference, being and non-being, etc. in the determination of things, including the world, the cosmos, the human self, and their interrelations. These concerns inform his epistemological interests, e.g., the relationship between the epistemological subject and its object, the determining act of knowledge and its determined content. We find that the metaphysical and the epistemological in Nishida’s thought are inseparable: they mirror one another as self-expressions of the real. One’s self-awareness mirrors the self-

awareness of reality. What is mirrored or expressed precisely is what Nishida regards as the “contradictory” or “dialectical” nature of reality. His interest in the inter-relationship between opposites and amongst distinct elements becomes most pronounced and developed dialectically under the rubric of “contradictory identity,” in Nishida’s later years, i.e., his so-called latest period from the early 1930s to his death — if we are to divide his life-work into separate periods. (Commentators differ in how exactly his *œuvre* is to be segmented. I shall adopt a four-fold periodization for heuristic purposes.¹) It is during this period that Nishida develops his conception of “contradictory self-identity” in a “dialectical” fashion to encompass not only the internal self-reflective experience of consciousness — the concern of his earlier works — but beyond that, the historical unfolding of reality in man’s relationship to his environment.

Throughout his works, we notice Nishida’s employment of the terminology of Hegelian dialectics, not only in the later works but even in the earlier ones. And yet Nishida’s thinking of “contradictory identity” and “self-negation” — along with his related conception of “absolute nothing” (*zettai mu*) — seems to owe much to the Mahāyāna tradition of Buddhism with its “dialectic of emptiness,” that is, the line of thought that can be traced back to the non-dualistic notions concerning interdependence (between form and emptiness, *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, etc.) and the lack of ontological independence (*svabhāva*; “own-being” or “self-nature”) in the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras* and Nāgārjuna’s Mādhyamika philosophy, *via* their consequent East Asian appropriations in T’ien-t’ai, Hua-yen, and Chan/Zen thought. While Nishida’s formulations of the issue makes ample usage of western philosophical concepts in general and Hegelian dialectics in particular,

the core content of his conception of “contradictory identity,” appears Mahāyānistic. My purpose then is to clarify Nishida’s dialectical thinking of “contradictory identity” in relation to that line of thinking in the Mahāyāna traditions and to the dialectics of Hegel, i.e., to clarify in what regard it owes allegiance to them and wherein it diverges from them. Wherein lies the Hegelian influence and wherein the Mahāyāna influence? In seeking the answer to these questions, we cannot ignore how Nishida himself viewed his own dialectic of contradictory self-identity *vis-à-vis* Buddhism and Hegelianism. And if Nishida’s conception is a sophisticated unfolding or development of a Mahāyāna notion but within the strictures of Hegelian dialectical terminology, what are the merits and/or demerits of this appropriation of Hegel’s language, especially when seen in light of further developments of his ideas by some of his pupils?ⁱⁱ

While attempting to answer these questions dealing with the relationship of Nishida’s thought to its forebears, this work shall underscore that aspect of his dialectical thinking wherein lies its unique and distinct creativity. I shall characterize (especially in the concluding chapters) Nishida’s philosophy of “contradictory identity” as a “*chiasmology*” or “*chiasmatic chorology*” to emphasize the inter-dimensional and *placial* complexity involved in his so-called “dialectic.” What I mean is a dialectic of *place* (*basho*) encompassing both the “vertical” interrelations between whole and part, indeterminate and determined, absolute and finite, nothing and beings, on the one hand; and the “horizontal” interrelations amongst finite determinate individual beings on the other; *and* furthermore in *both* the temporal and the spatial dimensions, that is, in the diachrony of the unfolding of history, collectively or individually, and in the synchrony amongst correla-

tive individuals as well as between individual and environment. “Chiasmatic” and “chiasmology” refer to the *chiasma* of those vertical and horizontal, spatial-temporal, as well as ontological and meontological cross-dimensional interrelationalities that come into play in Nishida’s dialectical thinking of “contradictory identity.” In addition I call Nishida’s dialectics a “chorology” in reference both to his own general characterization of his thinking — already during his middle period but expanded and developed in his final period — as a “logic of place” (*basho no ronri, bashoteki ronri*), and to his explicit characterization of this “place” (*basho*) in Greek (Plato’s) terms as *chōra*. This notion of the *chōra* in its *chiasmatic* self-formations (*via* self-negation) provides us with a unique standpoint from which to view Nishida’s dialectic *vis-à-vis* Hegel’s dialectic of the *Idea* along with the Mahāyāna motif of self-emptying emptiness. In reading Nishida, I shall thus argue for such a “chiasmology” against the *ousiology* of a substance-oriented metaphysics; and for such a “chorology” against the “ideology” (*idea-logy*) of an idea/concept-governed metaphysics.

In summary the work shall thus be guided by two overarching concerns: 1) The relation of Nishida’s dialectic of contradictory identity and self-negation to its forebears — Mahāyāna Buddhism and Hegelian dialectics; and 2) The distinctness of that dialectic as a “chiasmatic chorology.” It will be an analysis of Nishida’s dialectics *vis-à-vis* Mahāyāna non-dualism and Hegelian dialectics, and its explication in terms of a “chiasmology” or “chiasmatic chorology.”

The Summary of the Problem and its Significance

The work inquires into the meaning of Nishida's conception of, and dialectic involving, what he calls "contradictory self-identity" (*mujunteki jikodōitsu*) and self-negation (*jiko hitei*) *vis-à-vis* his eastern and western intellectual predecessors — in particular Mahāyāna Buddhism and Hegelian philosophy — from whom he has inherited a set of concerns, concepts, and terms. One ought to acknowledge the Mahāyānistic root of Nishida's thinking of "contradictory identity" even when he makes much use of the terminology of Hegelian dialectics. Juxtaposing Buddhist and Hegelian concepts in a preliminary discussion of Nishida's forebears will allow us to see that their synthesis in Nishida was not necessarily ready-made. Awareness of their essential differences will safeguard us from the temptation to uncover through their comparison some sort of naively assumed perennial truth. Such awareness in a look to his inheritance also provides a foundational background from which to view Nishida's own unique contribution. We shall see what aspects of each tradition he inherits and wherein he develops their ideas and diverges from them. There is the temptation to argue that what Nishida took from Hegel in his dialectical thinking was mainly the terminology, while much of the content of his dialectical thinking in regard to self-contradiction and self-negation and related ideas may be traceable to Buddhism's Mahāyānistic thinking of emptiness. Especially in his conception of an "absolute nothing" (*zettai mu*), an idea inseparable from his dialectic of "contradictory self-identity," his kinship with Buddhism is undeniable. Nishida's development of the interrelationality inherent in "contradictory identity" and "absolute nothing" is reminiscent of ideas traceable to the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras* and furthered in

East Asian Buddhism. And his notions of “inverse correspondence” (*gyakutaiō*) and “mutual self-negation” also point us back to the Mahāyāna logic of emptiness and interdependence as opposed to the western metaphysics and epistemologies of synthesis or subsumption under a general concept — traceable to Platonistic idealism and of which Hegelian sublation (*Aufhebung*) may be a prime exemplar.

However at the same time I do not intend to argue that Nishida’s dialectic is *entirely*, and nothing but, Mahāyānistic or Buddhistic. We cannot ignore the significant concept of the concrete universal (*gutaiteki ippansha*) that Nishida inherited from Hegelian thought early-on in developing his own epistemology of *basho*. We also cannot ignore the various western philosophical trends to which Nishida was responding and which shaped the development of his own thinking towards his *basho*-theory and then to his dialectics of interactivity in the world. Looking at Nishida’s thinking as a whole, it would be difficult to reduce it within the confines of any one tradition of the East or the West. The eclectic nature of Nishida’s philosophical project — i.e., its being composed of elements drawn from a variety of sources — precludes it from being confined within traditional and specific boundaries. For this reason I also want to emphasize the truly global stature of Nishida’s dialectical philosophy. As a marvelous synthesis of various strands of thought from the eastern and the western traditions, it provides a model for a world philosophy in this global age but in such a way that it also introduces one to a new way of experiencing and seeing the world one lives in. For example, Nishida’s understanding of the unfolding of history and man’s role therein, involving interaction with the environment together with a bodily *prāxis* — even when relatable to the general Buddhist

concepts of interdependence or emptiness and even Zen *prāxis* — is a unique and new development when we view it in light of the history of Buddhist thought. And his development of the notion of *basho* as a “place” *vis-a-vis* nothing in its utter indeterminacy, a place that permits the “contradictory identity” *of* and *in* all things — again while appearing to develop the Mahāyāna notions of emptiness and interdependence — takes us beyond the traditional Buddhistic modes of expression and into a uniquely Nishidan formulation and mode of thinking. Nishida’s conception of self-identity *via* contradiction involves the self-negation of this place of absolutely nothing, as the indeterminate groundless ground of the world of individual and correlative beings. It is this “vertical” relationship of an absolute nothing to finite beings in their “horizontal” correlativity — as a relation of mutual self-negation — that Nishida designates “inverse correspondence” (*gyakutaiō*). While seemingly rooted in, or at least commensurable with, certain Mahāyāna notions, Nishida’s development of the notion of “contradictory self-identity” as explicated in such a multi-dimensional *chiasma*, and its “placial” (*bashoteki*) or *chōratic* nature in conjunction with a bodily *prāxis* — i.e., embodiment as dynamic implacement — encompasses a complexity that extends beyond the previous formulations of Nishida’s forebears, Buddhist or Hegelian.ⁱⁱⁱ Bearing this in mind we cannot simply reduce the creativity of his dialectical thinking to any of its forbearing traditions.

To sort all of this out, we shall first examine the various influences to which Nishida was responding, and which led him to develop his enigmatic dialectics. In particular we shall examine the dialectic in Hegel’s works and the non-dualistic thinking involving emptiness and interdependence or interrelationality in the various Mahāyāna schools

of thought. We shall then look at Nishida's own development of his dialectical ideas in relation to those influences. I anticipate that the resulting picture surrounding his thinking will not be simple.

In viewing Nishida's unique contribution *vis-à-vis* its manifold influences, I want to argue in the end that while the core content of the sense of his dialectical ideas is to a large degree Mahāyānistic, and the vocabulary and formulations expressing it in much of his writings sound Hegelian, the cross-dimensional complexity of the dialectic that encompasses bodily *prāxis* in history as well as the founding of this dialectic upon a notion of "place" (*basho*) are uniquely Nishidan developments. Moreover it is such a "*chorology*" of a place of nothing, allowing for that criss-crossing inter-dimensionality of interdependent *matter* but as non-substantial — a *chiasma* of being-non-being —, that places Nishida's dialectic not only *beyond* previous Buddhistic formulations in unfolding their implications, but also in stark *opposition to* Hegel's *idealism* that is a dialectic founded upon the *idea* or concept. And hence we are led back to the question of the adequacy or inadequacy of the use of Hegelian terminology or the language of nineteenth century German philosophy — and even of the language of a *dialectic* in general or of a *logic of place* — in capturing Nishida's matter of thought, the "*chiasmatic chōra*."

Why this look at Nishida's dialectic *vis-à-vis* Buddhism and Hegel, now? It is evident that the world today in its globalization is unfolding its *chiasmatic* nature as a place of contradictions and oppositions. Regions and horizons hitherto isolated, due to the technological facilitation of communication and travel, now must face one another and learn to deal with the manifest multiplicity of — and difference in — ways of think-

ing, living, and being. Philosophers of the West can no longer pretend to remain isolated within their own tradition. Reflective traditions other than one's own can no longer be ignored as irrelevant. Just as Japanese thinkers have been dealing with the influx of western ideas since the diplomatic opening of Japan in the mid-to-late 1800s, western philosophers, surrounded today by the influx of non-western ways of being, can no longer ignore them. A little over a century ago Nishida Kitarō was at the forefront in the intellectual encounter between East and West in Japan. Our situation today is not completely different. The same globalizing trend that commenced in the 1800s, however, proceeds even more extensively and intensively today. Nishida's thinking then can not be totally irrelevant to our contemporary situation. With its cross-cultural inheritances whereby Buddhism meets Hegel and other western philosophers, Nishida's thought can serve as a paradigm for today's cross-cultural philosophizing.

Previous Research

Looking first at the connection between Buddhism and Hegel without reference to Nishida, there are two works, from a couple of decades ago, by Alfonso Verdu, which initially drew my eye. His *Dialectical Aspects in Buddhist Thought* and the *Philosophy of Buddhism*^{iv} both engage in a comparative analysis of Buddhism and Hegel in their dialectical aspects. Despite his detailed analysis Verdu appears to misunderstand Buddhism however in his attempts to reduce it to Hegelian concepts. The essential differences between schools and traditions need to be kept in mind in our analysis of Nishida, who ap-

appropriates both Mahāyāna and Hegel, if his “dialectical” thinking is to provide an authentic paradigm for a global philosophy.

Looking at works on Nishida, there may be some useful scholarship in the Japanese language. Among introductory works, Kosaka Kunitsugu’s *Nishida Kitarō no shisō*^v is helpful. Among the more creative readings and comparative analyses, there are some essays by Nakamura Yūjirō in his books *Nishida Kitarō* and *Nishida Kitarō no datukōchiku*^{vi} on themes that I shall be dealing with, i.e., Nishida’s dialectical notions in relation to Buddhism and/or Hegel. While I find his analysis useful, I am not in complete agreement with his treatment of Nishida. There are other works such as *Nishida tetsugaku* edited by Ueda Shizuteru with essays dealing with Nishida and Hegel, with useful insights.

Among the English scholarship, works on Nishida in general and on his dialectical thought in particular is lacking. There are only five book-length studies in English: Robert Carter’s *Nothingness Beyond God*, Michiko Yusa’s *Zen and Philosophy*, Robert Wargo’s *Logic of Nothingness*, Keiji Nishitani’s *Nishida Kitarō*, and Gereon Kopf’s *Beyond Personal Identity*.^{vii} Yusa’s book is primarily an intellectual biography of Nishida and hence does not delve into the intricacies of the philosophy itself although it does provide some useful background information. Nishitani’s English book on Nishida is mostly autobiographical. The last part of the book is devoted to theoretical expositions but these are mainly on Nishida’s early philosophy of “pure experience,” only indirectly touching upon my concerns. Carter’s book is a nice introduction but its analysis is too simple and does not provide any detailed working-out of the relationships between Nishida, Bud-

dhism, and Hegel. Wargo's book gives a view into the influence upon Nishida of some of his Japanese philosophical predecessors in the formulation of his early notion of "pure experience" along with his development of the "logic of *basho*." However it fails to cover in detail the latest phase of development of this "logic" that unfolds its dialectic into an external "worldly" direction with its multi-dimensional *chiasma*. Kopf's book that compares Nishida with Dōgen may provide some interesting insights even if it does not directly deal with my concerns. His later articles on Nishida published in the last few years may be more helpful however in relation to our concerns.^{viii}

On the dialectic of Nishida's latest stage, e.g. surrounding the ideas of the absolute's self-negation and of "inverse correspondence," there are some short works. David Dilworth's introductory essay to his Nishida translation, entitled *Last Writings*, and his "Nishida Kitarō: Nothingness as the Negative Space of Experiential Immediacy"^{ix} as well as some of Masao Abe's articles on Nishida, such as "'Inverse Correspondence' in the Philosophy of Nishida: The Emergence of the Notion"^x provide interesting insights. G.S. Axtell's "Comparative Dialectics"^{xi} focuses on Nishida's connection with western dialectical thought, including Hegel, and James Heisig's *Philosophers of Nothingness*^{xii} touches upon this topic as well. In Heisig's case however there are points where I think that he may be misunderstanding Nishida's notion of "contradictory identity." None of these works however deal in detail and simultaneously with *both* the connections *and* the disjunctions between Nishida and his predecessors, East and West. Moreover my project is to make explicit where Nishida's concept of "contradictory identity" and his dialectics in general stand in relation to *both* his Mahāyāna influence *and* his Hegelian influence.

But the intention is also to cover where it stands *today*. What seems to be lacking in much of the scholarship, especially in English, is a creativity that could forge a new path for unfolding the implications of Nishida's dialectic of contradictory identity, and in a manner appropriate, and co-responding, to the fluctuating multiplicity of configurations (of ways of being, thinking, living, etc.) — themselves in mutual tensions and self-contradictions —, within their multi- and inter-horizonal “clearing” or “space” in this so-called “post-modern” age of globalization.

Methodology

Comparing texts, ideas, and authors from different periods or cultures is certainly a risky undertaking. We need to be aware of the contextual background of their cultural and historical milieu to see what contributed to their formulations, what are they responding to, etc. Comparative philosophy then is no simple endeavor especially when the theories and ideas being compared are products of different environments, without any direct connections — whether of influence, reference, etc. — to one another. And that indeed is the case with Buddhism and Hegel. However in our case, the thematic of Nishida — a world philosopher who incorporated insights from the eastern traditions, including Buddhism, along with those of western philosophy, including Hegel —, provides a somewhat more sturdy bridge upon which we may experience the coming-together of Hegel and Buddhism, albeit through the lens of Nishida's eyes. A look at Nishida as the locus wherein such ideas from different traditions and contexts and periods come together, for better or worse, will in turn allow us to see how we — almost a century later in an increasingly

complex inter-horizonal globalized world — might be able to engage in a similar sort of philosophical undertaking, while emulating his successes and/or avoiding his mistakes.

What this means in terms of the “methodology” involved in my undertaking here is that my work shall be primarily *philosophical* rather than historiological. That is to say, while engaging in a comparative analysis of ideas from different textual sources and authors belonging to different historical contexts and periods — all of which become centered in our work in the figure of Nishida —, I intend also to think along with them and with Nishida in search of implications they may have for our contemporary context. As a philosopher I am most interested in how these ideas relate to us today, what meanings they impart to us, what they may have to say to my own person in this world wherein I currently find myself.

Contribution to the Field

This work shall contribute to the field of comparative philosophy in general by clarifying the relationship of a major modern Japanese thinker to both traditions of western philosophy and Mahāyāna Buddhism. Moreover it promises to further Nishida studies in particular, especially in being the first book-length work to directly tackle the issue of the dialectic of contradictory identity and self-negation in Nishida and its relation to its philosophical forebears of the East and the West, and while pointing out its relevance for the contemporary world. By focussing upon the *chiasmatic* aspect of Nishida’s dialectics and unfolding its relevance to the current global context of our being-in-the-world, whereby “East” and “West” are no longer separable as isolated self-contained ontological

realms, I hope to update not only our understanding of Nishida but the significance his ideas may have for us.

Outline of Chapters

The work will be divided into three parts. The first part consists of preliminary investigations; the second part consists of an in-depth look into the development of Nishida's dialectic in the various periods of his *œuvre*; and the third part is the conclusion to our inquiry. In Part I (Preliminary Studies), the first chapter is a short overview of the development of Nishida's dialectic in response primarily to the philosophical issue of dualism, and the second chapter compares and contrasts the two conspicuous elements in Nishida's dialectic, Mahāyāna Buddhism and Hegel. Part II provides a more in-depth look at Nishida's dialectic in the various stages of development of Nishida's thought from its inauguration in 1911 to his death in 1945. And Part III provide conclusions with a close look at the relationship between Nishida and Hegel in chapter eight, the relationship between Nishida and Mahāyāna in chapter nine, explications of the concepts of *chi-asma* and *chōra* in chapter ten, and some final questions and a brief look at the relevance of Nishida's dialectic for today's globalism in chapter eleven. A detailed outline is as follows:

Part I: Preliminary Studies:

Chapter 1: From Aristotle's Substance to Hegel's Concrete Universal: The Development of Nishida's Dialectic

Chapter 2: Hegelian Dialectics and Mahāyāna Non-Dualism

Part II: Dialectics in Nishida:

Chapter 3: Pure Experience, Self-Awareness, and Will: Dialectics in the Early Works
(From the 1910s to the 1920s)

Chapter 4: Dialectics in the Epistemology of *Basho* (From the Late 1920s to the Early
1930s)

Chapter 5: The Dialectic of the World-Matrix (From the 1930s and 1940s): Acting Per-
sons

Chapter 6: The Dialectic of the World-Matrix (From the 1930s and 1940s): The Dialecti-
cal Universal and Contradictory Identity

Chapter 7: The Dialectic of Religiosity (From the 1940s)

Part III: Conclusions:

Chapter 8: Nishida and Hegel

Chapter 9: Nishida, Buddhism and Religion

Chapter 10: The *Chiasma* and the *Chōra*

Chapter 11: Concluding Thoughts, Criticism and Evaluation

END NOTES

ⁱ Of course I am not denying the unity that holds together his so-called “Nishida philosophy” (*Nishida tetsugaku*) of his mature years. The division of his œuvre is purely for the sake of convenience allowing us to focus upon the different formulations he developed in each period in order to conceptualize and discuss what he was ultimately concerned with throughout his philosophical life.

ⁱⁱ For example, Nishitani Keiji and Nishitani’s student Ueda Shizuteru. We return to this question at the end of this work. However the nature and scope of this work prevents us from engaging in a detailed examination at the philosophies of Nishitani and Ueda in relation to Nishida.

ⁱⁱⁱ Of Buddhist schools, Kūkai’s Shingon Buddhism seems close to Nishida’s *chiasmatic* complexity, in encompassing embodiment and *prāxis* to its own micro-macro-cosmic version of the Mahāyāna “logic of emptiness.” Yet Nishida himself does not seem to have been influenced by Kūkai.

^{iv} Alfonso Verdu, *Dialectical Aspects in Buddhist Thought: Studies in Sino-Japanese Mahāyana Idealism* (KS: University of Kansas, 1974) and *The Philosophy of Buddhism: A “Totalistic” Synthesis* (Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Pub., 1981).

^v Kosaka Kunitsugu, *Nishida Kitarō no shisō* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2003, 2002).

^{vi} Nakamura Yūjirō, *Nishida Kitarō* (Tokyo: Midorigawa, 1983); and *Nishida Kitarō no datsukōchiku* [The Deconstruction of Nishida] (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1987), republished as *Nishida Kitarō II* (Tokyo: Iwanami, 2001).

^{vii} Robert E. Carter, *The Nothingness Beyond God: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Nishida Kitarō* (St. Paul, MN: Paragon House, 1997); Nishitani Keiji, *Nishida Kitarō*, trans. Yamamoto Seisaku & James W. Heisig (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991); James J.J. Wargo, *The Logic of Nothingness: A Study of Nishida Kitarō* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005); Yusa Michiko, *Zen & Philosophy; An Intellectual Biography of Nishida Kitarō* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 2002).

^{viii} See Gereon Kopf, “Between Foundationalism and Relativism: Locating Nishida’s ‘Logic of Bashō’ on the Ideological Landscape,” *Nanzan Bulletin* 27 (2003); “On the Brink of Postmodernity: Recent Japanese-Language Publications on the Philosophy of Nishida Kitarō,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 30/1-2 (2003); and “Between Identity and Difference: Three Ways of Reading Nishida’s Non-Dualism,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 31/1 (2004).

^{ix} Nishida Kitarō, *Last Writings; Nothingness and the Religious Worldview*, trans. David Dilworth (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1987); and Dilworth, “Nishida Kitarō: Nothingness as the Negative Space of Experiential Immediacy,” *International Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. XIII, no. 4 (December, 1973).

^x Abe Masao, “‘Inverse Correspondence’ in the Philosophy of Nishida: The Emergence of the Notion,” *International Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. XXXII, no. 3 (September, 1992).

^{xi} G.S. Axtell, “Comparative Dialectics: Nishida Kitarō’s Logic of Place and Western Dialectical Thought,” *Philosophy East & West: A Quarterly of Comparative Philosophy*, vol. XLI, no. 2 (April 1991).

^{xii} James W. Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2001).

PART I:
PRELIMINARY STUDIES

The following two chapters consist of preliminary investigations, which I feel are necessary before we embark on a detailed look at the dialectic and its development in Nishida's œuvre. In the first chapter we look at the development of dialectics in Nishida's thinking as a response to the two trends of substantialism and dualism that he noticed in western philosophy. His search for a non-substantialist and non-dualistic alternative is what led him to the dialectical way of thinking. In this development we see him reacting and responding to the ideas of Aristotle and the Neo-Kantians, while also struggling with and appropriating alternative notions presented by thinkers such as Bergson, Fichte, James, Haldane. In search for a non-substantialist and non-dualistic alternative, Nishida turns initially to Hegel's dialectics and appropriates his concepts and terms. It is through such an encounter with western philosophical theories that Nishida eventually comes to develop his own unique theory of *basho* in the 1920s. And from out of that notion of *basho*, Nishida then unfolds his dialectical understanding of the world in the 1930s. Nevertheless in this development of what came to be called "Nishida philosophy" (*Nishida tetsugaku*), we also notice insights that suggest, or at least are commensurable with, ideas of Mahāyāna Buddhism traceable to the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras*. To what degree then is Nishida a Hegelian and to what degree is his thinking Mahāyānistic? After tracing the general development of Nishida's dialectics as a response to western philosophy, we shall investigate in the second chapter Hegel and Mahāyāna Buddhism — both of which seem

to provide alternatives to Aristotle's substantialism — and the very issue of their commensurability. To what extent are Hegel's dialectical ideas and Mahāyāna's non-dualistic notions compatible? Examining each in their own terms and in relation to one another should prepare us to better understand Nishida's own dialectic *vis-à-vis* Hegel and Buddhism.

CHAPTER 1:
FROM ARISTOTLE'S SUBSTANCE TO HEGEL'S CONCRETE
UNIVERSAL: THE DEVELOPMENT OF NISHIDA'S DIALECTIC

A dialectical mode of thinking that deals with the interrelationships between opposing terms is evident from the very beginnings of Nishida's oeuvre. It becomes especially pronounced, however, during the 1930s and 1940s. How did Nishida come to formulate his thinking in such terms of *benshōhō* (dialectics), and in particular, his enigmatic concept of the unity of opposites or contradictory self-identity (*mujunteki jikodōitsu*)? One way to answer this difficult question is to look at the various trends in western philosophy to which he was responding. Two trends that we might name as especially significant in the development of Nishida's philosophy are substantialism, traceable to Aristotle, and epistemological dualism, reaching its culmination in Neo-Kantianism. One might even assert that Nishida's work as a whole is an attempt to provide a non-substantialist and non-dualistic alternative to those two related ways of viewing the world. This alternative is what eventually takes shape in the dynamic form of a dialectical non-dualism.

The very start of Nishida's original thinking, as exemplified in his 1911 *Zen no kenkyū* (*An Inquiry into the Good*), was also a break with the dominant philosophical trends of Meiji (1868-1912CE) Japan. His attempt to find a pre-reflective unity of experience and reality in the concrete, however, coincides with a general trend noticeable in European philosophy, during that turn of the century from the nineteenth to the twentieth. During that period, philosophers such as Dilthey, Bergson, James, and Husserl, among others, were similarly attempting to surmount the barriers of traditional metaphysics.

While showing interest in these contemporary trends, Nishida nevertheless found their formulations in the end to be inadequate. As against Henri Bergson's conceptions of the *élan vital* and pure duration, Nishida felt the need to emphasize the primacy of spatiality in terms of a place (*basho*) wherein things interact not only diachronically but also synchronically. Moving not only beyond naïve materialism or mechanism as well as idealism and their dichotomy, Nishida also felt the need to surmount both Husserl's phenomenology of mere consciousness and Haldane's restriction of an holism between individual and environment to the biological realm. Nishida in the 1930s instead came to emphasize the significance of the socio-historical world of human inter-activity and its self-creative dialectics as providing the standpoint of a concrete reality wherein we find ourselves first and foremost implaced. In his attempts to overcome their difficulties, however, Nishida also borrowed much insight from these thinkers. But the western thinker most conspicuous in Nishida's formulations of a concrete dialectic is Hegel. This has led some commentators to even claim Nishida to be a sort of Hegelian. On the other hand many have noted the influence of Buddhistic insights, in particular, from the Mahāyāna tradition and its *Prajñāpāramitā* roots. We are thus led to ask the following questions: To what extent then is Nishida's thought Hegelian and to what extent is it Buddhist? And to what degree is Nishida's appropriation of Hegelian concepts and terms adequate to expressing his own insights concerning concrete reality?

With these question and thoughts in mind I would like to begin our investigation with a look into what initiated Nishida's philosophical voyage in the first place, leading him to develop his *basho* theory and eventually to its unfolding in the dialectical terms of

a “contradictory self-identity” or “continuity of discontinuity.” For this we shall begin with a focus upon the two significant trends that I mentioned above, and which in the history of western thinking, are inseparable: Aristotelian substantialism and Neo-Kantian dualism. There is a connection between substantialism and the epistemological issue of the thing-in-itself in Kantian thought. This is also related to the issue of the relationship between the epistemological subject and object, which becomes explicitly expressed in the hylo-morphic terms inherited from the Greeks and developed by the Neo-Kantians. Nishida’s reading of the Neo-Kantians contributed to his formulation of the concept of *basho* in terms of a self-forming formlessness in response to their hylo-morphic dualism. But this theory of *basho* also takes significant borrowings from the terminology of Hegel, e.g., in the understanding of *basho* as a self-determining concrete universal. Nishida’s view to *basho* as a place of self-contradiction, a place enveloping the ultimate contradictions of being and non-being, in its dialectical unfoldings, thus takes on the coloring of Hegelian dialectics. We will see in the ensuing sections how Nishida developed what eventually became his own brand of dialectical philosophy, as a response to the shortcomings of the various western philosophers he had encountered and especially to the tendencies of substantialism and dualism, but also with significant borrowings from Hegelian thought. This preliminary look will prepare us for our subsequent examinations of the Hegelian and Buddhist aspects, as well as of the unique distinctness of Nishida’s dialectics.

Sec. 1: Aristotle's Substantialism

The dualism between epistemological subject and object leads to the question of their relationship. And this issue of dualism is closely related to the question of object-centered thinking. For in posing the question concerning the relationship between the two terms of the epistemological dichotomy, the very formulation of the question already assumes that there are two "objects," i.e., determinate things, to be related. In this way of thinking, the object of cognition that can be made into a grammatical subject of judgement becomes the center of focus. Nishida traces this, as the predominant mode of thinking in western philosophy, back to Aristotle. In the structure of judgment, the object *qua* grammatical subject is specified by properties predicated of it, with the assumption that underlying them is its substance. Aristotle takes this "substance" (*ousia*) as such to be what serves as the grammatical subject or substratum (*hypokeimenon*), while itself *never* predicated of something else. It cannot be a predicate.¹ (Z3 325; Z7 221) Nishida explores this Aristotelian notion of substance in the essays of both *Hatarakumono kara mirumono e* of 1927 and *Tetsugaku no konpon mondai* of the 1930s. But before looking into Nishida's own assessment of this doctrine and his ensuing response in the form of his *basho*-theory and concrete dialectics, we ought to inquire into what Aristotle himself meant by "substance." By examining how it relates to knowledge and judgement-making, we will begin to understand what led Nishida to his ideas.

Aristotle discusses substance both in ontological terms and in logical terms in his *Metaphysics* and his *Categories*. In the *Metaphysics*, substance is what is ontologically the most real. The Greek word is *ousia* (οὐσία), a gerund formed from the feminine par-

ticipale form of the verb “to be” (το ειναι). A strict translation of *ousia* would thus be *beingness*.² Of the various senses of the word “being,” Aristotle takes “substance” to be its most primary sense. Throughout the *Metaphysics* it becomes obvious that by “substance” he means that which is ontologically independent, having its own essential nature, i.e., what necessarily is *what* it is in virtue of itself and not due to anything else, constituting its own individuality and separateness from others. In the *Categories* (ch.5), however, Aristotle distinguishes substance itself into primary and secondary meanings. Primary substance (*proto ousia*) is the individual thing while secondary substance is the species or genus,³ the kind, to which that individual belongs as a particular. Substance in that latter sense is secondary because it has no existence apart from the individual thing, i.e., primary substance. That is, universals are always asserted of an individual as their subject. Substance in the primary sense thus must be individual. Aristotle also takes substance in that primary sense to be the most primary *vis-à-vis* all the other categories, which must refer to it as its quality or attribute. If primary substance “... did not exist, it would be impossible for anything else to exist.”⁴ While the essence or identity of a primary substance is thus absolute, ontologically prior, everything else is relative to it. The *Metaphysics* thus characterizes substance as the primary subject or substratum (*hypokeimenon*; το υποκειμενον) for other things. Thus, “...the many senses in which a thing is said to be... all refer to one starting point...,” and “...all that ‘is’ is related to one central point, one definite kind of thing...,”⁵ namely primary substance. And this is the sense of substance that becomes associated with the grammatical significance of *subject*, i.e., as that *of which* everything else can be *asserted* but which itself is not asserted of an-

anything. Substance in that sense is what becomes the substratum of assertions, i.e., the grammatical subject of predication, while the other categories serve as its predicates.⁶ While those qualities or characteristics asserted of substance may alter in their accidental nature, the substance itself, having its essence in virtue of itself, maintains its own identity as *what* it is. As long as the individual, *qua* substance, maintains its own essence, its identity remains the same even when its qualities undergo change.

This theory of substantial identity was Aristotle's reply to the Heraclitean doctrine of constant flux, whereby "all things are and are not" as if to "make everything true."⁷ Parmenides had also earlier set-forth an alternative to Heraclitus' theory with his doctrine of being as unchanging and undifferentiated. By means of the logical principle of the excluded middle that "X is *or* is-not" with the second alternative being inconceivable, Parmenides had extinguished the conceivability of time, motion, or change.⁸ Plato, on the other hand, convinced of the truth of Parmenides' conception of being as eternal and unchanging, but also recognizing the reality of change and plurality, had divided the world into two spheres. He thereby relegated the Heraclitean flux to the phenomenal realm and placed Parmenidean being upon an intelligible realm, hidden behind the phenomenal while providing structure and order to its flux. Like Plato, Aristotle also believed that there must be something essential that remains unchanged despite apparent change. But he disagreed with Plato's doctrine of the *ideas* as transcendent to phenomenal reality. His doctrine of the substantiality of individual things was thus set forth in response to *both* Plato's ontological dualism *and* the Heraclitean denial of the law of non-

contradiction. Aristotle's doctrine of substance, however as we shall see in the next section, leads to a more modern epistemologized form of dualism.

There is also a connection one finds in Aristotle between the unchangeable self-identity of substance and the principle of non-contradiction, that is not totally irrelevant to the formation of Nishida's own dialectical thinking. In *Metaphysics* Book IV, Aristotle asserts that "A is true when not-A is false" and that "not-A is true when A is false" (ch.4), the point being that it is not possible to truthfully assert and to deny the same thing, that contradictory assertions cannot be simultaneously true. Aristotle asserts this to be the most indisputable of all beliefs (ch.6). And if it is not possible for contradictory assertions to be made truthfully of the same thing, it is not possible for mutually opposing characteristics, one of which would negate the thing's essential nature, to belong to that same thing. While essentially remaining what it is, as the locus of contraries, change, and process, a substance can successively take-on opposing qualities that are accidental characteristics. But it itself, remaining what it is, cannot take on anything contrary to its essence.⁹ Thus Aristotle takes the law of non-contradiction, in its ontological application to substantial self-identity, to be the basic principle of his science of being *qua* being. The resulting picture is of a world composed of substances with non-self-contradictory essential natures, serving as ontological substrata presupposed by accidental changes.¹⁰ To deny the law of non-contradiction, Aristotle tells us, would entirely "do away with substance and essence."¹¹ We thus find, in their ontological applications, not only the principle of self-identity but the principle of non-contradiction, to be inseparable from Aristotle's doctrine of substance. This point proves to be significant when we look into

Nishida's non-substantialistic turn away from the grammatical subject and towards the predicate in his epistemology of *basho* as well as into his later expositions of the dialectical implications of *basho* in terms of a contradictory self-identity.

The ontological subject, as undergoing accidental changes, is what underlies the grammatical (or logical) subject. The two senses of "subject" (*hypokeimenon*; υποκειμενον), ontological and grammatical, are not exactly the same for Aristotle. The real substratum is the primary substance as the ontological "subject-in-process," the ultimate locus of processes. As the ultimate referent, it is pointed to as the subject of what might be said of it. The primary substance *qua* ontological subject thus *becomes* — or is *referred to* by — the grammatical subject that occupies its place in a sentence while being "neither predicable of another subject nor present in another subject."¹² The two are distinct in meaning since not everything that is a grammatical subject can be hypostatized as ontologically real and treated as a primary substance. The truth of a cognitive statement, a judgement, however must be founded upon that *ontological* subject, the substance, as the ultimate referent maintaining its self-identity.¹³

Aristotelian substantialism as such entails a form of discourse that takes reality in terms of objectifiable entities, substances, that can be spoken of as grammatical subjects. Nishida will call this form of discourse, "the logic of the grammatical subject" or "object-logic." That is, it is a logic of the subject of predication based on the definition of substance as the subject that cannot become predicate. From Nishida's perspective this discursive logic reifies or hypostatizes reality into substances, i.e., determinate things with self-identical essences. For one, it is an ontologization of the principle of non-

contradiction. And it is also a view to the world under the limiting lens of the Indo-Aryan linguistic structure with its subject-predicate grammar. The world in such light appears as consisting of substances with properties or attributes, about which we can make assertions in the conjoining of subjects and predicates. Taking this form of assertion to be the most fundamental, and presupposed by other propositional forms, Aristotle implies that the world linguistically described has a structure corresponding to that of language, and whose basic elements are substances with properties. And yet curiously what at first thus seems to be a straightforward correspondence between language and world is not exactly so. For primary substance as the ontological subject-in-process cannot be exhausted by linguistic assertions. The grammatical subject is not quite itself the ontological subject; the name is not the thing-in-itself.

The problem that Nishida finds with Aristotle's doctrine is that true primary being *qua* substance is unknowable. And in his view this is inseparable from the issue of epistemological dualism. As the very underlying matter of its predications that is *in-itself* but not *for-us*, primary substance on its own cannot be known. Knowledge of something particular means knowledge of its determinate predicates that render it intelligible. The cognitive content can only be what is predicated of the individual but never the individual *in-itself* without predication.¹⁴ Every cognition is established in the structure of judgement, conjoining the grammatical subject and the predicate, whereby the subject *qua* individual is subsumed under the predicate *qua* universal. For example, in the judgment "Man is an animal," "man" is subsumed under "animal." Knowledge then is of the universal, e.g., the animality of man. But substance in itself that makes something uniquely *what* it is

qua individual, apart from its predications, remains unknown. Alone the ontological subject refuses subsumption by the universal. And its thorough irreducible individuality transcending all concepts, means that it cannot even be conceptualized. As beyond conception, predication, and hence judgement, it is a *transcendent* object. Nishida questions this Aristotelian substance that *in-itself* is unknowable and irreducible. (See new Z3 294, 325-26, 328, 390) If substance is transcendent to our knowing and judging acts, how does it come to be the object of our knowledge and the subject of our judgments? How can we have knowledge of it and form a judgment about it, especially when it is taken to be the foundation of the truth of cognitive assertions?

In modern philosophy, Rene Descartes took this Aristotelian notion of substance and applied it to the cognitive subject. So we can ask a related question in regard to this subject of cognition *qua* substance: Can the epistemological subject be objectified and made into a grammatical subject of the judgement, “I think...X”? In Nishida’s view Descartes to the end sought the real in what can be reduced to substance and what becomes the grammatical subject of a judgment. Unable to escape “Aristotelian logic,” Descartes thus fell to a “dogmatic metaphysics.” (Z10 125)

The world conceived as consisting of substances, whether as object or subject, is but a reflection of our projection upon it of the grammatical structure of our language. The transcendence of substance indicates the limit of that projection. At best substance metaphysics then is but one limited perspective to the world. But alone it is inadequate in explaining our relationship to the objects of cognition. What must be taken into account is the concrete world of our inter-activity in the socio-historical sphere. (See Z6 139-40)

From Nishida's position Aristotelian substantialism and its "logic of the grammatical subject" thus point beyond themselves as always already *contextualized*. Cognition involves the process of objectification as an act that in itself is *already implaced*. The "logic" that Nishida proposes then is instead a "logic of *place (basho)*."

Sec. 2: Neo-Kantian Dualism

Nishida initially formulated his logic of *basho* in the mid-to-late 1920s as an epistemological theory alternative to the dualisms of the modern epistemologies found in western philosophy. His immediate target was the German schools of Kantian thought that, inheriting Greek categories, explicated the epistemological relationship between subject and object in hylo-morphic terms. The Neo-Kantians took cognition to involve the synthesis of its matter in accordance with *a priori* forms in the epistemological subject's (re-)construction of its object. Their epistemology then was a constructivism, taking as its point of departure the dichotomy between constructor and constructed. For Nishida this was already to lose sight of the concrete immediacy wherein the two terms are inextricably intertwined, an abstraction from the holistic situation of their inseparable dynamism.

As alluded to above, Neo-Kantian dualism inherits from Aristotle's doctrine of substance the very issue of its ontological independence, i.e., its transcendence to judgement. In hylo-morphic terms the matter of cognitive determination in-itself transcends its determination. Hence Nishida, for example in his *Sauda hakushi ni kotau* ("In Reply to Dr. Sauda", 1927), faults Rickert's epistemology for failing to clarify the ground of *the given* that would establish objective knowledge. (See Z3 489) If the objective source of

the material of cognition transcends the very determining process to begin with, the thing *in-itself* remains unknown. Beyond the content of cognition there lies its unknowable source transcending the whole process. What we know is but a projection of our own demands imposed upon the given material. Reality itself then becomes dichotomized into two realms, the transcendental realm of *a priori* conditions *qua* forms of determination on the one hand; and the transcendent realm of what becomes the matter of determination but are in-themselves unformed, objectively undetermined. This gives rise to the question of the extent to which their conjunction in the judicative terms of subject-predicate, accurately portrays the world of objects independent of our mental acts. Nishida in his *Torinokosaretaru ishiki no mondai* (“The Stranded Issue of Consciousness,” 1927) thus asks: In what way does the transcendent object come to *relate* to consciousness for its re-constitution as object. (Z7 223)

With epistemological dualism, a related and similar sort of issue arises in regard to the *other* pole of the dichotomy. In reflecting upon the cognitive process as involving the dichotomy between the objectifying act on the part of the transcendental subject, on the one hand; and the objectified content referring to the transcendent object on the other hand, we have already *objectified*, in fact, not only the content of that cognitive act but the subject behind the act. Consciousness itself is thus made into a determinate being, an object of thought, a subject of the judgement, “I think... X.” (See Z7 218) Both terms of the duality — subject and object — are thus objectified. Nishida takes this to be the hidden premise behind, or at least the implication resulting from, Kantian epistemology: it conceives of cognition as an act occurring between two *objects*. And yet as in the case of

the grammatical subject and its underlying transcendent object, an unknowable indeterminacy underlying and transcending that objectified subject must be presupposed.

Sec. 3: Hegel's Concrete Universal and Nishida's *Basho*

Nishida thus develops his position in response to the object-logic of both Aristotelian substantialism that accounts for the determination of enduring objects and Kantian dualism which in the transcendental direction accounts for the constituting features of subjectivity. Each side — subject and object — presupposes their pre-objectified link. Nishida thus aims to formulate a new paradigm of the concrete that would account for that relationship. He finds a clue in Hegel's concept of the concrete universal (*gutaiteki ippansha*). Nishida had already been appropriating this Hegelian concept in his earlier works in a variety of ways. So the formulation of the concrete universal in terms of *basho* is a further development taking-off from those earlier appropriations. For an individual thing to become objectified and made into a grammatical subject of a cognitive statement, it must somehow be subsumed under, determined by, a universal that becomes its predicate. But an abstract concept that stands opposed to the individual would fail to capture the uniqueness of the transcendent individual as we noted above. So how can Aristotle's individual thematized as substance and Plato's universal thematized as *idea (eidos)* — or in grammatical terms: the subject that is never a predicate and the universal predicate characterizing *what* the subject is — ever be conjoined when the subject *qua* substance is transcendent to that predication? (See Z3 325, 405; Z6 186ff) Borrowing Hegel's terminology, Nishida argues that the universal must instead be a "concrete universal" that *al-*

ready contains the individual within as its self-determination. Hegel made the distinction between the concrete universal that expresses itself in each individual as its self-determination, and the abstract universal formed by extracting what is common from various individuals while excluding what distinguishes them.¹⁵ While Aristotle looked to the individual substance as indicated by the grammatical subject to be the foundation of true judgements, Hegel thus looked to the concrete universal that *qua* predicate determines itself in the subject. The universal is concrete in that it particularizes or individualizes itself in that grammatical subject. The individual then, rather than being ontologically independent as substance, is the individualized expression of the concrete universal. But Hegel's concrete universal is still a *concept (Begriff)*, an idea (*Idee*) that grasps itself in its self-determining self-conception (*sichbegreifen*). So there is still the question of whether it is sufficiently concrete to do justice to the pre-objectified status of the individual thing in its relationship with the knowing subject providing its determining predicates.

Nishida in looking to Hegel's concrete universal thus re-interprets it in a more "concrete" direction. He takes it as the holistic situation or context enveloping the terms in relation, serving as their primitive unity to hold their dichotomy in place, thus guaranteeing the possibility of cognition. This line of thinking is what led Nishida to the formulation of his theory of *basho* in the mid-1920s and then to his concepts of the "dialectical universal" and "absolutely contradictory self-identity" in the 1930s. Rather than focusing upon the object, the grammatical subject, Nishida in his *Hatarakumono kara mirumono e (From the Working to the Seeing)* of 1927, turns away in the direction of that which can-

not be stated as a grammatical subject, that which cannot be objectified. The Hegelian concept of the concrete universal takes on, for Nishida, this significance of the unobjectifiable indeterminate but presupposed unity: the determining “predicate” rather than the determined subject of judgement. (See Z3 330) Judgement is established by the self-determination of such a “universal,” by which Nishida means the necessarily presupposed concrete contextual whole. To support his point Nishida also refers to Hegel’s etymological explanation of the German meaning of “judgement” (*Urteil*) as a primordial differentiation or division (*ursprüngliche Teilung*).¹⁶ (Z3 331) Judgement is accordingly seen not as the combination of two independent terms — individual *qua* grammatical subject and universal *qua* predicate; or matter and form, determined and determining — but rather the self-differentiation of a concrete whole, its segmentation that makes explicit what is implied within it. For Hegel that differentiation in judgement is of the original concept (*Begriff*) of the whole. Nishida however will disagree with Hegel as to the nature of that concrete whole, the self-differentiating concrete universal, and exactly *how* it is to be descriptively formulated.

In his maiden work of 1911, *Zen no kenkyū* (*Inquiry into the Good*), Nishida had formulated that concrete whole in terms of a “pure experience” (*junsui keiken*) that is prior to the subject-object bifurcation. And then in *Jikaku ni okeru chokkan to hansei* (*Intuition and Reflection in Self-Awareness*) of 1917, he developed this further in terms of “self-awareness” (*jikaku*), and arrived at the notion of an “absolute will” (*zettai ishi*) that unfolds in its internally self-mirroring self-awareness. Nishida takes objectification, accordingly, to be that process of an internal self-mirroring, whereby the resulting objects

mirror the self-mirroring whole. But the concepts of experience, will, and self-awareness, led his critics to charge him of psychologism. This compelled Nishida to reformulate his ideas and the result was his theory of *basho*. Self-awareness however still remained the starting-point in the development of his theory of *basho*. This is made clear in his 1926 “*Basho*” essay, wherein he states that he would like to begin his inquiry not from the assumption of the subject-object relation but from the idea of self-awareness that mirrors itself. (Z3 420) The point was to regard the formation of unformed matter, its objectification, from a *broader* perspective that encompasses the dichotomized terms of subject-object or form-matter in the standpoint of a self-forming formlessness. Cognition or judgement is thus seen to occur on the basis of an immanent self-determination or self-differentiation of what in itself in cognitive terms is an un-determined, non-differentiated, transcendent unity. In Hegelian terms this would be the concrete universal, mentioned above, that determines itself in primordial differentiation. And yet for Nishida, the self-determining universal cannot be a mere concept or idea but rather the holistic *situation* of our concrete livedness. Seeing the simultaneity of terms in these dichotomies — subject-object, form-matter, predicate-subject — from this concrete standpoint, led Nishida to conceive of the dynamic of this process in terms of an empty field wherein determination takes place. This is what Nishida designates, from the 1920s on, as “*basho*” or “place,” that which is ultimately not even a “universal” in its conceptually determinate sense. And the dynamic of its self-determining acts resulting in the dichotomies is what Nishida eventually in the 1930s and 40s works out dialectically in

the various terms of “absolutely contradictory self-identity” or “inverse correspondence.”¹⁷

Nishida’s reversal of Aristotle’s object-logic, the logic of the subject of predication, is thus undertaken with a turn away from the object and towards *basho*, away from the grammatical subject to what he also calls the “predicate plane” (*jutsugomen*). That is, in opposition to the substance that “becomes the grammatical subject but never a predicate,” Nishida looks to *basho* as the transcendent predicate plane that determines the grammatical subject but itself remains un-objectifiable, incapable of being spoken of as a subject of judgement. He takes its determination of the grammatical subject to be analogous to Hegel’s concrete universal that determines the individual. And like Plato’s *chōra*, it recedes into the dark to make room for the very objects of our attention. The difference from Plato however is that while the Platonic *chōra* is a mere receptacle for the determination of the *ideas* — precisely what eventually led to Aristotle’s form-matter duality and its Kantian reformulation in epistemological terms — in Nishida, *basho* as a living creativity is *self-forming*. The predicate *qua basho*, for Nishida, signifies that pre-supposed and un-objectifiable environing and backgrounding context wherein things are meaningfully determined, i.e., objectified, in our cognitive or judicative acts. “Predicate” (*jutsugo*) here then means more than simply its grammatical sense. As a “place” (*basho*) it is the concrete field that allows for the foreground abstraction of beings *qua* objects or *qua* grammatical subjects. It appears that Nishida is using the word, “predicate,” as an heuristic device to turn our attention away from the object, the grammatical subject, to the contextual dimension that environs what becomes the grammatical subject.

Nishida develops his theory of *basho* as involving a series of implacements within implacements. In his attempt to overcome dualism, he overlaps the various dichotomies of grammatical subject-predicate, epistemological object-subject, particular-universal, matter-form, noema-noesis, content-act, and determined-determining/determiner in general, all in terms of implacement between “the implaced” (*oitearu mono*) and its “place of implacement” (*oitearu basho*). That is, he understands the subsumption of the grammatical subject *qua* particular in the predicate *qua* universal to mean that the former is implaced within, enveloped by, the latter. (See Z3 390, 464-65, 498; Z4 81) And in the reverse direction, Nishida sees this implacement as involving the universal’s own individuation through self-differentiation, or, in Hegelian terms, the concrete universal’s self-determination in judgement (*Ur-teil*) as primordial differentiation (*ursprüngliche Teilung*) that we mentioned above. (See Z3 347-48, 391, 400, 402-03, 431, 465, 517) The universal’s envelopment of the particular then is also its self-particularization. In judgement the grammatical subject is thus cut-out from its necessarily presupposed contextual matrix (i.e., the “concrete universal”). That matrix of implacement is therefore a “place,” *basho*.

For terms to inter-relate there must be a “place” (*basho*) that establishes their relationship. Physical things relate within a common space, or in terms of physics, a force-field. And phenomena and acts of consciousness relate within the field of consciousness (*ishiki no ba*). This is why Nishida decided to conceive of that contextual matrix presupposed by judgements in terms of “place” or *basho*. It is within that space of *basho* that we see consciousness and its object co-relating. What exactly then is *basho*? To put it

too simply, it is the standpoint *vis-à-vis* reality, the most concrete entailing the non-distinction between experience and reality, prior to the dichotomization between subject and object or the distinction between ideal and real. At its most concrete level, presupposed by all other levels, *basho* envelopes and encompasses all *a prioris*, mental acts, perspectival horizons, etc., that constitute the world of objects. In his later works, starting from the 1930s, Nishida also unfolds its significance beyond the epistemological framework to speak of *basho* as the contextual whole of a dialectical world wherein individuals inter-act, a matrix of inter-personality wherein person and person inter-relate as “I and thou.” The physical field of forces, the field of consciousness, and the socio-historical world then all are understood in terms of *basho*.

In his *basho*-epistemology of 1926 and 1927 (e.g., in his essay “*Basho*” included within *Hatarakumono kara mirumono e*), the most fundamental and concrete standpoint mirroring, everything else within as its own reflection, is called “*basho vis-à-vis* true nothing” (*shin no mu no basho*). As the broadest and deepest back-ground in its undifferentiated wholeness, it is “absolutely *nothing*” (*zettai mu*) to make possible the foreground emergence of “beings” *qua* objects of cognition. *Nothing* thus forms itself into *beings* in self-differentiation, i.e., as a self-forming formlessness. The field of consciousness (*ishiki no ba*) on the other hand that envelopes the phenomenal world, providing an arena for the appearance of its objects, is regarded as *nothing* only relative to, or in opposition to, its objects. Nishida thus calls this field of consciousness, *basho vis-a-vis* oppositional nothing (*tairitsuteki mu no basho*) or *vis-à-vis* relative nothing (*sōtai mu no basho*). The determining predicates that render their subjects of discourse intelligible as

objects of cognition refer to what in Kantian terms would be the transcendental or *a priori* forms and categories. Nishida describes their activity in Husserl's terms as the *noetic* determination of the *noema*. On the basis of these determining acts, the object appears in the transcendental space, the epistemic field, of consciousness, i.e., relative or oppositional nothing.

True nothing on the other hand is absolute (*zettai*) in that it transcends to encompass the oppositions between being and non-being, object and subject. Since consciousness itself can thus be objectified as a term in relation, i.e., the grammatical subject of "I think... X," it is not yet the unobjectifiable and undelimitable space that is the "true nothing" enveloping consciousness itself and its determining acts. Consciousness and its acts must still be contextualized upon a further background that in its concreteness is no longer objectifiable. For Nishida, this is yet another way of speaking of that concrete holistic situation, the self-forming formlessness, that serves to root and envelope the subject-object dichotomy and all oppositions, including the most general sort of opposition between being and non-being, whose interactions unfold the self-determination of the concrete universal. By "absolute nothing" (*zettai mu*) or "true nothing" (*shin no mu*), then Nishida does not mean that there is literally nothing at the ground of things but rather has in mind the most fundamental concrete (back)ground that allows for the dichotomizing standpoints in our discourse. As that contextual background that is not made into the subject of discourse, the "predicate-plane" as opposed to the grammatical subject, in noematic or objective terms it is "nothing" (*mu*). Presupposed by the objectifying act, it cannot be formed into an object or *noema*. In the sense that it cannot even be objectified

as the subject of “I think... X,” *basho vis-à-vis* true nothing thus reaches beyond the limitations of consciousness. It is the formless root of the formed.

But this *basho vis-à-vis* true nothing as the deepest and broadest level enveloping all other standpoints, providing the concrete contextual horizon of the knowing self, also becomes developed by Nishida as the standpoint wherein the personal self is immediately implaced in its interactions with the world. This aspect of the personal self’s interactivity with other persons and things in the world is one of the major themes in his later works, from the 1930s on, and becomes worked-out in explicitly dialectical terms. Each successive deepening of *basho* — or broadening of implacements within implacements — is also a passage to the more concrete and fundamental ground of reality-*cum*-experience, moving from judgements about things *qua* objects of cognition to self-reflection about acts of consciousness, and to meaningful encounters in inter-action with things and persons in the world itself. In other words, cognition and self-reflection occur within the context of the world. Despite his terminological borrowings from Husserl’s phenomenology of consciousness, Nishida thus found fault with its objectification of acts of consciousness that does not look deeper into the broader contextual underpinnings operative behind consciousness and its objectification.¹⁸

Sec. 4: Nishida’s Dialectics of the Socio-Historical World

Nishida’s theory of *basho* developed in 1926/27 was an epistemology presented in opposition to the dualistic epistemology of Neo-Kantianism but also in response to Aristotle’s substantialism. It also proves to be a further concretization of Hegel’s notion of the con-

crete universal, the concept's self-determination into judgement, which simultaneously was a deepening of his own idea of self-awareness. Ever since his maiden work in 1911, Nishida had been dealing with the reifying object-centered starting point of philosophy and its concomitant subject-object dichotomization. The formulation of his *basho*-theory that began in 1926 was its culmination. But he continues to develop variations and implications of its "logic" in the ensuing years, especially its dialectical aspect. Even though his earlier ideas have dialectical aspects and implications, it is really not until the 1930s that Nishida himself begins to characterize his own standpoint as a "dialectic" (*benshōhō*). In the 1930s and 1940s he works-out the dialectic of his so-called "logic" in terms of the socio-historical world wherein human beings are implaced and inter-act one another and work upon their environment.

It is through Nishida's discussions of its dialectics extended into the sphere of the world of action that the spatiality of *basho* in connection with its temporal unfolding becomes even more pronounced. Henri Bergson is one target here, for example in Nishida's *Tetsugaku no konpon mondai (Fundamental Problems of Philosophy)* of the 1930s that extends the meaning of *basho* in this world-dialectical direction. Bergson, like Nishida, had the aim of erecting a philosophy that would counter dualism.¹⁹ But to counter any Platonist or Hegelian postulation of the *idea* as an absolute standing above the world of experience, Bergson emphasized the flow of time. His notions of "creative evolution" and "pure duration" were conceived, according to Nishida, from the standpoint an internal flow of time.²⁰ While agreeing with much of Bergson's thinking in this matter, Nishida, however, found Bergson's standpoint to be still subjectivistic, taking-off from

the Kantian understanding of time that subsumes the spatial and the environmental within the individual subject's time-determinations. Nishida claimed that Bergson's understanding of creativity was still formulated from the standpoint of the self's interiority. And his "pure duration" remains likewise bounded by the subjective interpretation of time in terms of an internal linear process. The environing socio-historical world is thus de-emphasized. This may seem an unfair criticism of Bergson, especially when, for example in a later work, *Matter and Memory*, Bergson emphasizes the inseparability between mind, body, and environment as opposed to the internal-external dichotomy, and distinguishes what he calls concrete extension — involving the continuous flux of environing matter — from mere abstract measured space.²¹ And yet it is also the case that even in that work, Bergson substitutes a temporal for a spatial distinction in order to explain the mind-body relationship, i.e., that the difference is to be understood in terms of a difference in degrees of duration, a difference in the rhythms of time between the rapidity of vibrations in extension or matter and memory's capacity to prolong the past into the present.²²

Be that as it may Nishida criticizes Bergson's conceptions for lacking a genuinely *dialectical* character that would seriously take into consideration the interplay between space and time. (See Z6 114, 121) Rather than conceiving of world-creation subjectively from within or from without — the latter which would require the postulation of a transcendent God —, Nishida argues that true creativity is found at the point where outer and inner meet, where one's own creativity is at one with the world's creativity, in the simultaneity of immanence and transcendence. (Z6 121-22) Accordingly he found Bergson's

formulation of the *élan vital* to lack genuine spatiality as well. (See Z6 64; Z7 146) True creative evolution must be a dialectical determination involving individuals and environment. Nishida now conceives the holistic dynamism of the concrete in the direction of the world at large that spatially encompasses and informs one's situation in one's interactions with other persons, other things, and the environment itself, involving the dialectic of inner and outer, self and other. Especially on the basis of his conception of a "continuity of discontinuity" (*hirenzoku no renzoku*) — both in terms of time, whereby each moment despite its giving-way to the next, entails the fullness of a complete world; and in terms of space, whereby each individual element, despite its independence, interacts in simultaneity²³ —, Nishida finds Bergson's formulation of pure duration to be lacking if it is to be taken beyond the status of a mere thought experiment. (See Z6 64) Nishida's point is that to understand concrete life, its conception merely in terms of an internal duration is not sufficient. Not only linear time but spatiality, i.e., the environment, must also come into play. (See Z5 339; Z6 102-03; Z8 89, 376). At this point one might also wonder however whether his criticisms of Bergson here are in fact a disguised self-critique of his earlier formulations of pure experience, self-awareness, and absolute will, an expression of his own self-recognition of their limitations.

Partially under the impact of thinkers like Marx and Ranke as well as his own Japanese critics, Nishida in his works from the 1930s thus extends the dialectical implications of his earlier vision of the concrete, as involving a "dialectical world" (*benshōhō teki sekai*) that encompasses both temporal and spatial dimensions, i.e., both history and society, as the medium wherein individual persons inter-act with one another and with

their environment. This extension of his concept of *basho* into the sphere of the socio-historical world was also a response to J.S. Haldane's philosophy of biological holism.²⁴ Haldane undertook to understand life in terms of its coordinated maintenance, involving the interrelationship between the individual organism and its environment. Nishida, while finding insight in such holistic views, develops his own brand of holism dialectically and in the uniquely human sphere, which concretely speaking is where we find ourselves first and foremost, *always already*, and in relation to which merely biological or materialistic conceptions would be but abstractions.

The resulting conception of the dialectical matrix of the spatio-temporal world also extends Nishida's critique of substantialism. That is, it is not simply a critique of the Aristotelian notion of individual substance but is an attack upon any universal substantialism that would extinguish the individual in monistic absorption (as in Spinoza or Advaita Vedanta). In other words, Nishida retains in his dialectics, the creative independence of the individual person, while at the same time denying it any absolute sort of substantiality *contra* Leibnizian monadology. The resulting picture of the concrete world then is of a truly dialectical matrix of individuals acting upon, and being acted upon by, one another; and acting upon, and being acted upon by, the world. What Nishida here denies is any substantialism that would reify the individual on the one hand (as in Aristotle or Leibniz) or reify the universal on the other hand (as in Spinoza or even Hegel). Nishida's dialectic then treads a middle path between these two reifications; it takes a middle position embracing both individual and world in dynamic inter-relationality. To focus on one or the other, on the other hand, would be an abstraction from the concrete

dynamism of that dialectical whole. Might this not be comparable to the middle position of Mahāyāna Buddhism and its notion of emptiness *qua* dependent origination that we find, for example, from the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras* to Madhyamaka and Hua-yen?

As we can see, Nishida's path of thinking in pursuit of the concrete that began with his epistemological concerns in regard to dualism and the issue of the transcendent object, led him to his epistemology of *basho* and then to the unfolding of its dialectics in the socio-historical world. Nishida developed his ideas in response to what he felt lacking in the various thinkers he had encountered: Plato, Aristotle, the Neo-Kantians, Spinoza, Leibniz, Bergson, Haldane, and Husserl, among others. And yet from all those western philosophers, from which he drew the impetus to develop his own philosophy, it is Hegel who we find most noticeable in Nishida's dialectical formulations, especially in the 1930s when his dialectics becomes most pronounced. To what extent may we then consider Nishida a Hegelian? We have not yet seriously considered, however, the traces of Mahāyāna insight in Nishida's dialectical thinking. One commentator, for example, has even claimed Nishida's philosophy to be a "synthetic product of Zen and Hegel."²⁵ To assess such claims we need to first examine the so-called dialectical aspects of both Hegelian and Buddhist thinking. To what extent are Hegelian dialectics and Mahāyāna non-dualism compatible or incompatible?

CHAPTER 2:

HEGELIAN DIALECTICS AND MAHĀHĀYANA NON-DUALISM

In examining Nishida's dialectical philosophy we find insights drawn from both Hegel and from Mahāyāna Buddhism. Most conspicuous from the Buddhist tradition is the concept of "nothing" (*mu*) and most conspicuous from Hegel is the concrete universal. In the 1950s Ha Tai Kim, for example, took Nishida's work to be "a synthetic product of Zen and Hegel" that treats Hegelian dialectic in light of Zen Buddhism.²⁶ If Nishida's dialectic was inspired by both Buddhist and Hegelian thought, how close and compatible are the latter two ways of thinking? Each in its own way attempt to overcome oppositions and dichotomies. As a preliminary study to examining Nishida's dialectics *vis-à-vis* Hegel and Buddhism, in the present chapter we shall examine the major dialectical features noticeable in Hegel's thinking as well as the non-dualistic notions in the major schools of Mahāyāna Buddhism that may be characterized as "dialectical." At the end of this chapter we shall also consider their compatibility or incompatibility, similarities and/or differences, to prepare us for a more in-depth investigation of Nishida's own dialectics that draws insight from both of these sources.

Sec. 1: Hegel

As we saw in the previous chapter Nishida develops his dialectics of the socio-historical world by unfolding dialectical implications from his epistemology of *basho*. In the formation of his dialectics, Nishida received the influence of many western philosophers,

such as Leibniz's monadology or Haldane's holism, but Hegel's influence is the most conspicuous. From his maiden work of 1911 to the beginnings of his epistemology of *basho* in 1926 and throughout the development of his dialectics of the world of interaction during the 1930s, Nishida's appropriation of Hegelian ideas becomes increasingly noticeable. The Hegelian concept of the concrete universal is already implicit in the terms of pure experience in 1911 (e.g., Z1 22, 52) and the absolute will in the early 1920s (e.g., Z2 13-14, 394-95). In the late 1920s, it becomes re-understood in terms of *basho* as the foundation of judgement, and then becomes developed in the 1930s in light of the socio-historical world as the dialectical universal that determines itself in the mutual interactions of individuals in the world. Nishida's own usage of the word "dialectical" (*ben-shōhōteki*) to describe both his own and Hegel's systems, however, makes it difficult for the reader upon first reading to distinguish Nishida's own dialectic from Hegel's. Nishida has even been classified as a "Neo-Hegelian," who was "faithful to Hegelian philosophy."²⁷ Before we can evaluate such claims as to the alleged "Hegelianism" of Nishida, we must familiarize ourselves with Hegel himself.

In examining the dialectics of Hegel, we shall avoid the mistake of simply reducing it to the triadic terms of thesis-antithesis-synthesis, a mistake made by many. The triadic formula, while used by Kant, Fichte, and Schelling, was never quite used in exactly those terms by Hegel himself.²⁸ Hegel uses the term "dialectic" to signify the process that resolves oppositions between conflicting positions through what he calls "sublation" (*Aufheben*).²⁹ For this Hegel makes use of the double meaning of the German word *aufheben*: 1) to clear away or annul; and 2) to keep or preserve. (EL §96z 142)³⁰ On the

one hand sublation entails the *negation* or *canceling* of the partiality of positions that leads to their opposition. But on the other hand it also entails the *preservation* of their essential truth that overcomes their opposition to *elevate* them to a more comprehensive truth. (PG 90/PS 68: WL1 94/SL 107) Hegel also calls such opposition, “contradiction.” But based on the mechanism of sublation whereby each negation of an opposite raises both opposites to a more comprehensive conception, dialectical contradiction differs from mere formal-logical contradiction. Through the process of sublations, the dialectic works itself out towards a culminating conception (*Begriff*) of what Hegel calls “the absolute,” i.e., most comprehensive standpoint encompassing all opposing terms. The process moves towards the reconciliation of all opposites into that culminating state of the absolute, its all-comprehensive idea (*Idee*). This culminating comprehension encloses the entire development within its self-conception, realizing its self-identity. What is realized is the self-grasping of the entirety of the process itself presupposed all along as its driving *telos*: “The movement is the circle that returns into itself, the circle that presupposes its beginning and reaches it only at the end.” (“Sie ist der in sich zurückgehende Kreis, der seinen Anfang voraussetzt, und ihn nur im Ende erreicht.”) (PG 559/PS 488) The dialectic thus moves towards the closure of its own process, closing in upon itself in its self-conceiving (*Sichbegreifen*) end.³¹ In the following I would like to examine Hegel’s dialectic more carefully by looking into each of his major works.

Hegel’s erection of his system of dialectic, similar to Nishida’s case, was in response to what he viewed to be the inherent dualism he found in the idealisms of Kant and Fichte.³² According to that dualistic worldview, a set of unknowable things-in-

themselves (the “not-I”) interacts with the epistemological subject (the “I”), causing sensations or some sort of “impingement” (*Anstoß*). The mind then processes that sense-data according to its own *a priori* set of laws (conceptual categories and forms of intuition) to produce the world of appearances. But beyond it there still lies the world of things-in-themselves that we can never know. This would then mean that in knowledge we simply project (*hinauswirft*) our categories onto experience. (GW 309) Hegel opposed treating determinations of thought primarily as forms distinct from its matter (WL1 17/SL 38), and instead wished to overcome the allegedly unbridgeable gulf between appearance and thing-in-itself. He regarded the whole idea of a realm of unknowable things-in-themselves to be empty. Rather than viewing the received sense-data and the *a priori* conceptual categories as independent elements somehow brought together in synthesis, Hegel, in reading Kant, starts from the conception of an underived whole, as an original synthetic unity (*ursprüngliche synthetische Einheit*), of which the elements are moments. (GW 305) He takes this to be “the absolute, primordial identity” (*die absolute, ursprüngliche Identität*) of self-consciousness. (GW 306) He views the “wholes” towards which reason is compelled to move, that Kant noticed, as inferential structures belonging to a particular epoch in history, in terms of which judgements can make sense. And in view of history, the “whole of these wholes” is the unfolding of history itself. This holistic structure, which Hegel calls “mind” or “spirit” (*Geist*), unfolding in history serves as the starting point then for the possibility of cognitive judgement-making. In this regard Hegel takes over from his friend Hölderlin the insight concerning the unarticulated unity

of subject and object, thought and being, that makes judgement possible, but develops it in terms of an historical unfolding of consciousness or *Geist*.

In the *Phänomenologie des Geistes (Phenomenology of Spirit)* of 1807 Hegel traces the development of that holistic structure, spirit, in the journey of self-consciousness that eventually leads to its “resultant simple concept [*Begriff*] of itself” as the very process of its development. The path treads through every relationship of consciousness to its object until reaching the very concept of its own movement. (See WL1 29/SL 48) Hence “the true is the whole” (“Das Wahre ist das Ganze”) but realized only in the result as that which becomes itself: “the true... is the process of its own becoming, the circle that presupposes its end as its goal, having its end also as its beginning; and only by being worked out to its end, is it actual.” (PG 20, 21/PS 10, 11) Through this self-enclosing circle of self-reflection, thought becomes pure concept (*Begriff*) grasping the organic whole of the very process of thinking, its history. (PG 31/PS 20; See also PG 53/PS40) This circular development of the spirit is also expressed in terms of an intersubjectivity — in the *Phänomenologie* and earlier in his *System der Sittlichkeit (System of Ethical Life, 1803)*³³ and *Naturrechts (Natural Law, 1802-03)*³⁴ —, whereby man is led to self-consciously regard himself *qua* spirit in mutual recognition, thus tying the comprehensive standpoint of the whole to a social space.³⁵ (See NR 503/NL 111)

If we recall from our previous chapter, one conspicuous concept Nishida that inherits from Hegel is the concrete universal. In Hegel’s system the concrete universal has much to do with how he understands dialectical development. In his system of logic in *Wissenschaft der Logik (Science of Logic)*³⁶ (1812-1816), Hegel explains the concept’s

immanent development within the self-reflecting movement of spirit also in terms of its self-determination. (See WL1 7/SL 28) He articulates this primal unity in terms of the concrete universal that contains its own principle of individuation through which it develops distinctions within itself while maintaining self-identity, a movement of self-determining self-differentiation. (WL2 245/SL 605ff) In the *Phänomenologie*, this movement was said to involve the sublation (*aufheben*) of contradictions, whereby it goes beyond itself, negating itself, in “self-externalization” (*Selbstentäußerung*) to meet its other or not-self. But, in doing so, it returns to itself to encompass the whole of the process of negation and sublation within itself, thus maintaining its self-identity. The thing-in-itself that transcends this movement of the concept proves to be but an abstraction for Hegel. Hegel in his *Logic*, therefore, takes the very essence of things to be in their *concept*, the concrete universal expressing itself in the very process of thought encountering thing. (See WL1 14-15/SL 35-36) Thought *qua* activity is thus an *active* universal self-actualizing itself. (EL §20 29) Hegel makes the claim in this regard that thought as the universal behind all acts of conception and recollection, in every mental activity, is also the constitutive *substance* of external things: thought is everywhere present as the substance of the real. (EL §20 31, §24z 37-38) In Aristotle’s case, if we remember our previous investigation, the individual *qua* substance is self-identical in that it has no attribute contradicting its essence. But in Hegel self-identity requires dialectical contradiction and its sublation in the very concept comprehending the whole process. Substance thus proves to be that absolute concept.³⁷ The world that we encounter is then the dialectical process of that self-development of the absolute concept of the whole, the concrete uni-

versal – not this or that specific universal but the universal principle of universality as such – serving as the directive force in everything, ceaselessly developing itself immanently in the world.

In judicative terms this concrete universal proves to be the most subsumptive predicate encompassing everything, including its negations but sublated, within it. Like Nishida after him, Hegel here takes up the issue of the judicative unity of the heterogeneous elements of the grammatical subject denoting the individual substance and the predicate representing the universal concept. Every judgement takes the basic form of the subsumptive judgement, “*S is P*,” meaning that “the individual is the universal,” or in terms of grammar that “the (grammatical) subject is the predicate.” The self-identity of the individual *qua* grammatical subject is thus found in what is different from it: the individual is universal and the universal is individual. (See EL §166 231, §169 & z 234) Self-identity thus must be constituted dialectically *vis-à-vis* its *other* rather than remaining tautological or being founded upon the substantiality of the individual.³⁸ Hegel understands this connection of the two opposing elements in terms of the concrete universal already containing its opposite, the specificity of the grammatical subject. Judgement then makes explicit that implicit dialectic of self-differentiation. As such the individual is a particular *of* the universal containing it, whereby the universal is individualized. Their connection is a problem only when they are taken abstractly as independent of each other.³⁹ It is in that sense that judgement (*Urteil*) for Hegel entails a primordial division or differentiation (*ursprüngliche Teilung* or *Ur-Teilung*) as mentioned in the previous chapter. In the self-differentiation of the concrete universal’s originally undifferentiated unity, judge-

ment articulates that self-identity of the concept into elements. (See EL §166 231) *Qua* concrete universal the concept is self-specifying and its immanent differentiation, its movement of self-determination or self-realization, becomes manifest in the judgement. (EL §163z 227, §165-66 230, §166z 232; see also WL2 486/SL 826) Hegel thus states that to form the notion of a thing is to recognize its inner essence, and to form a judgement about it is to realize its internal development as the realization of a universal truth, the concept of the totality. In his *Logic* he speaks of that larger whole within which all judicative acts take place as the “*idea*” (*Idee*). As an original unity of being and thought, the *idea* is both the universal substance and (epistemological) subject as mind or spirit (*Geist*), active in the spirit’s self-development.⁴⁰ (EL §213 275)

With his notion of a self-unfolding concrete universal, the self-realizing *idea*, Hegel attempts to overcome the opposition between realism or materialism and idealism. He understands both viewpoints to be connected to either the “objective” or the “subjective” standpoint, both of which despite their distinction imply the connection between subjective awareness and the objective world, the pre-dual unity of thought and world. In his earlier work (1801), *Differenz des Fichteschen und Schellingschen Systems der Philosophie* (*The Difference Between Fichte’s and Schelling’s Systems of Philosophy*), Hegel claimed that that ideal-real, subject-object, thought-world oppositions, implicit within Kantian philosophy, are to be found within consciousness itself. (See DFSg 62/DFSe 127-28) Hegel comes to regard that primal unity underlying all bifurcations between consciousness and the world to be the all-comprehending standpoint of the “absolute.” In his system of logic, Hegel thus explains the *idea* to be truth *in-itself* and *for-itself*, the ab-

solute unity of the concept and objectivity, the concept's ideal content and its real content exhibited in external existence. (EL §213 274-75) And the *idea* of all such movements, expressed in all of them, grasping itself in them as its own object, is the absolute. Each perspective of the opposition must presuppose the absolute and its self-limiting activity. He identifies that activity with the workings of universal reason as the principle of reality, the "soul of the world," directed onto itself to grasp its own grounding within itself, to recognize itself *in* the totality of its realization, its ideal pattern manifest in reality, through human thought: "Reason comes to know itself and deals only with itself so that its whole work and activity are grounded in itself." (Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* Bxiii; See MF 17; See also EL §24 & z 36-37, §142z 201) The self-differentiation of the concrete universal in judgement then is an expression of this self-development of universal reason, the self-limitation of the absolute. Its self-articulation in self-differentiation makes overt that original unity of subjective and objective. Hegel's *absolute idea* is thus this self-thinking thought articulating itself in all judgements, in the various self-differentiations of the concrete universal, distinguishing itself from itself to contemplate itself as its own content, as a self-identity dialectically maintained in the system of self-differentiation encompassing self and other, subject and object, ideal and real, etc. (See EL §236 & z - §237 292)

The *idea* comprehends and realizes itself in all of reality and in its own history. As we noted above, identity for Hegel requires dialectical contradiction. We thus see in the movement of Hegel's concept *qua* concrete universal a negative unity that negates itself into its other but in turn resolves that contradiction in the very *idea*, comprehending

the entire sublational process. (WL2 62/SL 442) The outcome of this system or logic of self-development is the *absolute idea* as the concept of this very circle, returning to and completing itself, recognizing itself in everything as its manifestation, a self-converging recognition of its own process encompassing both knowledge and reality, and ultimately as the circle of *all* such circles fulfilled in its all-comprehensive self-grasping (*sichbegreifen*) concept (*Begriff*). (See WL1 56/SL 71; WL2 432, 504-05/SL 777-78, 842-43; EL §15 20, §17 23, §215 & z 278-79) Its end is accomplished as the system of that very totality. (WL2 502/SL 840) Hegel speaks of the resulting science or knowledge (*Wissenschaft*) as thus realizing a totality that mirrors the world as a whole, a unified theory of reality, that, "...returns into itself and reaches the point with which it began... [and] exhibits the appearance of a circle which closes with itself..." (EL §17 23) And this is Hegel's holistic or totalizing stance of what he calls absolute cognition as a self-realizing whole, set forth as dialectically overcoming the finitude of Kantian epistemology and its dualism. (See EL §160 & z 223-24) Into this all-encompassing circle of self-recognition, Hegel — in his lectures on history (*Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, 1822-31) — includes human history itself as the history of the spirit's unfolding. Each epoch of history mirrors the *idea* of the totality of its development in a scattered image. (NR 522/NL 127; PH 457) And the culmination of history, resulting in the all-comprehending self-grasping, self-realizing, concept makes explicit its own development. (See PH 457) It is the *idea*'s self-recognition in making rational sense out of its own self-driven history, a recapitulation of its own historical progression culminating in human self-consciousness.⁴¹ Hence world-history, Hegel states, presents a rational process and rea-

son is both its substance and power, its matter and form. Nothing else is revealed in the world but this rational process. (PH 9-10) Reason is the substance of both consciousness and nature, structuring the course whereby the absolute spirit unfolds in history. (See PH 10, 439) Both history and philosophy for Hegel then is one big rational circle meant to account for everything real in the *absolute idea*. Nothing outside of its circle is meaningfully real. In the end Hegel admits this to be a form of idealism, but distinguishing it from the subjective idealism of critical philosophy, he terms it an “absolute idealism.” (EL §45z 73) Hegel’s reconciliation of the opposition between idealism and realism thus occurs on the basis of an idealism that is the standpoint of the *absolute*.

Reality as a whole, including the processes of both knowledge and history, are thus enclosed in the circular self-asserting *idea* of the absolute. We are told that the universal *idea* is the substantial totality of things. (PH 26) Can reality in its dynamism of oppositions ever be so affirmed in one all-comprehending *idea*? Nishida, like Hegel, was also interested in the whole as the concrete, and thus made use of Hegel’s notion of the concrete universal. We can see why Nishida found insight in Hegel, whom he viewed to be the first to attempt to develop a dialectical logic of practice or action, inclusive of both subject and object, as well as inter-subjectivity, a logic of social and historical reality as opposed to the Aristotelian logic of the subject of predication as a mere substance. But for Nishida the holistic standpoint as a standpoint that cannot be determined into any grammatical subject, is hence empty of any conceptualizable essence, irreducible to any “being.” It is in his concept of “nothing” (*mu*) that we discern in Nishida’s thinking an influence from the Buddhist Mahāyāna tradition, with its insight in regard to emptiness

and dependent origination. We now turn to the non-dualistic conceptions of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Sec. 2: Mahāyāna Buddhism

The most conspicuous in Nishida's writings that draws direct insight from Mahāyāna thought is the concept of "nothing" (*mu*). We may also discern in much of the dialectical aspects of his philosophy, inspiration from, and reference to the basic non-dualistic worldview of Mahāyāna. If we look into his own personal life, we find that Nishida was an avid practitioner of Zen meditation for many years, and one of his closest friends since childhood was D.T. Suzuki who popularized Zen in the West. And his own mother was a devotee of Pure Land Buddhism. Yet Nishida's texts in general, except for his last few essays, are short on any direct reference to traditional Buddhist sources. As Dilworth mentioned Nishida's career is characterized by a "general reticence in regard to Eastern religious texts."⁴² The exception to this is the cardinal concept, we already mentioned above, of "nothing" (*mu*), which appears in the various stages of his oeuvre. What seems uniquely Buddhist in his thinking, while deliberately formulated in response to the ideas of western philosophers and for the most part without any reference to Buddhist scriptural or doctrinal sources, is this concept of absolute nothing (*zettai mu*) or true nothing (*shin no mu*). Of course strictly speaking in themselves these are not real Buddhist terms although one finds the expression of "nothing" (*mu*) in both Zen and Taoist writings. But, in addition, the dialectical aspects of his later thinking, formulated mostly in Hegelian terms, show remarkable similarities with Hua-yen (Kegon) Buddhism's development

of interdependent origination. (I am thinking here of the manifold inter-determinations found in the Hua-yen conception of the *dharmadhātu* in terms of *li* (patterning) and *shih* (thing-events) and those found in Nishida's conception of the dialectical universal from the 1930s.) In this section I would like to examine the non-dualistic line of thought in Mahāyāna Buddhism, traces of which we find not only in Nishida's concept of "nothing" but in his dialectical formulations of "self-negation," "absolutely contradictory self-identity," "continuity of discontinuity," and "inverse correspondence."

When we look at the thinking of some of the representative Mahāyāna schools of philosophy, such as Madhyamaka and Yogācāra in India and T'ien-T'ai, Hua-yen, and Ch'an/Zen in East Asia, we notice a certain line or strand of non-dualistic thinking that is recognizable in Nishida's thought, especially in its dialectical aspects that become developed in his later works. The manner itself in which these schools explicate non-duality in terms of emptiness have been described by some commentators as "dialectical." Of course "dialectic" may not be the right term if we are to limit its meaning to what Plato or Hegel meant. But aside from that, there is a certain way of thinking in Nishida's own dialectic that we might trace to Buddhism. The source of that strand can be found in the thinking of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras*, e.g., the *Diamond Sūtra* and the *Heart Sūtra*. Their non-dualistic mode of thinking, starting with the equation of form and emptiness ("*rūpam śūnyatā śūnyatāiva rūpam*")⁴³ in the Chinese translation of the *Heart Sūtra*,⁴⁴ becomes worked out in a variety of formulations by these schools. In fact, despite his general reticence in most of his works in regard to Buddhist scriptural sources, Nishida in his very last essays of the 1940s comes to refer to these *sūtra s* under the inspiration of

their readings by his friend D.T. Suzuki. My discussions of Mahāyāna thought here shall present a simplified version of what in actuality proves to be much more complex. We shall begin west in India with Madhyamaka and Yogācāra and then proceed east to China with T'ien-T'ai and Hua-yen and from there to Chinese Ch'an and its Japanese version, Zen.⁴⁵

Madhyamaka is traditionally regarded as the first major philosophical school of Mahāyāna to emerge in India, under inspiration from the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras*. Its supposed founder Nāgārjuna⁴⁶ (ca 100/150~200/250CE) took the *Prajñāpāramitā* idea of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) to mean the lack of “self-nature” or “own-being” (*svabhāva*), i.e., ontological substance or essence, in anything, whether material or ideal, whether entity, event, process or thought. Things are empty of substance because, lacking independence, they depend on various factors for their being. Thus he equates emptiness with the Buddhist notion of dependent origination (*pratītya-samutpāda*). This lack of substantiality means that nothing can be asserted about anything without qualification. Any proposition assuming an absolute truth for itself falls into self-contradiction. Nāgārjuna showed this by considering four alternative positions (called “tetralemma,” *catuskoti*) about any topic: X (“...is”), ~X (“...is not”), both X and ~X (“...both is and is not”), and neither X nor ~X (“...neither is nor is not”), to disclose the emptiness behind each assertion. The proposition (whether positive or negative) can stand *only if* the emptiness of what it asserts is acknowledged, that is, only if its truth is taken provisionally as conditional or as conventional. That is to say, a truth can only be acknowledged once it has been de-substantialized or de-reified. Nāgārjuna aimed to refute all substantializing, reifying, or

hypostatizing assertions, including annihilating negations, to show that reality is irreducible to such mutually exclusive alternatives of is or is-not, yes or no, affirmation or negation, absolutely being or utterly nothing.⁴⁷ The soteriological point was to eliminate bondage to such positions that result in clinging and hence, suffering.

A consequence of the tetralemma was the theory of two truths and their non-dualistic equation or collapse, which comes to influence subsequent Mahāyāna thought. We may even find its trace in Nishida's idea of contradictory identity. The two truths are the relative or conventional (*samvrti-satya*) and the ultimate or absolute (*paramārtha-satya*). (MMK 24:8,9) The tetralemma's disclosure of the provisional nature (*samvrti*) of all truth-claims simultaneously refers to an ultimate truth (*paramārtha*) in regard to their emptiness. While provisionally a statement may hold true, ultimately it is empty. Because emptiness means dependent origination, its ultimate truth then does not refer to anything ontologically transcending the conventional: "...whatever is dependently arisen, that is emptiness." (MMK 24:18) Both truths refer to the same reality that things are conventionally real but substantially unreal. And while things are *not* substantially real, *neither* are they utterly unreal. Rather than dichotomizing reality into the two realms of *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, the two truths simply offer alternative perspectives to the reality of empty phenomena.⁴⁸ Bondage to *samsāra* then means becoming attached to dependently arising phenomena *as if* they were substantial. And genuine *nirvāṇa* means seeing reality as it is, without reification, without attachment, as empty. With the recognition that neither possesses substantiality (*svabhāva*), *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, like the two truths, are thus collapsed as designating alternative perspectives, reifying and de-reifying, to the

same reality. (See MMK 25:19-20) In terms of Nishida's later thought, this would mean the unity of opposites or contradictory identity.

This collapsing of the duality between *nirvāṇa* and *samsāra*, ultimate and conventional, epitomizes the “middle way” of Mahāyāna between substantial being and utter nothingness, between naïve realism and nihilism, between reification and annihilation, a “middle” that is “neither one nor two,” neither monism nor dualism. This non-dualism precludes any unilateral refutation or one-way transcendence of the conventional in favor of the ultimate. The ultimate in its ultimacy *vis-a-vis* the conventional is not transcendent to it. Emptiness must also be emptied⁴⁹ to prevent any one-dimensional attachment to nothingness, thus showing that reality is irreducible to either alternative of substantial being or utter nothing. (See MMK 13:3) *Via* this double negation of *śūnyatā śūnyatā* (the emptiness of emptiness) the Mādhyamika “middle” of neither/nor escapes reduction to either extremes. This provides the historical background for Nishida's own conception, in his later works, of the contradictory identity, and inverse correspondence in mutual self-negation, between absolute and relative, nothing and being. This “middle” becomes explicitly developed by the next major school of Mahāyāna philosophy, Yogācāra, as a hinge mediating the opposing aspects of reality.

The Yogācārins are famous for internalizing the Mādhyamika equation of emptiness and dependent origination, taking it as specifically referring to the mind's *karma*-fueled projections. The founding brothers Asanga and Vasubandhu⁵⁰ (fourth century CE) understood this mind-related world in light of three aspects or natures: *parikalpita*, *paratantra*, and *pariniṣpanna*. *Parikalpita* refers to the imagined aspects of the world that

appear as discrete substantial objects and subjects but which in reality are imaginary projections and thus empty of substance. Such projection is based on the activity of the ego differentiating itself *qua* subject from its objects through linguistic articulation. *Paratantra* designates the universal dependency of such phenomena, both in their interdependence and in their collective dependence upon the *karma*-infested mind. And *parinipanna* is reality understood in its “consummated” form, divested of *karmic* projections, erased of the imaginary substantiality and subject-object dichotomy, that is, reality experienced in its undiscriminated “suchness” (*tathatā*). (See MS 2:15; TK v.23; TN v.1f)

As in Nāgārjuna’s collapsing of the two truths, these three natures do not designate three realms but rather are in fact all in reference to the same reality. The imagined is how reality appears to the unenlightened defiled by *karmic* attachments, and the consummated is how reality appears to the enlightened, freed from *karmic* defilement. They are different aspects of the reality of interdependent phenomena. Their hinge or “middle” then is the dependent (*paratantra*) nature of phenomena, which provides the locus or basis (*āśraya*) for both the imaginary projections of substance and for the de-substantializing consummation of “suchness” (*tathatā*). Thus Vasubandhu states that dependent nature devoid of imagination *is* consummated nature. (TK v.21) And Asanga also states that the dependent is sometimes the imagined and sometimes the consummated. (MS 2:17) Accordingly *saṃsāra* is the defiled aspect of *paratantra* and *nirvāṇa* is the purified aspect of *paratantra*. (MS 9:1) As in Madhyamaka, *nirvāṇa* and *samsāra* in Yogācāra thus can be regarded as two ways of viewing the same reality, the deluded and defiled or the purified and enlightened. And *paratantra* serves as the axis on which

conversion from *samsāra* to *nirvāṇa* occurs. (See MS 2:2,17; 10:3,5; TN v.2-3,18,20,21,23; TK v.21) This motif of the realm of interdependence which is usually reified into discriminated objects but can also be de-reified into undiscriminated emptiness, we see taken over in Nishida's idea of the dialectical world of contradictory identity as a world of inter-determination amongst individuals and between the individual *qua* self and the dialectical universal *qua* world.

The Mahāyāna trend to collapse the dualities of conventional and ultimate, *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, upon a middle becomes further pronounced with its Siniticization. Chi-i (Zhiyi) (538~97CE), third patriarch and founder of the T'ien-t'ai (Tiantai; Jpn: Tendai) school in China, inheriting Nāgārjuna's two-fold truth, explicates and expands upon it in terms of a threefold.⁵¹ The three truths are emptiness, conventional being, and the middle. Insight into the first truth prevents one from clinging to the apparent substantiality of things and frees one from naïve realism. Insight into the second truth teaches one that emptiness is not utter nothingness and affirms the reality of things as conventional, conditioned, dependent. And insight into the middle enlightens one as to the synonymy of emptiness and conventional being in reference to the same reality while avoiding discriminating attachments to the reductive extremes of either eternal being or utter nothing. Contemplation of the first truth negates substantiality for the sake of emptiness. Contemplation of the second truth negates utter nothingness for the sake of dependent or contingent being. And with the third truth, both substantiality and nihility are negated for the simultaneous cognizance of the validity of both emptiness and conventional being. Not only must being be emptied of substantiality but emptiness must be emptied of its

reification as well. The third truth thus designates the path that treads the middle between the reductive extremes of being in eternalism and nothing in nihilism. Simultaneously it reaffirms the two other truths to indicate the harmonious tension between ultimate emptiness and conventional substantiality. The middle thus integrates emptiness and conventional being while avoiding their reification. In emptiness everything is one but this also means dependent origination amongst the many. The two truths are not simply absorbed into a substantialist or monistic oneness. Rather they are reaffirmed without reifying their dichotomy. Being and emptiness, many and one, are non-dualistically identified in that standpoint of the middle. Reality is then “one yet many, many yet one.” We thus again see here an example of a tendency within Mahāyāna that comes to expression later in Nishida’s own dialectic of contradictory identity between one and many, universal and individual, and inverse correspondence between absolute and relative.

If T’ien-t’ai explicates Mahāyāna non-duality in terms of three truths, Hua-yen (Huayan; Jpn: Kegon) develops this idea further in light of four realms collapsed into one *dharmadhātu*.⁵² It makes its explication through the employment of the Neo-Taoist terminology of *li* (“patterment”) and *shih* (fact, thing-event).⁵³ Dependent origination here becomes further worked-out in terms of mutual implication to encompass the sense of non-obstruction (*wu-ai*) between elements, allowing for their interpenetration. Inheriting and expanding upon the *Prajñāpāramitā* equation of form and emptiness, the first Hua-yen patriarch Tu-shun (Du-shun)⁵⁴ (557/8~640CE) regarded emptiness and form as different aspects of the *dharmadhātu* wherein everything is united in emptiness. Taking emptiness as the inter-connective and self-differentiating patterning (*li*) immanent in all

thing-events (*shih*), he develops their relationship in terms of the non-obstruction (*wu-ai*; Jpn: *muge*) between *li* and *shih*, i.e., *li-shih wu-ai* (Jpn: *riji muge*). While mirroring and implying the boundless entirety of the *dharmadhātu*, each thing-event (*shih*, *dharma*) remains its unique self without annihilating absorption into universality or whole. In spite of its shared emptiness with others, each individual is regarded as complete, mirroring the whole. And yet precisely due to their emptiness, each is harmonious with all others to establish non-obstruction amongst themselves, i.e., *shih-shih wu-ai* (Jpn: *jiji muge*). The non-obstruction amongst thing-events therefore manifests the full “wondrous being” of each individual thing-event and simultaneously their emptiness. This is analogous to the relationship we find in the later Nishida’s formulations of the dialectical universal, between the universal *qua* world and the individual *qua* persons, which precludes any unidirectional subsumption of the latter under the former.

This *dharmadhātu* of *li* and *shih* was later further explicated by the fourth Huayan patriarch Ch’eng-kuan (Cheng-guan)⁵⁵ (737/8~820/39/40CE) in terms of four realms: 1) the realm of phenomenal thing-events (*shih*) naively affirmed; 2) the realm of the “ultimate” or patternment (*li*) of emptiness; 3) the realm of the non-obstructed interrelationship between phenomena and their immanent patternings (*li-shih wu-ai*), referring to the non-duality between thing-events and their emptiness; and 4) the realm of the non-obstructed interrelationships amongst phenomenal thing-events (*shih-shih wu-ai*), referring to their co-dependent origination. The third realm refers to the vertical interrelationship between things and their inter-connecting and inter-differentiating patternment amongst themselves. The fourth realm refers to the horizontal interrelationships amongst

those co-relative, interdependently originating beings. But taking Nāgārjuna's equation of emptiness with dependent origination, *li* would refer to this interdependence amongst *shih* so that the first three realms as mere explanatory devices are collapsed into the fourth as the only *dharmadhātu*. While emptiness is regarded as the patterning (*li*) of interconnections and differentiations permeating the cosmic *dharmadhātu*, any reifying tendency – into a “universal principle” – is eclipsed by its collapse into the mutual non-obstruction amongst phenomena (*shih shih wu-ai*). Emptiness is thus de-transcendentalized; any claim to its substantial separateness from *samsaric* existence is negated. We find an analogous idea in the later Nishida's “inverse correspondence” whereby the absolute is seen as immanent in the world of relative beings *via* its own self-negation. Just as the conventional and the ultimate for Nāgārjuna were non-dual, the four realms in Hua-yen are non-quadrupal, many and yet one.

We find the same line of thinking, leading to non-dualistic collapse while precluding absorption in a substantialized one, in the Ch'an (Chan) or Zen tradition. Ch'an/Zen inherited much of the above-mentioned Mahāyāna world-view but developed it in a more practical orientation. Take, for example, the famous saying by the Chinese Ch'an master Ch'ing-yuan Wei-hsin (Jpn: Seigen Ishin) (660~740CE) of the T'ang dynasty. He states that before he began his study of Ch'an, “mountains were mountains, rivers were rivers,” but after he began his study, “mountains were no longer mountains, rivers were no longer rivers.” However with further Ch'an practice, he came to realize that “mountains are mountains, rivers are rivers.”⁵⁶ What we see here is first a move from the naïve realism of the first stage taken-in by the apparent substantiality of *shih*, to the emptying of all

substantiality of beings in the second stage. But to end there would signify bondage to their annihilation. With further practice, one comes to the positive realization that things are precisely what they are *because of their very emptiness*. Put differently, emptiness itself is emptied (of any substantiality or reification) to reaffirm being in *its very emptiness*. Truth here is in the identity of affirmation and negation, going beyond their contradiction. But this is not the self-identity of substance but rather entails a dynamic non-duality *via* emptiness.

The first three sentences of the *Genjōkōan* (*The Issue at Hand* or *Manifesting Suchness*)⁵⁷ by Dōgen Kigen (1200~1253CE), Zen master and founder of the Sōtō Zen school, likewise expresses the emptying of emptiness for a non-dual middle.⁵⁸ The first sentence asserts that when all thing-events (*dharmas*) are “the Buddha Dharma,” that is, reality viewed from an enlightened perspective, there is illusion and enlightenment, birth and death, enlightened and unenlightened beings. In this stance, opposites are equally affirmed as undiscriminated aspects of reality. The second sentence however states that when the many thing-events are without self, that is, viewed as empty of substance, there is neither illusion nor enlightenment, neither birth nor death, neither enlightened nor unenlightened beings. The opposites initially affirmed have now been each negated with the recognition of each of their emptiness. Stopping here would make Dōgen a nihilist, but he continues with a third statement that the Buddha way is originally *beyond* both fullness (i.e., being, affirmation) and lack (i.e., emptiness, negation), and that for this reason there is birth and death, illusion and enlightenment, enlightened and unenlightened beings. This signifies the re-affirmation of opposites on the basis of de-reifying their

previous affirmation (both/and) and negation (neither/nor). While Ch'ing-yuan's saying shows that it is the very emptiness, the negation of substantiality, that allows individual beings to be what they are, Dōgen's statements show that this same negation (of substance and utter nothing) allows opposites and even contradictories to be simultaneously affirmed. Thus this de-substantialized, de-reified reality that is "beyond fullness and lack" can simultaneously be affirmed in its "suchness."

Japanese Zen brings us full circle back to the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras* that inspired the whole Mahāyāna movement with the modern Zen thinker D.T. Suzuki. On the basis of the *Prajñāpāramitā's Diamond Sūtra*, Suzuki formulates what he calls the "logic of *soku-hi*" (or "is/not"). Its basic is that "'A is A' means 'A is not-A,' and therefore 'A is A'," or in short, its logical formulation runs: "'A = ~A', therefore 'A = A'." Suzuki takes this formula to be the foundation of *Prajñāpāramitā* thought expressed in the various paradoxical thought patterns of the *Diamond Sūtra*.⁵⁹ Inheriting this as the quintessence of Mahāyāna thought, Suzuki understands the Zen standpoint to transcend the logical dichotomization between being and non-being, yes and no, affirmation and negation. But what does this really mean? Both the principle of identity in formal logic and the logic of *soku-hi* assert that "A = A," the self-identity of A. But Suzuki's logic of *soku-hi* affirms A only after negating it. It asserts A's self-identity *via* its self-negation. The point is that self-identity is not to be taken as ontologically (or substantially) independent, i.e., without reference to its opposite. In other words, A is A only *via* the mediation of self-negation.⁶⁰ To be itself, a thing requires its not-being; it is what it is only in relation to what negates its identity. Self-identity cannot naively be assumed but is rather affirmed

in relation to negation. Suzuki refers to a famous passage from a Zen story, where a Zen master states the following: “Do not call this a staff. If you do, it is an affirmation. If you do not, it is a negation. Apart from affirmation and negation say a word, quick, quick!”⁶¹ Suzuki’s understanding of Zen points to the pre-theoretical livedness of experience prior to the bifurcations of subject and object, affirmation and negation. But as Suzuki’s formula shows, that experience cannot be reduced to the simple tautology of monistic self-identity. It entails a dynamic movement, a dialectic involving negation, that reverses the dualistic, objectifying, and substantializing view of things. Suzuki also happened to be a close friend of Nishida since childhood and it appears that there was a mutual influence in the formulations of their respective “logics,” i.e., Suzuki’s logic of *sokuhi* and Nishida’s logic of contradictory self-identity.⁶²

What we notice in all of these versions of Mahāyāna thought that we have examined is the collapsing of the dualities of conventional and ultimate, *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, and thing-event and emptiness, as well as of affirmation and negation, being and non-being, yes and no, through their de-substantialization and mutual emptiness as aspects of the same reality. This also involves a double negation, the self-negation or emptying of emptiness. Enlightenment (*nirvāṇa*) is supposed to entail the experiential awareness of emptiness behind our discriminations of interdependent phenomena into apparent substances. The apparently substantial is *empty* of substantiality in virtue of its dependent origination. Apart from its conditions it is nothing, and enlightenment would be the awareness of this emptiness or lack of ontological independence. But it is equally significant for the Mahāyāna Buddhist that this does not lead to the utter negation of the

phenomenal world or its absorption into some transcendent oneness. The verdict common to Mahāyāna is that not only must we de-substantialize objects in their interdependent originations but emptiness must be emptied as well to prevent any attachment to a world-denying nothingness or to an individual-absorbing universal. The reductive extremes of utter nothing in nihilism (*uccheda*) and substantial being in eternalism (*śāśvata*) are thus avoided with the “middle path.” The emptiness of emptiness itself thus prevents its one-sided transcendence of *saṃsāra*. It frees us from attachment not only to substantial being but also to utter nothingness. This is why emptiness must be emptied and collapsed into non-difference with interdependence and the interdependent. We see this inversion of emptiness relating it back to the world of things in the *Prajñāpāramitā* equation of emptiness and form; Madhyamaka’s relating of emptiness and dependent origination, *nirvāṇa* and *samsāra*, ultimate and conventional; Yogācāra’s notion of *paratantra* as the axis uniting *parikalpita* and *pariniṣpanna*; T’ien-t’ai’s notion of the middle that unifies conventional existence and emptiness; Hua-yen’s notion of *li-shih wu-ai* that collapses into *shih-shih wu-ai*; and Ch’an/Zen’s simultaneous negation of substance and affirmation of “suchness,” and the logic of *soku-hi*.

Sec. 3: Buddhism and Hegel

It is obvious that Nishida’s dialectical thinking is influenced by *both* Hegel’s notions of the self-determining concrete universal differentiating itself in judgement as “primordial differentiation” as well as in world-history; *and* Mahāyāna Buddhism’s non-dualistic thinking that treads the middle path between the reifying extremes of substantial being

and utter nothing. In this chapter we have looked at both Hegel's dialectical thought and the non-dualistic strain apparent in some Mahāyāna schools. Before we return to Nishida's own thinking, we are now in a position to compare and contrast some of the features we have discussed above in Mahāyāna Buddhism and Hegel's dialectics. As we will conduct a more detailed and direct analysis of Nishida's own thinking in light of these Hegelian and Buddhist concepts in a later chapter, we shall leave till then any conclusion as to the extent of Nishida's Hegelianism or Mahayanism. For now we may conclude our present chapter with a statement in regard to the similarity and/or difference, compatibility and/or incompatibility between Hegelian dialectics and Mahāyāna non-dualism. This will prepare us to look into the depth and breadth of Nishida's own stance.

Both what Suzuki calls the logic of *soku-hi* in Mahāyāna and Hegel's dialectics point to the conditionality of self-identity upon difference, i.e., that it is dialectical rather than simply tautological. The meaning of *A* in its self-identity always entails *more than* its conceptually delimited sense and is always inclusive of, or refers to, its environing conditions that delimit that sense. *A* is self-identical only in reference to its negation encompassed in the whole situation to which it belongs. We find this both in the Mahāyāna logic of *soku-hi* and in Hegel's notion that "the true is the whole." (PG 21/PS 11) Nishida's holistic standpoint seems inspired by both. In negating the delimited significance of the propositional subject, we move towards comprehending the holistic situation to which it belongs and that constitutes its identity, which in Nishida's terms is its implacement in the predicate-plane or *basho*. In Hegel the power that connects the grammatical subject with its predicate, or unites opposites is the self-determining universal that can-

cels and preserves, hence “sublates,” the difference or opposition in a more comprehensive conception. This comprehension of the whole *via* negation, making possible the affirmation of the subject of a proposition, is common to Hegel, Zen, and Nishida. One commentator, Hai Tai Kim, for example, considers both Hegel’s and Zen’s mode of thought as a “logic of life,” while contrasting their standpoints in terms of a “universal of universals” on Hegel’s part and “nothing” (*mu*) on the part of Zen.⁶³ We may add that for Hegel that unifying power, the concrete universal, is the concept realizing itself as the *idea*, as an all-encompassing universal. On the part of Mahāyāna, what constitutes the reality of phenomenal thing-events, as opposed to their nihility, is the emptiness of emptiness (*śūnyatā*), i.e., the immanence of emptiness as dependent origination not transcendent to phenomenal reality. Hegel’s view is still constrained by its conceptualism while Mahāyāna Buddhism is primarily a practice and emphasizes the irreducibility of the holistic experience to any concept. Through *prāxis*, *via* the experience of emptiness treading upon the “middle,” it attempts to go beyond the conceptual dichotomy of being and non-being or, in logical terms, affirmation and negation. They provide very distinct approaches to the dichotomization of the lived whole and how to regain or realize its pre-dichotomized non-duality.

Another commentator Alfonso Verdu, in his two books on Buddhist dialectics⁶⁴ finds many parallels between Buddhism and Hegel. But he makes this discovery by applying Hegelian categories to Buddhist ideas. For example, he interprets Hua-yen’s conception of the *dharmadhātu* of *li-shih wu-ai* and *shih-shih wu-ai* to be a “positivistic synthesis” that supersedes or sublates the more “negativistic” dialectics of Nāgārjuna, and

finds this to be analogous to the Hegelian principle of the negation of negation that cancels and preserves, i.e., sublates, differences and opposites.⁶⁵ And he takes the Hua-yen and the Hegelian understanding of causality as both involving the unity of essence and appearance that is a dialectical interplay of identity and difference. This is quite astounding in light of the very important Mahāyāna notion of emptiness, i.e., the lack of own-being or essence in things. Verdu also sees a correspondence between Hua-yen's concept of "non-impededness" or "non-obstruction" (*wu-ai*; Jpn: *muge*) and Hegel's "absolute concept" or "absolute *idea*" as both involving the above-mentioned sublational synthesis. Accordingly, in the Hua-yen development of Yogācāra's three natures, Verdu views *paratantra* that develops from *parinispāna*'s activity of self-permeation as the concrete universal that brings together *parinispāna qua* true universality and *parikalpita qua* mere particularity. While he admits the correspondence between Hegelian and Hua-yen categories to be loose earlier in his first book, elsewhere towards the end of that book he makes the claim that Hua-yen dialectics finds its closure and completion within a synthesis of which, centuries later, Hegel became the western formulator and herald. He tells us that "the all-comprehensive and all-involving identically subjective and objective dynamic impetus" of Hua-yen dialectics is the "Oriental foreshadowing of the Hegelian absolute idea."⁶⁶ Yet to look for such correspondences and to claim that one foreshadows the other or that one finds its closure in the other is misguided and ignores the disparity of their context and in the formulation of their aims. In his second book on Buddhist dialectics, as if to reply to his critics, Verdu claims that he is not trying to "hegelianize" Buddhism nor to "buddhify" Hegel and admits that there are wide and deep differences be-

tween the two.⁶⁷ He explains that the similarity he detects is more in the “form” than in the “content.” He admits to being inspired by his study of Hegel in his systematization of Hua-yen/Kegon doctrines in dialectical “triadic” form, and justifies this by appeal to the structures present throughout the Buddhist texts and especially in the “Awakening of Faith.” As is evident, reality in both is self-determining. But he rightly points out the lack of the Hegelian starting point of the structures of pure thought in Buddhist *tathatā* (suchness). While agreeing with this latter point, a triadic formula whereby opposites are unified or mediated in a third term is not so unusual and may be found in many other sources from around the world. That alone does not justify the application of Hegelian concepts unless the point is to reduce Buddhism to Hegelianism, i.e., to “hegelianize Buddhism.” It is far more helpful to understanding each by taking note of their differences despite the superficial similarities. And what I find interesting here in regard to Nishida is that both approaches to the world, despite great differences, can be found somehow intertwined in his dialectical thinking.

On the basis of our own discussions of Hegel and Mahāyāna, despite their common focus on the inter-relationship of knowledge, truth, and reality, and on the unity of opposites, we may distinguish their approaches in the following manner. The non-dual middle of Mahāyāna, as opposed to Hegel’s sublational dialectic: 1) avoids conceptual reduction (to either extremes of being or non-being or affirmation or negation); and 2) involves the simultaneity of opposites as bi-conditionals rather than the resolution of opposition *via* sublation. Taking both 1) and 2) together this means that the Mahāyāna scheme allows for the simultaneity of affirmation and negation as interdependent and

without reifying either, while Hegel's scheme is of a teleological process of sublation that works towards the resolution of opposites in a culminating and all-embracing *idea* of self-recognition. Hegel's method is conceptual, involving the progression of reason that recognizes its self-identity in the oppositions, i.e., the self-differentiation of its own concept *qua* concrete universal. The series of sublations presupposes that unifying concept, and realizes it self-consciously in its self-conceiving all-embracing *idea*. But Mahāyāna Buddhism precludes grasping the non-duality of opposites conceptually. Its stance is a *prāxis* of the middle that avoids either extremes as conceptual abstractions. This middle stance allows for the co-determinacy of what logically would be contradictories, i.e., affirmation and negation, being and non-being, taking them in their emptiness. While for Hegel, sublational dialectics comes to fruition and realization in the retro-cognition of its entire process in self-conception, Mahāyāna practice aims to experience the paradoxical unity outside of conception and reasoning, by avoiding abstraction. The point for Hegel is to grasp the whole in an all-embracing concept. The point for Mahāyāna Buddhism is to become free from the attachment to concepts, leading to reifying extremes. By contrast, for Hegel, it is the very self-conceiving of the all-embracing *idea* that will make man free. Their approaches are thus based upon distinct premises to begin with.

Despite some superficial similarities, we thus find significant differences in how Hegel and Mahāyāna Buddhism approach the world. And yet we find traces of both Mahāyāna non-dualism and Hegelian dialectics in Nishida's dialectical philosophy. Nishida's conceptions like "absolute nothing," "absolutely contradictory self-identity," and "inverse correspondence," seem to be inspired by Mahāyāna non-duality; but his con-

cepts of “concrete universal,” “dialectical universal,” and even the general use of the term “dialectics” in speaking of his own mode of thinking, are inherited from, or influenced by, Hegel. And in his own use of the moment of negation, Nishida appears to bind both orientations together. To what extent is Nishida then Hegelian and to what extent is he Buddhistic in his philosophy? Or is he *more* or *other* than either, whether taken alone or together? In the following chapters (Part II) we shall look at the dialectical features we find in Nishida’s own philosophical works.

PART II:
DIALECTICS IN NISHIDA

Now that we have undertaken a preliminary look at the various influences upon Nishida's non-dualism and his dialectics in the previous two chapters, we are prepared to investigate the dialectical aspects of his own thinking with some detail. In the following chapters, we will examine Nishida's œuvre roughly chronologically, so that we may discern the evolution or development of his dialectics from its implicit beginnings to its most pronounced and sophisticated formulations.

Different commentators have often divided Nishida's work into stages or periods, while disagreeing with each other as to exactly where the periods fall. Even if we accept that Nishida's fundamental project remains the same throughout his career — i.e., to investigate concrete reality prior to its theoretical bifurcation —, we cannot deny that his thinking evolves from work to work as he experiments with different formulations and terminologies. And yet it is not so easy to make clear-cut distinctions in terms of periods in that development because the different formulations and modes of expression that allegedly characterize each stage of his thinking, nevertheless, overlap into those different stages. Looking at Nishida's works as a whole, we see the general thematic of concrete reality formulated and discussed in different ways, beginning with “pure experience” in the early to mid-1910s; moving to the voluntarism of “the absolute will” and its “self-awareness” from the late 1910s to the early 1920s; the epistemology of *basho* or “place” in the mid-to-late 1920s to early 1930s; the concern with the socio-historical world with

his concepts of “absolutely contradictory self-identity” and “the dialectical universal” in the 1930s and 1940s; and finally his interest in “the religious” discussed in terms of “inverse correspondence” in the mid-1940s. All of these different modes of expression have to do with what Nishida viewed as the concrete basis of the real that, while in itself prior to the subject-object dichotomy, also encompasses such oppositional relations and contains the seed for their dialectical development. They all express in different ways what Nishida was convinced of throughout his philosophical life: the concrete un-differentiated foundation of everything, encompassing opposites and contradictories.

The dialectic itself becomes most pronounced and explicit in the 1930s when Nishida himself begins to refer to what he is describing as “dialectic” (*benshōhō*). What early was still an implicit identity between opposites in pure experience becomes in the later works developed more systematically, first in terms of “contradictory unity,” and then in terms of “contradictory identity,” as involving a complex dialectic of mutual and self-negation between opposing terms. Nishida’s initial expressions of the concrete as a one that differentiates itself into the many, later evolves into more of an emphasis upon the simultaneity or co-existence between the one and the many.⁶⁸ And the heuristic focus upon the predicate in the epistemology of *bashō* — the intent of which was to turn our attention away from the grammatical subject —, later recedes in favor of a greater emphasis upon “the contradictory self-identity” between those terms, whereby neither takes precedence. One might say that the dialectic, as it becomes more explicit, also becomes more complex and sophisticated in its formulation. The relationship with Hegel’s dialectic, however, was always there from the beginning, with Nishida’s explicit references to

Hegel's ideas, such as the concrete universal and judgement as the self-differentiation of a pre-judicative whole. And the relationship with Mahāyāna non-dualistic thinking will soon become apparent in the mid-1920s when he starts making use of the concept of "nothing" (*mu*), which then continues throughout the later stages of Nishida's oeuvre.

For our own purposes we shall divide our discussion of the development of Nishida's dialectic through his works into five chapters. The first will deal with his early works from the 1910s to the early 1920s, focusing on the concepts of pure experience, self-awareness, and absolute will. The second will deal with his epistemology of *basho* developed in the mid-1920s to the early 1930s. The third and fourth will deal with his dialectics of the socio-historical world developed throughout the 1930s. And the fifth chapter will discuss his dialectical ideas of religion that he worked on in the 1940s before passing away.

CHAPTER 3:
PURE EXPERIENCE, SELF-AWARENESS, AND WILL: DIALECTICS IN THE
EARLY WORKS (FROM THE 1910S TO THE 1920S)

Nishida himself does not employ the term “dialectic” (*benshōhō*) to describe the method or content of his thinking until the 1930s. But we do notice the influence of Hegel’s dialectics from the very beginning of his career. In these early works written from 1911 to the mid-1920s, Nishida still seems to be under the spell of the variety of philosophical influences he has been digesting, even while attempting to develop his own system of thought. He gropes for adequate formulations for expressing the pre-bifurcated concreteness that founds our immediate experience and subsequent reflections. Nevertheless we can still find in these early works the germ that will sprout into his later uniquely and more explicitly dialectical ideas. In *Zen no kenkyū* (*Inquiry into the Good*) of 1911, the theme is pure experience; and from *Jikaku ni okeru chokkan to hansei* (*Intuition and Reflection in Self-Awareness*) of 1917 to *Zen to dōtoku* (*Art and Morality*) of 1923, the themes are self-awareness and absolute will. In all of these formulations we already see dialectical implications.

Sec. 1: Pure Experience

We may start our inquiry with his very first original work, *Zen no kenkyū* (*Inquiry into the Good*)⁶⁹ of 1911, that established his name amongst the intellectuals of Japan right after the turn of the century. As we already discussed in chapter one, what led Nishida to

dialectics was his very concern with overcoming the dualistic gap and to provide in its place a new non-dualistic paradigm. In his maiden work, this concern is expressed in his concept of “pure experience” (*junsui keiken*), whereby the categories of subject and object in cognition are no longer seen as foundational but rather as abstractions derived from a more originary and pre-reflective experience. The terminology is already misleading in that the “experience” here is not something that lies on the subjective side of the subject-object dichotomy but rather concrete reality, encompassing their implicit dichotomy prior to bifurcation. It can thus be reduced to neither materiality nor ideality. As neither mere *experiencer* nor mere *experienced*, the experience here is “pure” in that we have unmediated access to it, prior to dichotomizing it into the various dualities of spirit-body, mind-thing, ideal-real, inner-outer, immanence-transcendence, etc. Constituting their point of union (*shukyaku gōitten*), it precedes the very differentiation into such dichotomies, e.g. of subject-object (*shukyaku mibun*). Nevertheless Nishida at this stage still reveals an idealist tendency in identifying the primordial fact of experience with the phenomenon of consciousness. (Z1 44)

Because we find ourselves *always already* immersed within it, our attempts to objectify pure experience as such perpetually fail. Take the event of a concert pianist playing his favorite piece in masterly perfection, or of a music enthusiast simply listening to those beautiful sounds. The most concrete occurrence of reality in either example is nothing but the happening and its awareness *together as one whole*, an event sufficient in itself, prior to any reflective dichotomization of it into experiencing subject and experienced object. (Z1 9) Thinking can analyze that event into components only *after the fact*.

Pure experience is always in the present and judgment about it happens only later, eradicating that original purity and unity. And yet Nishida also views pure experience as a spontaneously developing reality, a concrete whole encompassing those elements as implicit components. From out of that initially unsullied concrete whole, judgment emerges to divide its unity grammatically into subject and predicate or epistemologically into knower and known. Pure experience *qua* concrete reality then provides the non-propositional basis for its abstraction into the propositional form of judgment. On the basis of the concrete event of the concert pianist playing, one can make the judgment, “the pianist is playing.” Any intellectual analysis or discrimination must assume that prior concrete whole of pure experience. But Nishida takes this further. Ontologically, the entire world of separate objects, and the individual knower himself, emerge only as abstractions out of that concrete whole of pure experience. Experience precedes the individual, not vice versa. (Z1 6-7) And thus Nishida speaks of the one reality developing itself out of itself, the universal realizing itself in the fact of pure experience. (Z1 22, 52) Nishida takes pure experience then, beyond the normal significance of “experience,” to be a self-forming unifying activity (*tōitsu sayō*) that is the very basis of the world’s dynamism.

Nishida characterizes this self-unifying activity of pure experience in terms of the will or volition (*ishi*). This shows an influence from some of the German philosophers of the nineteenth century who spoke of the will in cosmological or ontological terms. For Nishida it is the drive inherent within that concrete whole to realize itself in self-differentiation and development. (Z1 12-13) That volitional reality, taken in cosmic pro-

portions, may be understood as God. Creation then is God's volitional activity of self-expression, and God is the unifier presupposed by all unities of experience. (See Z1 145) Nishida goes-on to characterize this self-unifying drive of concrete reality in a variety of formulations throughout this book, such as "the great system of consciousness," our "true self" that can be equated with God as the grounding unity of both spirit and nature, and cosmic reason or "patterning" (*ri*).⁷⁰ (See Z1 21, 61, 81-82) So it is not the individual self that possesses pure experience but the reverse: Pure experience, as the non-differentiation of experience-*cum*-reality, but understood in terms of this cosmic volitional reality, is what unfolds into the self as subject *vis-à-vis* reality as object. The subjective experience of each individual person then is but a state within the dynamic flow of self-differentiation belonging to that self-realizing concrete whole.

Hegel's influence is already conspicuous here. In describing that self-differentiating concrete reality, Nishida appears to make use of the Hegelian notion of a universal that is concrete in its self-determinations. "I" and "thing" in their mutual differentiation become understood as abstractions from out of the spontaneous self-unfolding of the concrete universal. One year after *Zen no kenkyū*, in an essay (1912) included later in *Shisaku to taiken* (1915) Nishida, while referring to Hegel, even makes explicit usage of the dialectical terminology of *an sich* (in-itself), *für sich* (for-itself), and *an und für sich* (in-and-for-itself), in order to explain the process of that universal's transition from implicit wholeness to self-differentiation and self-confrontation, and finally to its self-clarifying return to the original whole. (Z1 211-12) That is, from out of the concrete whole of pure experience (the moment of *in-itself*), there arises judgement about the

experience. But the sense of judgment is alienated from that initially pure experience, its concreteness, so that it relates to the original experience as an *other* (the moment of *for-itself*). And yet in that very relationship, it is re-integrated into the concrete *qua* greater whole encompassing both of those moments (*in-and-for-for itself*).⁷¹ Taking “the fact of pure experience” as the self-realization of the universal, Nishida states in *Zen no kenkyū* that “since our pure experience is a systematic development, the unifying force [of concrete facts] working at its root must immediately be the universality of the concept...” (Z1 22) This unifying activity of the universal that encompasses distinctions and contradictions is also characterized, with an eye towards Hegel’s notion of *Geist* (*seishin*, “spirit”), as “spirit containing infinite oppositions.” (Z1 58, 149) All of these appropriations of Hegelian notions, one might say, are but stepping stones that lead to more mature developments in Nishida’s thinking that come later. In this early stage of his career, despite obvious differences in the way he takes Hegel’s ideas from Hegel’s own meanings, Nishida appears to be sympathetic towards Hegel and to feel some affinity with him. Nishida however will go-on to work out the differences between his own thinking and Hegel’s in his later works.

In any case, we notice a dialectic already implicit within the concept of pure experience. For its development can be said to be self-contradictory. From its primordial wholeness that cannot be uttered, it differentiates itself in the structure of judgment in order to articulate itself. In itself, prior to self-differentiation, it cannot be objectified, it cannot be made into a subject of a statement; it is unsayable. And yet in its self-differentiation in judgment, the unspeakable is spoken. This idea of the concrete whole’s

self-differentiation persists throughout all of Nishida's life work. Its implicit dialectic is operative behind all of Nishida's formulations of concrete reality. Its formulation here in terms of pure experience provides the germ for its later more explicitly dialectical formulations, such as in terms of contradictory self-identity.⁷² And that dialectic, described in terms of God's volitional self-manifesting act in *Zen no kenkyū*, also provides the germ for the concept of "self-awareness" (*jikaku*) as an act of self-mirroring, an idea that Nishida develops in the ensuing years, and which in turn will lead him to his concept of *basho* as the horizon of self-mirroring.

Sec. 2: Self-Awareness and Absolute Will

In the works following *Zen no kenkyū*, during the late 1910s and early 1920s, Nishida develops the volitional aspect of the concrete that we already saw in his maiden work further in terms of his notion of "self-awareness" (*jikaku*). We see this, for example, in *Jikaku ni okeru chokkan to hansei (Intuition and Reflection in Self-Awareness)*⁷³ (1917), *Ishiki no mondai (The Issue of Consciousness)* (1920), and *Geijutsu to dōtoku (Art and Morality)*⁷⁴ (1923). This is the period when he becomes more involved in debating the dualistic theses of the Neo-Kantian epistemology of Lotze, Cohen, and Rickert, leading to more systematic articulations of his idea of non-dualistic concreteness in the sphere of epistemology. We find Nishida responding to the Neo-Kantian view that, on the premise of the subject-object distinction, takes cognition to be a process involving the reconstruction of what is given in intuition. But as we saw in his earlier concept of pure experience, Nishida views the dichotomy as part of a dynamic unfolding from a whole

already in place. Rather than a moment external to concrete intuition, reflection is its internal development. The need to explain how that dynamic of fission can unfold from a fundamental non-distinction, led Nishida in *Jikaku ni okeru chokkan to hansei* to formulate the concept of “self-awareness” (*jikaku*) as encompassing *both* pre-dichotomized experience and dichotomizing reflection. He uses this term — which also includes the connotations of “self-awakening” and “self-realization” —, to designate the very dynamic itself uniting the “intuition” (*chokkan*) of immediate experience and the subsequent “reflection” (*hansei*) that analyzes that initially non-distinct experience, objectifying it, reconstructing it in the dichotomized terms of epistemological subject and object or grammatical subject and predicate. As intuition leads to reflection, each reflection itself can in turn serve as the intuited content of further reflection. “Self-awareness” then names that on-going dynamic, uniting the two moments of intuition (experience) and reflection (thought) in an endless process of self-realization. (Z2 13-14)

Nishida further conceives of this dynamic process of self-awareness in terms of an internal self-mirroring, a mirroring of its own dynamic into elements *within* itself. Not only a development of the earlier dynamic of pure experience in *Zen no kenkyū*, this is a further appropriation of Hegel’s self-determining concrete universal while also reflecting an influence from Josiah Royce’s notion of the self-representative system in his *The World and the Individual*.⁷⁵ Cognition, understood thus in terms of this dynamic of self-awareness, is in marked contrast with the Kantian view. The determining of its content, unlike in Kantian hylo-morphism that separates the form and the matter of cognition proves to be an *internal* occurrence of *self*-determining or *self*-differentiation into ele-

ments. While the elements mirror or image the dynamic whole, the whole itself escapes reduction to any mirror-image since objectification falls only *within* it. The dynamic whole of this process engulfs the self in his lived experience (*Erlebnis*). The constitution of the individual self is only a product of that concrete process of self-awareness. And not only the subject of cognition but the world of objects as well emerges as a product of its self-mirroring self-determination. We are told that this prior concrete holism en-folds an infinity of possibilities in its un-folding.

As in his previous work of 1911, Nishida understands the driving force behind this unfolding in terms of the will. But during the 1920s, starting with *Jikaku ni okeru chokkan to hansei*, the ontological aspect of the volitional act, its free creativity, comes further into the light, as Nishida discusses it in greater detail, calling it “the absolute will” (*zettai ishi*), “the a priori underlying all a prioris,” “the act of all acts.” Here the volitional act becomes seen as constituting the a priori horizon for all modes of intentionality, such as thinking, seeing, and acting, and their respective objects, hence enfolding and unfolding the structural dualities of subject-object or *noesis-noema*. (Z2 219, 224, 241) Judgment or dichotomizing thought in general would be but the will’s self-awareness, mirroring itself in dichotomized terms. The dynamism of the will then in its self-awareness is the concrete universal reality that grounds human existence *vis-à-vis* its world of objects, as the originary fusion point from which stem the various oppositional dualities of subject-object, ideality-reality, inside-outside, all as distinct aspects of its holistic structure. (See Z2 394-95) In *Geijutsu to dōtoku* of 1923, Nishida continues this postulation of the pure transcendent and absolute will (*chōetsuteki ishi, zettai ishi*), as the

act underlying all acts, the a priori of all a prioris, unfolding the dichotomies of knower-known, subject-object, self-thing, etc. that constitute the world of concrete reality in its formations (*Bilden*) and re-formations (*Abbilden*). (See Z3 13, 188, 234-35) In *Ishiki no mondai* of 1920 each contradiction between opposites of a duality provides the positive content, the thematic, of a deeper receding horizon, and the deepest horizon is provided by the will as the act of all acts that can no longer be thematized or objectified. All oppositions are thus traced to the will as constituting the most concrete horizontal standpoint. And in constituting the horizon for all subsequent acts, that pure activity of the will is itself enveloped ultimately within a dark abyss that makes possible its self-awareness and self-contradiction. This is the idea that Nishida develops further a few years later (1926) in terms of a “place” (*basho*) delimited by nothing (*mu*), or *basho vis-à-vis* true nothing. Referring to Hegel’s contention that the knowledge of knowledge (self-reflective cognition) is self-contradictory and without it there is no truth, Nishida, in *Geijutsu to dōtoku*, takes the transcendent will as thus providing that contradictory unity that encompasses the contradiction of self-reflective cognition along with all oppositions. (Z3 151) The will in its dialectical unity *already en-folds* the contradictory oppositions it *un-folds* so that in its self-articulating self-mirroring is a “*a posteriori* returns to *a priori*..., particular returns to universal.” (Z3 180)

Authentic selfhood cannot be separated from the dynamism of that holistic process. We are told that one’s own consciousness is but a manifestation of this greater dialectic of a “trans-individual self,” a creative act belonging to the transcendent will. (Z3 186) We manifest the absolute will’s self-awareness. The individual self is thus a “dia-

lectual unity of infinite acts.” (Z3 48) The individual’s consciousness appears at the very point of divergence where the enveloping broader standpoint of the universal and the enveloped narrower standpoint of the individual, outer and inner, clash and unite in contradiction. Here at this very point where the universal as concrete is particularized is where consciousness appears. (Z3 56-57) Nishida characterizes this particularization as “the concentration of the meaning of the whole world into a single point,” “the transformation of the whole world into one will,” “the inclusion of the whole within the particular.” (Z3 215) As a chiasmatic locus connecting inner and outer, self and world, the body also comes into play in this focus or concentration. (See Z3 246) This sort of interrelationship between inner and outer, individual and universal becomes worked out in the 1930s more explicitly in terms of the dialectic between the individual acting self and the environing world. And in terms of time, the significance of the concrete whole is condensed and mirrored into the present as its focal point. (See Z2 192-93) From that singular point of the present, the will unfolds the dualities and oppositions it enfolds, extending its circular horizon in wave-like fashion to articulate its holism. (See Z2 207) So it is not only the oppositional dualities of subject-object, spirit-matter, self-other, etc., but the temporal differentiation of past-future, that mirror in their coincidence the holistic dynamism of absolute volition in its self-differentiating self-awareness. This chiasmatic concentration of the spatial and the temporal will become another important feature of Nishida’s dialectic in the 1930s. But already in the 1920s, as we have seen, Nishida takes the individual’s consciousness along with the singular moment of the present as focal points that realize the concrete universal’s internal development, differentiating itself from within.

Recent commentators have noticed in these early ideas the tendency towards an idealism or a monism. For example, Feenberg and Arisaka speak of an apparent “regression into a naïve kind of objective idealism” and Kopf discusses a possible privileging of “identity over difference” in the emphasis upon unity.⁷⁶ The later formulations certainly develop the thematic of pre-reflective concrete reality in a direction that is less monistic and more explicitly dialectical without necessarily prioritizing the universal over the individual or sameness over difference. The non-dualism becomes more dynamically dialectical and sophisticated, less easily characterized as another version of German absolute idealism. Yet we must also acknowledge that the later formulations are developments taking off from these early attempts at a non-dualistic philosophy. They are products of his attempts to overcome the shortcomings of these early formulations, to better describe and further clarify what he was trying to express. In his own time, it was the very ambiguity in meaning in his conception of pure experience, as well as of self-awareness and pure will, that led some of his own contemporaries to charge him of a psychologism. Nishida’s own acknowledgment of the inadequacy of these formulations led him to supplant them with other ways of characterizing the concretely real. (See Z8 255) This leads him to develop his epistemology of *basho* in the mid-1920s. And his desire to articulate the non-duality of the concrete with greater precision leads him further to his dialectical adventures of the 1930s.

CHAPTER 4:
**DIALECTICS IN THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF *BASHO* (FROM THE LATE 1920S
TO THE EARLY 1930S)**

Nishida in the late 1920s further develops his conceptions of self-differentiation and self-contradiction that we saw under the earlier rubric of pure experience, self-awareness, and the absolute will. In the essays of the 1920s, compiled together in 1927 as *Hataraku mono kara mirumono e* (*From the Working to the Seeing*), we find Nishida breaking through his previous positions in the attempt to develop a theory that overcomes epistemological dualism while precluding any possible psychologistic mis-taking of his position. The result is a reformulation of his ideas in terms of what he calls *basho* or “place.” The implications of this epistemology of *basho* becomes further worked out consequently in *Ippansha no jikakuteki taikei* (*The System of Universals in Self-Awareness*) of 1930 and *Mu no jikakuteki gentei* (*The Determination of Nothing in Self-Awareness*) of 1932. In all three works we see Nishida further elaborating upon the dialectical implications already present in his ideas, moving towards his radical conception of an absolute dialectic (*zettai benshōhō*) of the 1930s.

We find the root concept of the dialectical implications of his epistemology here in this notion of *basho* that at its most concrete level is delimited by absolutely nothing. As the most concrete level of reality-and-experience, he takes this to be the grounding immediacy that embraces all the contradictory planes involving self and world, whether in terms of the epistemological subject and its object, the grammatical subject and its

predicates, or the determining act of consciousness (*noesis*) and its determined object (*noema*). Nishida takes all such dichotomizations to be implaced within *basho*, as hence irreducible to the merely ideal or the merely real. As an expansion upon his earlier notion of self-awareness, *basho* is seen as enveloping everything within as its own mirroring reflections. So the concrete, now characterized as a “place,” thus becomes explicitly seen as the broadest, not delimited by anything else, not determined by anything opposing it. In its in-determinacy or un-differentiatedness, it is thus an “absolute nothing” (*zettai mu*) that envelops all in its self-differentiating self-determinations. This formulation re-poses the thematic of self-awareness thus more explicitly as a self-determination of the very place (*basho*) of its self-mirroring. The judicative act is thus to be understood accordingly as unfolding from that self-delimitation of the enfolding concrete. This unfolding dynamism involves a series of determinate places within determinate places, *bashos* within *bashos*, leading from the concrete to the abstract, from the undetermined *basho vis-à-vis* absolutely nothing ultimately to the determination of the object of cognition, the grammatical subject of judgement. This obviously is a further re-casting of Hegel’s concrete universal but this time in terms of “place” (*basho*) rather than in terms of pure experience or absolute will. Of course I do not want to suggest here that Nishida and Hegel are talking about the same thing. But Nishida was inspired by the notion of a self-determining universal found in Hegel’s attempt to overcome Kantian dualism. We will find however that *basho* in its most concrete sense, for Nishida, is not really a “universal” in the sense ordinarily taken in western metaphysics, e.g., Plato’s *idea* or Hegel’s *Begriff*. His incorporation of absolute nothing, along with his notion of *basho*, will lead Nishida’s

view to the concrete in a direction away from Hegel's understanding of the concrete. While Nishida refers to the Hegelian notion of the concrete universal throughout the second half of *Hatarakumono kara mirumono e*, he will eventually come to distinguish his own perspective from that of Hegel's. (In the final chapters of this work, we will come to the related question of the adequacy of such terminology.) In the following sections, I will discuss Nishida's various formulations of his ideas from *Hatarakumono kara mirumono e* that lead up the epistemology of *basho* with their dialectical implications, and then look at the dialectical implications within his *basho* theory itself from 1926, while also drawing from his formulations in *Ippansha no jikakuteki taikei* and *Mu no jikakuteki gentei*.

Sec. 1: On the Way to *Basho*

The epistemological theory of *basho* is not clearly systematized until the essay "*Basho*" in the second part of the book *Hatarakumono kara mirumono e*. In the essays included in the first part, we still see Nishida groping toward an adequate re-formulation of his ideas. He searches for a way to conceive of the underlying unity of cognition that does not succumb to any sort of dualism as in Kant's theory. In the essay, *Naibuchichkaku ni tsuite* ("On Internal Perception") (1924) he still refers to the self-awareness of the dynamic will as providing the connection between ideal and real (Z3 312) and in *Butsurigenshō no haigo ni arumono* ("That Which Lies Behind Physical Phenomena") (1924) he refers to Fichte's notion of the absolute I that is at the ground of the opposition between I and not-I.⁷⁷ (Z3 304) But the pre-*basho* discussions from the first part that stand-out in their an-

ticipations of later dialectical development are on the topics of time and the present and on the universal's self-determination in judgement.

We see Nishida grappling with the issue of time in a manner distinct from its linear conceptions. He does this by focussing upon the present (*genzai*) in its internal embracing of past and future, for example, in the 1923 essay *Chokusetsu ni ataerarerumono* ("The Immediately Given"). (See Z3 275, 277) This move anticipates his future working-out of the dialectics of the present. In *Naibuchichaku ni tsuite* Nishida speaks of the present as the ultimate point of an infinite depth from out of which world and self, time and space, unfold in a dialectic of subjective and objective unities. It provides the higher unity that embraces the unities of both the object-world and the epistemological subject, that is, both external and internal unities. The present is this concrete unity of subject-object embracing all the transitions within the world of things and the world of mind. (Z3 322-23) In the 1925 essay *Hyōgen sayō* ("The Act of Expression"), Nishida elaborates upon this theme in a manner akin to Dōgen's notion of time, with the explanation that a singular event, in its very momentariness, involves a relationship to the whole of the environing conditions that permit its occurrence, i.e., the entire world. (Z3 368) In other words, the "whole" focussed upon a single moment is not just temporal in terms of the past and the future but spatial in terms of the environment embracing subject and object. This conception of the present as a focal point of space-time anticipates the inter-dimensional, inter-directional — or *chiasmatic* —, complexity that becomes pronounced in his radical dialectics of the 1930s. But more immediately we see Nishida moving closer, in this conception of the present, to his conception of *basho* that becomes explic-

itly formulated a few years later in his “*Basho*” essay of 1926. In relation to the present Nishida alludes here to the place, or *basho*, of self-awareness, a place transcending and enveloping the self, as that wherein the self knows itself in its self-mirroring. What we ordinarily call “time” is established from out of that place (*basho*) in the interconnections between yesterday and tomorrow, past and future. (See Z3 350-51) Nishida will repeatedly come back to this issue of time as flowing from the present in its place-like quality that embraces past and future. In an application of the Hegelian idea of the concrete universal in temporal terms, Nishida will come to speak of this as the “self-determination of the eternal now.”

Nishida, in part one of *Hatarakumono kara mirumono e*, also develops his analysis of judgement in the Hegelian manner that will become more fully worked-out in part two in the “*Basho*” essay. He takes judgement as the self-differentiation of the concrete universal,⁷⁸ but also in conjunction with his concept of self-awareness in terms of self-mirroring. In other words, the universal as the predicate (*jutsugo*) determines itself into the grammatical subject (*shugo*), and this means the self-mirroring of the universal in its determined image *qua* grammatical subject, its object. Hence in judgement, the universal is really its own grammatical subject, its own “substance.” (Z3 330-31) Nishida adds that a truly concrete universal must encompass not only a positive content but also its *other*, the negation of that content that determines it *vis-à-vis*, and into, what it is *not*. Only in enveloping that contradiction between its finite content and its negation, its being and its non-being, is a universal thoroughly universal and concretely so. For example, the universal “color” must embrace the opposition between “red” and “not-red,” the latter mean-

ing all *other* colors. And at the deepest and most concrete level, that whole that embraces all such oppositions, i.e., between being in general and non-being in general, would itself have to transcend the categories of both being and non-being. (Z3 332-33) The universal that forms itself into the grammatical subject of a judgement and into the various dichotomies and oppositions, including relations of contradiction, then, Nishida reasons, must be something like a formless and empty space that can determine itself into the various particular forms and embrace them in their interrelations, in their positivities and negations. (See Z3 340) For this reason Nishida chooses to designate the deepest level of concrete reality as “nothing” (*mu*). (Z3 332-33) Taking nothing here as what embraces or envelopes its own determinations or differentiations into beings, Nishida is eventually led in the second part of the book, starting with the “*Basho*” essay, to conceive of this “universal” in the more spatial terms of “place” or *basho*. Hence the reader of Nishida must be careful not to understand what Nishida means by “universal” (*ippansha*) as a mere concept, especially at its most concrete level where it is defined as “nothing.”

At this point Nishida already sees himself as bridging the gap opened in Kantian hylo-morphism. That is, form and matter, determiner and determined, are seen here in their dynamic unity in the self-forming formlessness of the concrete whole. The unity here is not a substance but a non-substantial or a substratumless act (*substratlose Tätigkeit*). (See Z3 344-45) In *Hyōgen sayō* of 1925, the essay following *Naibuchikaku ni tsuite*, Nishida adds to this the necessity of the contradictory co-existence of one and many for the universal’s self-determination as such a self-forming formlessness. (Z3 359) That is, the formlessness, the nothing, is one and yet simultaneously plural. With the He-

gelian concept of the concrete universal in mind, Nishida explains the act of constitution to be an act of self-predication. In other words, the self-formation of the formless in judicative terms means self-articulation *via* auto-predication. As we saw just now in the previous essay above, the universal is its own grammatical subject. Furthermore the term “*basho*” again makes its appearance here prior to its theoretical elaboration in the “*Basho*” essay. Identifying the universal with the will as what is operative behind such constitution, Nishida states that the world of reality is the *basho*, i.e., place, for the will’s (self-)realization. The *basho* of reflection for the epistemological I is also the *basho* of realization for the volitional I. The world as such becomes the cross-section or *chiasma* whereupon the I in both aspects — epistemological and volitional — constitutes its objects and realizes itself. And what encompasses both dimensions of the world, the epistemological and the volitional, Nishida tells us, is the deeper standpoint of intuition on the basis of which the world is a world of expression. The world is a *basho* of reflection for cognition, a *basho* of realization for the will, and a *basho* of expression for intuition. (See Z3 382) This understanding of “intuition” will become significantly associated with the most concrete level of *basho* in the development of his system of *basho* in the following year (1926). All of these dimensions of the world are unfoldings of the self-forming formlessness, the self-differentiating holistic context wherein we always find ourselves implaced. This naturally leads him to the necessity of elaborating this concept of place or *basho*.

Sec. 2: The Epistemology of *Basho* and its Dialectical Implications

In the second part of *Hatarakumono kara mirumono e*, especially beginning with the essay “*Basho*,” and then in the following two volumes, *Ippansha no jikakuteki taikei* and *Mu no jikakuteki gentei*, Nishida develops, and elaborates upon, the concept of *basho* as the concrete ground upon which his previous concepts of “will,” “self-awareness,” and even “pure experience,” are implaced. He proclaims it to be the “a priori of a prioris” wherein the true self is found and founded, transcending and enveloping the various oppositional dichotomies, such as subject-object. It is here that, while breaking with some of the previous vocabulary, his formulations take on a more Buddhistic color with the notion of “nothing” (*mu*) in its relation to the concept of *basho*. But at the same time that Buddhistic tint is shaded by the Hegelian terminology that will become even more pronounced in the 1930s.

Sec. 3: The Concrete Universal and *Basho*

By the second part of *Hatarakumono kara mirumono e*, Nishida comes to understand the intuitive immediacy of an undifferentiated holistic situation — as in the example used earlier in *Zen no kenkyū* of “a running horse” that precedes the judgement, “A horse is running” — in terms of *basho*. (See Z3 393-400) In other words he visualizes the undifferentiatedness that implicitly includes its distinctions, containing the germ for its unfolding articulation, in light of this notion of a “place” (*basho*) enveloping those distinct terms, the *wherein* of experience, experiencer, and experienced. In contrast to Aristotle’s substance that cannot contradict itself, this “place” must be non-substantial in order for it

to enfold and unfold the terms in their mutual oppositions and even contradictions — e.g., between subject and object, self and not-self, affirmation and negation, being and non-being, etc. As delimited by nothing, its empty space refuses positive determination from without. Instead it is determined only in its self-differentiations from within. Nishida thus explicates what he previously took to be the self-contradiction in the will's self-mirroring self-awareness now in terms of a non-substantial and un-delimited field that implies, but without articulation, the synchronic immediacy of oppositional terms. He associates the self-differentiating concrete universal with that field itself as a place (*basho*) clearing space for the beings that emerge within it (see Z3 403, 523), or, in more restricted epistemological terms, for the beings objectified in our cognitive experience. This latter more restricted opening of *basho* in cognition is the field of consciousness (*ishiki no ba*) which Nishida comes to characterize as *basho vis-à-vis* oppositional or relative nothing. But deeper and broader than the field of consciousness is the concrete field that grounds — and envelopes the perimeters for —, even the field of consciousness and the dichotomies of subject-object, subject-predicate, particular-universal, and ultimately being-non-being. This is what Nishida characterizes in these works as *basho vis-à-vis* true nothing or *basho vis-à-vis* absolute nothing.⁷⁹

Nishida, in the second part of *Hatarakumono kara mirumono e*, continues to make use of Hegelian motifs, i.e., the concrete universal that differentiates itself in judgment. He retains his general approach to the dialectical structurings of opposition and conflict by agreeing with Hegel that “the truth is the whole.” That is, he takes opposing terms as abstractions from the concrete universal. The concrete universal (*konkrete Allgemeinheit*;

gutaiteki ippansha) that Hegel opposed to the abstract universal (*abstrakte Allgemeinheit; chūshōteki ippansha*) is what becomes articulated in judgement in various opposing and dichotomized terms.⁸⁰ In connection to this Nishida in both parts (Z3 331, 409) refers to Hegel's understanding of judgement as differentiation or division of what in itself is a concrete whole.⁸¹ While an abstract universal subsumes all of its individual terms by eliminating their differences and abstracting their common feature, the concrete universal *already* includes and retains their specific differences. Its self-determination, whereby the universal objectifies itself into what belongs to it, is in judicative terms the articulation that makes explicit its implicit inner division. But by the time of his formulation of the *basho* theory, Nishida is beginning to obtain a clearer vision of how his understanding of the concrete universal might differ from Hegel's. For as opposed to Hegel's conception of the self-differentiation of the concept (*Begriff*), Nishida's formulation is made in light of the distinctly non-Hegelian notion of *basho*. Furthermore Nishida's characterization of *basho* in its most concrete standpoint as an un-delimited "nothing" (*mu*) bears an allusion to Buddhist ideas. In contra-distinction from Hegel, Nishida here takes the concrete universal in its non-delimitation or non-differentiation as grounded in a nothing (*mu*) that is a place (*basho*) rather than a concept (*Begriff*). (Z3 523) So rather than subsuming and imposing individuals like a conceptual universal, Nishida's *basho* envelopes them, recedes to clear room for them, enfolds them to unfold them. In *Sauda hakushi ni kotaeru* ("In Reply to Dr. Sauda") of 1927, Nishida explains:

What I mean by *basho* is not simply the so-called universal concept but the place [*basho*] wherein particulars are implaced, a mirror that mirrors objects within. In saying so it may be thought that mirror and objects are distinct things.

However while establishing the particular within itself as its own determination, the universal in opposition to the particular, remaining thoroughly universal itself, does not become particular.... (Z3 502)

Later in 1930 in the “General Summary” of his *Ippansha no jikakuteki taiki* Nishida, in distinguishing his thought from Hegel’s, states that Hegel does not explicate the sense of the universal that determines the individual by enveloping it. Hegel provides no satisfactory support for, and explication of, the transition from the object of determination to the determining act of self-awareness itself. Nishida thus characterizes Hegel’s logic as still an object-logic (*taishōteki ronrigaku*), a logic of the grammatical subject (*shugoteki ronrigaku*). (Z4 335) For Nishida, by contrast, *basho* is that which cannot be reified into a grammatical subject or object since it is the very place of their implacement. Nishida is thus necessitated to find a conceptual scheme that could turn us away from the object, to de-focus our attention away from the grammatical subject of a judgement. For this purpose he instead looks to the predicate but conceived in a new way.

Sec. 4: The Predicate Plane

Nishida makes an association between the concrete universal *qua basho* in its relation to the individual, on the one hand, and the predicate in its relation to the grammatical subject, on the other hand. In making this association, Nishida intends to make an heuristic move calculated to de-focus one’s attention from the grammatical subject, turning it away from the tendency of thinking in terms of objects, i.e., noematizing thought or what he calls “object-logic” (*taishō ronri*). The point is to open one’s awareness to the concrete whole of one’s situatedness lived prior to making any judgement. Taking the predicate

beyond its merely grammatical significance, Nishida calls that pre-reflective whole, “the transcendent predicate plane” (*chōetsuteki jutsugomen*) and equates it with *basho* as our prior “place of implacement” wherein we are situated. In turn he associates the “transcendent predicate” with the concrete universal that differentiates itself into objects or grammatical subjects. (See Z3 347-48, 391, 400, 402, 405, 431, 465, 517, 523) Turning away from the object, away from Aristotle’s substance that becomes the grammatical subject but never the predicate, turning in the direction of the predicate in that significance of a pre-reflectively lived concreteness or implacement, we arrive at the transcendent predicate “that cannot be made into a grammatical subject of judgment,” permitting no further objectification as *this* or *that*. This is the most concrete level of *basho* as undetermined or un-delimited by anything, what Nishida calls *basho vis-à-vis* true nothing (*shin no mu no basho*) or *basho vis-à-vis* absolutely nothing (*zettai mu no basho*). (See Z3 467) Extending without end to envelope every *thing*, as the ever-implicit horizontal⁸² “beyond” of every experience, it itself is *no-thing*. The grammatical subject is what is cutout through differentiation within that vast matrix of potential predicates that Nishida calls “the predicate plane” and which he associates with what Hegel called “the concrete universal.” Of course ultimately Hegel’s concrete universal is not exactly Nishida’s *basho* at its most concrete significance, and Nishida will come to see his own *basho vis-à-vis* true nothing as foundational for any conceptual universal even if it is a self-conceiving concept (as in Hegel’s absolute *idea*).⁸³

Sec. 5: *Basho* as Self-Mirroring Nothing

As we see in the preceding discussion Nishida conceives of the subsumption of the particular in the universal in terms of implacement in *basho*, which he in turn associates, in reverse direction, with the concrete universal's self-determination. In judicative terms this means the predicate determining its grammatical subject that in fact however is its self-determination. Each self-determination of the universal into the individual is also the implacement of the individual in that universal. Nishida also explains this in terms of mirroring, in allusion to his ideas from the late 1910s and early 1920s. Each level of the self-determination of a universal is also a level of its self-mirroring so that each universal viewed noematically is an image mirroring a broader self-mirroring universal, which in turn mirrors a further universal, etc. As each universal itself can be made into the grammatical subject of a judgment, as a particular belonging to a broader universal (predicate), this entails a serial layering of universals within universals, a system of implacements within implacements. And if we proceed away from the grammatical subject, away from the objectified object as the point of determination, in the direction of the predicate, at the most undifferentiated and concrete level, there is the transcendent predicate plane no longer conceptually determinable as a "universal." That broadest and most fundamental *basho*, escaping further subsumption, can no longer be reified or reduced to any image, it cannot be objectified, and hence, in opposition to Aristotle's substance, is "the predicate that cannot become a grammatical subject." And as the determining "circle" embracing its points of determination, it is an empty mirror mirroring itself in all of its determinations. (See Z3 502) It has to be treated then as the final context serving as the transcen-

dent predicate presupposed in all determining or predicating acts, while itself remaining un-determined, i.e., no-thing (*mu*).

Sec. 6: The Dialectic of Being and Non-Being in the System of Implacements

To recapitulate, between the individual determined as object, defined as grammatical subject, on one end, and the un-defined universal, the transcendent predicate, on the other end, there is a chain of successive placements within placements, *bashos* within *bashos*, each articulating levels of differentiation, articulation, and reflection. In terms of positivity and negativity, each determinate being as a positivity, a foreground, is surrounded by an environing negativity in its background. But each such negativity is still positive, a “being,” from the standpoint of the further negativity wherein it is placed. (See Z3 422) In this movement from individual being to universal nothing, the system of *basho* thus comprises a whole succession of meontological-ontological levels that may be understood variously in terms of universal and particular, determining act and determined content, form and matter, *noesis* and *noema*, predicate and grammatical subject, epistemological subject and object, knower and known, place and placed, etc. Encompassing all of them is the transcendent predicate plane *qua basho vis-à-vis* true nothing, an undifferentiated field delimited by nothing. Nishida thus reconceives the various dichotomies in terms of the a-symmetrical relationship of placement involving the self-determination or self-differentiation of *basho* as if it were a concrete universal. He now views the dichotomies themselves as encompassed within an endless series of placements within placements, *bashos* within *bashos*. This entails a dynamism distinguish-

able from simple dualism and which eventually in the mid-to-late 1930s Nishida will characterize in terms of a dialectic between one and many. But even prior to such later developments, we see a dialectic already taking shape here in the oppositional relationships involving object and subject understood in terms of being and non-being or affirmation and negation. This dialectic works itself out in three general standpoints of *basho*.

Although Nishida fails to provide consistent presentations in his different works, and leaves it up to his students and commentators to fill-in the gaps, we can say that in the works immediately following the “*Basho*” essay of 1926 there continue in general to be three major levels of *basho*, but each with further sub-levels (which we shall not touch upon here): 1) *Basho vis-à-vis* beings: the natural world of material objects, individual substances, and their interrelations, and which become determined in our judicative acts as grammatical subjects. 2) *Basho vis-a-vis* oppositional (or: relative) nothing: the field of consciousness encompassing both the perceived self and its empirical objects, and the various determining acts of consciousness involving the subject-object structure (seeing, knowing, judging, willing, etc.). And: 3) *Basho vis-à-vis* true (or: absolute) nothing that envelopes the pre-theoretically and pre-cognitively lived dimension from out of which emerge the various norms or standards that guide the determining acts of consciousness. With each movement from one level to the next, the perspectival standpoint shifts from: 1) the perception of objects that become grammatical subjects of judgments; to 2) the self-reflection of consciousness as the epistemological subject relating to its object; and finally to 3) the loss of that noematic self (objectified consciousness) through absorption into nothing, i.e., the standpoint of intuition as self-mirroring self-awareness. The pro-

gression moves from 1) the focus upon objects to 2) the focus in self-consciousness upon the acts of consciousness, and finally to 3) the de-focusing away from the noematic (objects, grammatical subjects) to turn instead to the predicate plane as the holistic dimension concretely lived.

One significant realm within that serial layering of implacements is the field of predicates or a priori conditions of knowledge assumed by every judicative or cognitive act. In the above three-fold scheme this is the second or middle domain that one may thematize in epistemological Kantian terms as “transcendental subjectivity” or “consciousness-in-general,” or in Platonic terms as the realm of *ideas*. Emphasizing its *basho*-like nature that cannot be objectified and reduced to the grammatical subject of the statement “I think...X,” and characterizing it more as a “circle” rather than a “point,” Nishida calls it “the field of consciousness” (*ishiki no ba*). (See Z3 469, 504, 545) Nishida makes the point that in respect to its own objects, consciousness as such is no “being.” It is no determinate thing *qua* object but rather the field wherein beings *qua* objects appear. In this respect, it is “nothing” (*mu*) in relation to its objects that are thus “being” (*u*). (See Z7 222) Subjectivity *qua* field of consciousness is thus the negative pole *vis-à-vis* the world of objects as the positive pole it mirrors within itself. (See Z3 417) Hence Nishida calls it “oppositional nothing” (*tairitsuteki mu*) or “relative nothing” (*sōtai mu*). Five or so years after the “*Basho*” essay, in *Mu no jikakuteki gentei*, Nishida develops this dialectical formulation further, explaining that in the self-determination (of *basho*), self-affirmation is in the direction of the thing, i.e., the object, and self-negation is in the direction of the I, i.e., the subject. The true self then is no determined object of affirmation,

no *noema*; instead it is *noesis*, the determining act. (See Z5 178-79) In determining its object, it negates itself. The I in relation to its object is thus a relative nothing *vis-à-vis* affirmative being. (Z5 174) In *Mu no jikakuteki gentei* Nishida considers this to be a dialectical determination of the self-contradictory. (See Z5 174)

The I as the field of consciousness, however, does not yet provide us with a complete picture of the concrete whole of *basho* that acts in self-determination. The oppositional relationship here between subject *qua* non-being and object *qua* being, between negation and affirmation, requires what makes their mediation possible. Nishida characterizes this mediation in the dialectical terms of “the negation of negation.” Already in the essay “Shirumono” (“That which Knows”) of 1927, inserted at the end of *Hatarakumono kara mirumono e*, Nishida distinguishes the three levels of *basho* dialectically in the judicative terms of affirmation, negation, and the negation of negation, that is, their “contradictory unity.” (Z3 528-29) The real point here is that consciousness is determined by further determining “acts” traceable beyond the confines of the ego to what is *truly* “nothing.” Each thematization of consciousness as object implies a prior pre-objective consciousness as its field. In the endless regress of such self-reflection, consciousness itself sinks into the ultimately un-objectifiable self-determining field of nothing. Consciousness in its relationship to objects is thus merely an “oppositional nothing” (*tairitsuteki mu*) that provides the entryway to an “absolute nothing” (*zettai mu*). (Z3 432) Consciousness as the field of potential predicates thus dissolves into a further environing and self-determining transcendent field which in its non-differentiation is truly nothing,

serving as the *anontological* (under)ground of beings.⁸⁴ (See Z3 482) And this nothing encompasses contradictories.

Ultimately all of the layerings of *basho* are founded upon, and sink into, the self-mirroring of *basho vis-à-vis* true nothing that transcends consciousness itself in our pre-theoretical experience.⁸⁵ “True nothing” as *basho* is what envelopes the oppositional relationship between the “non-being” of consciousness in its determining noetic acts and the determined noematic “being,” i.e., the subject-object dichotomy. It embraces both moments as abstractions from its concretely lived immediacy. And in embracing that opposition between being and non-being, affirmation and negation, true nothing encompasses contradiction. (Z3 424) This encompassing of contradiction at the most concrete irreducible level is what Nishida characterizes as “the negation of all negations,” which in Buddhist terms would translate as “the emptying of emptiness” (*śūnyatā śūnyatā*). In other words, Nishida re-formulates his earlier appropriations of the Hegelian notion of the self-determination of the concrete universal here in the more explicitly dialectical terms of a “negation of negation” (*hitei no hitei*) (Z3 425) but with added Buddhist connotations in its association with the concept of a self-mirroring “nothing” (*mu*). This underscores the non-substantiality of the ground of knowledge and being as an underground or abyss. For what determines itself is also self-negating. In *Mu no jikakuteki gentei* Nishida explains that in its self-negation, *basho* contains endless determinations of objects within; it determines beings by itself being nothing. (See Z5 72-73, 80) And this is the dialectical dynamic that Nishida by 1932 (in *Mu no jikakuteki gentei*) finds operative ultimately even behind the field of consciousness. That is, the dialectic involves the

concrete universal's self-determination that in reverse direction is simultaneously its negation: "a universal that determines itself by itself becoming nothing" (*mu ni shite jikojishin o genteisuru ippansha*). (Z5 122) While itself escaping objectification, *basho* thus encompasses the very oppositions between object and subject, being and non-being, affirmation and negation. (See Z5 80, 81-82, 122) *Basho* then, even when taken as underlying its many determinations, is no self-identical substance. In that regard Nishida contrasts his position here from that of Hegel's. Hegel's position, Nishida argues, is a dialectic of thought or the *idea*, a dialectic of being, that objectifies the noetic process into a *noema*. It is not a dialectic of *basho* or of the unobjectifiable act ultimately delimited by nothing. (See Z5 122-23, 123-24, 130, 138, 234) Hegel's dialectic ignores the self-determination of facticity in the concrete present. (See Z5 138-39) With that irreducible concrete in mind, Nishida in *Mu no jikakuteki gentei* thus begins to call its self-determination that establishes the dialectical process, a "self-determination without a determiner" (*genteisurumono nakushite jikojishin o genteisuru*) a phrase we shall continue to see in later formulations of his dialectic. (See Z5 154, 161)

Sec. 7: *Basho* as Contradictory Unity

At this point in our investigation we ought to question the exact nature of what Nishida means here by "contradictory unity" (*mujunteki tōitsu*). For example, the subsumptive judgement, we are told, involves a unity between the grammatical subject and its predicate. This constitutes a contradictory relation in that the terms are ultimately mutually exclusive: Aristotle's substance as indicated by the grammatical subject but which *can*

never become a predicate on the one hand, and the transcendent predicate plane which in its unsayability *can never become a subject* on the other. (See Z3 468, 471-72) The connection of these mutually exclusive terms is then a “contradictory unity.”⁸⁶ If substance, as Aristotle proclaimed, has no contradictory, what makes a contradictory unity possible would have to be non-substantial. It is the non-substantiality of the transcendent predicate plane, as delimited by nothing, that permits its envelopment of “that which becomes the grammatical subject but not the predicate.” Only on the basis of that nothingness, can the mutually exclusive contradictories of the transcendent object (that cannot become a predicate) and the transcendent predicate (that cannot be stated as a subject of a proposition) be united in non-distinction and “become one another” (Z3 514-15) Transcending the judicative structure in opposite directions, the two opposing ends are thus united in their mutual non-substantiality. Nishida will later go-on to explicate further the dialectics of this contradictory unity in terms of mutual self-negations in the 1930s.

It is precisely the concrete *qua* self-determining *basho* that, as contradictory unity, is the unifier of transcendent object and its predicate. Regarding this point, we may raise the following questions. Is there a tension here, as Kopf claims, between the priority of the universal *qua* “predicate that encompasses the grammatical subject” (Z3 455) and the predicate’s need for self-particularization in the grammatical subject?⁸⁷ Is the contradictory relationship one of true symmetry between the noematic aspect of the determined subject and the noetic aspect of the determining predicate, thus requiring a third term such as in the negation of negation uniting affirmation and negation, as we noted above? The “third term” however is provided by the predicate itself in its significance as their

transcendent and enveloping *basho*. Is the dialectic instead then *also* a-symmetrical whereby “*noesis* utterly envelops *noema*”?⁸⁸ (See Z5 193) The dialectical structure itself of *basho qua* such “predicate” is inherently self-contradictory. It retains its self-identity in its very self-contradiction, an idea that Nishida will also develop further in the 1930s in terms of contradictory self-identity. But it is also the case that in the later writings, Nishida will come to de-emphasize the primacy of the predicate to bring instead the contradictory identity of the opposing terms in light of their mutual self-negation to the fore.⁸⁹

Like the relationship in judgement between grammatical subject and predicate, each level of implacement involves a contradiction that can be seen from the standpoint of the background universal enveloping the terms. Nishida explains in *Ippansha no jikakuteki taiki* that the discovery of a contradiction as apparent on a certain level of *basho* means that one has sunk, in a deepening of self-awareness, to a more concrete sphere of *basho* wherein the contradictory terms are implaced and co-exist.⁹⁰ Each deepening however entails no resolution of the contradiction but rather an envelopment of that contradictory relationship, holding the terms in tension.⁹¹ Each universal as the background “nothing” for beings implaced in the foreground of its domain, makes space for their *opposition*. It must itself remain indeterminate so as to make-room for opposite determinations. For example, “color” is indeterminate enough to include *both* “red” *and* “not-red.” The universal as such a field for opposites and contradictories provides the standpoint whereupon one can shift between affirmation and negation and become aware of contradictions. (See Z3 401-02) Nishida explains this further in 1931 in his *Watashi no tachibakara mita Hēgeru no benshōhō* (“Hegel’s Dialectic as Seen From My Standpoint”) (in-

cluded in *Zoku Shisaku to taiken; Thought and Experience Continued*). He states therein that self-contradiction cannot be conceived merely in terms of the grammatical subject of a judgment. The dialectical relationship between opposites cannot be reduced to determination in terms of *noema*. This goes-back to Aristotle's notion of substance as possessing its own self-identity. Contradiction instead becomes apparent when we turn our attention away from the *noema* and to the *noesis*, the determining act, instead. In that direction we can understand the contradictory in terms of the self-determination of *basho vis-à-vis* nothing, i.e., in light of their implacement within that *basho*. (See Z7 267, 270) And because the self-determination of *basho vis-à-vis* nothing is always operative behind the determination of *basho vis-à-vis* beings, i.e., the object-world, there is always something dialectical operating behind the judicative determination of the grammatical subject. (Z7 267-68, 275) The world understood in terms of grammatical subjects presupposes that dialectical movement involving opposites and contradictories. (Z7 275) Judicative knowledge with its noematic content is thus an abstraction from concrete knowledge that experiences the dialectical dynamism of the concrete. (See Z7 267-68)

There in that dialectical dynamism lies the "true self" as self-contradictory. (Z5 85) Self-awareness that sees the self is self-contradictory in that the self seen, as mirrored image, is not itself the seeing self. The self's self-determination here into what it sees is its self-negation into what it is *not*. The seeing self in relation to the seen self is nothing. It cannot be reified as object or stated as grammatical subject. It is a self-negating nothing allowing for its own self-contradiction. And thus in *Mu no jikakuteki*

gentei Nishida also makes the point that “philosophy begins in the fact of the self-contradiction of the self,” i.e., the self-negation of nothing. (Z5 92)

Away from the noematic pole of substance *qua* grammatical subject, and in the direction of the noetic pole of the predicate plane, there is thus *basho* delimited by nothing and wherein lies the true self, *basho* determining itself in self-negation, as a contradictory unity encompassing opposites. The non-differentiated “nothing” at the broadest and most concrete standpoint in the series of implacements thus entails a contradictory unity in its inclusion of *all* types of beings and their negations, hence being-*in-general* and its very negation, non-being-*in-general*. It would have to be a field that transcends but encompasses *both* being *and* non-being in general. Nishida is thus careful in his “*Basho*” essay to distinguish what he means by “nothing” here in its absolute sense (i.e., “absolute nothing,” *zettai mu*) from the merely relative sense of “non-being” as the negation of being (i.e., “relative nothing,” *sōtai mu*). In giving rise to, encompassing, the very oppositional relationship between being and its opposite, true nothing (*shin no mu*) must transcend that very nothing, i.e., non-being, contrasted with being (*tairitsuteki mu*; oppositional nothing). (Z3 424) This means that *basho vis-à-vis* absolute nothing, as encompassing a contradictory unity, precludes any sort of ontological or meontological reduction to state that it *is* or *is not*. To predicate it thus as *being* or *not being* would be to objectify it but *basho* is not an object. (Z3 503) Defying positive description, predication, or determination by something beyond, it slips away from any attempt to make it into a subject of judgment. And yet it mirrors itself in all the opposing terms reflected upon its empty surface. As a self-negating nothing, it makes room for their positive be-

ing. As Nishida himself remarks, this is somewhat suggested by Plato's concept of the *chōra* (χωρα) in the *Timaeus*. (See Z3 415) The difference from Plato's conception of the place of formation however is that *basho* is not a mere receptacle for the *ideas'* formations but rather a self-forming formlessness. At that most fundamental level of *basho*, as we have been noticing, mutually exclusive contradictories, e.g., being and non-being, affirmation and negation, I and not-I, transcendent object and transcendent predicate, are thus joined together. (See e.g., Z3 422, 424, 473-74) The dialectic between being and non-being is thus played out in that *space* of true nothing that envelopes them in their contradictory unity. The *basho* of contradictory unity then is itself "neither identity nor difference, neither being nor non-being." (Z3 419) From out of that contradictory unity delimited by truly nothing, there then unfold the sequential bifurcations of various opposites, endless dialectical developments from out of the self-identity of *basho vis-à-vis* true nothing. Nishida will contrast this understanding of the self-determination of nothing in terms of self-contradiction from Hegel's notion of the unfolding of reason.

In addition to the horizontal oppositions obtaining within each universal domain, we must bear in mind that this very dynamism of unity-*cum*-bifurcation or contradictory unity, viewed vertically, also extends between the successive implacements, and ultimately between the transcendent object, "the true individual that becomes the grammatical subject but not the predicate," on one end, and the transcendent predicate, "the true universal that becomes the predicate but not the grammatical subject," on the other end. (See Z3 468) On both ends of the judicative structure are implied that which lie beyond judgement, the indeterminable transcendent unified, as we noted above, in their non-

differentiation. All propositions or judgments thus can be viewed as really explications or amplifications of a fundamental intuition, the self-mirroring of that concrete whole, wherein all oppositional terms and contradictories are implaced in non-distinction. The grammatical subject and predicate are but moments in the articulation of that original (self-)intuition of the undifferentiated *basho*, the transcendent predicate plane non-distinct from the transcendent object in a contradictory unity. It is in fact their contradictory unity as the self-determining concrete whole that encompasses all other contradictory unities. *Via* this unity of contradiction, formed and forming, determining and determined, the transcendent and the immanent, are dynamically non-dual. *Basho* is the field of concrete immediacy for that contradictory unity, taken not only horizontally at each level or sphere but also vertically to encompass the entire dynamic. The intuition of its all-encompassing contradictory unity would occur from the standpoint of that concrete whole.

Sec. 8: The Intuition of Contradictory Unity

Nishida in 1930 (in *Ippansha no jikakuteki taikei*) describes the concrete *basho* enveloping dialectical development as the plane of intuition (*chokkanmen*). (Z4 367) As we have noticed above, taking the self-determination of the concrete universal as founded upon a self-mirroring of nothing, Nishida characterizes that concrete standpoint of *basho vis-à-vis* true nothing, in terms of intuition, as a self-seeing of the dynamic whole encompassing contradictories. Nishida takes intuition as such, the seeing of contradictory unity at the most concrete standpoint of lived experience, to be the necessary premise for cogni-

tion. But how can we even think this if non-contradiction rules our thoughts? Parallel to the irreducibility of the transcendent predicate plane to any grammatical subject, intuition as the seeing of its contradictory unity lies beyond the logical forms of thought or judgment. As we saw above consciousness as the field of predicates is still an abstract moment within the dynamism of the transcendent predicate plane that concretely envelopes it and its object (the grammatical subject) by determining itself in its self-negation. This means that the concrete universal in its self-determination, as rooted in the transcendent predicate plane (Z3 523), entails not only the non-duality between grammatical subject and predicate, epistemological object and subject, but the triadic stages affirmation (of the object), negation (in the subject), and the negation of negation in their contradictory unity. (Z3 528) With each level, the dialectic moves away from the abstract and restricted towards the broader and yet concrete; it moves from the dichotomies towards the immediacy of opposites, from the theoretical towards the lived or experiential. At the most concrete standpoint, the dichotomized or oppositional terms are seen as different aspects of the same self-mirroring nothing. At that deepest standpoint of *basho*, where there is the negation of negation, i.e., the unity of contradiction, there is the intuition of the whole dynamic process of *basho*. This provides an holistic view of self-mirrorings of *basho vis-à-vis* nothing, a non-dualistic (self-)seeing of the workings of concrete reality in its dialectical nature. (See e.g., Z3 445-47, 473, 475-77; Z5 76-77) Even if we cannot logically conceive of a contradictory unity, Nishida's point is that it can and must be "seen" from that pre-reflective standpoint. (See Z3 457-58, 485) In existential terms we are aware of a deep contradiction at the bottom of our lives in terms of birth-and-death or

generation-and-extinction. Its true intuition (*shin no chokkan*) is immediate to *basho vis-à-vis* true nothing. (See Z3 453, 475) Nishida will eventually work out in the mid-to-late 1930s the connection between intuition as that self-mirroring of the concrete and the will as the “the act of acts” operative behind all determining acts, dialectically, in terms of “acting-intuition” (*kōiteki chokkan*). In any case, in the epistemology of *basho*, during the late 1920s, Nishida takes the most concrete standpoint to be that of intuition, whereby the dynamic and non-dualistic whole is seen in its contradictory unity, a seeing that in non-duality is a *self*-seeing.

Sec. 9: Generation-and-Extinction, Life-and-Death, the Self-Contradiction of Human
Existence

The negation that life must face in its contradictory unity translates to *death*. At the most concrete level of one’s living experience one is aware of this fact of existence that undermines existence itself. Hence Nishida, in his “*Basho*” essay, characterizes that most concrete *basho vis-à-vis* absolute nothing, wherein the intuition of contradictory unity takes place, as also the *basho* of “generation-and-extinction” (*shōmetsu*). (Z3 423) This points to what one might call the existential dimension of contradictory unity. For if we take “generation-and-extinction” in its specifically human significance of “life-and-death,” we may consider its intuition, in its concrete immediacy, to be an acute awareness of the very finitude constituting our being *vis-à-vis* death. We live this immediacy whereby our existence is constituted and/or annihilated in the face of its other, non-existence. Here *basho vis-à-vis* absolute nothing is the abysmal *chiasma* wherein and whence life

and death, self and world, being and nothing, separate while always remaining in contact. Nishida develops this point in his later works, such as *Ronri to seimei* (“Logic and Life”) of 1936, in terms of the environment as the place of “the concrete reality of life” from where we are born and into which we perish. (Z8 19) Although his concern in *Hatarakumono kara mirumono e*, was primarily epistemological, we see here an existential side to Nishida’s *basho*-theory, that is, his concern with the lived finitude in the facticity of human existence, which in the 1940s becomes fully pronounced in his theory of religiosity. In fact, one might say that this opposition between life and death is the ultimate context that informs our cognitive acts. Self-awareness here at the place where life and death are *de-cided*, i.e., separated-out, is what establishes the founding of an epistemological system.

What Nishida himself called the “intuitionism” (*chokkanshugi*) of his “*Basho*” essay expresses this existential concern with self-contradiction lying at the very bottom of human existence. In the abysmal depths lying beyond the confines of the psyche or ego, we find ourselves implaced *vis-à-vis* absolutely nothing, where the self-contradiction of our own existence is evident, at the very place (*basho*) where life meets death. At the bottom of our personhood, he tells us, there is the deep dialectic, “the tragic” (*higekiteki narumono*) (Z5 119) True dialectical determination is to be born through absolute death. (Z5 293) But such statements become clearer when we also take into consideration what he says about time, i.e., that each moment is the rising and falling of the present. So the endless flow of life is itself conceivable as a dialectical unity of contradiction, involving the births-and-deaths of our momentary selves. (Z5 295-96) At each moment, in facing

one's past and one's future, one faces one's birth and one's death, one is living by dying. The ultimate issue for Nishida then, underlying the epistemological one of bridging the dualistic gap, is the existential one of self-reification *vis-à-vis* one's own life-and-death, to face the fact of self-contradiction underlying one's being, the non-substantiality at the concrete root of one's existence, *basho vis-à-vis* true nothing where being and non-being, birth and death, are in intimate contact at *each moment*. (See Z5 153, 159) His "intuitionism" points to that contradictory unity in its lived facticity.

Sec. 10: *Basho* as a Complete System of Incompletion

Basho vis-à-vis nothing, as we have seen, is itself the very source of dichotomized positions. And yet in its unreifiable immediacy, it entails a standpoint purified of the positions of both materialism or realism on the one hand and of subjectivism or idealism on the other hand, as well as of any sort of dualism. Despite the temptation of some commentators to read Nishida's *basho* theory as an idealism to contrast it with the later evolution of his thinking — where he explicates the *basho*-horizon in terms of the world of interactivity —, Nishida himself would reject such a classification. The acute self-awareness of life in the face of death, that we just saw above, would preclude the security of an ideal realm. Instead it would mean that one is *ex-posed* to the contingencies of the world, the non-substantiality of being. The system of implacements seen as a dynamic whole refuses confinement to an ideal sphere when the knowing I is itself implaced within a wider horizon enveloping both the ideal and the real. In his attempt to overcome

epistemological dualism, Nishida has thus constructed a “complete” system that includes the very impossibility of its completion in virtue of its unreifiable, un-objectifiable concrete source.⁹² We can say so in that the most encompassing principle in Nishida’s system is that self-founding principle referring to no further principle, the an-archic *arche* he characterizes as a self-forming formlessness. As an absolutely un-determinable nothing it horizons his system as an open system, “a circle without periphery” (*mugendai no en*)⁹³ that envelopes the endless dialectical process. (Z5 148) That absolute nothing that mirrors all as their un-delimited place (*basho*) is wherein we find ourselves as *always already* implaced within its determining and determined contexts. Here we are exposed to the possibilities of life-and-death at each moment. Nishida’s challenge then was to articulate that ultimate context or horizon without reifying it.

By the beginning of the 1930s, however, Nishida is already expressing dissatisfaction with his own discussion of dialectics in terms of *noesis-noema*, subject-object, and predicate-subject, from the period of *Mu no jikakuteki gentei*.⁹⁴ Already in *Mu no jikakuteki gentei* we see Nishida shifting his interest towards the world at large where we are implaced in our inter-activities with one another and with the environment. That is the direction that his most explicitly dialectical phase of his oeuvre will take in the mid-to-late 1930s.

CHAPTER 5:
THE DIALECTIC OF THE WORLD-MATRIX (FROM THE 1930S AND 1940S):
ACTING PERSONS

In his preface to *Tetsugaku ronbunshū dai san* (*Collection of Philosophical Essays Vol. 3*) (1939), Nishida states that his philosophical purpose ever since his *Zen no kenkyū* has been to see things from the most direct and fundamental standpoint. To overcome the psychologistic coloring of the concept of pure experience, and through contact with the Southwest school of Neo-Kantianism, he was led during the 1920s, as we saw in the previous chapter, to the standpoint of *basho*. Following his formulation of the epistemology of *basho* in that decade, Nishida extends and further develops the dialectical features of his thinking in the 1930s and 1940s. He comes to describe *basho*, “the most fundamental and concrete universal,” as a “dialectical universal” (*benshōhōteki ippansha*) and an “absolutely contradictory self-identity of many and one” (*ta to ichi to no zettai mujunteki jikodōitsu*). (Z8 257) The shift in the 1930s is a move that gradually takes us from a look that penetrates through the interior depths of consciousness into its abysmal grounding, to a view that in penetrating beyond that interiority lands outside in the world of one’s implacement, wherein one acts. The concept of *basho* itself almost seems to become eclipsed by the notion of “the socio-historical world” (*shakaiteki rekishiteki sekai*), but the latter is really an external manifestation of *basho* itself, an extension of its self-determination. The change here is no theoretical alteration or rejection of his theory of

basho. The shift rather involves a thorough retrieval of the roots of one's self that takes one from the self as knower to the self as *actor* in the contextual world.

In both his *Tetsugaku no konpon mondai (Fundamental Problems of Philosophy)*, which came out in two volumes in 1933 and 1934, and the several volumes of his *Tetsugaku ronbunshū (Collection of Philosophical Essays)*, which came out throughout the mid-to-late 1930s and 40s, and even earlier in *Mu no jikakuteki gentei (The Determination of Nothing in Self-Awareness)* of 1932, Nishida extends and applies his theory of *basho* to the dynamic features of that socio-historical world so that the logical structure of the system of *basho* now becomes explicitly identified with that of historical world-constitution. Undergoing, in his epistemology of the 1920s, an exhaustive plumbing into the interiority of the self's grounding in *basho*, enabled Nishida to now turn his attention outward to the world that shapes one's inward being, and hence the shift in his manner of approaching the very thematic of *basho*, a turn from an internal view to the depths of one's self-awareness to an external look to the dynamism of the very world wherein one is implaced and in which one actively takes-part. Of course this is all founded upon the non-duality between inner and outer, which Nishida now characterizes in dialectical terms. Nishida's concern correspondingly shifts from the structure of judgment and cognition to the dialectical structuring of the historical world (*rekishiteki sekai*) and our implacement in that world in terms of what he calls "acting-intuition" (*kōiteki chokkan*). But again there is a link between the two in that the former is founded in the latter. The dialectical features of the world are now the focus of attention in order to bring-out the dynamic non-duality of the concrete. For example, he develops his earlier discussions of

the intuition of contradictory unity, now in the direction of the world of our implacement, in terms of the dialectical universal or the absolutely contradictory self-identity (*zettai mujunteki jikodōitsu*). Nishida shows the dialectic as unfolding not only internally within the structure of one's inner experiences and cognition but also externally, to manifest the creative structure of the world's formations and the inter-activity between individual selves that contribute to that creativity. The world itself becomes seen in its *basho*-aspect as a field of inter-determinations. In this and the following chapters we will examine these dialectical formulations from the 1930s when Nishida is conceiving of the world as a dialectical matrix wherein we find ourselves *always already* acting and inter-acting. In this chapter we shall discuss his characterizations of this dialectic as involving our own human existence as a being-in-the-world, inter-acting with other beings and with one another. In the following chapter we shall then look into the more "abstract" formulations of this dialectic that attempts to depict its logical structuring, e.g., in terms of the "dialectical universal," "absolutely contradictory self-identity," "absolute negation," etc.

Nishida discusses the dialectic of the world at-large in a variety of contexts, all of which involve the inter-activity of our personal selves as embodied subjects with one another and with the world: the unfolding of the historical world, the relationship between individual and environment, the "acting-intuition" (*kōiteki chokkan*) of human existence, the body as a dialectical mediator in one's relationship to the environment, the self as maker and made contributing to the world's self-formations, and the "I-thou" relationship. *Basho* now becomes more explicitly the arena wherein we exist as acting and inter-acting beings to historically unfold the world.

Sec. 1: The Historical World and Its Dialectic of Environment-and-Individual

By the 1930s we find Nishida furthering his concrete non-dualistic stance with an emphasis upon the self as actor or “acting self” (*kōiteki jiko*) in inter-action or mutual working (*aihataraki*) with other beings. He notices that our seeing, knowing, or self-awareness in general, are all inextricably inter-twined in our activities with one another and with the world. We are dynamically active in the world. But at the same time he notices the dynamically active nature of the world itself that environs us. *Mu no jikakuteki gentei* of 1932 serves as a transitional work that moves from the epistemology of *basho* developed from the late 1920s to his concerns of the later 1930s, the world in its historical unfolding. In that work he tells us that the world most immediate to us, wherein we dwell, is neither the world of matter or objects nor the world of consciousness or spirit but this world of activity (*kōi*), the world wherein every act is its self-determination, an expression of its foundational nothingness. (Z5 209) This world continually creates itself through the creative activities of its individual elements, namely ourselves. The existence of the self thus cannot be separated from its environmental and historical determination in that world. (See Z5 326, 351) Each of us is born into that world as historically determined with his own destiny. (Z5 262-63) Nishida in subsequent works of the 1930s brings out the dialectical nature of this world of inter-activity, calling it “the dialectical world” (*benshōhōteki sekai*). Extending his earlier notions of the self-determination of *basho vis-à-vis* absolute nothing in the direction of its worldly manifestations, he draws out its dialectical complexity in various terms, such as of “reverse determination” (*gyaku gentei*) or of “contradictory self-identity” (*mujunteki jikodōitsu*). We shall discuss these

concepts in detail in the following sections below. But we can say for now, in a preliminary manner, that in all of these dialectical formulations he brings out the irreducible complexity of the concrete. We can accordingly understand what Nishida initially called “pure experience” (*junsui keiken*) in his maiden work now in light of the dialectical structuring of our concrete implacement into the world of inter-activity. Our immediate intuitions, our self-awareness, cannot be separated from this world. As the sphere of the concrete wherein we immediately find ourselves, Nishida thus turns to the world in its social and historical dimensions.

Nishida, thus re-conceptualizing the concrete in light of our worldly inter-activities, re-formulates *basho* accordingly in terms of the world as social and historical. *Basho* delimited by nothing is still the non-objectifiable, irreducible, concrete basis of reality. But as the world of our implacement, Nishida now sees it in the direction of the environing world, with which we inter-act, what he calls “the world of historical reality” (*rekishiteki genjitsu no sekai*). The systematic of the self-determination of *basho* is thus now seen as manifest in the unfoldings of that historical world as topological. (Z9 210) And the world’s formations are in turn taken to involve our own concrete inter-activities. In other words *basho qua* world involves a complex dialectic of social-and-historical determination of which we are significant players. (See Z6 128, 132-33) On this basis, *basho*, as “historical space” (*rekishiteki kūkan*), becomes clarified as not simply the interior depths of the individual self but the individual’s rooting in a “public place” (*ōyake no basho*). (Z9 171) It is not simply the inner world of consciousness but rather the world of manifold individual selves determining one another in their interactions. So in terms of

the concrete immediacy prior to the subject-object split, it is our inter-activity in and with that world that is most fundamental. We are not first and foremost cognitive subjects in a de-worlded state observing objects from afar. Rather we are implaced within the world wherein we find ourselves *always already* in inter-action with other actors and with the environment. Cognition is to be understood only upon this basis: “Knowing itself is already a socio-historical event [*shakaiteki-rekishiteki jijitsu*].” (Z6 141) That is to say that our knowing is enveloped, implaced, within a broader context, the world of our concrete interaction unfolding in history. In providing that contextual *basho* (place) of our implacement, the world is socio-historical (*shakaiteki-rekishiteki*). The *cogito* cannot be separated from its implacement therein.

Nishida, in his *Tetsugaku no konpon mondai*, views this world involving the inter-activities of individual persons, as stated above, to be the most concrete realm, that is, the field of our concrete immediacy, wherein we find ourselves *first and foremost, always already*. (See Z6 50) In contrast to this we can also view the world in more abstract ways, such as in purely material terms whereby things mechanically act upon one another as causes and effects; or in biological terms, whereby living things move teleologically for the organism’s survival and the reproductive maintenance of the species. But the concrete world wherein we human beings find ourselves taking-part in, wherein we are born, work, and die, is specifically this historical, or socio-historical, world (*rekishiteki sekai, shakaiteki-rekishiteki sekai*). (See Z6 137-38, 183-84; Z8 16, 42, 51; Z9 492) We cannot objectify this world because we are already working within it. (Z6 171) Nevertheless the dialectical reality of the concrete is most explicit when we look into our own im-

mediate situation *vis-à-vis* this historical world. It is this sort of a concrete stance founded upon our lived interactivity with the world that Nishida, during this period, finds lacking in Hegel, Kant, and phenomenology. (See Z6 172)

Nishida defines the historical world (*rekishiteki sekai*) as the world of inter-acting human persons (*hito to hito to no musubitsuki no sekai*). (1966 Z14⁹⁵ 247) This shows the significance of our own role as persons within that world. The inter-activity is with what surrounds us, the environment of things as well as other individuals. As elements of a whole, our own self-determinations are thus also the self-determinations of the whole. (See Z6 110) The whole determines itself *via* its individual elements working upon one another. In developing this dialectic Nishida, for example in his *Ronri to seimei* (“Logic and Life”) of 1936, borrows from Haldane’s theory of biology. Haldane’s thesis concerned the holistic coordination and mutual adaptation between the biological organism and its environment.⁹⁶ (See Z8 18-19) For Haldane, “life” meant not simply the individual organism but this interrelationship as a whole. While agreeing with Haldane that life, in distinction from mere matter, expresses the holistic inter-relationship between the living individual and the environment, Nishida adds that it is only with human life that we see the individual reacting to environmental delimitation by intentionally acting to transform and re-create his environment. We are conditioned by our surroundings, influenced by our upbringing, our friends, the books we read, the TV programs we might watch. Moreover the natural environment also takes on for Nishida the significance of “death” in the sense that it resists our advances, our attempts at appropriation, to negate and de-limit our being. But as human beings we can confront those determinations, to alter the very

conditions that shape who we are: “Environment makes man and man makes environment” (“*Kankyō ga ningen o tsukuri, ningen ga kankyō o tsukuru*”). (Z8 162, 314, 329)

We are not only affected by the environment but we work and act upon it, re-creating it, as well. For example, while the land nourishes us with food, we in turn alter the land to increase or decrease its productivity, which again conversely affects our well-being. While being determined, created, by the environment, we also determine that environment, re-creating it. Nishida thus distinguishes his own conception of “life” (*seimei*), as involving this full dialectic of human creativity, from Haldane’s merely biological conception. The real world of life, the dialectical dynamic that he calls “historical life” (*rekishiteki seimei*), for Nishida is thus not merely biological but is socio-historical (*shakaiteki-rekishiteki*). (Z6 106)

In the concrete dynamism of that socio-historical world, the dialectical nature of the concrete becomes fully manifest in the very reciprocity of creativity as man partakes in the world’s self-formations. That is, human persons, in their own independent capacity to consciously and intentionally make things and re-shape the world, act and inter-act as “operative elements” (*sagyōteki yōso*) or “creative elements of the creative world” (*sōzōteki sekai no sōzōteki yōso*). (Z8 51, 52)

The world continues creating itself not only through the environment’s determination of individuals but also through the individuals’ determination of the environment. (Z6 83-84, 107, 178)

Created by the world, man in turn asserts his autonomy by re-creating that world. And conversely, while taking part in that creativity, we, the made, are simultaneously re-making *ourselves* as makers. And yet in doing so we serve as conduits of historical life, acting as parts of the world’s self-creativity. This was Nishida’s answer to Marx’s materialist de-

terminism. His reply was a holistic inter-determinism that simultaneously retains the individual's autonomy without becoming an outright self-affirmative individualism. Nishida comes to describe this as the "contradictory self-identity" (*mujunteki jikodōitsu*) between maker and made, environment and individual subject-body. (See Z8 241, 332) The world is the *basho* of this dialectical inter-relationship between individual and environment. And human life manifests that dialectic in its mutual dependence and alterations with the environment. (See Z8 15) Our creative autonomy is thus the world's creativity.

Sec. 2: The Dialectic of Acting-Intuition

The true self, the self in its most concrete immediacy, then is an acting self (*kōiteki jiko*) partaking in the world's *poiesis*. Instead of being de-worlded subjects observing the world from without, we are radically implaced within the world's dynamism. The subject of cognition is founded upon this fact of acting-in-the-world. We always find ourselves in this concrete situation of a dynamic inter-activity, reducible to neither terms of subjectivity or objectivity, to spirit or matter, prior to the polarization in intellectual analysis between subject and object. As we inter-act with things, we also come to see them and the world around us in light of the context of the inter-activity. We are both spectators and actors in the unfolding of the great play of life. (See Z14 67) We see as we act; cognition implies action. *Contra* Descartes, Nishida in the first volume of *Tetsugakuno konpon mondai* (1933) thus asserts that it is not that "I exist because I think" but that "I

exist because I act.” Thinking already means acting. (Z6 136) We see things by acting on them, creating them, giving them form. (Z8 58, 64-65, 216-17)

To express that inseparability between seeing things and acting upon them, Nishida neologizes the term “acting-intuition” (*kōiteki chokkan*), first introducing it in the mid-1930s. In what sense are “acting” and “intuiting” united in this phrase, “acting-intuition”? Two terms that many often regard as opposites, one implying passivity and the other implying activity, are intentionally brought-together in this concept to express their inseparability as complementary moments in the concrete immediacy of how we exist in the world. (See Z8 215) The concept takes the earlier notions of pure experience, intuition, and self-awareness and extends them into the worldly arena of concrete action, whereby self, body, and world are dynamically inseparable. Nishida’s point is to show that they must not be understood merely as some passive form of static contemplation. Intuition or seeing is never just the passivity of pure reception. Instead it entails the dynamism of our acting in the world, our active engagement with our surroundings. (See Z7 94) Seeing things, that is, understanding them in view of *what* they are, already implies our acting upon them, giving them form, within the context of the given historical world. It involves the active structuring of what we see, rendering them with forms. This occurs not only ideally as in Kant’s a priori forms and categories, but *also* physically as we build the world around us, re-shaping the space of our dwelling. The determining act of intentionality is extended into the world at-large. For example, when driving a car, we see our surroundings in a certain way that is in accord with our very act of driving. This is not a theoretical seeing but a bodily seeing inseparable from the act of driving. We have an

immediate grasp of the world by acting within it and in this pre-reflective immediacy there is no separation between inner and outer or between mind and matter, subject and object. We act upon things while being acted upon by them. We determine the very things that are determining us; we shape the things around us as we ourselves are being shaped. So we see by acting and act by seeing; they generate one another. So what Nishida described in the late 1920s as the intuition of contradictory unity now becomes developed *vis-à-vis* the world, wherein we interact with one another and with the environment, in terms of *acting-intuition*. Nishida in 1935 (in his *Tetsugaku ronbunshū dai ichi*) also calls this a “dialectical intuition” (*benshōhōteki chokkan*). (Z7 209) The dialectic is such that we are *both* passively determined by the environment *and* actively working upon it. Acting-intuition expresses this dialectical nature of human existence as thus simultaneously active and passive, free and determined, as it partakes in the very dialectic of world-formation. It is our concrete mode of existence in our implacement in the world’s dynamism. And as our partaking in the dynamic of the dialectical world, acting-intuition provides the non-dual basis for all subsequent dichotomizations, such as the subject-object duality.

In formulating this concept of acting-intuition Nishida is focussing his interest upon the concrete non-duality of that process whereby man as acting self is inseparable from the world of inter-action. In acting, we objectify our essence, expressing ourselves externally in the things we make, and in turn those things move us and determine our acting so that subject and object are reciprocal in determination. (Z6 277-78) This reciprocity is pre-reflective so that the world’s *poiesis* and man’s *poiesis* are dynamically one

prior to bifurcation into subject and object. Through our acting-intuition, the world thus shapes itself *qua* historical life. (See Z8 30, 32, 33, 54, 61, 69, 72-73, 77) Since man is a creative element of the creative world, his acting-intuition is at the same time the world's on-going act of self-expressive self-formation. *Via* this dialectic of acting-intuition, the individual self as actor and the historical world forming itself are non-dual, they are dynamically – but not monistically – one, a dialectical identity that Nishida comes to call “contradictory self-identity” (*mujunteki jikodōitsu*).⁹⁷ Through acting-intuition, we alter the world, giving it form, and this simultaneously means the world's *own* self-formation. (See Z8 39) And in shaping the world, we are in turn shaped by it through its *own* self-shaping. Our seeing in acting-intuition then signifies, for Nishida, the world's *own self-awareness* as it forms itself. Because in acting-intuition we are implaced in the world and partake in the world's dynamism, our own self-awareness *via* acting-intuition and the world's self-awareness in its self-determination are dialectically identical. Nishida makes this explicit with a statement in 1943. Just as our creative autonomy is the world's own creativity, the same goes for our self-awareness: “When the world becomes self-aware, our self becomes self-aware, and when our self becomes self-aware, the world becomes self-aware.” (Z9 528)

Sec. 3: The Body as Dialectical Mediator

In discussing the dialectic of the world and man's implacement within its dynamic through acting-intuition, one issue that cannot be ignored is the body (*shintai*). Our seeing in acting and our inter-activity with one another and with things entails our embodi-

ment; we act upon things and are acted upon by them through the body. Thus the factor of the body as *both* a thing at-work *and* a thing worked-upon is introduced into the dialectic of the world. The true self is neither disembodied nor de-worlded *qua* transcendental consciousness but implaced *via* embodiment in the world of history. (Z5 210, 212) Through our bodily nature, we act to build our environment. (Z5 287) The living body is what extends our creative intentionality beyond mere ideality to the surrounding world. One might then say that the body is the axis of our dialectical engagement with the world. As actor the body is subject and as a tool of manipulation it is an object. As both user and tool, the body is both subject and object. (See Z7 127; Z8 50) In this dual nature, or what Nishida calls “contradictory self-identity,” the body is the medium where mind and environment meet and co-determine. It is the mediating support for the dialectical inter-relationship between man’s acting-intuition and the world’s self-formation. And as the body acts upon the environment, the environment itself *qua* tool becomes an extension of the body.⁹⁸ Through this mediation of embodiment in our bodily activities, our own self- and co-determinations are equal to the world’s self-determination.

Nishida regards the body *qua* subject-body, engaging in acting-intuition and taking-part in the world’s historical formations, on the above basis, to be an “historical body” (*rekishiteki shintai*). (e.g., Z8 62-63, 70) The term designates our dialectically dual nature of being simultaneously created and creators: while being shaped by the environment, our bodies actively partake in its re-shaping. And this contributes to the unfolding of our historical world. Nishida distinguishes this body as historical from the merely biological body. (See Z7 139) The historical body, functioning as a creative element of

the world's self-formation, is *poietic*, i.e., creative, productive. That is what makes it historical. The merely biological body, incapable of separating itself from its environment, is not yet creative in that sense. It is not yet truly a subject-body, i.e., an actor standing on its own. But the historical body, while determined by its environment, in turn becomes independent to the extent that it can determine its environment in reverse. As the environment conditions and makes the human subject-body, the subject-body in turn reshapes and makes its environment. Body and environment are thus co-determining in a dialectic that simultaneously constitutes the world's own continual self-re-formation. We might then say that human existence in its embodied creativity is a microcosmic mirror reflecting, inter-resonating with, the macrocosm's dialectic.⁹⁹ So with this conception of the body as dialectical medium, any functional dualism between mind and body, as well as the dichotomy separating the individual self and the world, is collapsed. On this basis, Nishida provides a founding for his earlier epistemology with its interrelationships between the epistemological subject and the world *qua* object or, in judicative terms, between grammatical subject and predicate. All of this also underscores the profound significance of the body for self-awareness, in other words, that self-awareness is not determined merely through consciousness but rather through the body working upon the world. (Z5 247)

Sec. 4: The Dialectic of Maker and Made: From the Made to the Making

Nishida characterizes the dialectic of acting-intuition and embodied inter-activity further in its historical world-formative aspect in terms of the reversible movement between the

made and the making. As a historical body, man, through the manipulation of tools, transcends the biological sphere of life by refashioning his environment. The merely biological in its dependence upon the environment does not yet stand opposed to its maker. But man *qua* historical body stands independently to counter its conditioning, to function as the creator of the historical world. Environment makes man and man makes environment. (Z8 162, 314, 329) But this also means that man is working as a creative element of the creative world. (Z8 317-18) In other words the individual, in mirroring and expressing the whole world, also possesses its creativity, whereby the world forms itself. The dialectic is such that made is making and making is made, and on its basis the world continually evolves “from the made to the making” (*tsukuraretamono kara mirumono e*). (See Z8 219) That is to say, the process of the world’s self-formation involves a continual evolution from the conditioning of individuals (i.e., human selves) by their environment to their counter-conditioning of the environment and back again. We are born into this world and conditioned by it as “made.” But, in realizing our human potential, we in turn become creative as “maker.” Moreover the things we make, separating from us, in turn affect us and determine us. What is made by us in turn makes us. (Z6 193; Z7 148) The process is both from what has been made by the environment to what makes the environment, *and* from what has been made by the individual self to what makes the individual.¹⁰⁰ To repeat an example already cited above, we cultivate the earth and grow food that in turn nourishes us, enabling us to go-on growing more food. The food we receive from the environment, our upbringing by our parents, our relationship with friends, the weather, etc., all affect our state of being; and we in turn go-on to alter those condi-

tions. In these intimate interactions between the I and its environing things, between maker and made, the made makes, the created creates, and hence “persons are *creata et creans*.” (Z10 104, 114; Z8 219) Born into the world of *poiesis* that is continually forming and being-formed, we ourselves are continually and simultaneously forming and being-formed. (See Z8 492) Man *qua* historical body thus possesses a contradictory identity between made and making. Man as embodied subject is formed and forming *vis-à-vis* his environment as an element born out of the world that is *also* formed and forming in the same formative acts. Nishida is here asserting a dialectical complementarity between subject and object in terms of self and environment, whereby their relationship of determination or making is reversible. The world of historical reality continually constitutes itself in this manner, moving “from the made to the making.” (See Z8 240)

Nishida accordingly comes to view true self-awareness to involve our partaking in the dialectical process of being-made and making, whereby the self *qua* historical body expresses itself externally as a creative element of the creative world.¹⁰¹ But this means that the self-awareness of the acting self as it expresses itself externally is conversely also the self-awareness of the self-expressive world, both self and world moving “from the made to the making.” And in this self-awareness *qua* acting-intuition, human existence is *both free and* taking-part in the world’s formativity. This distinguishes human life *both* from inanimate matter that moves mechanistically in causal determinism *and* from biological life that moves teleologically for species-preservation and -reproduction. The dialectic of made and making, “from the made to the making,” is the concrete reality of which the merely material, biological, or mental, dimensions of reality are only abstrac-

tions. Nishida hence that dialectic is another way of expressing the most concrete sphere of human existence.

Sec. 5: The Inter-Personal Dialectic of “I And thou”

The dialectic of inter-activity between maker and made in the human world coincides with the establishment of society. And this in particular involves the inter-relations between our individual selves as *persons* (*jinkaku*). Nishida discusses this dialectic in terms of “I and thou” (*watashi to nanji*). We ought to keep in mind that what Nishida means primarily by individual or “individual thing” (*kobutsu*) is the individual *person* (*kojin*). Taking the individual to be that which truly exists in itself and works by itself to thoroughly determine itself, there is nothing more individual than the human self, i.e., the person. That independence and freedom was one factor that, as we noticed above, distinguished for Nishida the socio-historical world of humanity from the merely biological world. But the human individual can never be utterly solitary; it is an individual *vis-à-vis* other individuals. (Z8 307-08) The human self is constituted in its interrelations with other selves. It is in *Mu no jikakuteki gentei* that Nishida first thematizes the interpersonal relationship in terms of “I and thou.” He found this relationship to occur in the mutual implacement of individual persons in the socio-historical world as their concrete *basho*. (See Z5 333) The person’s self-determination, as a member of society, is his self-determination *vis-à-vis* other persons as “thous.” (Z5 352) They work together and relate to one another in responsive reciprocity as persons, as “I and thou,” belonging to the same world, the same universal. (See Z5 288) With the dialectical determination of the self *vis-à-vis* its other, “I and thou” is therefore what emerges in that mutual recognition

of co-relating persons. (See Z5 262, 288; Z7 46) For each individual discovers its true self in the face of the other.

We cannot deny the insurmountable gap between self and other. In facing its other, the individual self arrives at a wall of separation, an absolute discontinuity of otherness separating them. (See Z5 342) Self and other are absolutely *other* with respect to one another with no universal that subsumes them. (Z5 297-98) For no-one can immediately know the consciousness of a stranger. (Z5 307) And yet at bottom there is also a unity between them that envelops that distinction. (See Z5 252) Rebounding, as it were, upon that mutual border of alterity, one (the *I*) comes to know oneself. (See Z5 5, 8, 297-98, 303, 305-06, 309, 310, 323, 324) In that inter-personal inter-activity, where “I and thou” come into mutual contact, Nishida tells us that there is the recognition of the absolute *other* in the depths of one’s *own* self. In reciprocity with one’s *other*, one’s own self-awareness becomes enhanced and deepened in light of that *other*. This means self-awareness in light of one’s interactions and mutual response with others. (See Z5 305-06) Our very sense of self becomes shaped in relation to other people. In that sense the other as a mirror is the medium for one’s own self-reflection. (See Z5 311) The essence of the self is thus constituted not simply as an actor in inter-action with other beings but more specifically as a “person” (*jinkaku*) in the “I-thou” relationship, wherein the *I* discovers itself only by recognizing its other, the *thou*. (Z6 99) That makes the self, as already implying otherness, inherently inter-personal and social. There can be no solitary ego outside of such inter-personal relations of mutual recognition. (Z6 30; see Z6 298) It is in that sense that Nishida can cryptically exclaim that the other gives birth to the I or that

the self is established in seeing the other within oneself or in seeing the self in the other. (e.g., Z5 8, 313) On the basis of that mutual recognition of the absolute other *within* each of our selves, inter-personal contact in terms of “I and thou” is made possible. In opening oneself out to the otherness that one can never overcome, one thus touches upon that *other*. That is, in opening oneself up to the absolute independence, i.e., the personhood, of the other person, one recognizes and accepts the other *as other*. But that also means the constitution of one’s own personhood or self so that in their mutual encounter as persons irreducible to material, instrumental, or biological terms, the *I* and the *thou* are inter-dependent; one cannot negate the other without negating oneself. Nishida expands upon this inter-personal dialectic in light of love as what occurs not only for the sake of some value or purpose but for the sake of the beloved’s personhood, a love whereby one dies to oneself in the face of the otherness of the *thou*, *agape* as opposed to *eros*. (See Z5 214, 250, 328, 331-32) He also goes-on to describe its paradoxical relationship in the various terms of mutual self-negation, continuity of discontinuity, and contradictory self-identity – concepts that we will examine in greater detail in the following sections.

The mutual relationship between “I and thou” occurs at the edge of the world’s self-determination. That is to say that while determined by the world in their implacement, their mutuality forms the shape of the world. (See e.g., Z7 29) Each person, despite his or her implacement in the universal whole, is irreplaceably unique in the context of the whole. As we saw in the previous section, while made by society and history, the individual self possesses the creative significance of being a maker who remodels society and shapes history. (See Z5 278) He does this in his self- and co-determinations with

other individual selves. This inter-activity and mutual working of human persons coincides with the world's own self-determination, which in this case means the establishment of society (or what Nishida calls in German, *Gemeinschaft*). (See Z6 124; Z7 149; Z8 19, 20) This is why the historical world, as more than merely biological, is also the *social* world. Nishida claims that when individuals are enabled to mutually recognize one another's free creativity in their inter-personal relationships, to face one another in terms of "I and thou," there is the genesis of society. (See Z8 19) But Nishida adds that if we also recognize the unobjectifiable *alterity* of the surrounding world wherein we are implaced, the *thou* does not have to be confined to other human persons. That is, we can form a "metaphysical society" with the concrete world in an "I-thou" relation "with mountains, rivers, trees, stones/rocks." (Z6 46)

CHAPTER 6:

THE DIALECTIC OF THE WORLD-MATRIX (FROM THE 1930S AND 1940S): THE DIALECTICAL UNIVERSAL AND CONTRADICTORY IDENTITY

Throughout the 1930s Nishida further analyzes the overall dialectical structure of the historical world and the interrelationships involved therein in the various terms of absolute (or: self-)negation (*zettai hitei, jiko hitei*), the continuity of discontinuity (*hirenzoku no renzoku*), absolutely contradictory self-identity, and the self-determination of absolute nothing (*zettai mu*) and of the absolute present (*zettai genzai*). Through these formulations that may, at first sight, seem abstract Nishida attempts to portray systematically, in a kind of “logic,” the dialectical complexity of the concretely real, that is, the world as involving the manifold inter-relationships between its oneness and manyness, its universality and individuals. This complex inter-dimensionality of the world as a dialectical matrix is moreover depicted in its vast cosmic significance as an infinite space-time matrix. In this chapter we shall examine these dialectical formulations of what Nishida takes to be the logical structuring of the world as a dialectical matrix, *basho* in its dialectical unfolding *qua* world.

The significance of the dialectical formulations developed during this period, in the context of the whole of Nishida’s philosophical work, cannot be understated. Nishida saw himself as achieving a certain maturity and clarity in expression with these dialectical formulations. (See Z6 3) And later in his preface to *Tetsugaku ronbunshū dai yon* (vol. 4), written in 1941, he acknowledges his attainment of a certain clarity that he was

seeking for in his 1939 essay, “*Zettai mujunteki jikodōitsu.*” (Z9 97) We can thus conclude that the direction his thinking took in the 1930s were extremely important in Nishida’s own self-assessment. Looking at these dialectical formulations from this period will thus help us in understanding and assessing his overall relationship to the dialectics of Hegel and Mahāyāna non-dualism as many of them, implicitly or explicitly, contain references to both.

Sec. 1: The World as Dialectical Universal: The Manifold Dialectic of Universal and Individual

The world of inter-personal inter-activity and wherein maker is made and made is maker, is radically dialectical. Nishida’s stance towards the world in its dialectical structure poses a radical alternative to metaphysical monism or dualism. In virtue of its radical dialectics, Nishida in the mid-1930s, in his *Tetsugaku no konpon mondai* and *Tetsugaku ronbunshū*, characterizes that historical world in its logical structuring as a “dialectical universal” (*benshōhōteki ippansha*). This appears to be an extension of his earlier appropriation of the Hegelian concept of the self-determining concrete universal (*gutaiteki ippansha*) although he does make a distinction from it. He now depicts the self-determining universal explicitly in its dialectical character. While the Hegelian language is prominent during this period one also notes in these discussions of dialectics a nearness to the Buddhist conceptions of interdependent origination and non-obstruction involving thing-events and their inter-relational patterning. The dialectical universal designates the structuring of the world so that the self-determination of the dialectical universal means

the self-determination of the world itself. (Z6 159; Z7 136) But it is the logical form, not only of the dialectical world, but of our acting-intuition in virtue of the fact that our acting-intuition is *also* the self-determination of the whole. (See Z7 126-27; Z8 68) It is the logical structure of the world-matrix wherein we are born, act, and die, so that we exist as creative and constitutive elements of the dialectical universal itself. The dialectic is such that while being autonomous creators we are also fully implaced in this universal as our *basho*. The dialectical universal that determines individuals is thus also their *basho*. (Z6 116) The dialectical universal encompasses the multiplicity of individuals and with them constitutes the dialectical dynamic of the historical world. Nishida proclaims the world as such to be a world of the dialectical universal (*benshōhōteki ippansha no sekai*). And the world's socio-historical reality exists as its self-determination. (Z6 183) So the self-determination of the dialectical universal, the self-determination of *basho*, and the self-determination of the world, for Nishida, are all identical. (Z6 159) With this concept of the dialectical universal, Nishida draws out the dialectical implications of the notion of *basho*.

As we just stated Nishida now takes the universal in its self-determinations as explicitly a dialectical universal. This underscores precisely the fact that the universal in its dialectical capacity is not placed in a metaphysically privileged position in relation to the individual. The dialectical universal as the dynamic structuring of the world is “one *qua* many, many *qua* one” (*ichi soku ta, ta soku ichi*). That is to say that in its self-determination, “the one determines the many and the many determines the one, the universal determines the individual and the individual determines the universal.” (Z6 207)

To take the universal here as metaphysically privileged would be to objectify it into a grammatical subject, to relativize it into an individual. But we grasp the universal's self-determination, that is, the worldly *poiesis*, not by objectifying it in opposition to ourselves. As in his epistemology of the 1920s, we must turn away from the grammatical subject and toward the predicate plane to treat the universal accordingly as irreducibly unsayable, as the very *basho* wherein we find ourselves implaced and taking part in its dynamic. And because we cannot treat it as the grammatical subject of a judgement, neither can we regard it monistically as a cosmic substance engulfing everything else as in Spinoza or even as the absolute spirit of Hegel's absolute idealism. The dialectical universal is the structural medium for co-relating individuals, enveloping and determining them. The individuals implaced in it determine themselves and each other and in their implacement are determined by it. (Z6 247) In that sense the dialectical universal, is not the absolute *substance* of the world. Rather it is to be regarded as a "place," *basho*. As the concrete field in space and time, the locus and epoch, for our socio-historical interactions, it is the *an-ontological* background for ontological emergence, oneness which *qua* nothing allows for the mutual constitutions of the many.¹⁰² Nishida explains that reality in its dialectical nature is "being [*u*] and at the same time nothing [*mu*], it is being *qua* nothing [*u soku mu*], nothing *qua* being." (Z6 344) Such opposites are to be thought only from out of this dynamically dialectical reality that is self-determining. The "dialectical universal" is thus a further development of Nishida's earlier conception of the "self-determination of absolute nothing," but now understood in more explicitly dialectical terms.

The dialectic of this dialectical universal occurs in several coeval forms: 1. the universal's self-determination, 2. the universal's determination of the individual, 3. the individual's self-determination, 4. the individuals' co-determination of each other, and 5. the individual's determination of the universal.¹⁰³ The simultaneity of these various determinations is made possible by virtue of the non-substantiality of the dialectical universal as their *basho*. *Basho* delimited by absolutely nothing grounds the many individuals in their self-affirmative being. Implaced within the self-creative world *qua* dialectical universal, the acting self as an individual possesses its *own* identity as an independent self-determining being. The world in its nothingness provides a place (*basho*) for that individual's positive self-determination. And yet the individual's being is grounded upon that world. For the whole of the world actualizes itself by determining itself into those innumerable individuals.

As in Hegel's concrete universal, the universal's self-determination for Nishida constitutes the individual. The universal determines the individual in that the historical and social situation — including the network of conditions on many different levels, i.e., physical, biological, psychological, economic, national, cultural, technological, epochal, etc. — shapes one's identity and self-awareness in one's present situation. Each individual self is a condensed microcosm (*shōuchū*) expressing the macrocosmic whole comprising innumerable other individuals. (See Z10 305, 340-41) And yet the dialectic between universal and individual is not necessarily one-sided, hierarchically structured on the basis of the primacy of the universal. As we saw in the previous sections the individual's autonomy is still retained. For the non-substantiality of the universal *qua basho* al-

lows for that autonomy. Moreover the universal cannot determine itself without the individual's free self-determinations. The individual's free act constitutes the universal's determining act. The two are in co-respondence: Just as the universal is determining itself in the individual, the individual is determining itself within the universal. The individual's self-determination, then for Nishida, is also the self-determination of the dialectical world. (Z5 222-23) The world *qua* dialectical universal is determining itself into that acting individual self. (Z7 78) The two – the individual's self-determination and the universal's self-determination – are in synchrony. Let me illustrate this with an example. The socio-historical milieu of American academia expresses itself in the activities of each academic belonging to that environment. Simultaneously the activities of each individual academic constitute that environment. The two movements, while moving in opposite directions, are one. What this means is that while determined by the universal *qua basho* the self-determining individual at the "extreme limit" (*kyokugen*) of the universal's self-determination, determines that universal in reverse. Nishida calls this "reverse determination" (*gyaku gentei*).¹⁰⁴

Prior to Nishida, Leibniz had also viewed the world as comprising individuals or *monads*, which microcosmically mirror or express the whole macrocosm, each from its own vantage point. Nishida distinguishes his stance however by emphasizing that the individual is authentically individual, that is, a self-determining individual, *only vis-a-vis other* individuals. It determines itself in relation to other individuals. (See Z6 13-14, 173-74) Individuality is thus founded upon the reciprocal determination of innumerable individuals. (Z7 43) As in Leibniz's monadology, each individual has his rightful place with-

in the world. But in addition Nishida also emphasizes how each individual cannot be utterly isolated or alone. Otherwise its very status as an individual is undermined. The monad is a monad in *opposition to* other monads. (Z6 23) The individual is individual only in *facing* other individuals. One is who one is only in relationship with other individuals, with whom one converses, laughs, argues, loves, and so on. We saw this in the previous section on the “I-thou” relationship. Our self-identity is constituted *vis-à-vis* other persons in the dynamic of inter-determination. And yet each individual *as such* is simultaneously independent. As reciprocally independent they are co-relating. For only the independent can truly relate to one another *as such*. This also means, in other words, that each individual is *both* independent from *and* inter-dependent with others. (See Z6 42-43) Furthermore, for Nishida, that mutual determination between individuals coincides with the self-determination of the universal wherein they are implaced. For the dialectical universal as the structure of the dialectical world provides the place, *basho*, for the inter-activity of those innumerable individuals. And in turn the many individuals working together constitute the universal. The self-determination of each individual and the mutual determination of individuals are different aspects of a single reality, the self-determination of the dialectical universal. By this, however, Nishida does mean to prioritize the universal’s self-determination at the expense of individual autonomy. For the self-determination of the universal *itself* is composed by the web of mutual determinations among the many individuals. Nishida really wants to maintain the dialectical tension here between individual determination and universal determination, each on its own and in respect to the other.

If we take the mutual determinations and interrelations among individuals as the dialectic in the horizontal direction, we may take the universal's own determination into those individuals as the dialectic in the vertical direction. The five-fold determination involves a *chiasma* of the vertical and the horizontal. On the vertical level, each individual creatively expresses the world's own self-creation. Thereby the one world disperses itself into a multiplicity of individual focal points, each expressing or mirroring the world from different angles. (Z8 350) The two directional planes of vertical and horizontal are of the same dialectical matrix (i.e., the dialectical universal) forming a *chiasma*: what on the vertical level is the self-determination of the universal, on the horizontal level means the inter-determinations among individuals implaced in its world. That reciprocal determination of mutually independent individuals requires a medium, i.e., *basho*, wherein they meet. Their working activity then in turn may be conceived as *basho*'s self-determination. (See Z6 90, 94-95; Z7 171) Hence Nishida tells us that the medium of individuals expresses itself in the reciprocal determination among its individuals; the innumerable individuals working together is the medium's self-formation. (See Z7 120-21, 171) Each individual's self-determination *vis-à-vis* other individuals is then simultaneously its determination by the universal, the medium's own self-determination. (Z6 13-14; 142; Z7 175) In that sense the world of the reciprocal determination of individuals is the world wherein world determines itself. (Z8 322) Nishida explains that the self-determination of the world *qua* medium is simultaneously the individuals' self- and co-determinations. (Z7 176, 177) The same obtains in the epistemological sphere: the mutual determination and dialectical unity between subject and object or between form and

matter simultaneously means the self-determination of their medium or *basho*, the world's dialectical universal, that establishes the dichotomy to conversely constitute the world-matrix.

The dynamic interactions of individual elements constitute vertically in reverse direction the very movement of the dialectical world. So while the vertical self-determination of the universal is non-different from the horizontal inter-determination of individuals, the latter on the vertical level proves to be the "reverse determination" (or: counter-determination) (*gyaku gentei*) of the universal by the individuals. (See Z5 274-75, 289-90) That is, individual selves, determined in their implacements in the world, inter-act with one another and their inter-action or inter-determination conversely determines the very world, contributing to its dialectic. (See Z6 239ff) At the point where the self-determination of the world of the dialectical universal reaches its extreme limit (*kyo-kugen*) the individuals in turn counter-determine that world. (See Z6 10, 22-23, 26, 148-49) The world's self-determination takes-place by way of the inter-determinations of individuals determining the world. Nishida has in mind the human capacity to determine history and remodel society, the very conditions into which one is born. While living under the influence of the society an individual person is born into, he also has the capacity to determine himself and to conversely remodel his social surroundings and move history itself. (See Z5 233-34, 277, 278) It is in this sense Nishida takes the human individual to *be (at)* the extreme limit of the world's self-determination, its socio-historical determination. (Z5 278) We are not only determined by the universal but transcend it to determine it in reverse. (Z5 248) At that extreme limit, we are implaced in the world-matrix as si-

multaneously its individual determinations *and* its creative determinants. This is another way of speaking of the self's *thorough* determination by and implacement in the world on the one hand and paradoxically its *absolute* independence and freedom (*zettai no dokuritsu, zettai no jiyū*) on the other. (Z5 352) The individual is thus simultaneously determined by the environment, self-determining as independent, co-determining with other individuals, and in its self- and co-determinations counter-determines the environment. (See Z5 269-70, 301) The self-determination of concrete (universal) reality is itself the self-determinations and reciprocal determinations of its individuals. (Z8 239) This proves to be Nishida's dialectical radicalization of Hegel's statement that the individual is the universal and the grammatical subject is the predicate.¹⁰⁵ (Z6 10, 142-43; Z8 82)

In this radicalization of dialectic, we notice the co-existence of freedom and determinism: Just as the individual, while determined by the past, freely goes-on to determine itself in the face of the future, moving "from the made to the making," the individual, while determined by the environment, goes-on to counter-determine it. At the extreme limit point of determination — both by past and by environment —, there is its reversal, its reverse determination. In that chiasmatic point where universal and individual meet, there is thus freedom in determination. Nishida thus conceives the free will in terms of this dialectic whereby environment determines individuals but individuals in turn freely determine themselves, one another, and the environment. (See Z5 259-60, 275) Nishida claims, on the basis of reverse determination, that contrary to Hegel, we can even conceive of matter as generating what Hegel called the *idea*. (Z5 224) But "matter" here as the acting individuals themselves is ultimately "dialectical matter" (*ben-*

shōhōteki busshitsu), by which Nishida means the self-forming formlessness of absolute nothing itself. (Z5 297) In fact it is that non-substantiality of the universal *qua* nothing that allows for its reverse determination.

As we can already see, dialectic for Nishida is no simple matter. The manifold dialectic, on the part of each individual at the extreme limit of that universal self-determination, means that the individual is simultaneously dependent, independent, *and* interdependent. The individual is dependent on the world for its being, but is also independent in its unique creativity. And simultaneously those same individuals on the horizontal plane are co-dependent with one another in their inter-actions. Their inter-activity in turn makes the world what it is in reverse determination. As both independent from and interdependent with one another, individuals are also independent from and interdependent with the universal. And as the inter-determination among individuals is the self-determination of the universal, so is the individual's self-determination. That is, the many individuals' self-and-co-determination is simultaneously the universal's self-determination *qua* world. (See Z6 11, 14-15, 39, 83-84; Z8 41, 54) Thereby the individual's own acting-intuition, both alone and together in inter-activity with others, is at the same time the world's own self-formation *via* acting and seeing. Again, quoting Hegel, Nishida states, the universal *is* the particular in self-determination. (Z8 91, 93) But Nishida has thus radicalized the dialectic beyond what is covered by Hegel's self-determining concrete universal and Hegel's equation of universal and particular to explicitly encompass this manifold dimensionality of the dialectic. For the dialectical universal embraces *both* the concrete universal's self-determination in the individual *and* the uni-

versal's reverse determination by the individual. Nishida himself makes that distinction explicit in *Ronri to seimei* where he distinguishes the dialectical universal as *neither* an abstract universal (i.e., not a mere concept distinct from things) *nor* a concrete universal (i.e., what becomes the particular). Rather it is a universal embracing *both*: “the universal of one *qua* many and many *qua* one.” (Z8 82) Nishida here takes the dialectical universal in its *basho*-like significance as enveloping the concrete universal's self-determining act. But in doing so Nishida is taking his own dialectic as more radical — as what he calls an “absolute dialectic” (*zettai benshōhō*) — than Hegel's. That distinction of Nishida's absolute dialectic from Hegel's dialectic, one might say, thus hinges on Nishida's development of this notion of the dialectical universal.

Furthermore Nishida's radicalization of the dialectic seems to even account for the meaning of the Buddhist concept of inter-dependent origination as developed by the Chinese Hua-yen school with its explicit encompassing of the vertical (*li-shih wu-ai*) and the horizontal (*shih-shih wu-ai*) directions. In Hua-yen terms, the individual is a thing-event (*shih; ji*) that is interdependent with others (*shih-shih wu-ai; jiji muge*) and expressive of the whole pattern (*li-shih wu-ai; riji muge*).¹⁰⁶ In the self-determination of the dialectical universal, as the universal determines individuals and individuals determine universal, one determines many and many determine one. (Z6 206-07) Each mode of inter- and self-determination are mutually implicative. Such is the radicalized dialectic of the world-matrix as designated by the term “dialectical universal” (*benshōhōteki ippansha*). (E.g., see also Z6 236-37, 326-37) The world for Nishida is hence thoroughly uni-

versal and thoroughly of individuals; it is simultaneously *both* individual determination *and* universal determination. (Z6 159, 234)

That manifold inter-dimensionality of the world-matrix translates into Nishida's conception of the world's contradictory self-identity (*mujunteki jikodōitsu*). The world of historical reality as a dialectical world, Nishida tells us, possesses the contradictory self-identity of one and many, of whole and parts, of universal and individuals, and also of outer and inner, i.e., the epistemologically objective and subjective. (See Z8 239-40) Each pair of these opposites is one, however only dialectically, not monistically or substantially. The point is that neither of each pair is real on its own. Each is real only in relation to the other as co-relative, co-determining, terms. They form each other and are mutually implicative in an organic unity. (See Z8 331) Again this means that the concrete as radically dialectical is not substantial, neither as a macrocosmic whole as in Spinoza's substance nor as microcosmic atoms as in Leibniz's monads, neither as individual bearers of accidents as in Aristotle's *ousia* nor as thinking things as in Descartes' *cogito*. It is neither simply one whole nor simply many individuals. (See Z8 371) Nishida's vision of reality here is radically dialectical and hence non-substantial. All reifications in terms of substance fail to grasp the world's dynamic holism. Nishida has thus made explicit the radical dialectical implication of what began earlier as an epistemology aiming to counter reification in terms of the grammatical subject. We also notice Nishida during this period at pains to avoid any mis-taking that would reify and prioritize the universal as some sort of absolute substantiality standing-over individuals. The real cannot be reduced to any term of the dialectical process. Hence what he calls the "universal" in its

dialectical significance is really the dynamic holism of inter-acting individuals, a whole that in terms of substance is empty.¹⁰⁷ This is an important point to remember. Only thus taken in its non-substantiality is it the “substance” (*kitai*) of the world’s dialectical process whereby one is many and many is one. (Z8 82) Nishida distinguishes this radical dialectics from Hegelian dialectics whereby the universal (*qua* concept, *Begriff*) subsumes, or grasps (*begreifen*) the totality of individuals. By contrast we are to think of the determination of that non-substantiality, the universal’s determination of the individual in its radically dialectical matrix that retains the individual’s free self-determination, as a “determination of that which is without a determiner” (*genteisurumono naki mono no gentei*), a determination of and by the universal *qua* nothing. (Z5 269) Hence in *Mu no jikakuteki gentei* Nishida equates that ultimate environment that envelops everything to determine the individual with absolute nothing (*zettai mu*), whose determination is without any determiner, i.e., without any agent *qua* substance. (Z5 286) The dialectic of the world-matrix then is a dialectic of *basho* (*bashoteki beshōhō*).

Sec. 2: The Dialectic of Absolute (or Self-) Negation

Nishida’s radical dialectic that precludes monistic or universal subsumption is founded upon a non-substantialism, involving the act self-negation. This is the meaning behind what he calls “absolute dialectics” (*zettai beshōhō*), that is, a dialectic of “absolute negation” (*zettai hitei*) or “self-negation” (*jiko hitei*). (See Z6 273, 275) Nishida takes dialectical negation seriously to the extent that it escapes any resolution in an affirmative synthesis. The truly real as what is ontologically independent, not requiring anything else for

its existence, is what philosophers like Aristotle and Descartes calls substance.¹⁰⁸ But Nishida adds that what truly *is* in itself must be what includes its *other* within itself in a self-negation, it must envelope absolute or self-negation within. (Z10 120) He tells us: “Dialectical movement... must be absolute negation-*qua*-affirmation, absolute nothing-*qua*-being.... From that standpoint, to die is to be born and to be born is to die. There is established an infinite dialectical process of negation-*qua*-affirmation...” (Z6 29) What does this mean? It means that the real is non-substantial. But here that non-substantiality is expressed in terms of negation. What is unique about Nishida’s conception of the dialectic is that it occurs through the mediation of self-negation. True dialectic, Nishida states, takes absolute negation as mediation. (Z6 29) There is no mutual determination or conjunction between “I and thou” or among individuals without absolute negation. (Z6 43, 209) Mutual self-negation by virtue of the very non-substantiality of concrete reality is what makes the various inter-determinations possible in the first place. In turn the universal’s self-negation is its self-determination, which *qua* self-negation allows for its reverse determination by the individual. (See Z6 14, 199, 201) That the dialectical universal’s self-determination is its self-negation in turn means its individualization to become its other, the innumerable individual beings. It becomes the world of individuals reciprocally determining each other in mutual self-negation. (See Z6 199, 201-02, 224) The entire world of actuality is thus a world of affirmation passing-through absolute negation. (Z6 323) The one and the many are “one” dialectically, and that means *via* mutual self-negation. (See Z8 376) The dialectical world is thus “substantial” (*kitaiteki*) *only* in this sense of its self-negation. (Z8 99-100)

Such a dialectic that unfolds the interrelations of opposing terms *via* mutual self-negations may be contrasted to one that would subsume opposites under a positive sublating concept. In acting upon an other, one seeks to negate the other and make the other *into* oneself, i.e., to express oneself at the expense of the other. One aims in this way to become the entire world, to express oneself at the expense of everything or everyone else. But simultaneously this entails self-negation: one can act only as a part of the world and one can be at-work only in being worked-upon. (See Z8 373, 384) The point is that without self-negation, one cannot negate that which negates one's self. (Z8 75) One cannot determine the other, make it into oneself, and affirm oneself without negating oneself. (Z7 175; Z8 310) In our acting-intuition, for example, things move us and compel us to act and this means for Nishida our self-negation so that we "become those things."¹⁰⁹ But in turn the things working upon us affirm themselves through their self-negation, allowing for consciousness of them. (See Z7 104) That is, in both directions, there is activity only under negating conditions. Or, put differently, the two opposing moments of activity and passivity in acting-intuition are mediated in their self-negations. In the dialectic of life, for example, organism and environment, each, in their mutual encounter, is altered, i.e., negated for the sake of the other's self-affirmation. (See Z8 58) Each, in working upon its other, must be worked-upon. This means that one cannot affirm itself without allowing itself to be negated *vis-à-vis* the other. And co-relative determination among individuals requires the same sort of mediation in mutual self-negation. (See Z8 19, 202) Otherwise they would remain utterly independent, having nothing to do with each other. Mutual self-negation inverts ontological independence into interdependence

and correlativity. It is the very foundation for any sort of self-determination and hence self-affirmation.

In contrast to any notion of a subsuming absolute concept, the universal in Nishida's system engages in absolute negation in the affirmation of individuals. (Z6 243) Nishida equates such absolute negation with *basho vis-à-vis* absolute nothing and its movement. Delimited by nothing, the universal then must be ultimately nothing, no determinate universal. Spinozistic substantialism is thus precluded in the self-negation of the one that is "...unable to negate the many but instead depends upon them." (Z9 384) So *via* mutual self-negation the one and the many, whole and parts, are identified. (See Z13 198, 211-12) Through self-negation, the one becomes the many to establish the world of individuals. And this self-negation of the one along the vertical plane means simultaneously the mutual self-negation among individuals on the horizontal level. In negating itself, the world affirms the individuals implaced within it; and in turn the individuals through mutual self-negation contribute to the world's creativity. In the self-negation of the many, the world is one; and in the self-negation of the one, the world is many. (Z13 198) The dialectical matrix consists in this mutual (self-)negation of one and many. (Z8 371) Self-negation thus mediates the dialectic on all levels and dimensions as a self-opening *chiasma*. It is the expressive process of the non-substantial medium or *basho vis-à-vis* nothing. As the entire dynamism of the world-matrix is founded upon it, the creativity of the world is inconceivable without it.

The vertical dialectic of self-negation translates on the horizontal level into interrelations among individuals. This includes mutual self-negation between persons opera-

tive in inter-personal relationships as well as between subject and object in cognition. For example, in inter-personal dialectics, the self is a person only in recognizing the personhood of the other. Such recognition would preclude instrumentalization of the other although on a certain level objectification is unavoidable because of our bodies. This very recognition of the other's otherness *qua* person, the awareness of otherness mediated by one's own self-negation, makes oneself into a person as well. (See Z6 67) The I is *I* by recognizing the *thou* and this means that the I is *I via* self-negation and the we is *we* by reciprocal self-negation. (Z6 212-13) Nishida therefore writes that individual persons "relate to one another separated by absolute negation." (Z6 46) But we find mediation *via* mutual self-negation operative in the temporal dimension as well. Within the continuity of one's self, the unity of personality as the I of today is established by regarding yesterday's *I* and tomorrow's *I* as *thous*. (See Z6 68) The self is born *via* self-negation at each moment, being born by dying, making itself anew as its previously made self disappears. Through self-negation, each moment gives-way to the next, making the transition possible "from the made to the making," from determined to determining, from created to creating. (See Z6 202) In that respect self-negation is the mediation for the dialectical process in time, the medium that allows for the very unfolding of time. The self's individual unity then is established both synchronically (with other persons) and diachronically (within oneself) *via* mutual self-negation between terms. Mutual self-negation operates in cognition as well to mediate subject and object whereby the external object (i.e., transcendent object) is internalized, subjectivized *qua object* or phenomenon, and the internal self (i.e., transcendental subject) is externalized, objectivized *qua object* relating to

that object. Likewise Nishida in *Tetsugaku no konpon mondai* explains the subsumptive judgment in terms of the mutual self-negations of grammatical subject and predicate allowing for their copulative conjunction and identification. That is, Nishida explains Hegel's identification of individual and universal with his dialectic of mutual self-negation. (E.g., see Z6 186ff) So we see here in both spatial and temporal dimensions, on the horizontal plane as well, that the dialectic is mediated *via* mutual self-negation. While mutual self-negation between terms on the horizontal plane operates synchronically through the spatial dimension, it is also operative diachronically in the interrelations between moments in the temporal dimension.

Such self-negation mediating the dialectic of the world-matrix is Nishida's extension of what he earlier conceived in terms of the self-determination of absolute nothing. (See Z6 68) The dialectic of such self-negation can be contrasted with the sublational dialectic of Plato or Hegel that postulates a higher level of being or concept. In Nishida's case the ultimate field enveloping all dialectical oppositions is in perpetual self-negation and is not to be conceived or affirmed as a grammatical subject of a statement. Unobjectifiable, it is a place de-limited by nothing, *basho vis-à-vis* absolutely nothing. The universal's self-determination occurs on the basis of its *placial* (*bashoteki*) self-negation. That is, any universal determining its individual instances is possible only *via* implacement within an un-delimited nothing. Self-negation happens only on the basis of that nothing enveloping the contradictory poles of affirmation (being) and negation (non-being). The dialectical mediation operative in all oppositional relations of the world-matrix, for Nishida, expresses this concrete reality that is substantially nothing.

Sec. 3: The Dialectic of the Continuity of Discontinuity

Nishida describes mutual self-negation, its dialectic, alternately in terms of a “continuity of discontinuity” (*hirenzoku no renzoku*). The inter-relations of terms in their *mutual* self-negation as their mediation means that they are continuous in their very discontinuity *with* one another. They are continuous, united, in their discontinuity, i.e., difference, that de-limits their respective identities. Again this is to be contrasted with the continuous self-identity of a substance. The self-determination of the dialectical universal, Nishida asserts, entails neither mere continuity nor mere discontinuity between the determined and co-determining individuals but the continuity of their discontinuity. (Z6 13, 202)

For individuals to oppose each other and work upon each other they must be independent of each other, hence discontinuous. And yet their mutual working also requires some sort of a continuity. That continuity of discontinuity mediating mutually independent but inter-dependent individuals is *basho*, their “place.” (See Z7 17-18) For example, there is a continuity of discontinuity in our interaction with our environment, wherein we make things through the bodily manipulation of tools. Here the body becomes tool and in turn the tool becomes an extension of the body, and in its interaction with things, the body becomes a thing of the world. (Z8 31, 32) At the same time, the world itself becomes a tool, a realm of instruments for our use, as well an extension of our bodily selves. (See Z8 52-53, 67) The body mediates our relation to other tools and tools mediate our relation to the environment of things. Through body and tool, self and environment are interconnected. And yet the very things that we make and use still stand-apart from us so that there is a severance in this interconnection, discontinuities

amidst continuity, uniting man and world. Hence Nishida characterizes “technics” (*gi-jutsu*) as involving this continuity of discontinuity between body, tool, thing, and world. (See Z8 64) This mediation is made possible on the basis of their mutual implacement in *basho vis-à-vis* absolute nothing. Another example is the relationship between self and thing *via* desire, whereby one moves to realize one’s inner desire by making its outer object accord to one’s subjectivity, and yet there is simultaneously also an absolute severance between one’s inner subjectivity and its outer object as *other*. That other is *not* one’s self, one does not possess it, and hence one has *desire* for it. Desire thus entails both continuity and discontinuity between self and object, inner and outer.

We find the continuity of discontinuity operating in the temporal dimension as well. For Nishida time is neither a mere sequence of now-points nor a static continuity. Time as perpetually perishing is essentially discontinuous in its flow. Motion or change entails that discontinuity of time. And any notion of temporal unity or continuity must take this into account. For Nishida this means dialectical unity in self-negation. That is, the dialectical process moves from actuality to actuality in a continuity of discontinuity. (See Z8 90) Each moment as independent of others passes to give way to the next. As we saw in the previous section, the self-negation of each moment constitutes the very unity of time. This also means the continuity of discontinuity in time. (See Z6 210) Each moment of self-determination is a moment of unique creativity that cuts-off the past to move “from the made to the making.” The affirmation of that very moment is thus also its self-negation that engenders the new in a continuity of discontinuity.

In that unity of time as a continuity of discontinuity, there is also the unity of personhood, the constitution of the individual self. (Z8 5) The individual person in different times is neither merely continuous nor merely discontinuous with itself. Every moment in personal continuity, the I of yesterday and the I of today, is distinct from the other. What one did twenty years ago, or even yesterday, may seem foreign to oneself today. It is as if the I of yesterday and of today are different persons, encountering one another. In that sense the I at each moment rises and falls, appears and disappears. And yet the I is united so that the whole of its moments is simultaneously one and many, continuous and discontinuous. The personal self is always an on-going process of unification in the focal point of its present, a self-determination at each moment *vis-à-vis* past and future. The individual affirms his identity in that present moment in relation to past and future as a continuity of discontinuity. As persons, Nishida declares, we are continuities of discontinuities. (See Z6 49) The acting self united in this discontinuous flow of the present is thus “living by dying”: “...in order to be connected with the following moment, as a continuity of discontinuity, we must die at this moment and enter into nothing. But without dying in this sense, there is no I... We live only by dying in the present.” (Z6 231) This means that while determined by the past, at each present moment the I, regarding yesterday’s I as a thou, is *also* free to act in discontinuity with that past. And thus he can move “from the made to the making.” Implaced in the present, the self’s creative act marks the transition from made *I* to making *I*. It is in this sense that the I is a continuity of discontinuity, living by dying. (See Z6 32)

The same continuity of discontinuity applies to epochs in collective history. Each epoch is neither the simple result of the previous one nor a mere preparation for the succeeding one. It has its own independent meaning within the whole of history. (Z9 390) With the self-negation of each momentary event (or epoch), time, and hence history, unfolds in a continuity of discontinuities. (See Z8 84-85) With this understanding of time Nishida sought to account for the very contradictory nature of motion in time that Aristotelian substantialism failed to explain.

Nishida repeatedly emphasizes, however, that the self-determination of the self in internal time cannot happen without its co-determination with other selves. The unity of the self-consciousness of the personal self occurs in its implacement within the socio-historical world. (Z6 32) The individual is individual only *vis-à-vis* other individuals, a continuity of discontinuity extending in the spatial horizon. We can accordingly understand the self's constitution as resulting from a criss-crossing *chiasma* of continuities of discontinuities both in time and in space. Dialectic at all levels, of time and space, happens as a continuity of discontinuities.

Discontinuous beings form a continuum on the basis of such non-substantial mediation — their continuity of discontinuity —, implaced upon the “placial” medium (*bashoteki baikaisha*) *vis-à-vis* nothing. (Z7 19, 109) Again, as we suggested above, this is what Nishida has in mind when he speaks of the “substantiality” (*kitaiteki*) of the dialectical world in its self-negation. (Z8 99) Precisely as *basho*, “place,” delimited by nothing, does the medium stand-under (*sub-stantia*) as a place that is no *thing*. Its self-negation as thing, or in Buddhist terms its emptiness of substance, is precisely what allows for the

inter-continuity amongst dis-continuous individuals. In explicating the radical dialectic of the concrete, whether in terms of self-negation or in terms of the continuity of discontinuity, Nishida is thus still retaining in his mind his earlier conception of *basho vis-à-vis* nothing. The notions of nothing, self-negation, and continuity of discontinuity, all refer to one another and together make possible the very “inconceivable” conception of a “contradictory self-identity” (*mujunteki jikodōitsu*), the topic of our next discussion.

Sec. 4: The Dialectic of Absolutely Contradictory Self-Identity

With his 1939 essay *Zettai mujunteki jikodōitsu* (“Absolutely Contradictory Self-Identity”), Nishida unifies the various expressions he has been using since *Tetsugaku no konpon mondai* for the internal logical structure of the dialectical world – “self-identity of opposites,” “self-identity of mutual contradictories,” “self-identity of opposing directions/regions,” “self-identity of opposing working activities,” “dialectical self-identity,” “self-identity of absolute contradiction,” etc. – under the phrase, “absolutely contradictory self-identity” (*zettai mujunteki jikodōitsu*). We may discern the importance of this concept in the fact that it becomes conceived by many to be synonymous with Nishida philosophy itself. By the late 1930s Nishida is conceiving of such contradictory self-identity primarily in terms of the interrelations between one and many, universal and individual, world and actors — an interrelationship that moves the world of individuals “from the made to the making.” (See e.g., Z8 318-19, 367-68) Earlier in 1933 (*Tetsugaku no konpon mondai*) Nishida conceives of the determination of the inter-active world in terms of a “dialectical unity” (*benshōhōteki tōitsu*) or “self-identity of opposites” (*sōhan-*

surumono no jikodōitsu). (Z6 53, 55) He finds the world to contain contradiction (*mujun*) and that it determines itself dialectically in its contradictions. (Z6 123) He makes the claim that dialectical movement (*benshōhōteki undō*) is conceivable only in terms of that self-identity of opposites. (Z6 48) Reality always involves the union of what are opposed in a contradictory identity, whereby opposites imply and determine one another. (See Z6 47, 344) Similarly by the late 1930s he comes to think of the world of this dialectical movement as a world of contradictory self-identity. (Z8 20) One prime example is life. Life involves the dialectic of birth-and-death, generation-and-extinction, health-and-illness. Nishida tells us in *Ronri to seimei* that historical life is a dialectical process involving these opposites, whereby it goes-on determining itself in self-contradiction. (See Z8 72-73, 80) But it is already clear from his earliest works prior to the 1930s that, in Nishida's mind, self-determination implies some sort of a "contradiction" or "paradox" (*mujun*). Self-determination and self-contradiction go hand-in-hand in that the former requires a form of self-negation that alters the current state of things into what it is *not*. The idea is a development of what he earlier discussed in terms of a primal pre-dichotomized holistic unity ("pure experience"). But now Nishida explicitly formulates that inner contradiction of the concrete allowing for its dialectical unfolding. This is also an extended attempt on Nishida's part to fully think and articulate the un-sayable or pre-reflective (the concrete holistic situation). The outcome of his musings is this idea of "absolutely contradictory self-identity" (*zettai mujunteki jikodōitsu*) which becomes one of the major themes of his philosophy from the late 1930s to the 40s. What does it mean?

We might better understand what Nishida means by “contradictory identity” if we always keep in mind one of the concepts that we touched upon above, self-negation. We already saw how for Nishida the individual’s self-determination involves, in fact, co-determination among individuals, which in turn also means the self-determination of the universal *qua* world; and vice versa. The meaning of “universal” (*ippan*) excludes individuality and the meaning of “individual” (*ko*) excludes universality, and yet these opposites imply one another and their respective self-determinations coincide with one another. This is possible because self-determination is also self-negation and what mediates the encounter between opposites is their mutual self-negation on the basis of the non-substantial medium of their mediation, that is, *basho vis-à-vis* absolutely nothing. Opposing or independent terms are united within a whole mediated through mutual self-negations. That whole as their non-substantial medium allows for their continuity of discontinuity, their contradictory self-identity. In the world of interacting persons opposing actors interact on the basis of mutual self-negation. In mutual self-negation, they are identified in their co-dependency or bi-conditionality as belonging to a whole. The world that moves in self-contradiction between made and making thus possesses such “a self-identity of absolute contradiction.” (Z8 367) Contradictory self-identity belongs to that concrete whole of reality, its structure as a dialectical universal in its self-determinations. That dialectical universal as the logical structure of the world-matrix, while determining itself *via* self-negation, remains self-identical through its self-contradictions, as a contradictory identity of individuals and universal, mediated through self-negation.¹¹⁰ Nishida

thus views concrete reality, in its radically dialectical nature, as thus self-contradictory. But this obtains only because the real for Nishida ultimately is *not* a substance but *basho*.

Within the space-time matrix, there are focal points of creativity mirroring and expressing that contradictory self-identity of the concrete whole of reality. (See Z8 327) As a self-determination of that concrete whole, the individual self born into its dynamic matrix thus must *also* be a contradictory self-identity. For we ourselves partake in that dynamic matrix. Just as the world entails an absolutely contradictory self-identity between the oneness of its whole and the plurality of individuals, we ourselves as individuals in that world are also self-contradictory. (See Z8 27, 398, 512; Z9 490) Our own contradictory existence microcosmically mirrors the macrocosm's contradictory reality. In other words the contradictory nature of human existence is in dialectical co-respondence with the contradictory nature of the dialectical world itself. For example, in being independent and unique creators, determining ourselves, while also being inter-related and co-determining with others, the individual person possesses his self-identity in the contradiction of many and one. (Z8 309) The individual determining itself involves the universal's determination as well as its co-determination with others. Our own identities are constructed *vis-à-vis* the self-contradictory world. While we form it, we are also implaced within it, determined by it. As creative elements of the creative world, we are both forming and being-formed *vis-à-vis* the world, both the subject of this formation and its means, both for ourselves and for the world, both user and used, manipulator and instrument. Human existence — in its embodied implacement in the world as well as in its acting-intuition as the mode of embodied existence — is thus self-contradictory. This is

exemplified in Nishida's statement that desire in the individual's dialectical interaction with the world "is born to die and dies to be born." (Z6 16) In other words, we live by dying. In temporal terms this means that the individual comprises both a continuity and a discontinuity of moments. Nishida also expresses this contradictory identity of the self in terms of transcendence and immanence: the knower is *both* implaced in the spatio-temporal world *and* transcends it in the sense that he/she is a foundational conduit for the world's self-expression. That is, the self is a self-contradictory identity that expresses the world by transcending it while being itself immanent in the world as the foundation for the world's self-expression. (Z10 118) Such contradictory identity also points to the self's non-substantiality. This is where Descartes went wrong in his method of doubt when he mistook the reality of the self-doubting self in terms of the grammatical subject. Rather the self that grasps itself in self-doubt as existing, whereby the thinker is the thought, must have the form of a contradictory self-identity, not of a substance. Reminding us that thinking itself is an historical event, Nishida states that the indubitable self is not the abstract self of consciousness but the historically-formative self that is made and is making. By recognizing this, we can take Cartesian reflection to a deeper and more concrete standpoint beyond that attained by Descartes. For it is within the dynamic matrix that we are self-aware at the deepest level of our own contradictory existence *vis-à-vis* death. We can thus take Cartesian reflection as a self-awareness *via* self-negation that uncovers the self's contradictory self-identity between thinker and thought, subject and object, immanence and transcendence, self and thing, inner and outer, and ultimately life

and death, being and non-being. What is indubitably immediate to the self is this contradictory self-identity and not its substantiality. (Z10 128)

Both world and self thus possess self-identities of contradiction. (See Z9 443) And in inter-action, their own mutual contradictory identity unfolds the fate of the world. Contradictory self-identity, for Nishida, then is the internal logical structure of the world and its concrete reality — not only in space but in time. Its logic entails strife. Always involving the tension of contradictories constituting its self-identity, it is never static. Rather it is always moving in self-contradiction, from present moment to present moment. The world of historical reality in its contradictory identity is thus a world of endless strife, unfolding in a variety of formations from epoch to epoch. (See Z7 197-98). The many individuals as creative elements within this world of absolutely contradictory self-identity make history through their interactions. Nishida speaks of this structure operative in the world-matrix as the *logos* of *genesis kai phthora* (or: generation-and-extinction), bearing in mind the Heraclitean sense of *logos* as the harmony of opposites in strife and in flux. He is associating Heraclitus' *logos*, the endless flux that unites opposites, with his conception of the dialectical universal as the *logos*-structure of the world. (See Z8 9) And he takes the principle of non-contradiction, emphasized by Aristotle, but which pertains only to the logic of objects (the grammatical subject as substance), to be grounded upon this more fundamental *logos* of concrete reality. In other words the non-contradictory self-identity of substances emerges as an abstraction only in light of their deeper contradictory self-identity within the world-matrix with its dialectical *logos*. And yet in this contradictory self-identity, Nishida reminds us that the dialectical matrix of the

world is not simply in process. In its dialectical self-identity, the world moves and yet remains still *qua nothing* in the affirmation of its absolute negation. The world continually *moves via* its self-contradiction and yet is *still* in its self-identity; it is both moving and at rest in contradictory self-identity. (Z8 493)

Nishida in *Tetsugaku no konpon mondai* still retains, from his earlier epistemology of *basho*, the idea that contradictories must belong to the same species. When taken alone, each term in mutual contradiction is nothing but a reification of, or abstraction from, their concrete whole. The world as the broadest and deepest domain encompassing everything and delimited by nothing must then envelope and make possible the ontologically most basic contradictory relationship, i.e., the opposition of being and non-being. But its preservation of self-identity as a whole, encompassing the absolutely contradictory or opposed, does not mean that they are synthesized or sublated at a higher level. The contradiction and opposition remain. Concrete self-identity is precisely in that very tension or strife of contradiction or opposition. That is what constitutes the identity of the world's concrete whole. Nishida here has not abandoned his earlier heuristic turn away from the grammatical subject. He argues in *Tetsugaku no konpon mondai* that Spinoza's *substantia* is simply an absolutization of the subject of predication, presupposing the Aristotelian logic of substance. True self-identity cannot be reduced to the grammatical subject as an objectified substance to which the rule of non-contradiction applies. Instead it is non-substantial, absolutely nothing. That all is one (*issai ichinyo*) does not mean their indiscriminate oneness as substance but rather their contradictory self-identity *via* mutual self-negation. (See Z8 421)

This brings Nishida in the 1930s back to the topic of the structure of judgment and the question of its unity. Logically the mutual exclusivity between grammatical subject *qua* object (substance that cannot become a predicate) and the predicate *qua* field of concepts (or epistemological subject that can never be stated as grammatical subject) would make subsumptive judgments impossible. Aristotle's logic of the grammatical subject (*shugoteki ronri*) accounts for the noematic determination of enduring objects. Kant's logic of the transcendental field of categories (i.e., predicates) (*jutsugoteki ronri*) accounts for the determining features of subjectivity. Nishida thinks that Aristotle's logic that substantializes the individual object precludes cognition in virtue of the object's transcendence. But on the other hand he thinks that Kant's critical logic that looks internally in the direction of the predicate plane reduces that individuality to intellectual categories. What is the truly concrete situation of their unity? Both theories are too limited on their own. At this stage in his life-work Nishida finds their unity by taking it beyond his earlier 1920s predicate-oriented formulation of the epistemology of *basho*. He re-formulates their unity this time more explicitly in light of the contextual matrix of the world of interactivity as a contradictory identity between grammatical subject and predicate, the transcendent object and the transcendent predicate, epistemological object and subject, world and self, universal and individual. Although the basic idea is the same this slight alteration in the 1930s reflects further caution on Nishida's part to preclude any uni-directional prioritization of *noesis* over *noema*, determining act over determined content, predicate plane over grammatical subject, epistemological subject over object. Instead he emphasizes the balance of the two opposing terms in terms of their contradictory self-identity.

He wants to avoid engendering any tendency that, on the basis of his earlier predicate-oriented logic, would incline in the direction of an idealist monism or transcendentalism. So Nishida re-formulates his earlier position with the emphasis that the true *hy-pokeimenon* (subject, substratum), or true universal, is conceivable neither merely in the direction of the grammatical subject nor merely in the direction of the predicate but instead is the primal unity of the world of physical force (constituting substance that becomes grammatical subject) and the world of consciousness (as the field of predicates) — “absolutely self-identical as a unity of absolute opposites.”¹¹¹ (Z6 186-87, 190) His claim is that dialectical logic becomes conceivable from this self-identity of absolute opposites. But this also means from the standpoint of the acting self as a socio-historical existence. (Z6 143) His focusing upon the socio-historical world necessitates the reformulation his theory of the concrete universal in terms of what he conceives to be the logical structure of the dialectical universal, that is, its absolutely contradictory self-identity. This is to avoid any mis-taking of his theory, the point being now to explicitly prevent any reduction of the concrete, not only to the object (*noema*, grammatical subject) but also to the epistemological subject with its field of predicates or determining acts (*noesis*). The identity of the concrete can never be reified *qua* substance, whether as physical or intellectual, object or subject. Nishida means to account for the dialectical complexity of the concrete that obtains its unity only within the world’s dynamic matrix that is self-contradictory. Its unity of contradictories precludes its conception as a grammatical subject. (Z8 76)

Acknowledging that, in terms of object-logic (the substantialism of Aristotelian logic), the contradictory can never be said to be identical, Nishida (in *Dekaruto ni tsuite* of 1944) explains that contradictory self-identity instead has the sense of self-identity in terms of *basho* enveloping the contradictories by transcending them. (Z10 148) As *basho* the world-dialectic then is of a non-substantial substratum of — or a grounding (under)ground for — the ultimate contradiction between being and non-being. (See Z7 181) It is the non-substantial domain for the contradictory relationship between contradictories. As a self-forming formlessness, *basho*, is what allows for the universal *qua* one world and the many individual selves to stand in absolutely contradictory self-identity. Nishida defines their creative inter-activity as “possessing the sense of *basho* determining itself, as the self-determination of absolute nothing.” (Z6 122) Its non-substantiality as “nothing” (*mu*) transcending but immanently expressing itself in the opposition between being and non-being is what allows for its own self-contradictory self-determinations. Nishida thus takes the world of our pre-reflectively lived present as such a contradictory self-identity, a self-determining dialectical reality, of which the realms of objectivity and subjectivity, material and ideal, are but derivations or abstractions. (See Z6 148)

Sec. 5: The World-Dialectic as the Self-Determination of Nothing

From the standpoint of absolutely contradictory self-identity, everything that *is* is a being but also an expression of nothing. (See Z8 257) Nishida’s theme of the 1930s, as well as of the 1940s, the dynamism of the world matrix is still a manifestation of what he earlier spoke of as *basho vis-à-vis* absolute nothing. We need to remember this when juxtapos-

ing its dialectic with Hegel's. The difference from his earlier formulations is that now Nishida includes in his discussions of the self-realization of nothing its externalization in the world's dialectic. Hence Nishida states that the true universal that mediates the process of living by dying, the continuity of discontinuity in the reciprocity of individuals, is the "universal of nothing" (*mu no ippansha*). (Z6 14) By this Nishida does not mean a "universal" as ordinarily conceived in opposition to the particular. Rather it is the "universal of universals" (*ippansha no ippansha*) that envelops universal and individual, enfolding the reciprocity between the concrete universal's determination of the individual and the universal's reverse determination by the individual. He tells us that the "universal of nothing" is the "universal of universals... that determines itself in absolute negation." (Z6 14) This universal of nothing is the true *substantia*. (Z6 40) The world ultimately possesses no internal self-identity that we may regard as its essence or substance. He tells us that at the bottom of the truly dialectical world, there is nothing (*mu*). (Z6 306) In death we enter into this absolute nothing and in birth we emerge out of it. (Z8 401) Every moment as a moment of contradiction could mean life or death and implies the struggle between life and death. (See Z8 408) The world in its continuity of discontinuity of moments thus involves an on-going determination of absolute nothing. (See Z6 162, 307-08) The self-determination of the dialectical universal, our *basho*, Nishida states, must have this sense of being the determination of nothing as a "determination of that which is without a determiner" (*genteisurumono naki mono no gentei*) or a "determination without determiner" (*genteisurumono naki gentei*). (Z6 15, 20-21, 116, 149, 162; Z7 12, 205) This allows for its limitless creativity, creating from its store delimited by

nothing. Creation is thus the self-determining act of what is absolutely nothing. (Z6 127) As we saw above the medium for the continuity of discontinuity in the mutual determination among individuals is absolute negation (*zettai hitei*). (Z6 18) And in terms of *basho*, this means absolute nothing. The manifold inter-determinations of the dialectical matrix involving universal and individuals *via* mutual self-negation then occurs as “a determination of the universal of nothing” (*mu no ippansha no gentei*). (Z6 13-14) The notion of a dialectical universal developed in *Tetsugaku no konpon mondai* thus radicalizes the dialectical dynamic involved in the self-determination of a concrete universal, and at the same time points to the *basho* as that *wherein* individuals are implaced and *wherein* the inter-determinations involving universal and individuals transpire. Their interactions and contradictions determine in reverse that *basho* as the matrix of the world. Their universal implies their field that in its non-substantial nothingness makes-room for their interactions, their contradictory self-identity, their continuity of discontinuity. It is not a concept of the whole that sublates and resolves their contradictions. Their medium is the dialectical universal only *qua basho vis-à-vis* nothing. (See Z6 253) Its non-substantiality as a “universal of nothing” (*mu no ippansha*) is what makes possible their self-identity in contradictory inter-determinations. (See Z6 39)

The self-determination of nothing thus forms a part of that manifold dialectic of the dialectical universal we examined above. In other words it makes possible the manifold dialectical determinations of the universal’s self-determination, the individual’s self-determination, the universal’s determination of the individual, the individuals co-determination of one another, and the individuals’ determination of the universal. For

only a field in its non-substantiality can enfold individuals without mitigating their uniqueness. Only a “universal” that is “nothing” *qua basho* can allow for its individuals to be determinants. Hence the individual self partaking in the world can truly be free and creative in the world’s self-creativity out of its nothingness. In our own self-expressive creativity we partake in the world’s and by virtue of its un-delimitation by nothing, the process is endless and the world is in perpetual unrest, which in existential terms means a world of anxiety, a world of doubt. (See Z7 206)

Sec. 6: The Dialectic of Time: Its Enfolding and Unfolding in the Present

As we have already had occasion to see, time plays a significant role in Nishida’s understanding of the dialectic of the concrete. During the 1930s he develops the dialectic of time in conjunction with the dialectic of the world. Temporal determination involves all of the dialectical characterizations we have examined: self-negation, continuity of discontinuity, and contradictory self-identity. The medium for this dialectic of time is the present (*genzai*). Time moves irreversibly in a straight line from present to present, each momentary present determining itself discontinuously from the previous and the next. (See Z8 368-69) In determining itself it negates itself to give-way to the next, whereby in contradictory identity its self-affirmation is its negation, its rising is its falling. Thereby the present transcends itself to move from present to present, from actuality to actuality, without ever returning to what has passed even for an instant. (See Z5 184, 218, 230, 268; Z8 225, 236) In its very continuity time is then discontinuous as a continuity of discontinuities. Nishida contrasts this nature of time with the mechanistic process that moves

from cause to effect (from past to future) and from teleology that moves from potentiality to actuality (or from future to past). (See Z6 18-19, 70; Z8 98, 329, 384-85) Each present moment is not merely the preparation for what follows nor simply the consequence of what precedes. Rather the present is ontologically independent. As such it is discontinuous with every other moment. And yet in its momentariness it negates itself to make way for other moments of the present. At each moment the present must yield in transition to what it previously was *not*, and yet it is always present, an “eternal now” (*eien no ima*), as the *basho* for its on-going self-determination. The now is that focal point of the self-determination of the present. And this, in Nishida’s mind, is what establishes time. This view of time may remind us of some of the Abidharmist theories in Indian Buddhism concerning the momentary nature of the *dharma* but it is closer, in fact, to Dōgen’s sophisticated development of that theory and his analysis of time and impermanence.

As the locus of time, the present in its concrete actuality is prior to the dichotomization of subject-object. In terms of time it is where everything — including the opposition of “I and thou,” the reciprocal determinations between individuals — occurs as its self-determination. (See Z6 267; Z7 74) Even as our actions are determined out of the past and towards the future, we act *in* the present; the time we live is always of the present. At every decisive moment of the present we negate determination from the past to create a new present that will determine the future. And in light of that present we even change the meaning of the past. (See Z6 19) The present as such is the true *substantia* of time. (Z6 65) Nishida views past and future, the innumerable moments, to be all synchronically co-existent within that concrete present as their locus. (Z7 162; Z8 368-69)

In enveloping them, the present as the eternal now determines them both. (See Z6 45; Z7 57) And in determining itself the eternal now envelops time, creatively determining itself in each momentary now. Time, for Nishida, is conceivable only in light of this self-determination of the present enveloping past, present, and future. (Z6 70) His view here is in fact an extension of Augustine's conception of time,¹¹² whereby past, present, and future, are all contained within, and understood in light of, the present. (See Z5 145, Z7 173) The world arises from that present and returns to it. (Z5 104-05) Nishida calls this "absolute present" (*zettai genzai*). As an eternal now, time is absolutely present. But as locus Nishida understands this in terms of the absolute un-delimited place (*basho*), from out of which time flows in the self-determination of the present, from present to present. The present enveloping past and future is thus the *basho* of time. In the domain of the present *qua basho* then, its self-determination of each momentary present also means its co-determination *vis-à-vis* other moments in their synchronic co-existence. They succeed each other in time and yet are also somehow juxtaposed in the a-temporally absolute present. Time unfolds as the inner self-determination of this all-enfolding present. (See Z6 160)

For the personal self, the above translates into his *temporal* non-substantiality. In time, the self continually dies while being born and is born while dying. Every moment in time is a moment of birth-and-death for the self. (See Z5 161) The temporal being of self-existence then is self-contradictory in that moment of rising and falling, being-born and dying. (See Z7 274) It is also the moment of encounter, for the personal self, between being determined *vis-à-vis* the past and freedom *vis-à-vis* the future. In this meet-

ing of past and future in the present, the now proves to be a point of de-cision¹¹³ that cuts-off the past and creates the future. It is what makes possible free creativity (*ex nihilo*) in the face of the open future and escape from environmental determinations necessitated by the past. (See Z5 289) We die at each moment to the past (its determination) to give birth to the future (in free creativity). The individual's free will then is established in this dialectical fact of living by dying. (See Z5 195, 233) One sees this, for example, in a master musician, who, having attained the ability to play an instrument by previous practice along with inborn talent, can also freely improvise new sounds and rhythms. Now in one's determination by the infinite past, one encounters within the present one's past as absolute *other*, a "past *thou*." Past *thou* and present *I* encounter one another dialectically. (Z5 326-27) One's past is an *other* to one's present, determining one's present self, and yet also in understanding that past in light of the present, one in turn determines the past, re-interpreting it. Hence the continuity of discontinuity between "I and thou" is extended here in the direction of time between one's past, present, and future: the *I* of yesterday and the *I* of tomorrow are both *thous vis-à-vis* the *I* of today. (Z5 339) Through the *I* of each moment regarding all other moments as *thou*, hence seeing the continuity of the self in its *otherness*, the unity of personhood is paradoxically established. (See Z5 343, 351) But this also means the self-determination of the present: "...[O]ur life..., in the sense of the present determining itself, is born as the self-determination of the eternal now..., determined as a continuity of discontinuity." (Z5 280) Nishida also finds here the dialectical source of the *ought* in one's responsiveness or responsibility to that infinite

past *vis-à-vis* one's immediate present, just as one finds it in the *thou* in opposition to one's *I*. (See Z5 327, 328)

History, like personal continuity in particular and like time in general, is also a continuity of discontinuity, i.e., distinct epochs. Each of its epochs is analogous to the moment in that it can also be regarded as self-determining. (See Z8 145) The present era is neither simply the result of the previous epoch nor merely a preparation for the following one. It has its own independent significance and meaning that rises and falls *vis-à-vis* other epochs. (Z9 390) And that continuous unfolding of discontinuities, whether in history or in the personal self, occurs within the present *qua basho*.

What all of this means for Nishida is that *qua* self-determination of *basho*, the self-determination of the present, the self-determination of the medium of the continuity of discontinuity, and the self-determination of the dialectical world or universal are all equivalent. (See Z7 124) That is, the self-determination of the eternal present (*eien no genzai*) is one way of speaking of the self-determination of the concrete or dialectical universal but in temporal terms. Just as the universal determines itself *via* self-negation into individuals, the eternal present determines itself in self-negation into each moment *vis-à-vis* all other moments.¹¹⁴ (See Z8 95) The dialectic of the world-matrix is then an on-going result of these self-determinations of the dialectical universal and of the eternal now.

If the present is the foundation of concrete reality in temporal terms then in Nishidan terminology it must also possess contradictory self-identity. In its self-determination

the present is self-contradictory. (Z5 207) For in its momentary self-determination, the present begins as it disappears, it “lives by dying,” as a continuity of discontinuity. (Z5 208) As *basho* the present contains the not-*present* of past and future in its determinations. And it is the locus where made and making, determined and determining, are also in contradictory identity, allowing for their mutual transitions. In addition the present possesses the contradictory self-identity of the many (innumerable moments) and the one (whole of time). (See Z8 369) The non-substantiality of the present, encompassing the dimensions of time in its self-negation, continually giving way for the presencing of the non-present, generates the very flux of time, accounting for the changes of the world. And yet amidst this flux, the present is at rest. (See Z8 90) Only in the sense of being a self-negating medium of nothing is the present the eternal “substance” or *substantia* of time, moving while still, whereby the whole of time is both one and many. And this becomes manifest in the self-determination of the world itself as such a movement-in-stillness. It is both changing and unchanging, in ceaseless motion while always in the present. Even early on in the *Basho* essay of 1926 Nishida made the point that at the bottom of the continually changing stream of consciousness that is unable to return to its past even for an instant, there is the eternally unchanging, which in itself is substantially nothing. (Z3 437) Everything is synchronically co-present not in their monistic oneness but *via* mutual self-negation in the present. Therein time possesses a contradictory self-identity (of one and many). (See Z8 368)

Contradictory identity, as we have seen in previous sections, is possible for Nishida on the basis of a non-substantiality that he characterizes as an un-delimited nothing.

Nishida had earlier adumbrated this understanding of nothing (*mu*) in its temporal dimension in terms of the present in his *Basho* essay of 1926. Therein it is eternal nothing (*eien no mu*) that accounts for irrepeatable time and *creatio ex nihilo*. (See Z3 437-38) Hence we can take it to account for the novelty and unpredictability of time itself. The absolute present then that re-names the dialectical universal in temporal terms is thus also *basho vis-à-vis* absolute nothing. In *Mu no jikakuteki gentei*, the self-awareness of absolute nothing in the temporal dimension becomes the self-determination of the eternal now establishing time. (Z5 109, 112) And the self-determination of the present that establishes time is conversely the self-determination of nothing. (See Z5 112, 145, 147) Just as nothing envelops being, the eternal present envelops time. Both operate as a “place,” *basho*. By “eternity” (*eien*) here Nishida cannot simply mean eternal unchangeability but rather absolute nothing or non-substantiality determining itself everywhere. (Z5 228) Only in its non-substantiality as a field un-delimited by anything can the present thus envelop in the light of time, past, present, and future as its self-differentiations. Only as absolutely nothing does it envelop the flowing of time. (Z5 294-95) It is in that sense that the present is bottomless, determining itself from out of itself, escaping noematic constraints in its abysmal nature as an *Ortzeit* (*bashoji*; “place-time”). (Z5 116) And conversely this means that the un-delimited *basho vis-à-vis* nothing always lies in the concrete present.

Taken in that sense, Nishida tells us, time is spatial, and space in turn envelops time in its self-negation as its *basho*. This is another instance that Nishida characterizes as a contradictory self-identity in that the two terms of space and time in their conceptual definitions are mutually exclusive and yet mutually implicative in their concrete reality.

It is in relation to this that Nishida characterizes time and space as “linear” and “circular.” He tells us that the “linear” (*chokusenteki*) determination in time as a sequence of moments *also* entails a “circular” (*ennkanteki*) determination in the synchrony of their interrelations within time (but also space) as whole. (See Z7 14) Concrete time is not merely linear but is the self-manifestation of a whole that envelops its linear development. (See Z8 503) And since the whole here also involves space, the point is that the individual is not just determining itself in linear time but that its determination also involves the environing world. (Z6 217) The world of the determination of *basho* is circular as a socio-historical world. (See Z6 128) This metaphor of a spatial “circularity” involved in time at its root, allows us to envision the fullness of each moment as saturated with implications and possibilities of the world at-large.¹¹⁵ The present as such an absolute locus or *basho* contains an infinity of possibilities to be actualized *via* its self-negation. Nishida can thus accordingly speak of the co-presence *via* reciprocal self-negation of past and future in the present. (Z7 61-62, 63, 176; Z8 86-87) The present provides the horizontal medium filled with the innumerable possibilities for determining past and future. With his concept of the present Nishida thus “spatializes” time to view it as this medium for the mutual self-negations and interrelations of all temporal dimensions, e.g., past, present, future. Nishida however extends that spatialization of time to signify time’s cross-section with space. That is, he comes to view the fullness of the present, in its implicit containment of the world, as spatial-temporal. For the establishment of objective time occurs within the world’s spatial dimension, the world of social inter-activity, wherein each inter-acting

person experiences the flowing of time from his internal perspective. (See Z5 193) In the inseparability of history and society, time then already involves the spatial.

Sec. 7: The Dialectic of the Space-Time Matrix: The Sphere Without Periphery

In his characterization of the concrete world as dialectical Nishida thus comes to a conception of its concrete whole as a sphere encompassing time and space, the “linear” and the “circular” self-determinations of *basho*. *Basho vis-à-vis* absolute nothing as that non-substantial medium that is one and eternal, in its self-negation, is the world of the many inter-determining one another *both* synchronically and diachronically. That is, the space-time oneness of the dialectical world determines itself into the spatial many (i.e., individuals) and the temporal many (i.e., moments). We ourselves are caught up in this dialectical whirl as continuities of discontinuities, both internally and externally, in the self-determining of the concrete present.

As noted above at the end of the previous section all of this means that time does not unfold alone in its own dimensions but involves the spatiality of the world. While time in its unfolding is linear, Nishida points out that it must also be “circular” at its root, whereby it is established as “space *qua* time, time *qua* space.” (See Z7 120) The “circular” determination of the absolute present points to its spatiality in terms of the social world, but ultimately the world-matrix, the world as dialectical universal. Nishida tells us in *Tetsugaku no konpon mondai* that true dialectical determination is not found simply *within* the temporal unity of the personal self but *between* dialoging persons within the

present, i.e., “I and thou,” “not between the temporal but rather the spatial, between subjectivity and objectivity.” (Z6 107) Nishida repeatedly emphasizes that the self-determination of the self in internal time cannot happen without its co-determination with other selves. Just as the individual determines himself in “linear” fashion *via* time, he is also determined by his environment and in his interactions with other individuals in the “circular” space of his implacement. The individual’s self-determination *via* time immediately means the environment’s self-determination in space; the unity of his self-consciousness immediately implies his implacement within the socio-historical world. (Z6 32, 104) The individual is individual only *vis-à-vis* other individuals. This means that in the world-matrix the direction of diachrony immediately implies the direction of synchrony, i.e., time implies space and vice versa. Far from being restricted to a temporal process the dialectic involves interrelation among synchronic terms. We cannot then conceive of the inter-determination of individuals merely in terms of a dialectic of *process*.¹¹⁶ (Z6 74) For it entails a spatial relationship (*kūkanteki kankei*). (Z6 73) Time as the self-determination of the present entails this spatiality (*kūkanteki*). (Z6 68) Nishida thus emphasizes the inseparability of spatiality and temporality in our dialectical determinations. The world-dialectic, in the self-determination of its concrete present, thus must encompass both “linear” and “circular” directions, or “longitudinal-latitudeal” determination (*tate no gentei, yoko no gentei*), or more simply put, historical and social dimensions. (See Z6 258) Its concrete non-duality is thus a criss-crossing *chiasma* of continuities of discontinuities in temporal and spatial inter-determination.

This inseparability in the concrete between spatiality and temporality provides the basis for Nishida's critique of Bergson in his *Tetsugaku no konpon mondai*. Nishida argues that Bergson's conceptions of "pure duration" and "creative evolution" lack any genuinely *dialectical* character that could accurately portray concrete non-duality. He describes Bergson's "pure duration"¹¹⁷ as resulting from the maximization of individual determination and the minimization of environmental determination; it subsumes universal determination within individual determination. (See Z6 114-15) He finds Bergson's conception of creative evolution, the *elan vital*, and pure duration, all to be conceptions of an activity from *within*, interior to the self, from the standpoint of individual subjectivity and its internal flow of time that subsumes the physical, the spatial, and the environmental. (See Z6 121) But the *elan vitale* becomes conceivable only in relation to the environment *via* the body. If we are to take consciousness as the world's temporal dimension, as a "space for memory," it must still refer to the world's space. (See Z10 186-87) The "linearity" of time must still involve the "circularity" of space. Pure duration must thus involve environmental determination, a spatial dialectic of discontinuity and mutual self-negation.¹¹⁸ (See Z6 64, 102-03, 115, 117-18, 263; See Z8 89, 376) Of course it is questionable whether Bergson ever denied the connection between internal time and the external environment.¹¹⁹ Nishida uses Bergson as a target in order to emphasize the extension of the dialectic into the spatial world.

Basho delimited by nothing, for Nishida thus, extends both spatially and temporally in its self-determinations. On the basis of its self-negation as the self-mediating medium, the world is in contradictory self-identity between inner and outer, immanence

and transcendence, temporal and spatial, one in the self-negation of the many and many in the self-negation of the one. (See Z10 145) Nishida again borrows from Pascal's characterization of nature as an infinite sphere, to metaphorically call this concrete whole of the dialectical world that is both absolutely nothing and eternally present a circle without periphery or with a limitless periphery and without any central point (*chūshinten naku shūhen naki en*). Instead everywhere or every point within it is its focal center.¹²⁰ (See Z5 148-49, 184, 282, 283; Z6 163) The concrete whole is an infinite or endless sphere (*mugendai no kyū, mugen no kyū*), determining itself, enveloping both the flow of time and the expanse of space. (See Z6 107-08, 250-51; Z7 121) The fullness of the present in its momentary self-determination then refers ultimately to that concrete whole of space-time as an infinite or limitless sphere. Its self-determination establishes *both* the unique creativity of each personal standpoint *and* the present moment of each line of temporal unfolding, among innumerable other focal points of the space-time matrix concentrating, and saturated with, the whole. In spatial terms its self-determination has its center of self-awareness everywhere, in each individual's perspective; and in temporal terms the absolute present is always now, everywhere beginning anew and ending at each moment, drawing past and future together into that single point of the present. Within this sphere the self faces the abyss of the whole of infinity on the one hand that simultaneously is absolutely nothing on the other hand. *Basho qua* absolute nothing and absolute present is thus a concrete whole encompassing in its self-determinations in both the "linear" direction unfolding time and in the "circular" direction in its endless spatial expanse. That determination in the present wherein we always find ourselves, however, is never thor-

oughly fixed. The sphere as delimited by nothing is an open abyss. Therein in its self-determinations, self-differentiations, self-dichotomizations, the endless process of dialectic obtains. (See Z5 153)

We might say that *basho* conceived as the concrete present then serves as the very chiasmatic axis of temporal and spatial determinations from which time and space may be abstracted out as separate. (See Z8 233) In that world of the present, everything is generated in a *chiasma* of space-time or circular-linear. (See e.g., Z7 9-10, 55, 64, 198) The world of the present, as Nishida points out, is thus linear but also circular, temporal but also spatial, of the individuals' internal experience but also of the universal unfolding externally. Concrete reality entails this non-duality of time and space in its immediate present. The self-determination of that concrete present whence the world of the many springs then is the self-determination of the world-matrix as a concrete *chiasma* of space-time. The dialectical *logos*-structure of the world-matrix, in the contradictory identity of its *chiasma*, thus encompasses inseparably space and time — as well as universal and individuals, matter and consciousness —, both microcosmically and macrocosmically. (See Z7 174) This dialectical complexity of the concrete then precludes reduction, reification, hypostatization. And on its basis Nishida can conclude that true dialectics does not stand upon a determinate standpoint but rather entails a concrete standpoint that is a standpointless standpoint (*tachiba naki tachiba*). (Z7 167) Elsewhere Nishida thus calls his dialectics one of “Heraclitean realism” (*herakureitosuteki na jitsuzaironteki benshōhō*) that is neither materialism nor idealism.¹²¹ (See Z8 328, 336) It is a “realism” in that it takes note of the dialectical complexity of the concrete.

CHAPTER 7:

THE DIALECTIC OF RELIGIOSITY (FROM THE 1940S)

The issue of what Nishida calls “religion” (*shūkyō*), i.e., man’s relationship to the absolute source or ground of reality, was a concern from the very beginning of his writing career. It was already an issue underlying his discussions of pure experience, epistemology, inter-personal relations, and the historical world. But Nishida fully develops the explicitly dialectical aspects of “religiosity,” in its connection with the world-matrix, only in the last period of his oeuvre, during the mid-1940s up to his own death. One might say that his attempt to answer this question of “religion” in relation to the dialectical matrix marks the apex of all of his philosophical efforts. We find the first obvious attempt on Nishida’s part to establish such a dialectic of religion *vis-à-vis* the world-dialectic in his 1944 essay, *Yoteichōwa o tebiki to shite shūkyōtetsugaku e* (“Toward a Philosophy of Religion, with Pre-established Harmony as Guide”). And his essay of 1945, which also happens to be his last completed work prior to his death, *Basho no ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan* (“The Logic of *Basho* and the Religious Worldview”) recaps and summarizes the main ideas of his philosophical life-work, especially ideas developed from the 1920s and 1930s concerning judgment and knowledge, the historical world, and nothing, while relating them to that ultimate question of religion. Nishida’s appropriation of religious ideas — both of the East and of the West, i.e., Buddhism and Christianity —, while developing his dialectic of religiosity, is most noticeable in these two essays of the mid-

1940s, both included at the end of the final volume of his *Tetsugaku ronbunshū* (*Philosophical Essays*) published in 1945. In these works we see Nishida striving to discern what is the essence of religion while focussing upon the theme we saw earlier of death and finitude in the contradiction of human existence. It is important to realize here that by “religion” Nishida thus has in mind something quite specific. It has to do with an existential sense of self-contradiction in the tension of life-and-death or impermanence one feels in the depths of self-awareness. And what the religions call “God” or “absolute” then for Nishida is what that finite self immediately faces in those depths of self-awareness, i.e., the alterity of the source of being and knowing, the *wherein* we find ourselves always already, always in excess to our attempts at conceptual reduction. In Nishida’s terms it is *basho* delimited by nothing. Nishida unpacks all of this with a further exposition of his dialectic in relation to religion. In this chapter I shall discuss the dialectic we find in both works, and some others, from this period.

Sec. 1: The Monadology of Inter-Expression

Nishida in the works of the 1940s expands upon the world-dialectic of inter-activity that he developed in 1930s. But now he further emphasizes the aspect of expression (*hyōgen*) belonging to that dialectic of inter-determination. Implaced in the world, we find ourselves confronting one another and things in mutual determination. Nishida takes such mutual determination in terms of mutual expression and in terms of the world’s self-expression. (See Z10 303, 319) We are constituted accordingly as we partake in the world’s expressive act, mirroring the world’s expression in our own expressive acts. Ni-

shida certainly did speak of the dialectical world as a world of expression in the previous decade as well. But now the connection with religiosity is made explicit. For to conceive of the universal-individual, world-self, relationships in terms of expression is to conceive of the relationship between two self-expressive *persons*, i.e., God and man. In other words this idea directly ties-in to the dialectic of religiosity that Nishida systematizes in these essays of the 1940s.

As in the 1930s, Nishida during the 1940s divides that world (*sekai*) into three layers of reality from the most abstract to the most immediate: the material (*busshitsuteki*) world of quantifiable mechanical force, the biological (*seimeiteki*) world of life, and the historical (*rekishiteki*) (or socio-historical) world of human inter-activity. (Z10 298f) The most concrete is that last world of human inter-activity, the socio-historical world. Therein we ourselves are things at-work (*hatarakumono*) in the context of our mutual relations. The world understood merely mechanistically in terms of matter or merely teleologically in terms of life are mere abstractions of that world of inter-activity that we concretely live. If we recall, this is the world that in the 1930s Nishida described as possessing the contradictory self-identity (*zettai mujunteki jikodōitsu*) between one and many while also being the self-determination of *basho vis-à-vis* absolutely nothing (*zettai mu*). In the 1940s Nishida will go on to identify the meanings of both of these concepts — absolutely contradictory self-identity and absolute nothing — with what he regards as “God” (*kami*) or the absolute itself.

Nishida explicates the concrete world, in its contradictory self-identity, as neither simply material-mechanistic nor merely biological-teleological, neither just physical nor

utterly ideal — each opposition reflecting only a limited aspect of the world as concrete whole. Instead it is a world of expression. (See Z10 309) We saw in the previous chapter how the world's contradictory identity is mediated by the mutual self-negations of its constituents as well as of itself. Nishida now claims that the world founded upon self-negation is a world of expression: the nothing expresses itself in the multiplicity of beings. Everything as such is a *thou* escaping one's grasp in its self-expressions. (See Z6 57) This becomes a major theme during the 1940s. Developing his earlier ideas about mirroring, Nishida emphasizes this function of expression as what characterizes the reciprocity between world and individual — as opposed to merely mechanistic causality or mere representation — in the dialectic between the one and the many. (See Z10 118-19) The self-formative world is a self-expressive world. (Z10 348) The world's determination in the individual is its expression in the individual, and conversely the self expresses itself in the world by transforming the world. Individuals mutually determine themselves through expression as well. Thus in their mutual encounter things are expressive of themselves, of one another, and of the world. This also means that the expressive and the expressed are one in contradictory self-identity. (Z10 310) The world as a whole enveloping the multiplicity of oppositions and contradictions constitutes a single coherent world. But the many things within the world — the ant, the sun, one's desk, one's boredom —, contradicting and opposing one another, each express that world in its own manner. But out of the variety of these things it is the I in its act of self-awareness that creatively expresses the world's contradiction and partakes in its self-formations. The individual human self in this capacity then, at each moment, is the expressive focal point

(*shōten, hyōgenten*) of the world, its momentary self-determination (*shunkanteki jikogentei*). (See Z10 114, 299, 301, 355) The self is a self-expressive element of the world forming itself in self-expression. The individual's expressive act is thus simultaneously creative *vis-à-vis* the world. And, in acting-intuition, the self intuits the world's self-expressive forms. (See Z10 173) So each self-expressive point (*jiko hyōgenten*) of the whole is also its point of self-awareness (*jikakuten*). (Z10 180) The absolutely contradictory self-identity between the one world and the many individuals then is founded upon the fact that the two terms do not just stand opposed to one another but that the many individuals are implaced within that world as its focal points of expression.

To describe this Nishida, especially in his *Yoteichōwa o tebiki toshite shūkyō tet-sugaku e* of 1944, makes use of Leibniz's concept of monads and their pre-established harmony. He appropriates Leibnizian monadology to describe his own conception of the world's contradictory self-identity between one and many. Nishida conceives the human individual as a monadic point that concentrates the world's self-mirroring; it serves as a microcosmic mirror of the macrocosmic whole. This mirroring is what is also understood in terms of expression so that the self is the world's expressive monad. (See Z10 94, 299) Each monad is a focal point that thoroughly mirrors, from its own unique vantagepoint, the holistic one in its self-expression and self-creation. (See Z10 177) Each of us are thus born in the world to express it in unique fashion. This also means that each monadic self possesses the quality of a single world within itself. (Z10 300, 305) Each individual at-work *vis-à-vis* one another, expressing the whole, is thus simultaneously a monad *and* a single world. We are implaced in the world but the world is within us as well. And

hence we are always in touch with the world's absolutely contradictory self-identity within ourselves. (See Z8 362) The individual self as microcosmic-monadic focal point thoroughly mirrors *within* itself the macrocosmic world's contradictory self-identity. (See Z10 301)

Leibniz, according to Nishida, had also explicated his monadology in terms of “expression” or something like it.¹²² But the difference between Leibniz and Nishida lies in the fact that while for Leibniz the monad's expression is its representation of the world, for Nishida the individual's expression of the world means its creative act as a creative element of the creative world. And while for Leibniz the monad is a windowless “metaphysical point,” a substance,¹²³ for Nishida the monadic self is a creative point (*sō-zōten*) of the historical world, an expressive point of the world's self-expression, inter-related *dialectically* with other such points. (See Z10 107) The Leibnizian monad is an indivisible substantial unity that expresses or “represents” the variety of compounded and outwardly extended material phenomena by concentrating them into its simple and internal immaterial unity. Nishida on the other hand characterizes his own monadology as a “creative monadology” to distinguish it from Leibniz's “representational monadology.”¹²⁴ One might say that it is a monadology of dialectical inter-action between chiasmatic points within the dialectical matrix. Kosaka, commenting on Nishida, characterizes this standpoint of creative monadology as both a “worldism” and an “individualism” in that the individual's expressive creativity and the world's expressive creativity move together, or inter-resonate, in non-distinction: in their mutual expression, the world is expressing itself in the individual and the individual is expressing itself in the world.¹²⁵

From this standpoint, whole and individual are dynamically one. It is in that sense that the I, in each of its momentary acts of consciousness, is an expressive monad of the world.

Nishida underscores the dialectical complexity of this monadology by incorporating, along with its spatial aspect, the temporal dimension. That is, the monadic point is not merely an individual subsisting through linear time but rather the singular moment of its expressive and creative act of self-awareness. Each act of awareness, as a living moment of creativity, actively mirrors the whole of space-time from its own unique vantage point. This also means that the monadic spatio-temporal focal points mirror one another in expressive reciprocity throughout the matrix of space-time. The self-expressive whole simultaneously means the reciprocity of inter-expression between those individuals. (See Z10 98) Not only the self *vis-à-vis* other individual selves but each moment of its acting and self-awareness *vis-à-vis* its past and future are monadic points within the inter-expressive webwork of space-time. Each act of self-awareness reveals one's life-and-death, the contradiction of existence, and the deeper the self-awareness, the more fully one expresses the concrete reality of the world's abysmal nature. The self-aware act in its spatio-temporal singularity *vis-à-vis* the infinite whole of space-time then is a micro-cosmic vector of macro-cosmic self-expression.

As in the dialectic of the 1930s, such mutual expression also means mutual self-negation. In negating itself, the individual through its own self-expression allows for the world to express itself. Monadic individuals in their mutual expressions form the world through their mutual negations. But this conversely means their self-negations serving as

the world's own self-expression. Everything, including our individual personal selves, is then holistically one in self-negation. (Z10 159-60; see Z10 352-54) The whole, in its holistic oneness, expresses itself in self-negation as individuals oppose and interrelate in mutual self-negation. (See Z10 162-63) In that reciprocity between the holistic one's self-negation into the plurality of individuals and the many individuals' self-negations in the holistic one, the whole mirrors and expresses itself within itself with each individual serving as its unique point of self-expression. (Z10 166, 168) In this way Nishida thus depicts the world's contradictory self-identity between one and many as an inter-expressive whole. Nishida writes:

What are at-work upon one another in that world, each contains within itself a single focal point of the world. They go-on forming the entire world by standing-opposed to one another other as [each] a single world determining itself self-expressively and in reciprocal self-negation. In other words, each, as an angle of the world, constitutes the single world by relating to and determining one another. The concrete world, i.e., the historical world, existing and moving on its own, contains the focal points of the world within itself, and continually transforms itself by taking these dynamic focal points as its centers. (Z10 305)

In each self-aware act and from its own perspectival point, we dynamically express that dialectical matrix of the whole world within our own selves. The self as the expressive monad of the world, in this way constitutes the focal point for the world's own self-expression.

Nishida thus takes expression to be the structural medium on the basis of which both cognition and acting are to be understood; they are both expressions of the world.¹²⁶ But as I alluded to above, in distinction from Leibniz, expression for Nishida means the creative act that dialectically moves from the created to the creating, the made to the

making *via* self-negation. On the basis of such inter-activity of expressive acts between individuals and objects, actors and acted upon, expressers and expressed, history unfolds. Each expressive moment of the process of the reciprocity between self and world is a moment of the historical world's self-formation *via* moment-to-moment mutual self-negation. As such the monad in Nishida's case is not a substance as in Leibniz. And neither is the self-expressive monad, or harmonious whole of interrelated monads (the world), Aristotle's *hypokeimenon*. For self-expression happens in self-negation, it is non-substantial. (Z10 158)

Nishida translates that monadology of inter-expression into religious terms in a variety of ways, most notably the medieval mystical notion of an infinite sphere (*mugen kyū*). For example in *Basho no ronri to shūkyō teki sekaikan* of 1945, he comes to view each monad as a mirroring self-expression of God in His "pre-established calculus" of divine creation.¹²⁷ In *Dekaruto tetsugaku ni tsuite* ("On Cartesian Philosophy") of 1944 as well, Nishida characterizes this as a contradictory self-identity between the finite and the infinite, between self and God. (See Z10 134) In 1945 he describes this as the absolute expressing itself in the relative, the transcendent becoming immanent. Adding to his earlier appropriation of Pascal's infinite sphere, Nishida borrows from the medieval theologian Nicholas of Cusa, to express the idea that we are the world's singular focal points (*isshōten*) mirroring or expressing the entire world as well as its eternal past and eternal future in the self-determination of the absolute present. (Z10 340-41) The world of the absolute present as such is a sphere of infinite radius (*sphaera infinita*) and no circumference (*shūhen naki mugendai no kyū*), having its center everywhere.¹²⁸ (Z10 103, 301)

The entire universe, past, present, and future, endlessly creates itself through the infinity of its individual focal points within its infinite sphere. We are those innumerable monadic points in the infinite sphere without periphery/circumference, as momentary determinations of the absolute present. (Z10 340-41) Nishida is thus taking Leibnizian monadology in a direction that accords with Cusa's mystical notion of that infinite sphere. Nishida also makes use of Cusa's description of God as a "coincidence of opposites" (*coincidentia oppositorum*), namely that infinite sphere as irreducible to any particular being while simultaneously fullest in being.¹²⁹ (Z10 110) Accordingly Nishida likens the *basho* of absolutely contradictory self-identity, the world of the absolute present, and historical space, all to this infinite sphere, mirroring itself within itself without substratum (*mukiteiteki*). (Z10 322) All of these applications and meanings of the metaphor come together in Nishida's conception of the absolute present that *qua* macro-cosmic whole of space-time corresponds to each of its infinite micro-cosmic centers. God as such is the infinite formless form forming itself, as in Spinoza's "*natura naturans = natura naturata*,"¹³⁰ mirroring and expressing itself in the countless monads. (See Z10 95) What in religious terms is God's revelation thus is the self-expression of the absolute in the monadology of inter-expression. (Z10 320) It is from this inter-expressive relationship between the I (and its acts) and the world in light of that infinite sphere that Nishida seeks to understand the phenomenon of "religion."

Sec. 2: The Logic of *Soku-hi*

Throughout his works of the 1940s Nishida construes “religion” (*shūkyō*) specifically in the paradoxical form of contradictory self-identity that the sacred or the absolute takes in its manifestation in the ordinary and everyday. That is, the absolute, God, is not to be reduced to, or objectified as, something transcendent standing-opposed to the self. Instead it is in an “immanent transcendence” (*naizaiteki chōetsu*), wherein we find ourselves implaced or, in religious terms, embraced in its compassion. In other words, Nishida in these works is explicitly associating the religious notion of God with his own concept of *basho vis-à-vis* absolutely nothing. Nishida accordingly conceives of the religious relationship between self and absolute in terms of his key concept of mutual self-negation. Even earlier in the late 1930s, for example in *Rekishiteki sekai ni oite no kobutsu no tachiba* (“The Standpoint of the Individual in the Historical World”) (1938), Nishida had expressed correspondence between absolutely contradictory self-identity and the God of religion. (See Z8 346) In the 1940s he develops this way of understanding the religious relationship or “religiosity” in terms of what he calls the “logic of *soku-hi*.”

In order to explain his dialectical logic, Nishida in these works of the 1940s, for the first time in his career, makes explicit reference to the Buddhist doctrines of the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras*. This provides Nishida with an avenue for contrasting his own dialectic from that of Hegel – this in spite of his own appropriation of Hegelian terminology throughout his career. Instead of looking to Hegel as the source of his “absolute dialectic,” Nishida suggests that it can be traced to a form of logic found in the *Prajñāpāramitās*. (Z10 317) Nishida here is most certainly indebted to his many conversations with his

friend D.T. Suzuki when referring to the “*Prajñāpāramitā* logic of *soku-hi*” in his *Basho-teki ronri to shūkyō teki sekaikan*. (See e.g., Z10 333) The term *soku-hi*, the Japanese reading of the Chinese *chi-fei*, connotes the conjunction or inseparability in “is and is-not” or “affirmation-yet-negation,” the structural bi-conditionality or non-duality in their mutual reference and interdependence. It expresses the dialectical identity of absolute contradictories, i.e., affirmation or “is” (*soku*) on the one hand and negation or “is-not” (*hi*) on the other. And this is founded upon the Mahāyāna notion of the emptiness (*śūnyatā*) or non-substantiality of the real.¹³¹ Nishida understands his own idea of *basho* to designate the very locus of that dialectical structure.

The paradoxical logic of *soku-hi* becomes most pronounced in Nishida’s discussions of the absolute or God. Nishida tells us that an absolute that stands-opposed to the relative would itself be relative (i.e., to the relative) and hence not truly absolute. No being can stand against the absolute to relativize it. Standing unopposed by any being, the true absolute must be beyond all oppositions (*zetsu-tai*). “Absolute” (*zettai*) means that it is ab-solved, cut-off (*zetsu*) from all opposition (*tai*). In opposing absolutely nothing, it is absolute being (*yū*) and yet in being un-opposed, as un-delimited and hence in-definite, it is nothing (*mu*) determinable. The absolute possesses then the contradictory self-identity of being and nothing. (Z10 315-16) Its self-identity is self-contradictory. Nishida explains that in its opposition by nothing, the absolute determines itself only through its own self-negation that makes-room within itself for co-relative beings. (Z10 315-16) As the absolute itself cannot be objectified in opposition to the relative, it instead bears within itself the relative in its own self-negation or self-contradiction. (See Z10 315-16) In

other words, this is a further extension of his earlier notion of *basho* as delimited by absolutely nothing, determining itself in self-negation. The Nishidan absolute thus is a self-negating nothing. He defines it as “the absolutely contradictory self-identity that contains its absolute negation within itself.” (Z10 321) God *qua* absolute nothing then entails its own internal negation to encompass its opposite. Rather than negating the relative, the absolute “inverts itself into the form of the relative.” (Z10 316) In possessing itself through self-negation, the absolute one expresses itself in the world of the innumerable many. And this is the true God’s act of creation. The real God cannot be just utterly transcendent and self-sufficient, eternally unchanging beyond the world of transience. God must empty His self in self-expression and thus create. God substantialized then is no true God. Its oneness must be non-substantial, allowing for the contradictory self-identity between one and many, absolute and relative.

For Nishida God must be absolutely non-substantial, no-thing. And in its self-negation, we are reminded of the Mahāyāna notion of the emptiness of emptiness (*śūnyatā śūnyatā*) that denies *sva-bhāva* (“self-nature,” “own-being”) to even emptiness itself. Telling us, in his *Yoteichōwa o tebiki to shite shūkyō tetsugaku e* of 1944, that the true God, rather than being the so-called “God,” must instead be what the mystical theologians of the West had called *Gottheit*, Nishida immediately adds “the emptiness [*śūnyatā*] of the *Prajñāpāramitās*” to this equation. (Z10 104) And in the following year (*Basho-teki ronri to shūkyō teki sekaikan*), he makes the claim that the absolutely contradictory self-identity of God, as containing absolute negation, is best expressed by the *Prajñā-*

pāramitā dialectic of *soku-hi* (*hanya no sokuhiteki benshōhō*). (Z10 321) To express this, Nishida, in the manner of the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*, states that because,

...God... is absolutely nothing, He is absolutely being.... Hence... because there is the Buddha there are sentient beings and because there are sentient beings, there is the Buddha; and because there is God as creator there is the world as creation, and conversely because there is the world as creation, there is God. (Z10 316, see also 324-25)

With the absolute's self-inversion into the relative *via* self-negation; the transcendent is thus the immanent and God is simultaneously everywhere and nowhere. This is a development of his earlier notion of the self-determination of *basho vis-à-vis* absolutely nothing, whereby the transcendent is immanent and the immanent is transcendent.¹³² (Z9 469) To support this paradoxical view Nishida further quotes the following passage from the *Diamond Sūtra*: "Because all dharmas are not all dharmas, they are called all dharmas; Because the Buddha is no Buddha, he is the Buddha; Because sentient beings are not sentient beings, they are sentient beings." (Z10 316-17) Nishida reads this passage in accordance with his own previous discussions (from the 19330s) of the inter-determination and reverse determination between universal and individual *via* self-negation, in other words the idea that while the universal determines the individual it in turn is determined by the co-determination of individuals.¹³³ And he applies that reading to the theistic notion of God that results in an un-orthodox, or rather quite "non-theistic," understanding of "God." In the 1945 essay *Kūkan* ("Space") as well Nishida equates that absolute negation *qua* affirmation of absolute nothing, in its absolutely contradictory self-identity, with the true emptiness of Buddhism (*bukkyō no shinkū*). (Z10 157) So he takes the *Prajñā-*

pāramitā sūtra's logic of *soku-hi* as already expressing the paradox of absolute self-contradiction. (See Z10 317)

In distinguishing this Buddhistic aspect of his dialectic from Hegel's noematic dialectic, Nishida describes his idea of absolutely contradictory self-identity as belonging to the framework of the eight-fold negation (*happu*) as developed by Indian Madhyamaka and Chinese *San-lun*.¹³⁴ (Z10 317) The four double-negations (of is, is-not, both is and is-not, and neither is nor is-not) denying any assertion that can be made about anything provides a middle-path between attachment to being as substantial and the utter nihilistic rejection of being. This can be traced back to the prime representative of Indian Madhyamaka, Nāgārjuna, who calls into question every sort of postulation of being (*qua* substance or *sva-bhāva*) and correlates emptiness (*śūnyatā*) and dependent origination (*pratītya-samutpāda*). As such it is a variant of the *soku-hi* structure of the *Prajñāpāramitā* mode of thinking. But Nishida's own unique contribution here is in taking that Buddhist logic of *soku-hi* and applying its structure to themes found in Christianity as well as to one's existential concern *vis-à-vis* death. Nishida, for example, appropriates the Christian language of *kenosis*, the self-emptying of God, to illustrate the same paradox of the concrete depicted by the *Prajñāpāramitā* logic, while conversely applying that logic of *soku-hi* in his interpretation of Christian *kenosis*.¹³⁵ (See Z10 317) The result is his dialectical concept of the "inverse correspondence" between God and man, absolute and relative.

Sec. 3: The Dialectic of Inverse Correspondence

Throughout the 1930s Nishida had already alluded to the connection between the self-contradiction in the depths of one's self and what he considered to be the issue of "religion" or "religiosity." In the mid-1940s Nishida comes to explicate this more fully in the dialectical terms of inverse correspondence (*gyakutaiō*) between the absolute and the finite self. I think it possible to even take the notion of generation-and-extinction in relation to *basho vis-à-vis* absolute nothing in the "*Basho*" essay of 1927 as a conceptual precursor to this idea of inverse correspondence. Nishida now views the unfolding of the self-determining world, encompassing individual persons, thoughts, and events, all explicitly in light of the absolute's self-negation (*qua* nothing), as its own expressions. And he takes this further in terms of *basho* as the absolute enveloping the individuals of the world as it makes-room for them. *Basho* as absolute nothing determines, negates, transforms, itself within itself into the activities of the many individuals, which in turn become expressed in each individual self's self-awareness. This is a development of Nishida's previous notion from the 1930s of reverse determination (*gyaku gentei*) whereby the universal's self-determination is its determination of individuals, which conversely however is the individuals' self-determinations and moreover the individuals' determination of the universal itself. Nishida has now translated this dialectical matrix of inter-determination into the explicitly religious terms of the interrelationship between God and man and in light of one's existential concern *qua* finite existence *vis-à-vis* death. To designate this inter-relationship in its religious significance Nishida coins the new phrase "inverse correspondence" (*gyakutaiō*).

Man as finite confronts and touches God *qua* infinite only in death, i.e., negation. This is the relationship that Nishida designates with the term “inverse correspondence.” Earlier in 1938 (*Rekishiteki sekai ni okeru kobutsu no tachiba*), Nishida explains the encounter between God and man as occurring internally within the self in terms of the individual’s internal mirroring of the world’s contradictory self-identity as its monadic focal point, its perspective. (See Z8 362) That is, man and God stand in absolutely contradictory self-identity. (Z10 104-05, 111) In the very interior depths of his life, man lives in self-contradiction *vis-à-vis* death. And it is on this basis (of self-contradiction) — microcosmic self-contradiction mirroring macrocosmic self-contradiction — that man as relative being encounters the absolute. But in his finitude man, from his side, is incapable of treading upon the path of this encounter to God; there is no path leading from man to God. (Z8 365; Z10 104) A gap of eternity separates man from God. But as stated in the previous section that which simply transcends the finite is not truly absolute. Rather the true absolute must be that which envelops us and wherein we are implaced. (Z8 365; Z10 105) God *qua* absolute must mediate itself in its encounter with relative existence *via* self-negation predicated upon non-substantiality. The absolute’s de-substantializing nothingness thus serves as the place, *basho*, for that very meeting between absolute and relative. By becoming self-aware of the self-contradiction of life in its deepest root *vis-à-vis* death, man penetrates to his existential source at the place where he meets God in self-negation. Nishida in 1938 takes this to be the essence of “religion” (*shūkyō*). (Z8 365) But now in 1945 he develops this idea further in terms of the dialectic of inverse correspondence between absolute and relative. Just as man meets God in death, God meets

man in His self-negation, or, in Christian terms, *via gratia* (grace) and *agape* and symbolically portrayed as Christ — that is, God’s incarnation in, and death as, man. God and man *via* mutual self-negation thus are in inverse correspondence. (Z10 325) Just as God possesses himself in self-negation, we as images of God exist as God’s self-mirroring self-negations. While separated by an eternity, man and God are hence immediate to one another in their inverse correspondence. Nishida illustrates this simultaneity of transcendence and immanence in *Bashoteki ronri to shūkyō teki sekaikan* with a saying of Zen master Myōchō (Daitō Kokushi): “Buddha and I, parted through a billion *kalpas* of time, yet not separate for a single instant/moment; encountering each other the whole day through, yet not encountering each other for an instant.” (Z10 317; Z10 104)

The dialectic of God’s self-negation is such that God, as the true absolute, is simultaneously absolutely being and absolutely nothing in contradictory identity: “[B]ecause... [God] is an absolute nothing, it is an absolute being... It becomes being in being absolutely nothing.” (Z10 316) God is nowhere to be found in this world, and yet he is everywhere. Nishida states that “the true absolute exists there where it inverts itself as thoroughly relative.” (Z10 316) In other words, God is present in His inverse correspondence with ourselves. The absolute is absolute in becoming thoroughly relative. Through self-negation God paradoxically exists in the many individuals, omni-present in the world of co-relativity. (Z10 316) As absolute being, rather than transcending the co-relative beings, God encounters and embraces them. (See Z10 333, 344) Despite its transcendence and invisibility, the absolute is thus within this world and immanent to man: “The truly dialectical God is the God that is thoroughly immanent while thoroughly tran-

scendent, thoroughly transcendent while thoroughly immanent.” (Z10 317) In self-withdrawal God envelops the world as its *basho*. For only as *basho* can God be both transcendent and immanent. Nishida takes this to be expressed *both* in the Christian terms of grace, *agape*, and the incarnation, *and* in the Pure Land Buddhist terms of compassion. (See Z10 321, 345) *Agape* is God’s love that saves humanity in self-sacrifice, i.e., His incarnation and death *as* man. In Christianity, the absolute’s self-negation thus translates into *kenosis*, God’s self-emptying absolute love expressed in both the creation and the redemption of the world. (See Z10 317, 345-46, 349) Absolute love (*zettai ai*) embraces all, both the wise and the foolish, the good and the evil. That is to say that it embraces its opposite: in His absolute *agape* God descends down even to the utterly diabolical. (Z10 321, 345) Nishida declares that the absolute, in whatever religion, must manifest this sort of love. (Z10 345) What in Christianity is God’s love, in Buddhism translates to the Buddha’s infinite compassion. In Pure Land terms this would be Amida’s deep wish to save the sinful more than the saint.¹³⁶ And in general Mahāyāna thought we may link such contradictory self-identity in the absolute’s transcendence and immanence to the non-duality between *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*.¹³⁷ The absolute’s self-negation is possible in each religion only because the real God is really *Gottheit* and the real Buddha is empty, i.e., the absolute is non-substantial, it can contradict itself in its non-substantiality. Nishida thus equates God *qua* absolute with the formless source of the world constituting its own self-formations in self-negation. And in enveloping everything thus generated, God is really *basho vis-à-vis* absolutely nothing. (See Z10 329)

Now man's confrontation with God requires the utter denial of all that is human; the only avenue to God is utter self-negation.¹³⁸ (See Z10 315; Z13 235) This means death to one's own ego. Living then, for man, is already dying. But in such death one is born to one's true self, one realizes the "real" self. (Z10 335) In other words, in confronting one's impermanence or non-substantiality, "eternal death" (*eien no shi*), one becomes aware of one's own existential finitude and one authenticates one's self in the singularity of one's being in space and time. (See Z10 314) Nishida takes this penetration into the core of one's interior contradictory self-identity to be the meaning behind what Zen calls "seeing into one's nature" (*kenshō*). (Z10 352-53) It opens-up and brings-forth the abysmal nothing at the core of one's self and wherein one hovers, the nothing that absolutely negates one's self-being. One realizes that one's self at bottom is groundless: "At the bottom of itself, where there is nothing, the self, thoroughly nothing, responds to the absolute one in inverse correspondence." (Z10 355) Only insofar as one confronts that deep self-contradiction *vis-à-vis* death, one's nothingness, in the questioning of one's self whereby one's own existence becomes an issue, does one enter into the dimension of religiosity, which Nishida also identifies as the true issue of philosophy itself. (Z10 312-13) Only humans can have this explicit awareness of their existential self-contradiction establishing their being. As that self-contradiction within the self is the *raison d'être* of the self's existence, its awareness constitutes one's authenticity as a self. (Z10 314, 324) Nishida however takes this interior self-contradiction of human existence — God's self-negation that establishes man (*...kami no jikogentei to shite ningen no seiritsu...*) — to also be the meaning behind the Christian concept of original sin universally inherited by

humanity.¹³⁹ (Z10 342) For the story was that in eating from the “tree of knowledge,” man “becomes like God.” (*Genesis* ch.3) That is, man within himself must mirror the self-contradiction of the absolute. Hence in proportion to the degree of self-awareness, one experiences *angst* in virtue of that self-contradiction in the depths of one’s existence. (Z10 111) In Christian terms this is the awareness of sin. As one grows in self-awareness, one becomes increasingly aware of the internal contradiction, the existential sorrow (*hiai*) or tragic condition of human existence, until one reaches the self’s abysmal “vanishing point” (*shōshitsuten*). (Z10 356) And this is what for Nishida is the beginning of religious awareness, a conversion of life or a religious turning of the mind (*shūkyō teki kaishin*). (Z10 111; see Z10 312-13) This also means, in religious salvific terms, that the one most fully aware of his own inner evil or sin is more likely to be “saved” than the one fully confident in self-righteousness. In other words, there must be corresponding self-negation on both sides of the salvific act: self-doubt on the part of the saved and self-sacrifice on the part of the savior. Only to the extent that the self becomes nothing in the will’s self-abnegation does one touch upon the absolute in inverse correspondence to the absolute’s self-negation. In other words it is more difficult for the morally confident to attain such religiosity “...than for a camel to enter through the eye of a needle.” (*The Gospel According to Matthew* ch.19, v.24) But this can be translated into Zen terms as well. At first glance Pure Land devotionalism appears to be the form of Buddhism most comparable to, or compatible with, Christianity as the religion of grace. But Nishida has already claimed in the mid-1930s that *satori* in Buddhism is really no different.¹⁴⁰ (Z7 210) In addition he reminds us in 1939 and here of Dōgen’s statement that “to study the

Buddha's way is to study the self, and to study the self is to forget the self." (Z8 512, 514; Z10 336) And further he interprets Zen's speaking of "seeing into one's nature" (*ken-shō*), accordingly, to refer to the absolute's self-negation that establishes one's self, one's self-possession in what transcends the self, self-affirmation in self-negation. (See Z10 352-53)

Only then, in the attainment of religious awareness that is a self-less self-awareness, does one come to face God. Only in death does the relative face the absolute, does the self face God. (See Z10 314-15) In facing the abyss that engulfs the instantaneous twinkle that is one's life within the dark nothing, one faces God. In dying to one's self — as ego, own-being, or substance, i.e., to one's substantialized self — one realizes one's true nature as the self-negation of the absolute. Man faces God only as God's *own* mirror image. What this means, as Nishida significantly points out, is that one's religious turn occurs *not* from one's self but from the calling voice (*yobigoe*) of God or Buddha. (Z10 325) In self-negation one simultaneously discovers that it is happening as God's own absolute (self-)negation. (See Z10 326) God and man, in contradictory self-identity, thus meet in the bottomless depths of mutual self-negation in inverse correspondence.¹⁴¹ Since the issue of religion only arises in our confrontation with the tragic, the finitude of existence, true religion, from Nishida's standpoint, then cannot be about self-betterment through self-reliance. Quite to the contrary, the significance of works through one's own efforts must be downplayed. In this Nishida sees a parallel between the Christian concept of original sin and the True Pure Land sect's rejection of self-power (*jiriki*). Both the Christian view of the fall of man and the True Pure Land Buddhist view of man's deluded

and desirous nature express and exemplify this idea that man in his fallen state cannot encounter the absolute without self-negation. We are intrinsically sinners and deluded. The attitude of pure self-reliance gets us nowhere. The point for these religions is that we can only be saved in reliance upon the infinite compassion of Amida Buddha or the infinite grace of God in Christ. Nishida finds in both religions this motif of salvation whereby one meets the absolute only by sinking into the self-aware depths of existential contradiction *qua* finite being. Religious self-awareness thus arises in all three religions — Christian, Pure Land, and even Zen — through the *prāxis* of self-negation as opposed to self-affirmation.

The more one realizes one's sinful nature, the more one faces God. One must take this to the farthest extent so that one no longer regards even self-negation itself as one's own doing. In facing God, it is rather God and not one's self that is doing the facing. Man, in his finitude, his foolishness or sinfulness, on his own can make no contact with the absolute. Self-awareness of one's finitude or limitation must be taken as supported by the working-activity of the absolute. A similar idea was expressed much earlier when Nishida claimed that the world's self-awareness and the individual self's self-awareness coincide: "When the world becomes self-aware, our self becomes self-aware, and when our self becomes self-aware, the world becomes self-aware." (Z9 528) But what comes into view here is the a-symmetry from the human perspective in the religious relationship between the absolute and man. God's working is expressed in man's working and man's working is supported by God's working, and they work together *via* mutual self-negation. In mutual self-negation the finite self and the infinite absolute work

together in inverse correspondence as dialectically one. But from man's side, this means that, in his working towards salvation (or enlightenment), the absolute is *already* at-work, it is the doing of the absolute. And that is why Nishida states that "the religious spirit occurs not from one's self but is the calling [*yobigoe*] of God or Buddha..., the working activity of God or Buddha..." (Z10 325) Nishida finds this "call" paralleled in both the Christian notion of the Word (*logos*) of God and the Pure Land concept of calling Amida's name (*myōgō*). The calling for help that mediates the reciprocity between savior and saved — e.g., in True Pure Land terms, calling on the Buddha's name (*myōgō*) (See Z10 350) — is already the absolute's salvific call. The point is that deliverance from delusion or sin requires divine self-negation — whether taken as God's love or Buddha's compassion — in inverse correspondence with the individual self's self-negation. In Lutheran terms this means faith (*fide*) *vis-à-vis* grace (*gratia*) as opposed to works, and in Pure Land Buddhist terms it means enlightenment *via* reliance on other-power (*tariki*). In 1935, in his *Zushiki setsumei* ("Schematic Explanation") for *Tetsugaku ronbunshū dai ichi* (*Philosophical Essays Vol. I*), Nishida had already made this point, albeit briefly, that while there is conversion on the part of man and grace on the part of God, one is to realize that one's own religious seeking is not by means of one's ability but rather by means of grace. And in 1945 Nishida cites Luther in this regard that faith is God working in us so that by killing the old "Adam" (i.e., in admitting one's original sin) within us, we are made to live entirely anew in God.¹⁴² (See Z10 336)

That doing on the part of the absolute, operating behind selfless self-negation in man's conversion experience, we must remember however is also its *own* self-negation.

Just as a relative being cannot face the absolute without dying to its self and passing into nothing, the same is conversely true for the absolute. It cannot simply be transcendent to, i.e., *relative to*, the relative. The working-activities of wanderer and savior are in correspondence. But two distinct substances, self-affirming positivities, could never meet. The co-correspondence must occur *via* mutual self-negation that is a mutual opening up to one another. In mutual expression, one faces the absolute at the extreme limit of one's individual will, God, conversely, faces one's self in His absolute will. The dynamic of religious conversion points to that reciprocal non-duality between absolute and relative, God and self, in the conjunction of divine grace or enlightened compassion with one's own self-less exertion. Nishida thus finds in both the Christian experience of faith and Buddhist experience of enlightenment, an expression of the inverse correspondence between the absolute (God or Buddha) and the relative (the individual self). But he understands both in terms of the "logic" that he traces back to the *Prajñāpāramitās*.

So here with this theory of inverse correspondence Nishida in the 1940s has furthered the implications of his notion of absolutely contradictory self-identity. While the notion of inverse correspondence is a radicalization of the notion of absolutely contradictory self-identity, it may be, as Kosaka claims, that Nishida felt that absolutely contradictory self-identity alone was not sufficient to express the paradoxical correlation between absolute and self as especially manifest in the sphere of religion. Hence he formulated the new phrase "inverse correspondence" to express how absolute and individual, even as they are separated by an eternity, are in contact "inversely" in reciprocal self-negation.¹⁴³ In order to preclude any possibility of hypostatizing or reifying its aspect of self-identity

Nishida has drawn our attention to the complementarity of mutual self-negation whereby the corresponding work on both contradictory or opposing ends cannot be mistaken for self-affirmative acts. They are identical only dialectically in their respective self-negations of any substantial self-identity. That dialectical correspondence of their working-activities is a fitting-together of enveloping and enveloped, place (*basho*) and implaced. The “correspondence” in “inverse correspondence” refers to their mutual fit in implacement. The relative, which itself is a consequence of the self-negation of the absolute, negates itself in being enveloped by the absolute as the absolute itself negates itself. Absolute and relative thus inversely correspond *via* mutual self-negation. The correspondence of absolute and relative is inverse but is reciprocally so in the sense of a fit between macrocosmic place and implaced microcosm, moving in both directions on both sides.

In that respect we still see Nishida working in these formulations of inverse correspondence to articulate his philosophy of *basho vis-à-vis* nothing that he had initiated in 1926. If we remember that the absolute in its un-delimited nothingness is ultimately the *basho* of the world, we can also understand the absolute’s self-negation in inverse correspondence with relative beings in the sense of a self-inverting space, or a self-withdrawal that makes space, for beings. It is the relationship of implacement between place and implaced that allows the gap of eternity separating absolute and relative to be crossed. Thereby the absolute *qua* enveloping *basho* can embrace beings in its immanent transcendence. Nishida retains his old theory that *basho* in its self-contradictory self-negation as absolutely nothing, beyond being and non-being, envelops every oppositional relation,

providing the medium for oppositional interactions. Nishida is thus applying to the implicit dualism in religion the *basho*-theory that he had used decades prior in order to bridge the dichotomy in epistemology.

Although Nishida shows us, as we saw above, that inverse correspondence is certainly not foreign to Zen, perhaps it is more easily detectable in the other religions that he discussed, the two devotional religions of grace, Protestant Christianity and True Pure Land Buddhism. In that case, what aspect of his dialectic of religiosity seems most Zen-like? There is his concept of the “everyday/ordinary” (*byōjōtei*) And yet in the peculiar fashion of his cross-cultural religious syncretism we find it combined with the Christian term of “eschatology.” We now turn to this strange concept of the “eschatology of the everyday.”

Sec. 4: The Eschatology of the Everyday

Nishida during this period of the 1940s continues his discussions of time from the 1930s in terms of the absolute present. But he reformulates the inter-relationship between the arising and the perishing monadic-like instants, and the *basho*-like eternal present that embraces it, in light of their inverse correspondence, in terms of the dialectic of religiosity. As in the 1930s, he takes the absolute present as sustaining the world at each moment, giving birth to it anew, whereby the historical world unfolds from made to making at each moment. But now he attends more to identifying that absolute present in religious terms as God.¹⁴⁴ On this basis he can thus view each individual self, at each *moment*, as God’s unique self-determination. (See Z10 92, 114) This also means that each of our

acts, in self-awareness, express the absolute present's self-determinations whereby the eternal past and the eternal future it enfolds are unfolded into the light of the present. (See Z10 300) It is in that moment of the present that we live time in immediacy with what Nishida now depicts in its religious significance as the inverse correspondence between absolute and finite. The reality of the concrete is in that present moment, which is thus saturated with religious significance and existential meaning. For it is in that present that one dies and is reborn as a reflection of God.

It is in that sense that Nishida in *Bashoteki ronri to shūkyō teki sekaikan* characterizes the absolute present in its self-determination, borrowing Christian terminology, as *eschatologisch* (eschatological, *shūmatsuronteki*). (Z10 354, see also 337) He explains however that by “eschatological,” he means something different from its Christian sense whereby it is wont to be conceived teleologically in terms of a transcendent object functioning as *telos* or end. He thinks of the eschatological rather in terms of the absolute's immanent transcendence (*naizaiteki chōetsu*) within ourselves, in its inverse correspondence, whereby “we are in accordance [*ouzuru*] with the absolute one by transcending our selves.” (Z10 355) The individual person's self-negation is in co-respondence¹⁴⁵ with the self-negation of the absolute present. The self, as an historical individual, in thus facing the absolute as its self-contradiction in the present moment (absolute present), the self in its religious self-awareness as God's self-negation, is eschatological. Our actions, being historical as self-determinations of the absolute present, are eschatological as well. And *basho* itself, in that absolute present, and in its explicitly existential or religious significance, as the existential matrix wherein we realize the absolute and the absolute real-

izes itself in us, is thus eschatological. Eschatological urgency here is not in light of some distant future but rather of the present. In other words, the *eschaton*, the “end,” is now at *every moment*, saturated with significance, in the absolute’s self-determination. The world in its dynamic concrete immediacy, as an absolute present, is in that sense “eschatological.”

In thus re-interpreting the meaning of “eschatology,” Nishida draws a connection to the Zen-like understanding of the “ordinary and everyday” as manifest in the present moment. Every point in space, at each moment, is the creative point of the absolute’s self-determination, established in its self-negation of the eternal past and the eternal future, a self-negation of its eternity. (Z10 101) As we saw in our previous chapter, it is here in the present that Nishida views the world as moving from the made to the making, the point in time when, as creative elements of the self-creative world, we transcend past conditioning and create the future anew. (See Z10 346) In Zen terminology that present is the locus of the everyday. It is therein that the simultaneity of transcendence and immanence, the self-determination of the absolute present, is manifest. Nishida expresses that immeasurable depth of non-substantiality (*mukitei*), as available in the utterly ordinary, with the Zen-like terminology of “ordinariness/everydayness” (*byōjōtei*).¹⁴⁶ (Z10 356) As the self’s most concrete reality, Nishida takes it to be the deepest foundation of personhood that is nevertheless manifest at the shallowest surface of one’s being. (See Z10 358) The most primordial is in the utterly routine; it does not transcend the actual as something higher and beyond. The moment of authentic self-awareness, exhausting the self in self-negation, whereby self-transformative conversion freely takes place, is hence

immediate to that deep root of one's self in the utterly ordinary. It is in that sense that self-awareness mirrors the absolute whole in one's concrete present, one's monadic point in space-time expressing the macrocosmic whole. The present one lives in the here and now possesses an immeasurable depth, and yet it is ordinary, not super-ordinary. Kosaka in his commentary on Nishida explains that while "inverse correspondence" expresses the religious relationship between the absolute and the finite self with emphasis on the working-activity of the absolute, "ordinariness" here expresses the very standpoint of religion in the state of "seeing one's [true original] nature" (*kenshō*) or "[religious] conversion of mind" (*eshin*), that is the state of religious self-awareness on the side of man.¹⁴⁷ It is standpoint of conversion arrived at in self-negation in one's ordinary and everyday existence.

Nishida discovers the eschatological in this ordinariness. For it is therein that we are always in touch with *both* the inception *and* the termination of history; we eschatologically stand upon the beginning and the end of the world *at each moment*. (Z10 105) There, in the momentary present, we are in contact with the world's beginning and end, the *alpha* and the *omega* of the self, its birth-and-death, generation-and-extinction, wherein the eternal past and the eternal future meet in the absolute present. (Z10 357) It is the very place, *basho*, of "our realization of the absolute and of the absolute's own self-realization,"¹⁴⁸ It is in this sense — of the ordinary containing at its core its self-negation and self-contradiction *vis-à-vis* the absolute matrix of space-time — that Nishida describes the finite self's inverse correspondence with the absolute in the strangely syncretic Zen-Christian terms of "the eschatology of the everyday" or "eschatological ordinariness"

(*shūmatsuronteki byōjōtei*). (Z10 357). As microcosmic creative elements mirroring the macrocosmic creative world, and as expressive monadic focal points for the self-expressive world, we are thus in touch with the absolute at every moment in inverse correspondence and in eschatological ordinariness.

In conclusion we might say that the ideas of inverse correspondence and eschatological ordinariness take the logic of contradictory self-identity further in the existential and religious dimension, while infusing it with concrete content more immediate to our living selves. But at the same time, in that concern for religiosity, one finds a certain consistency in the final essay of 1945 with his maiden work, *Zen no kenkyū*. For in both it is what Nishida calls the “religious” that provides the key to the concrete basis of the real. We also see a continuity with his epistemology of 1926/27 in his concern with *basho* that he opposes to the Aristotelian object *qua* grammatical subject. Looking back to his earlier theory, Nishida in his final essay refers to the predicate plane as determining itself in contradictory self-identity. (See Z10 318-19) But in addition Nishida now characterizes the self of consciousness as mirroring, in its acting, the contradictory self-identity of the world as the world’s own self-determination. The self of consciousness with its field of predicates finds itself *always already* implaced within, and determined by, the world as the *basho* wherein it dwells, the self-forming socio-historical world most immediate to ourselves. (See Z10 308) Furthermore, however, the dialectical matrix of that world in its self-affirmation *qua* grammatical subjects in the object-plane (*noema*), and its self-negation *qua* predicate plane, the plane of acts of consciousness (*noesis*), is hence in con-

tradictory self-identity. (See Z10 308-09) And that dialectic, the contradictory self-identity of the concrete, is what Nishida here re-formulates in the 1940s in the religious terms of the infinite sphere of inter-expression, inverse correspondence between absolute and finite self, and eschatological ordinariness. It is in these formulations of the dialectic of religiosity that the Mahāyāna Buddhist influences, as opposed to Hegelian dialectics, along with a certain reading of Christianity, are most evident. Now that we have engaged in a detailed study of dialectics in Nishida we are ready to move to the next part of our study to assess Nishida's work in its engagement with Buddhism and with Hegel as well as where it diverges from these influences, and in light of the globalized situation of post-modernity today.

PART III:
CONCLUSIONS

Now that we have discussed the dialectic in each period of Nishida's œuvre in detail, we are prepared to look more directly into the issue of its relationship to Hegel and to Mahāyāna Buddhism. We are also prepared to give a general assessment of his philosophical work, in its so-called dialectical aspect, in light of its own unique stance as more than merely Hegelian or merely Buddhist. Finally I would like to address some questions that may be directed toward Nishida's dialectics in regard to the kind of terminology or language Nishida employs and in regard to what the dialectic of *basho* may have to offer us today in the current context of a globalizing world. We shall attempt these in the following chapters. In chapter eight, we look at the relationship of Nishida's dialectic with Hegel's, and in chapter nine we look at its relationship to Buddhist Mahāyāna ideas of non-duality. But as this necessitates a discussion of his dialectical theory of religion in general, we shall also look-into his reading and incorporation of Christianity. In chapter ten we develop Nishida's dialectical philosophy in terms of a *chiasmatic chorology* on the basis of the *chiasma* and the *chōra* — indicated in his dialectics of *basho* and of contradictory self-identity — as the very matter (*Sache*) of his thinking. This is also connected to the issue of Nishida's appropriation of the philosophical terminology of nineteenth century German philosophy, primarily that of Hegel's dialectics. To what extent does it adequately express what he was thinking? In the final chapter (chapter eleven) we shall tackle that issue of the language of Nishida's dialectic as well as of its "logic" and

the meaning of “contradiction.” And we shall end our discussion with a look into where Nishida himself positioned his dialectical thought of *basho* in relation to the world context, especially in terms of geo-politics, that he found himself in at that time. What might we derive from it in light of our own contemporary situation in the global world? This will allow us to make some assessment as to what Nishida’s work has to offer us today.

CHAPTER 8: NISHIDA AND HEGEL

In the previous chapters we have discussed in detail the dialectic in Nishida's thinking as it manifests in the various stages of his œuvre. In them we can discern a slew of influences from, and references to, western and eastern sources, especially Hegel and Buddhism. Commentators have noted¹⁴⁹ that one of Nishida's goals was to articulate certain truths experienced in the eastern traditions, e.g., Zen meditation practice, with the terminology of western philosophy. For this purpose Nishida has employed the language of nineteenth century German philosophy, most notably that of Hegelian dialectics (together with Neo-Kantian epistemology). Even in terms of content, Nishida, as we have seen, in his attempt to bridge the gap left open by Kantian dualism, appropriates, for example, the general western terminology of the universal and its relation to the individual (or particular) and especially the Hegelian conception of the self-differentiating concrete universal. One cannot deny the importance of the concrete universal in the unfolding of Nishida's dialectic. And yet the notion of *nothing* that we always find in the background of his dialectics and of the radical inter-relationality that unfolds during the 1930s both intimate a nearness to the Mahāyāna worldview, as Nishida himself seems to admit in his final essay of 1945. So the question arises as to what extent Nishida is Hegelian and to what extent he is Buddhist. Is his dialectic simply a version of Hegelian dialectical philosophy? Is it a form of Mahāyāna thought? In this chapter we shall examine the dialectic-

tic of Hegel and its relationship to Nishida. We will then follow that in the next chapter with an examination of how Mahāyāna Buddhism relates to Nishida.

In the genesis of his thought, as we have seen, Nishida received the influence of many western philosophers. The catalyst that spurred his philosophical project, as we saw, was the issue of epistemological dualism. Be that as it may Hegel is probably the one figure of western thought whose significance to Nishida is consistent throughout Nishida's writing career. Throughout his *œuvre* Nishida expresses both his affinity to and distance from Hegel's philosophy. For example, in what appears to be an afterward added to his one essay that directly thematizes Hegel's philosophy, *Watashi no tachiba kara mita Hēgeru no benshōhō* ("Hegel's Dialectic as Seen From My Standpoint") of 1931,¹⁵⁰ Nishida acknowledges his debt to Hegel. Therein he states that much of his thought was inherited or learned from Hegel and that his thinking is closer to Hegel's than to anyone else's. (Z7 277-78) Nishida expresses his nearness to Hegel in another work of the same period, *Mu no jikakuteki gentei*. And yet their views are far from consonant and it is in these very works of the early 1930s that he also distinguishes his own dialectic from Hegel's. As Nishida develops his own dialectical thought through the 1930s and into the 1940s we find him increasingly expressing disagreement with Hegel. In the following sections we shall investigate the dialectical ideas and aspects in Hegel's thought and their influence on, or rejection by, Nishida, contrasting and comparing their views in respect to the following points: opposition, contradiction, and negation; the concrete universal; the conceptualism of the absolute *idea*; the subjectivism of the absolute spirit; the rationalism of the self-completing circle of reason; substantialism and (grammatical) subject-logic (or

object-logic); and metaphysical hierarchy and the hegemony of the universal. Insofar as these points in Hegel support, refer to and imply one other, there will be some overlap in content among the sections.¹⁵¹

Sec. 1: Dialectic, Opposition, and Negation

In western philosophy, we can trace dialectics to Plato's Socratic dialogues. In the *Republic*, *dialektike* is one of the higher modes of knowledge, whereby, in taking each hypothesis as a stepping stone and asking "why?," one moves upwards toward an intuitive view (*noesis*) that could render a universal account, a *logos*, for things. That view is of the all-comprehensive *idea* of the Good that explains everything and authenticates all other particular forms of knowledge. Hegel inherits from Plato this idea of the art of dialectic. But for him its dia-logic is not founded on a dialogue between two interlocutors and their distinct views but rather on the basis of contradiction itself, the opposition of premises that lead to further consequences. Rather than taking the formal logical principle of non-contradiction, along with the principles of identity and of the excluded middle, as ontological absolutes, pointing to a reality of unchanging and independent essences (substances), Hegel's point was to comprehend them within the context of a dialectical dynamic, involving the development of the process of thought and of reality. Nishida inherits from Hegel this appreciation of the dynamic, as opposed to the static and formal, but proposes to take its dethronement of absolutes further than even Hegel imagined possible.

Central to Hegel's dialectical analysis is the recognition that the principle of non-contradiction is the principle of identity negatively stated: "X = X" implies that X is *not* not-X. The relation of X's self-identity is established through a negative relation to not-X, that it is itself in *not* being not-X. Its identity is then not immediately given. But X's self-identity can not merely be in its *not* being not-X. Hence "X = X" is no tautology but an affirmation made possible through a double negation, a "negation of negation."¹⁵² Hegel thus rejects any conception of identity as simply atomistic, as unrelated to anything else. Rather identity always involves a negative relation of exclusion to the *other*, exclusion of its own non-existence. The self is found in and through its *other*.¹⁵³ Things are not self-subsistent but are established through the mediation of reciprocal negation and are thus united in a state of mutual tension. (See WL2 121/SL 497, WL2 126/SL 502, WL2 131/SL 506, WL2 376/SL 726) Hegel thus affirms the logically contradictory character of reality but he comprehends this dialectically rather than in the abstract terms of formal logic. It does not mean the logical incompatibility between fixed atomic entities but rather the co-relativity of categories. What exists concretely, for Hegel, as such is never fixed or atomic, it exists "with difference and opposition in itself... Contradiction is the very moving principle of the world...." (EL §119z 174) That very tension of contradiction, such as in motion that involves the contradiction between "here" and "not-here," which is also a contradiction between "is" and "is-not," is what serves to drive the world's unfolding.¹⁵⁴ Hegel thus states, "motion is *existent* contradiction itself."¹⁵⁵ (WL2 59/SL 440) These are points taken up by Nishida himself. The main difference however is that in Hegel's case that system of the dialectic is to be comprehended under

the perspective of a complete concept, which is the very substance driving the entirety of the dynamic.

We find dialectics in Nishida's thinking from the very beginning of his career although he did not always characterize his own thinking with the term "dialectic" (*benshōhō*) until later. The relationship to Hegel was there from the start as well. Although Dilworth differentiates Nishida's "logic" as a "logic of paradox" from Hegel's "logic" as a "logic of dialectical synthesis," we ought to keep in mind that Nishida himself came to use the term *benshōhō* to describe his way of thinking, and characterizes the reciprocal relationships between opposites found in reality, a "dialectical process." Early on (early 1920s), for example in *Geijutsu to dōtoku (Art and Morality)*, we find Nishida referring to Hegel in arguing that the self-cognition of the cognitive process involves a necessary contradiction. (Z3 153) As in Hegel, contradiction for Nishida drives the dialectical process of reality and thought. Like Hegel's cases of dialectical contradiction, Nishida's examples of contradiction are often experiential rather than formal-logical. A prime example here would be the self-contradiction felt in the religious sphere *vis-à-vis* one's death. And yet it is that very existential contradiction between life and death that can *also* be understood in, or translated into, the terms of the logical contradiction between being and non-being, affirmation and negation.

When contrasting his dialectic from Hegel's, Nishida likes to characterize his system as an "absolute dialectic" (*zettai benshōhō*). By this he means a *radicalization* of dialectical thinking. On the other hand he takes Hegel's dialectic to be insufficiently dialectical. "Dialectic" for Hegel means the rational process that gradually resolves opposi-

tions between conflicting positions through what he calls “sublation” (*Aufheben*). It involves on the one hand the *negation* or *canceling* (*Negieren*), ceasing or ending (*aufhören lassen, ein Ende machen*), of the partiality of the positions leading to their opposition; and involves on the other hand the *preservation* (*Aufbewahren*) of their essential truth that overcomes their opposition, *elevating* them to a more comprehensive truth. (PG 90/PS 68; WL1 94/SL 107) This means a reconciliation between the terms that overcomes their opposition. With each sublation, the all-encompassing truth about the whole becomes more and more manifest. But that progression towards the whole truth assumes its end in a *telos* that drives it. That is, Hegel’s system is predicated upon a *pre-given* concept (*Begriff*) operating from above as it drives the sublations of all oppositions toward the realization of itself in its absolute *self-conception* (*sichbegreifen*) of the entire process. The dialectical process is here founded upon this *concept* that anticipates and grasps the entire dynamic and realizes itself in it. We shall cover this conceptualism with greater detail in a later section below.

In opposition to any such totalizing universal, Nishida includes in his dialectical understanding of the historical world, an acknowledgement of the autonomy of the individuals engaging in inter-action (*aihataraki*) to constitute that dialectical unfolding of the world. (See e.g., Z9 13ff) This dialectic, founded upon mutual *self-negation*, allows for genuine reciprocity between the opposing terms, including the very relationship between universal and individuals. As we saw in the previous chapters, the individual in occupying the “extreme limit” (*kyokugen*) of the universal’s self-determination, counter-determines (*gyaku gentei*) the universal. While living under the influence of the social

world wherein the individual is born and acts, the individual as a free person is *also* self-determining and in that freedom goes on to remodel his/her social environment into which he/she was born. Individual persons are just as much agents of history as the world taken as a whole. The individual then is not simply a pawn for the “cunning of reason” in history. Of course in underscoring that radical reciprocity neither does Nishida want to overemphasize the individual in a manner that would turn it into some metaphysical absolute. Rather, individuals as very much a part of the dialectical matrix are themselves self-contradictory, just as much as the world itself. Be that as it may, the pluralism involving true individuals along with their radical reciprocity would seem inconceivable in the Hegelian system traditionally construed. This radical interrelationality in Nishida’s dialectic is predicated upon the fact that the dialectical universal embracing its terms here ultimately is no self-conceiving concept but instead entails an unconceptualizable nothing environing them as their place (*basho*), enveloping the entire dialectical process. Thus from Hegel’s discourse of the resolution or sublation of contradictories in an all-encompassing concept, we may distinguish Nishida’s discourse of the implacement or envelopment of contradictories in *basho*. For Hegel, the absolute at the end of the dialectical process is the concept that reconciles all opposites, including the dichotomies between subject and object, mind and matter, self and thing, man and nature, ideal and real. Their ultimate reconciliation in the *idea* of the whole is the dialectical goal. In the case of Nishida, however, opposites as inter-relating bi-conditionals are implaced within an enveloping place, *basho*. Both agree that “truth is the whole,” of which parts are but abstract moments. Both strive for a holism that is concrete in encompassing

those very parts or moments as real elements and that is dynamic in realizing itself in those very parts or moments. But for Hegel, that whole is encompassed within an absolute concept, and for Nishida, that whole is an abysmal place delimited by absolutely nothing. The whole is a non-conceptualizable *non*-concept as always lying in the background, behind us, never made *present before* us. A look at Nishida's appropriation of one of the Hegelian terms for that whole should help us to further understand this subtle difference.

Sec. 2: The Concrete Universal

Nishida had been making use, directly or indirectly, of the Hegelian concept of the concrete universal (*gutaiteki ippansha*) ever since his maiden work, *Zen no kenkyū* (1911). As we recall from our previous discussions, both thinkers looked to the undifferentiated whole as it determines, forms, itself from within, in self-differentiation. It is the primal judgment (*Urteil*) that is the primordial division (*Ur-teilung*), articulating its whole in elements. (WL2 264ff/SL 623ff) In his opposition to the Kantian premise of an ultimate duality — between mind as form and matter as content —, Nishida found much use for that Hegelian notion of the concrete universal, providing the ground of judgements. It is from his initial appropriations of Hegel's concrete universal, that Nishida then goes-on to develop his own theory of *basho* as the place wherein opposing terms are implaced.

Hegel's concrete universal contains its own principle of individualization (WL2 245ff/SL 605ff), whereby it differentiates itself while maintaining self-identity. In its primal differentiation (*Ur-teilung*) it is the substratum of the judgement (*Urteil*) whereby

it articulates itself into its elements and their relations. On this basis Hegel affirms the identity expressed in the copula between the grammatical subject and the predicate and between the individual and the universal. (EL §166 231, §175z 240) Nishida inherits and appropriates this Hegelian notion of the concrete universal before and after developing his *basho* theory. (e.g., Z3 331, 409; Z8 93) We find it already conspicuous in *Zen no kenkyū* (1911). Here, as opposed to his later more mature stance, Nishida appears quite sympathetic to Hegel's conceptualism. A main thematic of *Zen no kenkyū* was Nishida's formulation of what he called "pure experience" (*junsui keiken*) as the fundamental reality prior to the subject-object split. Nishida takes this reality as ultimately referring to a universal that grounds individual consciousness while itself transcending each consciousness as but a moment or stage in its self-differentiation: "The fact of pure experience means that the so-called universal realizes itself." (Z1 22) The immediate experience one lives is partaking in the self-development of that infinite whole, containing infinite possibilities. He then adds that what he means here is what Hegel calls the *concept* (*Begriff*). In other words Nishida here views the Hegelian *concept* to name the same unifying power that underlies what he understood in terms of pure experience: "Since our pure experience is a systematic development, the unifying force working at its root must immediately be the universality of the concept itself." (Z1 22) And: "...[T]he universality of the concept is... the unifying force of concrete facts." (Z1 22) Nishida also refers to Hegel in this work as stating that true individuality does not exist apart from universality, and that the determined universal (*bestimmte Allgemeinheit*) is what becomes the individual. This is an obvious reference to the idea of the concrete universal. Nishida however immedi-

ately adds that individuality cannot be expressed through abstract concepts although it can be clearly expressed by an artist's brush or a novelist's pen. (Z1 149) One might then raise the question as to what extent Hegel's universal is sufficiently *concrete* to express what Nishida has in mind.

Nishida eventually develops his interpretation of the concrete universal in terms of a place or field, *basho*, and comes to understand the universal's principle of individuation in light of its being the place of implacement that envelopes the implaced. This is in fact an idea for which he also acknowledges a debt to Plato's concept of *chōra* in the *Timaeus*. This *placiality*, its *basho*-nature, which must be assumed and cannot be stated as the subject of a judgement, is what for Nishida makes the universal *concrete*. (See Z3 431-32, 439, 523, 526-27) For both thinkers, while the abstract universal abstracts from specific differences, the concrete universal permits those differences as its own internal self-determination.¹⁵⁶ It is in that sense that the grammatical subject of a judgement is itself the universal. The question however is whether that self-determining concrete whole is ultimately to be understood *qua idea* as an all-comprehending concept or *qua basho* in its all-embracing un-delimited placiality. Nishida thus eventually develops his own distinct notion of the dialectical universal. He comes to view its self-determining process as involving something more than Hegel's concrete universal and distinguishes his own standpoint of the dialectical world from Hegel's universal. (See Z8 82) For Nishida the self-differentiating universal entails an undifferentiated place presupposed by conception. As the very place of the conceiving act that place cannot be conceived. It *exceeds* all attempts to think it. Nishida argues that Hegel's logic failed to explicate this

sense of the placiality that every conceptual universal must presuppose; the very placiality that a true concrete universal in developing (*entwicklen*) itself into the individual must involve, as enveloping (*enthaltend*) the individual. In ignoring that enveloping or environmenting background of implacement, Hegel's logic is still an "object-logic," guided by its focus upon the grammatical subject. (Z4 335) We need to acknowledge the dark field surrounding the light of conception, the unsaid or unthought behind every subject of discourse. To the extent that he objectifies the universal *qua* concept *vis-à-vis* the individual, Hegel, from Nishida's perspective, had not yet eradicated himself from the subject-object dichotomy that he was trying to overcome. Hegel is still conceiving his universal *noematically*, as some *thing qua* object, transcendent to, and subsisting under, its unfolding process. Nishida, by contrast, is interested in the holistic field that theorizing acts must implicitly refer to as their *wherein* — that which noematically speaking is *nothing*.

Nishida was certainly inspired by Hegel's application of the concrete universal to history as what unfolds the dialectical process of its realization. And yet Nishida found the transcendence of Hegel's universal in its manipulation of individuals (i.e., "the cunning of reason"), precluding genuine reciprocity with individuals, to be one-sided, hence abstract, not truly concrete. Instead Nishida found the concrete world to be founded upon *our* inter-activities. It is not a world unfolding an absolute concept to realize its *telos*. Concrete dialectics for Nishida is then the world's self-determination that is at the same time its determination *via* inter-determining individuals. (See Z8 93) In the formula that equates universal and individual, Nishida thus emphasizes, contra Hegel, their reciproc-

ity: the universal's self-determination, the individual's self-determination, and their inter-determination of each other. That is to say that Nishida has radicalized the dialectical nature of the concrete universal in the direction of what he comes to call the dialectical universal, the *chiasmatic* matrix of the dialectical world, whereby its self-determination into individuals involves the self- and co-determinations of those very individuals. On this basis can Nishida state the "substratum" (*kitai*) of the dialectic to be such that "one is many and many is one" (*ichi soku ta, ta soku ichi*), the dialectical universal that he distinguishes not only from abstract universals but even from Hegel's concrete universal. (Z8 82) In differentiating his own concept of the dialectical universal from Hegel's concrete universal Nishida in the late 1930s (e.g., Z8 82) underscores *both* the radical reciprocity of his absolute dialectic *and* its placiality making room for that reciprocity — both of which he finds lacking in Hegel. The dialectical universal for Nishida points to the very place, *basho*, for those multiple inter-acting individuals and their dialectic. Both universality¹⁵⁷ *qua basho* and true individuality, in their concreteness, thus elude the grasp of abstraction or conception. Nishida initially seems to have been inspired by Hegel's concept of the "concrete universal" in its idea of a self-differentiating undifferentiated reality. And yet that dynamic of the concrete — its *chiasmatic* nature of over(inter-)determination — for Nishida, proves to exceed any conceptual grasp. This is why, in contrast to Hegel, the dialectical process for Nishida is irreducible to any rational structure or the self-realization of reason. He tells us that reason is dialectical only on the basis of *facts* determining themselves, i.e., the concrete comes first, not any concept. (Z7 274)

Sec. 3: Conceptualism: the Self-Conceiving Concept or *Idea*

By “concept” (*Begriff*), Hegel means the concrete universal in its rational structuring of reality. The world is structured according to conceptual necessity. Its substantial structure, accordingly, is derived solely from that *concept*. Hegel takes this conceptual structure to be the essence or nature of things, the true substance of reality amidst the complexity and contingency of appearances and fleeting manifestations. It is the *logos* or inner necessity behind whatever is, externally realizing itself in transient forms. But that essence *qua* concept is only for thought. In his attempt at bridging the Kantian dichotomy Hegel appears to reduce reality to thought. (See WL1 14-15/SL 35-36) And yet as the absolutely self-subsistent matter (*Sache*) this can be *no mere human* thought finitized in the face of the world. (See WL1 18-19/SL 39) The concept grounds the sublational unity of identity and difference, self and other, in its grasping of totality (*Totalität*). (EL §119z 174, §121 175, also §160 223) It is not that the form of thought imposes itself upon an independently existing material but that the totality of the concept, as free and infinite form, *already* contains within the principle of matter. (EL §128z 185). This totalizing concept exists *in itself* and in grasping or conceiving itself, knowing itself, it is *for itself*. Hence it is *an und für sich*. (PG 301/PS 253; WL1 30-31/SL 49) In this self-sufficiency it is infinite, not finite. This all-encompassing concept that is the substance of reality as whole is what Hegel also calls the absolute *idea* (*Idee*) providing a rational vision of the conceptual necessity of that whole. (WL2 483ff/SL 823ff)

The *idea* then represents the systematic totality of reality, its inner reason, underlying and guiding the entire dialectical dynamic. The core of reality is this concept that

rationalizes the whole: “What is not rational has no *truth*, or what is not conceived *is* not; thus when reason speaks of an *other* than itself, in fact it speaks only of itself.” (PG 389/PS 333) It is the formula that becomes externalized as real, the non-material force relating everything together, whereby everything — in time and in space — can be conceptually grasped as a whole. As such it is the concrete universal. And judgement (*Urteil*) is its primordial division (*Ur-teilen*). (WL2 264ff/SL 623ff) The end of the entire dialectical process, culminating in its all-encompassing concept, is this *idea*’s self-realization, the self-conceiving concept (*der sich begreifende Begriff*) grasping itself in the totality of its system, comprehending itself in its realization. (WL2 504-05/SL 842-83; EL §243 296) Its own content is itself realized or manifest in that dynamic whole. Moreover by the concept’s self-conception Hegel also means the self-consciousness of the absolute spirit or mind (*Geist*). (See WL2 224/SL 586) The *idea* as self-consciousness is *Geist* — the spirit not merely of individual man but of the cosmos. Its self-comprehension encompasses both its manifestation as real and its conceptual necessity as rational. And thus: “the *idea* is truth which is *an und für sich*” (EL §213 274), “the truth of the finite is... its ideality,” and “every genuine philosophy is idealism.” (EL §95 140) The absolute for Hegel is that one *idea* that in the act of judgement differentiates itself into its elements, which in turn return to that *idea* as their truth. (EL §213 275) The very point of Hegel’s “absolute idealism” then is that everything in the world manifests this *idea* of rational necessity — ontologically prior to its manifestations as in Plato’s realm of *ideas* —, for the realization of its rational self-consciousness. And that is precisely the direction in which Nishida does not want to go.

Nishida, like Hegel, wants to overcome the Kantian dichotomy between subject and object, concept and reality. But he rejects Hegel's idealism of an all-comprehending *idea* that would cement that gap, that is, *ideally*. In search of the concrete whole, Nishida looks instead to our pre-conceptually or pre-theoretically lived experience. As already pointed to the previous section, the early Nishida of *Zen no kenkyū* (1911) almost seems to regard the universality of the Hegelian "concept" (*Begriff*) — "the soul of the concrete" (*die Seele des Konkreten*) (WL2 242/SL 602; Z1 22) — to be identical with what he has in mind when speaking of that spontaneously evolving whole of reality as "pure experience." (Z1 22) He states that the universality of the concept is the unifying force grounding the unfolding of pure experience. As in Hegel's concrete universal, it is from out of that self-unfolding whole of pure experience that judgement emerges through its divisions into the grammatical subject-predicate or the epistemological subject-object. And yet we can still discern an emerging distinction here in what they emphasize: *concept* or *idea* on the one hand and *intuition* or *experience* on the other. The difference is obvious when we notice that for Hegel, truth *qua* whole means the conceptual comprehension resulting from, but also driving, the entire dialectical process. It is the *telos*. On the other hand truth for Nishida is *immediate*. For both it is the whole. For Nishida here pure experience as immediacy is the most concrete and hence truth itself, while for Hegel in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, sensible certainty (*sinnliche Gewißheit*) is not yet truth but its abstract beginning.¹⁵⁸ What Nishida means here by "universality" that unifies and grounds pure experience cannot in the end mean the same as Hegel's absolute concept.

With the maturation of his ideas, especially with the formulation of his theory of *basho*, Nishida seems better apt to express where his understanding diverges from Hegel's. We can more easily distinguish Nishida's self-forming formlessness that is *basho* from Hegel's self-forming form that is a self-conceiving concept (*Begriff*). The concept, Hegel tells us, "is everything" (*alles*). The concrete universal determining itself is the concept's "universal absolute activity" (*allgemeine absolute Tätigkeit*) and "absolutely infinite force" (*schlechthin unendliche Kraft*), to which nothing can offer resistance or oppose. (WL2 186/SL 826) In its totalizing power, its hegemony is universal. But from the Nishidan standpoint the question is raised whether such a concrete universal *qua idea* or concept can truly subsume concrete individuality without extinguishing or covering-over the individual's trans-rational or trans-conceptual singularity.¹⁵⁹ This is the issue of Hegel's alleged pan-logism — already raised by his Neo-Kantian critics such as Lotze — and his implicit Platonism that ontologically prioritizes the concept. To this we can oppose Nishida's *basho*. Nishida also repeatedly speaks of Hegel's dialectic to be a "dialectic of process" (*kateiteki beshōhō*), by which he seems to mean the sublational process that unfolds in time towards final resolution. Nishida instead looks to the *present* as the locus, *basho*, for the simultaneity of contradictories in their co-existence. True dialectic, Nishida emphasizes, is of existence itself, activity, in the *present*; not merely the rational process of thought working itself out in time. Rather than looking to the conceptual resolution of contradictories, Nishida looks *behind* them to their environing *wherein* that must always be assumed as their implicit context. Nishida thus starts from a standpoint distinct from Hegel's by looking not to the *concept* of the rational necessity of eve-

rything but to *basho*, the implicit *wherein* of everything. As the concept of rational necessity, the concrete universal imposes upon, and destroys, the trans-conceptual singularity of individual beings. On the other hand *basho* delimited by nothing envelopes beings in their unique singularities and contradictions by withdrawing itself, receding into the dark — *śūnyatā śūnyatā*.

Nishida, indeed, does acknowledge his debt to Hegel for the notion of a concrete logic manifesting in the reality of historical unfolding. History, for both thinkers, proves to be the self-realization of something “absolute,” although for Hegel that self-realization is also the self-grasping of the concept. This is also the point on which Marx contended with Hegel to instead look to history’s material conditions rather than the ideal. Nishida thus also acknowledges his closeness here to Marx and the dialectical materialists in their mutual opposition to the Hegelian *idea*. Like Marx Nishida places the *idea* — contra Hegel — upon the stream of history that self-formatively moves *via* historical facts. (See Z7 276) Nishida’s conviction is that the focus of dialectic should not be speculation but facticity. The individual elements inter-acting to create history are its agents, not any ideality or concept. And what embrace them to makes-room for their inter-activity is *basho*. The universal’s self-determination in those individuals entails its self-negation, presupposing their *basho* that *allows* for their autonomous activities that in turn counter-determines the universal. In other words, *basho* here envelopes both the universal’s self-determination into individuals and counter determination by individuals. In that sense its transcendence is immanently real, it is concrete as the *very world* of inter-activity. Hegel as well purports the *idea* to be immanent in the world as its rational structure unfolding

history. The concreteness of Nishida's world history is, however, far more convincing in that Nishida founds it upon the embodied activities of man working upon the environment, re-structuring it through the manipulation of things as tools. While agreeing with Hegel that we are determinations of the universal or absolute, Nishida also emphasizes the autonomy of ourselves as world-creative historical bodies rather than being mere manifestations of the self-consciousness of absolute spirit. His dialectic is a dialectic of individuals with bodies inter-acting in the world. What is "absolute" for Nishida is but the place (*basho*) for such inter-activity. Nishida maintains his opposition to Hegel's dialectic of the *idea* up towards the end of his life when in the essay *Kūkan* (1944) he makes the claim that his logic of *basho* that is a logic of the self-formation of the endlessly creative historical world is the *reverse* of Hegel's dialectical logic. (Z10 172-73) And yet while approaching Marx in this opposition to Hegelian idealism, Nishida also wants to avoid the position of mere materialism. He does not want to reduce the absolute to mere matter and history to its mechanical movements. At the root of history is neither mere concept nor mere matter. Neither idealism nor materialism leads to the position of absolute dialectics. Neither Hegel's nor Marx's dialectics, for Nishida, then are true dialectics. (Z6 275)

In distinction from both Hegelian and Marxist dialectics, both of which he calls the "dialectics of being" (*yū no beshōhō*), Nishida characterizes his dialectic as a "dialectic of nothing" (*mu no beshōhō*). (e.g., Z5 123) As opposed to a rational or conceptual necessity behind the historical and dialectical process, Nishida intimates something a-rational lying at the abysmal bottom of reality, whereupon facts transpire in their singu-

larity and individuals act freely. Hegel's logic on the other hand takes the absolute *qua* infinite being as its *arche*, in the affirmation of which finite being reaches extinction. But this *being* as such, from Nishida's standpoint, is still *a* being conceived in opposition or contrast to non-being. Both are conceived, thought. Being and nothing as opposed to one another are both conceptually determined *vis-à-vis* one another. True nothing on the other hand transcends both as the implicit place making their inter-relational or oppositional co-implication possible. As such it cannot be intellectually determined or conceived. But neither can this abyss be mere materiality conceived as the opposite to ideality. It encompasses as *basho* both thought and reality and their inter-action. For Nishida it is such inter-activity from out of the enveloping nothing that unfolds history. It is not that history is dialectical because of its underlying reason but rather that reason is dialectical because of the way facts inter-determine themselves *within* that nothing. (Z7 274)

An essential feature of *basho*, for Nishida, as we have already seen, is its incapacity to be stated as a grammatical subject of a judgement. (Z3 468-69, 521) We can contrast this admission to Hegel's view of the self-conceiving concept. Hegel's *idea* is the concept that grasps itself as its subject.¹⁶⁰ For Nishida this means that it is still objectified as *noema*, still being treated as a grammatical subject. (Z5 130; Z6 40-41) It is not yet the final predicate that "can never become a subject." Nishida's *basho*, on the other hand, as the always implicit *wherein* of every subject of judgment and delimited by nothing, is undeterminable or undefinable. If identity involves the reciprocity of inter-determining self-determining individuals, no concept can ground self-identity. The complexity of the dialectic exceeds conceptuality. The concretely real, for Nishida, ulti-

mately can be no concept or object of thought or subject of judgement. It is rather that place, *basho*, wherein individuals relate and inter-act. Because it is *nothing* definite it can enfold individuals in their trans-rational singularity. From the standpoint of his own theory of *basho*, Nishida can thus contrast Hegel's dialectic from his own as a dialectic of the *idea* or thought, a dialectic of "being," and a dialectic of process incapable of genuine self-contradiction, self-negation. (Z5 123) This is because genuine self-contradiction or self-negation would presuppose the indefiniteness of Nishida's "nothing," a place (*basho*) that can encompass contradictories. Rather than understanding reality in light of rational necessity as Hegel does, Nishida takes what he calls "the history of life" to encompass any such reason or conceptual understanding. From that perspective, Hegel's logic is an abstraction from concrete life. (Z7 275) In contrast to Hegel's totalizing dialectic, Nishida's holistic dialectic recognizes the irreducible and unreifiable complexity of the all-encompassing context. In self-reflection Nishida's system as such *also* acknowledges its own in-completion, i.e., its grounding *basho* is not objectifiable, it is an abysmal nothing.

Sec. 4: Subjectivism: The Self-Knowing Subject or Absolute Spirit

As mentioned above, for Hegel, the culmination of the concept's dialectical development in the teleological *idea* is the self-consciousness of what he calls *Geist* — spirit or mind — not of any individual human being, but mind in the macro-cosmic level, which he also equates with the God of Christianity. At the root of reality, driving everything, is the implicit rationality of the all-conceptualizing *idea*, which in turn is the "complete self-clarity of *Geist*"¹⁶¹ in all. Hegel's universal is this self-knowing absolute subject. Every-

thing else is drawn out of its self-development. The whole is the self-movement of the absolute *spirit* (*Absoluter Geist*), identified with the one universal reason, the rational structure of the world. All differences between opposites emerge from out of this movement, whereby reason or spirit articulates and recognizes itself: "...[R]eason [*die Vernunft*] knows itself and deals only with itself so that its whole work, as well as its activity, lies in itself." (DFSg 17/DFSe 87) As "thought thinking itself," the concrete universal's self-differentiation is the working out of the thought process of *Geist*, whereby its dialectical principle externalizes itself for, and the opposing views of realism and idealism are unified in, its total self-vision. (PG 542-43/PS 472-73) The *idea* as the self-conceiving concept (*der sich begreifende Begriff*) grasping the totality of itself as the all-permeating pattern in its own self-reflective self-consciousness is thus subjectivity. (WL2 504/SL 842) Hegel in his *Phenomenology* redefines the Spinozistic substance that he critiqued as mere self-identity and as lacking dialectical determination, into this dialectical subject, *Geist*. While agreeing with Hegel's critique of Spinoza, Nishida however finds this absolutizing reconceptualization of the subject to be an objectification, a return to self-identity as noema, substance *qua* grammatical subject. That is, the subjectivization of substance is in fact the substantialization and objectification of the epistemological subject. It is still not free from being *some-thing* (*etwas*) and hence not yet the concrete that in itself remains undifferentiated.¹⁶² Hegel's universal then, conceived as *absoluter Geist*, again is not concrete enough.

As a counter to the substantialism of Spinoza and Schelling, Hegel meant to redirect our attention to the reality of subjectivity. But if Hegel's conception of the concrete

universal in terms of an absolute spirit does not escape being an objectification neither does it then escape the standpoint of subjectivism. This is so even when it is supposed to ground the unity of subjectivity and objectivity. (EPM §575ff 314-15) In seeking rational subjectivity behind reality, and thus abstracting from the concrete life of individuality as multiple, bodily, and working in the world, Hegel's dialectic inclines towards subjectivism and mere formalism. (Z7 274) For Nishida, the real world is not a world mediated or posited by the one mind of the absolute. Instead it is mediated by absolute negation *via* the continuity of discontinuities between its elements. The one embracing those many elements does so only as their field, the *nothing* in their background, rather than as a self-positing subjectivity. Nishida would rather conceive the dialectic from the more concrete standpoint of *practice* on the basis of the historically constitutive inter-actions of individual persons upon that field. The formative and creative universal must not be set above the concrete world; rather it itself emerges dialectically as inseparable from the on-going dialectical formation of the world of the many.

Hegel equates "absolute spirit" with the self-knowing God. (PG 564/PS 492-93) Theologian Karl Barth, however, has raised the objection that in making rational necessity an essential feature of God, Hegel has left no room for grace founded upon God's freedom.¹⁶³ That is, in Hegel's systematic, God cannot genuinely *give* to man, which is an essential component of Christian belief. Nishida, in his work from the mid-1940s, by contrast takes into consideration this graciousness of the God of religion, while interpreting it along the lines of *soku-hi* logic, as freely giving in radical self-negation. Of course for Nishida this ultimately points to an impersonal *basho vis-à-vis* absolute nothing rather

than a theistic-personal view of God. He develops this idea in light of his own notion of the absolute as *basho* delimited by nothing, self-negating to make room for beings, allowing for their inverse correspondence with God. One might then say that the impersonal nothing as enveloping place *allows for* the personal God's embracing love. As opposed to the self-illuminating light of a self-conceiving consciousness that is Hegel's God, Nishida's God thus entails a dark abyss. But in its transcendent alterity it is simultaneously immanent as the very place *wherein* we find ourselves embraced, *always already*.

Modeled after intellectual rationality, Hegel's absolute spirit, as reason grasping itself in self-conscious clarity, one might say, is an idealizing self-projection of man as rational thinker. But it fails to account, on the other hand, for man's being-in-the-world as a concrete working body. Nishida's absolute, as we have been seeing, by contrast, is no spirit or mind (*Geist*) modeled after the *cogito* but rather the unobjectifiable non-reason of nothing. (See Z5 123) It is no "world spirit" guiding historical events with its "cunning of reason." Its self-awareness (*jikaku*) points to its own darkness, its irreducible un-delimitation. The light of cognition always presupposes that darkness as the formlessness giving shape to form and light. If Hegel wanted to maintain against Spinoza and Schelling that the absolute or the true is not only substance but also the epistemological subject *qua* spirit, Nishida strove to show that it is rather the environing place enveloping and determining any substance *qua* grammatical subject as well as any epistemological subject knowing it and itself *qua* spirit. In such a way Nishida opposes Hegel's subjectivism of the self-illuminating spirit to acknowledge instead the *finitude* of light and form on the basis of a radical non-subjectivism.

Sec. 5: The Rationalism of the Self-Completing Circle

As opposed to the German Romantics who looked to intuition or imagination to found the unity of man and nature, Hegel advanced his vision of the rationality of reality that culminates in the absolute spirit's self-cognition. This understanding of reason and how it operates in history leads Hegel to his unique metaphor of the circle (*Kreis*) to explain his whole system. Reason (*Vernunft*) is what bridges the dichotomous gap between consciousness and nature in its all-encompassing vision of the rationality of everything real. Hegel, in his preface to his *Philosophy of Right* (1921), thus states the principle of his philosophy of history to be that "the rational is actual and the actual is rational" (*Was vernünftig ist, das ist wirklich; und was wirklich ist, das ist vernünftig*).¹⁶⁴ (GPR 17/PR 10) Reason is not only within our consciousness but lies everywhere in the dynamism of its realizations in nature and history. Reason as such, Hegel tells us, is the substantial (*das Substantielle*). (WL1 29/SL 48) The rationality underlying all, in its self-grasping, is the world's subjectivity, *Geist*, the spirit living through our own rational thinking as it recognizes itself in nature. In grasping the rational ordering of nature, we are thus taking part in reason's own self-cognition. On this basis of universal reason underlying external reality, Hegel can claim, in opposition to Kantian dualism, that being and thought are ultimately one. The real or actual (*wirklich*) at its deepest level, in its underlying necessity, is rational since rationality necessitated it. Hegel's starting *arche* is thus rationality. By contrast Nishida's starting point, the dark unintelligibility or a-rationality surrounding the situation of our implacement. Nishida refuses Hegel's identification of reason and reality. Just as the grammatical subject is implaced in the predicate and the *noema* is envel-

oped by *noesis*, reason is implaced in concrete human life. In Nishida's view at the bottom of reason there lies the deep contradiction of human existence. (Z7 276) To explain his very distinct view, Nishida also makes metaphorical use of the circle (*en*). The two "circles," as we shall see in the following, however are quite distinct.

For Hegel, reason underlying history is what guides its course, manipulating the passion of individuals to work towards realizing its *telos*.¹⁶⁵ The true agent of history then is not the individual person but universal reason manipulating the individual. Autonomy is only in the individual's identification with the absolute spirit as its self-recognition. For Nishida this eliminates the autonomy of individuals as free creators of the world. Nishida, by the 1930s, thus opts instead for a genuine reciprocity between universal and individual, place and implaced, a dialectic transpiring within an *ur*-place delimited by nothing. For Nishida the individual's free act *is* the world's self-determination, and vice versa, in dialectical inter-determination. As the absolute is nothing but the field or place of individuals, history is made by the free acting of individuals *qua* historical bodies, moving as creative elements of that world's self-creativity.

The contrast between Nishida's a-rationalism and Hegel's rationalism here can also be understood in terms of a circle that is open or closed. The *telos* of world history for Hegel is the self-realization of reason in the world that manifests the rationality of the whole in the clarity of its own light. What is realized is the self-grasping — the concept's self-conceptualization or the spirit's self-consciousness — of the entirety of the process itself: "The movement is the circle that returns into itself [*der in sich zurückgehende Kreis*], the circle that presupposes its beginning and reaches it only at the end." (PG

559/PS 488) And: “The true... is its own becoming, the circle [*der Kreis*] that presupposes its end as its aim and has it for its beginning and is actual only through its execution and end.” (PG 20/PS 10) And also: “The result is the same as the beginning only because the *beginning* is the *purpose*.” (PG 22/PS 12) The whole dynamic for Hegel is thus a circle (*Kreis*), a circular motion (*Kreisbewegung*). The dialectic moves towards the closure — the conclusion (*Schluss*) — of its own process, making a circle in realizing its inherent goal. *Telos* is inherent in the beginning, however, only as a potential, an impetus towards its realization. History in that sense is still a progression but with its self-culmination accomplished in its conceptual or theoretical *recapitulation*, the self-recognition of reason in history as its complete self-realization, accomplished in man’s historical consciousness. While history is progressive, in looking back at itself the spirit that drives history makes rational sense of itself. The goal of reason as this principle is to recognize itself *in* this total reality, and history is the process wherein this self-recognition of reason occurs. The progression reaches culmination *via* closure within a conceptual circle, a circle that conceptualizes its pre-conceptual beginnings.

The suggestion Hegel makes in his *Encyclopedia* is that it is philosophy *as such* and *as the science* (*die Wissenschaft*) that realizes the totalizing view that mirrors the world as a whole. It forms a *circle* that embraces all the particular philosophical principles and sciences in a single intelligible system with a common rational framework, a theoretical system that explains all of reality by starting from the single principle of reason. The whole process is a progression towards its all-and-self-comprehensive *idea*, the concept of its truth. Its realization is the self-grasping of the entirety of the process in the

absolute concept. The dialectic moves towards the closure of its own process, making a circle, closing in upon itself in its own self-conceiving (*sichbegreifen*) end: It "...returns into itself and reaches the point with which it began... [and] exhibits the appearance of a circle which closes with itself."¹⁶⁶ (EL §17 23; see also §15 20) Both history and philosophy for Hegel then is one big rational circle that is meant to account for everything *real*, an absolute conceptualization of the whole. Just as it is for Nishida, truth for Hegel, then is the *whole*. But Hegel's conception of the whole binds the development of reality and knowledge. For Hegel the whole means the totality of a system as a *completed* circle. On the other hand Nishida's whole is an in-completable sphere, a circle without periphery, extending into the unaccountable and the unknown. Hence while Hegel's whole is infinite, its infinity in possessing a definite structure is a whole that can be grasped from within in self-conceptualization. It is determined by its own internal rational necessity. In accounting for itself, its self-rationalization, Hegel's infinite here is self-enclosing, it is a self-completing circle. Nishida's infinite on the other hand is open.

We thus contrast Hegel's circle — in assuming the completion of the whole (in the concept, *idea*, spirit) — as closed, and Nishida's circle — allowing for the whole's in-completion (as the unobjectifiable, ineffable, place de-limited by nothing) — as open. An essential difference from Hegel's self-completing system is that Nishida's system is "*without* system," i.e., it is *not* complete, cannot be completed, it necessarily allows for its in-completion. The *telos* presupposed in Hegel's dialectic, in already assuming its realization, closes the dialectical circle. Nishida's dialectic, on the other hand, as founded upon the self-negation of each moment, allows for genuine novelty and change, irrupting

the bind of each determination. The focus here is not on a future *telos* but on the present in its inconceivable or unconceptualizable singularity of the moment. Therein lies the spontaneity, freedom, that Nishida emphasizes. It is on this basis that *the made* becomes *the making* to counter-determine its determining universal. The whole of the dialectical dynamic thus opens up a space reaching beyond Hegel's closed circle. The "double aperture" — as Robert Carter calls it¹⁶⁷ — of the singularity of the individual or the moment on the one end and the un-delimited whole on the other end, escaping conceptual determination on both ends, precludes the closing of the circle. Nishida's circle, in contrast to Hegel's self-closing circle, as boundlessly open is thus an-archic and a-teleological. The open sphere without periphery and without center perpetually undermines and destabilizes any totalizing edifice.

This difference between openness and closure may be what Nishida has in mind when making the distinction, throughout the 1930s, between his own dialectic of *basho* and Hegel's dialectic of *process (katei)*.¹⁶⁸ Following Nishida's lead, many of his Japanese commentators, such as Kosaka Kunitsugu¹⁶⁹ and Nakamura Yūjirō, have also emphasized this distinction.¹⁷⁰ The reason is not always stated clearly and it can be misleading in that Nishida's dialectic *also* involves *process* in the historical world's temporal unfoldings and Hegel's dialectic *also* involves the *idea's* external manifestations in *space*. One might clarify this distinction however in the following manner. For Hegel, the dialectical process is a self-completing process, presupposing the whole in its completion, progressing towards its resolution of contradictions in that presupposed completion. And that Hegelian whole, conceptualized in the *idea*, from Nishida's perspective is an

objectification. That whole in its objectification as a grammatical subject requires im-
placement within an environing openness as its *basho*. And that open field, its always
implicit *wherein*, would have to be mirrored in each present moment of the process,
opening it anew at each moment, precluding its closure in some teleological future. The
placiality of *basho*, open at each moment, is such that it allows for the *simultaneity* of op-
posites in their mutual reference as bi-conditionals, in turn referring to their site of co-
implacement. It precludes having to drive them toward future sublations and ultimately
to a culminating *telos*.¹⁷¹ Nishida's understanding of time is thus focussed on the present
on the basis of that all-encompassing placiality of *basho*. In a 1938 lecture, Nishida
charges Hegel for ignoring that dialectical significance of the present moment. (See Z13
22) A dialectic of inter-determination amongst independent individuals and involving
contradictory self-identity thus cannot just be a dialectic of "process" of the Hegelian
sort. Nishida's point is that it cannot be founded upon a conceptual circle that completes
itself *in due time*. The concrete situation that enfolds the reciprocity of independents
must have the sense of being their *basho*, their site of co-implacement. Nishida takes this
to be the true sense of the self-determination of the dialectical universal as occurring in
the present. (Z6 75) Hegel's dialectic is still teleological, *future-oriented* in its focus on
time, a modern secular development of eschatological thinking. The suggestion is that
Hegel's self-enclosing circle (of time) requires Nishida's boundless circle (of *basho*) as
its environing *wherein*.

Sec. 6: Substantialism and the Logic of the Grammatical Subject (Object-Logic)

In his 1931 essay on Hegel (*Watashi no tachiba kara mita Hēgeru no beshōhō*), Nishida raises as one of his major contentions against Hegel the issue of the objectification of the unobjectifiable, what Nishida calls “the logic of the (grammatical) subject” or “object-logic.” Nishida charges Hegel’s dialectic of objectifying the absolute, perpetuating the very dualism it attempts to eradicate. In objectifying the absolute, it makes it into a *noema*, a determinate being, that can be made into the grammatical subject of a statement. A real dialectic, Nishida claims, must sever itself from any such standpoint. (Z7 277-78) Instead of the affirmative determination of a being, true dialectic would have to involve the affirmation of negation in the mutual negation amongst terms, whereby social interactivity is made possible. The absolute *qua basho* would be the field for such interactivity of mutual self-negation. During the 1930s Nishida goes on to conceive what he calls an “absolute dialectic” that would recognize the grounding of individual self-identity in that reciprocal determination. (See Z6 40-41) This inevitably involves the unobjectifiable field of their implacement. By contrast Hegel’s all-encompassing concept,¹⁷² that grasps its own developmental totality by sublating its individual moments, according to Nishida, still does not escape being objectified. In its self-conceptualization, whether we call it *Idee* or *Geist*, it is objectified as something specific, even as a universal, set over and above individuals. (Z6 41) Nishida on the other hand de-substantializes the universal into a *non*-objectifiable “predicate,” as ultimately implying the *place* (*basho*) wherein genuine inter-relationality (inter-activity, inter-determination) obtains. This model of reality recognizes the complexity of the manifold of inter-relationality, thus

precluding reifying claims in regard to *both* the individual and the universal. Rather than reifying the whole as a metaphysical substance or as an ultimate subject of judgements, Nishida looks to the complex *facticity* of the concrete as an un-delimitable context, en-folding and unfolding any apparent reifications or abstractions. (See Z7 274-75)

For Nishida the focus upon the grammatical subject or object, as we recall, is connected to the metaphysical substantialism traceable to Aristotle. It is also related to the general post-Platonist Greek identification of being with form and substance, i.e., reality as possessing self-subsistence and definite form. Hegel's metaphysics reflects this affirmation of substantial being while incorporating the Cartesian and Spinozistic developments of the notion of substance into his own notion of the self-conceiving concept whereby "substance is (epistemological) subject." Moreover Hegel attaches a dynamic structure to that concept in its self-realization. And yet for Nishida substance as such still means the *grammatical* subject, what can be stated. Hegel's logic, even if in certain respects a logic of concrete reality, could still not help being "Greek." (Z6 62) It is still an object-logic, a logic of noema. And Nishida finds Marxist philosophy to be no different in this respect, failing to think through, due to its materialism, the meaning of social and historical reality, i.e., concrete reality. (Z6 139)

Nishida states that as long as being is conceived in terms of an object or as a grammatical subject — despite Hegel's equation at the beginning of his *Logic* of pure being and nothing as immediately self-same (*dasselbe*) (WL1 67/SL 83) — it cannot be identical with nothing. Taken noematically, being and nothing cannot be one. But neither can being *qua* noema or object give rise to becoming. Nishida is here thinking of his

own sense of the in-determinate determining itself. Being and nothing are one only in the sense of nothing determining itself into beings. Being for Nishida is the self-determination of *nothing*, the self-forming formlessness. What noematically is nothing (i.e., no thing) is determined — in its self-determining — as being. (Z7 268-69) And that is how Nishida re-interprets Hegel's assertion that the truth of being (*Sein*) and nothing (*Nichts*) is becoming (*Werden*). (WL1 91-92/SL 104-05; Z7 269) The concrete for Nishida always involves this becoming or self-determination of nothing. But in its prior formlessness it escapes reduction to any propositional subject. Hence even Hegel's self-conceiving concept or self-cognizing spirit cannot do it justice. As *always already* assumed, it perpetually eludes any such self-objectification. Instead in order to hear that self-determining nothing Nishida prescribes a de-focussing *away* from the grammatical subject, i.e., in the direction of what he calls "predicate," "the predicate that does not become a grammatical subject." Any objectification remains but a partial view to, or abstraction from, that concrete whole. True dialectical unity of being and nothing, as that holistic context of our inter-activity, cannot be thoroughly conceived in the noematic direction, the objectifying direction that transforms it into a subject of utterance, a *thing*. (Z6 245) Nishida sees Hegel's dialectical logic as remaining trapped within such an Aristotelian orientation to the grammatical subject. For this reason he claims his own logic to take a stance that is in *reverse* to that of Hegel's substantialist dialectics. (Z10 133-34)

Sec. 7: Metaphysical Hierarchy and the Hegemony of the Universal

Nishida's adoption of dialectics to express the formativity of world-realization departs from Hegel's dialectic also in that its radical inter-relationality precludes the sort of metaphysical hierarchy that would result from the universal's prioritization *qua Geist* or *Idee*. Hegel's universal determines itself in the individual. But it also has the sense of subsuming individuals. And yet because Hegel's universal is ultimately the *idea* of the whole, its precise relationship to real individual thing-events in the world remains precarious. In what sense does the ideal posit the real? To bridge the gap between thought and reality by means of thought itself seems one-sided. It would be an imposition of form upon matter, universal over individual. As concept or *idea*, and as spirit in its self-knowing, the universal in Hegel still assumes primacy over individuals. Individuals in turn are left unfree as mere abstractions of that absolute principle. (Z13 169, 501) As the conception of a rational necessity operating behind the dialectical process extinguishes any genuine freedom of the individual person (see Z5 119), there can be no sense of the individual's reverse determination (*gyaku gentei*) of the self-determining universal. Nishida claims that his own dialectic by contrast permits the individual to be thoroughly individual. (Z10 105) Hegel's universal on the other hand, despite its hegemonic posturing, fails to subsume genuine individuality. No universal, conceived as concept, can exhaust the individual's trans-rational (i.e., trans-conceptual) singularity, its utter uniqueness with its creativity and self-contradiction. Nishida reiterates this point even in the 1940s (*Dekaruto ni tsuite*, 1944), saying that Hegel's universal falls short of grasping the individual practical self who undergoes the dialectic of life-and-death. (See Z10 132-33)

At the bottom of each individual person lies the *tragic* (*higekiteki*), his/her deep self-contradiction, the inner conflict that no universal concept can subsume and resolve. (See Z5 119) On this basis Nishida repeats his criticism of Hegel in his various works from the early 1930s to the early 1940s: Hegel's dialectic, centered around the conceptualized universal, fails to account for that concrete reality of the individual self; it remains abstract. (Z6 41; Z9 144, 379, 381)

While failing to account for individuality, Hegel's dialectic also fails to account for any genuine inter-relationality of the concrete. (See Z5 138; Z10 317, 331; Z13 168, 229) A true dialectic, Nishida argues, must be radically relational to account for the complex inter-determinations between individuals and environment, their mutual self-negations. In this schema there is no domineering universal functioning as metaphysical principle. Instead there is the *basho* of co-implication. (See Z5 270-71) Nishida sought to explain the inter-relationships involving the self-determining concrete universal and the autonomous individual in light of his notion of the manifold determinations of the dialectical universal and of *basho* as enfolding individuals and their inter-relations. (See Z13 110) The universal is de-substantialized in its concretion, pointing to the very space of the world of individuals. The self-determination of the dialectical universal is precisely the dialectical world as consisting of the inter-activity of independent individuals, a world of the self- and inter-determination of individuals. That is, the universal in determining itself in the individuals entails its self-negation that makes-room for those inter-relating self-defining individuals. From the other side Nishida views the individual as breaking-through the universal's determination on the basis of the singularity of the mo-

ment as cut-off from both past and future. Only in the present can the individual as a monadic point of space-time counter-determine the universal and make its transition “from made to making.” The nothingness at the concrete base of reality allows for the novelty of the moment. Nishida views his own dialectic of the present to account for this, in contrast to Hegel’s dialectic of future-oriented teleology.

Nishida’s absolute thus does not exercise hegemonic domination over, or subsumption of, individuals. The concrete whole is *absolute (zettai)* only in the sense that it is *absolved* of all positive predications or determinations, cut-off from de-limiting oppositions (*zetsu-tai*). Its only attribute is its own self-negation that makes-room for beings. (See Z10 315-16) As *basho vis-à-vis* absolutely nothing it is then characterized by its own self-contradictory relationship with co-relative beings. It engages in mutual self-negation with individuals. The result is the radical dialectics of inter-determination *both* horizontally among individual thing-events themselves *and* vertically between them and itself as their field. The vertical dimension of the dialectic, even while involving universal-individual inter-relationality, is *non-hierarchical*. For its inter-determination happens *via* mutual self-negation. Nishida thus opts for a model of reality that is radically relational and precludes abstract generalizations. On this basis — i.e., that there is no absolute positivity or substantiality and that the absolute negates itself, is non-substantial — metaphysical hierarchy is deconstructed. It is only in this sense that Nishida accepts Hegel’s statement that the individual is the universal, i.e., as entailing radical reciprocity. And thus can individuals stand without losing their singularity or autonomy under universal law. Like Lao Tzu’s *tao*, the absolute rules without ruling; it rules by letting its sub-

jects rule themselves. But at the same time, we must not forget, individuals are *also* de-substantialized. The world is predicated upon such *mutual* self-negation.

Sec. 8: Conclusion

While having borrowed terms and concepts, even the very idea of a “dialectic,” from Hegel in his own concern to surmount Kantian dualism, it is clear that by the commencement of his mature thinking in the 1930s, Nishida has come to distinguish his own dialectics, which he calls “absolute dialectic” (*zettai benshōhō*), from Hegel’s. The core ideas of Nishida’s this absolute dialectic, e.g., in its founding upon the notions of *basho*, absolute nothing, and absolute negation, and in its radical reciprocity in the dialectical universal or inverse correspondence, extend beyond the purview of Hegelianism. Nishida uses the term “dialectical” (*benshōhōteki*) to describe the radical inter-relationality and non-substantiality of reality in regard to both its whole and its individual elements. In that radical relationality, opposites remain in tension as mutually referring bi-conditionals. By contrast Hegel’s dialectic is a dialectic of the process of sublation over opposites, resolving them into its all-encompassing self-grasping concept. Nishida’s absolute, on the other hand, is no such concept but the place enveloping the inter-relations and oppositions. His absolute dialectic is then a dialectic of *basho* (*bashoteki benshōhō*). Nishida views Hegel’s dialectic instead to be a dialectic of the *process* of sublation. But the sublational process, as we saw, is also a process of self-objectification in its self-conceptualization that makes itself, the entire process, into the *subject* of self-knowing judgement, i.e., *subject* in *both* senses as knower (epistemological) and known (gram-

matical). In this self-objectification, it tacitly perpetuates the dualistic standpoint of *theoria* that sees its subject-matter *out-there*. Nishida's dialectic of *basho* instead acknowledges that which can *not* be seen or objectified but must be assumed as implicit, the irreducible and un-reifiable holistic situation as the very *wherein* of all being and thinking. While necessarily assumed, it cannot be made into an object or grammatical subject, even in the self-conception of an absolute *idea*. For such an *idea* must always still assume its unstatable *wherein*. And this *wherein*, from Nishida's perspective, is the world's non-substantiality that allows for the autonomous creativity of inter-acting individuals implaced in it. Nishida's "self-formation of the formless" allows for the freedom of the individual in the radically dialectical manifold of reciprocity. This is quite different from the *idea*'s ordering of the historical world as its material. In short Nishida takes Hegel's dialectic to be a dialectic of the *idea* and of process, and distinguishes his own dialectic to instead be a dialectic of *basho* and of nothing, which is also a dialectic of concrete self-contradictory existence, a dialectic of the a-rational as opposed to rational necessity. (See Z5 122-23)

In conclusion, Nishida's dialectic, in contrast to Hegel's dialectic at least traditionally construed, encompasses a radical inter-relationality and inter-determination that precludes self-closure in any self-conceiving concept. The *chiasmatic* complexity of the inter-relationality is such that it cannot be reduced to an *idea*, even an absolute one; and cannot be hypostatized, whether as an absolute subject or substance. The dialectic he develops in the 1930s thus remains true to his original idea of a "self-forming formlessness" in the concrete. His dialectic is not of a series of sublations that culminate in an all-

encompassing concept but instead a dialectic of *basho*, the always implicit place that cannot be objectified or reified. To regard Nishida as a Hegelian or his work as a kind of Hegelianism, even if he makes use of Hegelian formulas and terms, then is misleading, especially when Nishida himself repeatedly distinguished his position from Hegel's throughout the 1930s. The matter of his thinking here — the dialectic of radical reciprocity with the motifs of nothing, negation, and inter-relationality or inter-determination — possesses greater affinity to the non-dualistic ideas of Mahāyāna Buddhism, traceable to the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras*, than to Hegel. Towards the end of his life, in *Ronri to sūri* (*Logic and Mathematics*) of 1944, Nishida thus comes to claim that his dialectic “assumes a standpoint in reverse to that of Hegel's — *it is Buddhistic*.”¹⁷³ (Z10 59) To this Buddhistic aspect of Nishida we now turn.

CHAPTER 9:
NISHIDA, BUDDHISM, AND RELIGION

Nishida throughout his career, as we already mentioned, was concerned with what he called the “religious” or “religiosity.” This was an issue for him from the very beginning of his philosophical career when he wrote in his preface to *Zen no kenkyū* that religion is “the end [*shūketsu*] of philosophy.” (Z1 6) He does not, however, fully develop this issue thematically until his final works in the 1940s. In general, prior to the 1940s, we find Nishida somewhat reticent in referring to religious texts, especially those of the eastern traditions in contrast to the western philosophical sources he frequently cited. Nevertheless both Kyoto school followers and western disciples of Nishida have repeatedly pointed to a “Buddhist metaphysic,” reformulated in the language of western philosophy, hidden within Nishida’s formulations. While it may be too simplistic to read Nishida’s entire project as nothing but a modernized version of Mahāyāna metaphysics, I think that any serious student of eastern thought would recognize Mahāyānistic components in Nishida’s dialectical thinking. It is there even prior to the final essays of the 1940s wherein Nishida comes to acknowledge some sort of a connection.

In discussing Nishida’s relationship to Buddhism, we may first point to his own practice of Zen meditation which he began in 1897 and continued from his late twenties and through his thirties. This has already been noted by many commentators even to the point of stereotyping Nishida as a “Zen thinker.” Its influence upon his thinking, most obviously in his maiden work, *Zen no kenkyū*, is difficult to deny. The opening of *Zen no*

kenkyū, where Nishida's describes "pure experience" (*junsui keiken*) as "to know facts just as they are" and without the subject-object split — even if he may have originally adapted the term from William James¹⁷⁴ — is reminiscent of the Zen understanding of enlightenment. Many commentators have thus taken Nishida's philosophy to be an expression in philosophical language (the language of Aristotle, Neo-Kantianism, German idealism, Hegel and Marxism) of his own lived experience of Zen.¹⁷⁵ A couple of years before his death, in a letter to his student Nishitani Keiji (Feb 19, 1943), Nishida writes that it had been his dearest wish since his thirties to unite Zen and philosophy despite the impossibility this would entail.¹⁷⁶ (Z23 73) In the same year he also writes to his student Mutai Risaku (July 27, 1943) that his final aim is to connect Buddhist thought and the modern scientific spirit through his logic of *basho*. (Z23 123) This interest was not confined merely to the Zen version of Mahāyāna, however, as he wrote in another letter to Mutai a few years later (January 6, 1945), just prior to beginning work on his final essay (*Bashoteki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan*), that he would like to work on the worldview of Jōdō Shinshū (True Pure Land school). (Z23 319)

After that initial thematic of pure experience, throughout the œuvre of what is called "Nishida philosophy," from the late 1920s onward, we find plenty of motifs that suggest Buddhist Mahāyāna origins. As the most conspicuous examples, we may mention the unity of opposites or contradictory self-identity, absolute nothing, and mutual self-negation, comparable to the non-dualistic notions of interdependent origination, emptiness, and mutual non-obstruction found in Madhyamaka, Hua-yen (Kegon), and T'ien-t'ai (Tendai) thought, etc. One commentator, Yusa Michiko, has made the claim

that "...the Mahāyāna Buddhist assertion of the radical interdependence and interpenetration of individuals sustains Nishida's fundamental position."¹⁷⁷ The *Basho* essay of 1926 that initiates Nishida philosophy in working out a dialectic of negation from the (under)ground of experience appears to draw from the Buddhist tradition its conception of an absolute nothing (*zettai mu*) that envelopes our being *qua basho*. Of course the term "absolute nothing" does not appear in Buddhist literature but we do find the concept of "nothing" (*mu*; Chn.: *wu*) in works of Ch'an and Zen. After its introduction in 1926 Nishida develops this idea further in his works of the 1930s and 40s with explicit connections to his religious concerns. Especially his final essay of 1945 (*Bashoteki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan*) brings out the religious implications of that idea in a way that makes us feel its nearness to the Mahāyāna motif of emptiness. But it would also be wrong to say that there were no direct references to Buddhism in earlier works. Even during the early years of Nishida philosophy, such as in *Ippansha no jikakuteki taikai* of 1929, we find Nishida quoting the famous passage from the *Heart Sūtra*: "form is emptiness, emptiness is form." (Z4 357) Aside from a few such direct references, however, his allusions to Buddhist ideas during that period are somewhat subtle and except for the concept of nothing he makes little use of Buddhist terminology in contrast to his employment of western philosophical terms. It is only in the works of the late 1930s and 1940s that he makes frequent reference to Mahāyāna Buddhist sources. Most notably, in *Bashoteki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan* (1945), he quotes the *Diamond Sūtra* and Daitō Kokushi (Myōchō Shūhō; 1282-1337/38CE) (e.g., Z10 316-317) and makes use of ideas coming from Ch'an texts such as *The Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch* and *The Record of*

Lin-chi, Zen thinkers such as Dōgen (1200-1253CE) and Ikkyū (1394-1481CE), and even the True Pure Land school. Nishida's debt to Buddhist non-dualism no longer seems so inconspicuous in his last works. Read backwards from the standpoint of that 1945 essay, his dialectic even of the mid-1930s appears to express, whether intentionally or not, the non-dualistic strand of Mahāyāna philosophy having its origins in the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras*.¹⁷⁸ On the other hand David Dilworth has pointed out that the non-duality indicated in Mahāyāna thought can never be adequately framed within the dialectical language of Hegel.¹⁷⁹ As we have already seen, Nishida has made much use of that Hegelian terminology. Despite that fact we find evidence towards the end of his life that Nishida saw himself *contra* Hegelian dialectics as inheriting the standpoint of Mahāyāna Buddhist philosophy. (Z10 69)

Neither can we ignore the close relationship between Nishida and his friend from his student days, the world famous Zen scholar, D.T. Suzuki. Mutai Risaku, who knew them both and witnessed their friendship, writes in his *Shisaku to kansatsu (Thought and Observation)* that Suzuki and Nishida influenced one another and held in common the view concerning the contradictory nature of reality. Both thinkers found this contradictory nature to be abundantly manifest within the thought of Mahāyāna Buddhism, including both Zen and Jōdō Shin (True Pure Land). According to Mutai, Nishida highly valued among Suzuki's works, *Mushin to iū koto (That which is called No Mind)* (1939), *Jōdōkei shisōron (A Theory of the Thinking of the Pure Land School)* (1942), and *Nihonteki reisei (Japanese Spirituality)* (1944), taking them as exemplary of "religious philosophy." Notice the years of these books. Mutai expresses his belief that Nishida's philoso-

phy of religion in his final essay of 1945, *Bashoteki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan*, was influenced by his intellectual exchange with Suzuki and his exposure to Suzuki's ideas during that period from the late 1930s to the early 1940s.¹⁸⁰ Especially Suzuki's *Nihonteki reisei* develops what he calls "the logic of *soku-hi*" (*sokuhi no ronri*). (E.g, see Z10 316) Nishida began working on his 1945 essay around the same time that he was given the text of *Nihonteki reisei* by Suzuki. This is significant in respect to the fact that Nishida himself refers, in his own essay, to what he calls the "logic of *soku-hi*" of the *Prajñāpāramitās*. In a letter to Suzuki in the following months (March 11, 1945), Nishida explains how he is writing about religion in the attempt to clarify its conception in terms of his "...logic of contradictory self-identity, i.e., the logic of *soku-hi*." (Z23 348) Nishida also writes in a letter to another student, Hisamatsu Shinichi (April 12, 1945), that with this essay he attempts to show what is unique and excellent about Buddhism *vis-à-vis* Christianity. (Z23 372) It thus appears that through his intellectual exchanges with Suzuki in his later years (late 1930s to early 1940s) Nishida was stimulated to pay more direct attention to the affinity of his own thinking with Mahāyāna thought. In a 1938 lecture, for example, while claiming that he did not directly derive his dialectical notion that "one is many and many is one" from Buddhist doctrines *per se*, Nishida acknowledges that it is an "eastern way of thinking" found also in the dialectic of Mahāyāna Buddhism. The two ways of thinking — his and that of Mahāyāna — are thus commensurable. (Z13 22) Having developed his dialectics along his own philosophical path, it appears that with a closer look into these Buddhist doctrines Nishida in his later years came to feel that some deep source common to both had been at work within his own thinking as well.

That is, irrespective of whether he had intentionally or unintentionally drawn inspiration from Mahāhāyana themes in his earlier works, Nishida had come to feel more strongly than before a deep commensurability between his and Mahāyāna conceptions.

We need to still exercise caution, however, so as to not simply reduce the uniqueness and complexity of Nishida's thinking, categorizing it, as nothing but Buddhist or Mahāyāna thought. Notice that Nishida himself carefully pointed out that his dialectic that "one is many and many is one" does not depend on Mahāyāna Buddhism. (Z13 22) To the extent that the stimulus for Nishida's thinking was western philosophy, even the Zen influence coming from his own meditational practice was never pushed to the forefront for most of his writing career.¹⁸¹ His philosophizing sought to overcome certain issues, most notably the issue of dualism raised in the works of western philosophers. His response to them was accordingly articulated in the language of western philosophy. In this, Nishida saw himself as engaging in a nonsectarian philosophical search for truth. Even his explicit use of Buddhist ideas in his final essay of 1945, as Dilworth notes, moves beyond the sectarian boundaries of traditional Buddhist thought to achieve the status of a world philosophy.¹⁸² And in relation to his usage of Buddhist ideas, especially in his discussion of religiosity in that final essay, we need to also acknowledge his many references to Christianity. We find in that essay, explicit references not only to Buddhist sources but to Christian sources as well. This fact that in his encounter with Buddhism Nishida brings Christianity into the picture, makes the situation in regard to his stance *vis-à-vis* Buddhism no simple matter. We need to recognize the uniqueness of his dialectical thought, moreover, when viewed in light of the history of Buddhist thought. This

would include, for example, his understanding of the unfolding of history and the role of humanity therein, involving our interaction with the environment and entailing a bodily *prāxis* that is hence historical in significance. And even his notion of *basho* as the place enfolding everything, including contradictories, even while developing the Mahāyāna notions of emptiness and interdependence, go beyond traditional Buddhist formulations.

In the following sections we shall look-into the connections between the Nishidan and the Buddhist concepts of nothing and emptiness; contradiction and *soku-hi*; the dialectical universal and the *dharmadhātu* of non-obstruction and interdependent origination; ordinariness and the present; and *myōgō* and *tariki* (along with comparable Christian notions of *kenosis* and *gratia*) and inverse correspondence.

Sec. 1: Emptiness, Nothing, Negation

As already mentioned Nishida's texts in general are short on traditional Buddhist references. The one exception of course is the concept of nothing (*mu*) and its concomitant activity of negation (*hitei*), appearing throughout his *œuvre* ever since the inception of Nishida philosophy. *Mu* is a principle concept of Japanese Mahāyāna Buddhism but Nishida develops it in his own manner in dialogue with western philosophy and initially independently of any direct references to Buddhist scripture. It is this concept of *mu* that Nishida has often pointed to when distinguishing his dialectic of *basho* from the dialectic of Hegel that he characterizes as a "dialectic of being [*yū*]." One might then ask to what degree this concept of nothing that distinguishes Nishida from Hegel makes Nishida's thought Buddhistic. It is, however, only in his final years that Nishida comes to examine

in detail this concept in its explicitly Buddhist context. The Buddhist source of this idea, nevertheless, is difficult to deny. Dilworth has noticed, for example, a Buddhist antecedent to, and possible influence upon, the metaphor of self-mirroring nothing in the Buddhist classic, *The Awakening of Faith*, wherein the essence of enlightenment is stated to be like an empty space and a contentless mirror.¹⁸³ In Japanese Buddhism, the term *mu* is another way of speaking of the Mahāyāna concept of *kū*, emptiness, the open sky (*śūnyatā*). Now the question of whether Nishida himself was explicitly conscious of any such influence when he first started using the idea of *mu* in his early works is another matter. The awareness of a connection, however, shows in his later works. In discussing the self-determination of absolute nothing in terms of its absolute negation, Nishida, in one of his later essays from the 1940s, *Kūkan* (“Space”), makes a direct reference to “the true emptiness of Buddhism” (*bukkyō no shinkū*). (Z10 157) And a little earlier in a letter from 1939 (November 6) Nishida appears to have in mind *prajna*-intuition when writing that he has always had a deep interest in the vision of emptiness (*kūkan*), a vision upon which he would like to build his philosophy.¹⁸⁴ One can also notice an affinity between Nishida’s characterization of the absolute (that is nothing) as self-negating with Nāgārjuna’s notion of *śūnyatā śūnyatā*, the emptiness of emptiness. This was one of the points that we found in our previous chapter to distinguish Nishida’s conception of the absolute from Hegel’s. For the absolute’s self-negation is what precludes in Nishida the subordination of individuals under the universal’s hegemony. If the universal itself were empty, any threat of a unilateral totalization would be perpetually destabilized. In Mahāyāna both the individual (i.e., forms) and the so-called universal (i.e., emptiness) are empty, and this

enables their simultaneity or non-duality while disabling any reduction of the one into the other. On this basis one might claim that Nishida's original concept of *zettai mu* (absolute nothing) certainly does give expression to "the formless" that he states has nurtured the traditions of the East. (See Z3 255) This in turn makes the connection of *mu* that has become a "standard hybrid trope"¹⁸⁵ of the Kyoto school with Buddhist metaphysics even more suggestive.

Not only can we distinguish Nishida's absolute from Hegel's through its association with Buddhist nothing. We can distinguish Nishida's Buddhistic concept of nothing from Hegel's understanding of nothingness as well. For Hegel, nothingness is relative to being and but a moment within the dialectic of being and non-being in the process of becoming. For Nishida, nothing is absolute; as self-forming formlessness it enfolds and unfolds everything else in its creative self-negation. Consciousness cannot function without assuming that pre-given nothing that provides, *via* its self-determination, the space of its implacement. (See Z5 82) To explain this Nishida in his 1945 essay (*Basho-teki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan*) makes use of an ancient Buddhist expression: "with no place wherein it abides, this mind arises." (Z10 329) The mind in authentic self-realization arises in its *basho* that is delimited by absolutely nothing. Absolute nothing here serves to negate all apparent substances, including the knowing subject itself. The subject or spirit here then cannot be absolute; there is always its implacement in the pre-given un-objectifiable place of concrete immediacy. Nishida had already in 1931 thus found self-awareness in terms of nothing, the self-determination of nothing, *mu*, to be operative *behind* Hegel's dialectic. (E.g., Z5 123-24; Z7 271) The deepening of self-

analysis in light of that dark abysmal place, *basho vis-à-vis* absolute nothing, eradicates or extinguishes any rationalist attempt to reduce concrete awareness to a self-conceiving concept in Hegelian fashion. What Nishida expresses in the thought of nothing is rather a self-learning that is a “self-forgetting” in the fashion of the Zen thinker Dōgen as we shall see below.

This non-substantiality of nothing is a far cry, however, from any ontological nihilism. For the self-negation of nothing serves to simultaneously affirm the very beings it embraces as their *basho*; it makes-room for their co-being. (See Z10 315-16) Nishida’s motion here is comparable to that of the Mahāyāna middle path — the emptiness of emptiness (*śūnyatā śūnyatā*) we just mentioned above that avoids ontological reification on the one hand and annihilation on the other. For Nishida it is this self-negation of the absolute that affirmatively establishes the personal self and the world of such individuals. That absolute negation *qua* affirmation, in his final 1945 essay, is “God’s creation.” But since absolute negation here must be mutual, in the reciprocity of inverse correspondence, Nishida expresses this in Buddhistic fashion, “Because there is Buddha there are sentient beings and because there are sentient beings there is Buddha.” (Z10 324-25) Stating that the true God cannot be simply an utterly transcendent God but rather what the mystical theologians of the West have called *Gottheit* (Godhead, Godhood), Nishida immediately adds that this “is the emptiness of the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras*” (*hannya no kū*). (Z10 104-05) One might thus go-on to say that the entire dialectic of mutual self-negation between absolute and relative, world and beings, universal and individuals, in

the non-substantial and de-substantializing matrix of *basho qua* nothing is Nishida's rendering of the non-dualistic concept of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) in explicitly dialectical terms.

We already noted in discussing the concept of inverse correspondence that the self-negation of the absolute is to be matched by man's own self-negation. Nishida makes use of Dōgen's statement in several of his works that "to learn the Buddha way is to learn the self; to learn the self means to forget the self; and to forget the self means to be authenticated by the ten thousand *dharmas*." (Z10 336; see also Z8 512, 514; Z10 326) Nishida takes Dōgen's statement as a repudiation of the dogmatic substantialization of the self predicated upon self-attachment and further takes it to exemplify what he himself means by absolute (or: self-) negation. (Z8 512) At the ground of its foundation, where life meets death, the self touches upon absolute negation and one dies to oneself. (See Z8 514) The true self lies where the abstract self, the substantialized ego serving as the subject of consciousness, is negated. Nishida finds this true self in the oneness of body-and-mind in its dynamic interaction with the world, a practical standpoint that cannot be approached through an Aristotelian orientation to the grammatical subject. Breaking away from that Aristotelian orientation we arrive at a concrete standpoint that is in reverse of that of Hegel's rational or idealist dialectics. (See Z10 133-34) It is the existential awareness of one's self-contradiction at the depths of one's being, an experience of one's being *qua* life-and-death, which Nishida also calls the standpoint of "religious self-awareness." It is a "religious" self-awareness that he finds evident in several different religions. For example, he finds the motif of dying to one's ego not only in Dōgen's Zen but also manifest in the True Pure Land Buddhist idea of relying on other-power (*tariki*).

(Z8 514) In both Dōgen’s “forgetting oneself” and True Pure Land’s “relying on other-power,” one discovers true self-identity in self-negation, one’s inner existential strife that is not sublated but rather lived. We can thus say that the paired concepts of nothing and negation bring Nishida’s thinking into proximity with that of Mahāyāna and moreover that Nishida was — or at least, *became* — aware of this closeness.

Sec. 2: Contradiction, *Soku-hi*, and the Middle Path

We noticed above the proximity, and possible connection, between Nishida’s conception of the absolute’s self-negation — the nothingness of the absolute that he designated absolute nothing — on the one hand, and the Mahāyāna notion of the emptiness of emptiness on the other hand. The other major concept of his work that sounds particularly non-western and Buddhistic is the concept of absolutely contradictory self-identity (*zettai mujunteki jikodōitsu*). Therein one might observe a motif quite conspicuous within Mahāyāna Buddhism: its various formulations of the non-duality between opposites on the basis of their non-substantiality, such as between *nirvāṇa* and *samsāra* or between *śūnyatā* and *rūpa*, etc. This is an idea traceable to the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras*, for example, the well-known statement in *The Heart Sūtra* that “form is emptiness, emptiness as such is form” (*rūpam śūnyatā śūnyatāiva rūpam*). The collapsing of opposites in both Nishida and Mahāyāna treads a middle path that avoids the reification of being as substance on the one hand and the annihilation of being into utter nothing on the other hand. A major feature of that paradoxical mode of thinking, recognizable in both Mahāyāna and Nishida is what we might call “double transcendence” or “double negation,” a “trans-

descendence,” that precludes any sort of uni-lateral reduction — as we have already seen in the Mahāyāna notion of the emptiness of emptiness and which may be contrasted with a tendency within Hegel towards totalization under an hegemonic universal. Nishida’s friend Suzuki has traced that dialectic of the middle in Mahāyāna to the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras*, which he finds to be characterized by a mode of thinking that he calls “logic of *soku-hi*.” Suzuki’s influence on Nishida in this regard is conspicuous in Nishida’s final essay wherein he frequently refers to the “logic of *soku-hi*” of the *Prajñāpāramitās*. In this section we shall discuss the possible connections between Nishida’s idea of contradictory identity and Suzuki’s logic of *soku-hi* in light of the Mahāyāna notion of the middle path.

The double negation or trans-descendence — the emptiness of emptiness —, just now mentioned, is what constitutes Mahāyāna Buddhism’s so-called “middle path.” In chapter two we noted some of the differences between that middle path of Mahāyāna and the sublational dialectic of Hegel. As opposed to Hegel’s dialectic, the non-dual middle of Mahāyāna 1) escapes conceptual reduction; and 2) involves the simultaneity of opposites as bi-conditionals; which thus 3) allows for genuine contradiction *via* emptiness as opposed to conceptual resolution. The point of Mahāyāna practice is to experience that emptiness. Contrasting Mahāyāna’s middle path then with Hegel’s sublational dialectic, Nishida certainly appears closer to Mahāyāna in content despite his terminology. Nishida, throughout the 1930s and 40s, declares his dialectical and holistic understanding of the concrete to be neither monism nor pluralism, neither idealism nor materialism, neither teleology nor mechanism, neither universalism nor individualism. He rejects both the

Aristotelian reduction of reality to the individual substance *and* the Platonist subordination of individuals under the universal *idea*. Each position in its own is an abstraction from the *chiasmatic* complexity of the concrete. Nishida's middle position rather embraces individuality and universality, parts and whole, many and one, etc., in their interrelationality. His dialectical matrix, precluding reduction to any of the above terms as well as to mere being or mere non-being thus appears to epitomize the Mahāyāna middle. The Mahāyāna "middle path" avoids the reductive extremes of utter nothing in nihilism (*uccheda*) and of substantial being in eternalism (*śāśvata*). Nishida's self-contradictory identity then almost appears to be a direct descendent of that Mahāyāna middle that empties *both* absolute substantiality and utter annihilation, preventing any unilateral transcendence that would annihilate relativity or individuality. For Nishida with his dialectic treads that middle path.

Having developed the dialectical and "middle-treading" concept of contradictory identity during the 1930s, Nishida subsequently turns his attention more directly to his religious concerns in the 1940s. He comes to articulate a dialectic of religiosity with explicit textual references to religious, especially Buddhist but also Christian, sources. And on the basis of these direct references to religious sources, his dialectic of contradictory identity, together with the newer formulation of inverse correspondence, can be seen in a clearer Buddhistic light. For example, Nishida identifies what he had been calling the contradictory self-identity between many and one to be the very logic that has been operative behind "the religion of eastern nothing," whereby "mind is Buddha." He makes the claim that through that absolutely contradictory self-identity of the world as one and

many, each individual self faces the absolute in the present. He explains this in terms of the individual's own self-contradiction. The religious understanding that "mind is Buddha" entails that we penetrate this principle of "all is one" by dying to the ego in the depths of self-contradiction. (Z8 421) With this stance Nishida again sees himself moving in a direction opposite to that of the object-logic that he still finds in Hegel. He asserts that a truly absolute dialectic, i.e., a dialectic of contradictory identity, is instead to be found in the Buddhist doctrine of the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras* that gives expression to the intuitive wisdom (*prajna*) of the emptiness of all. (Z10 317 399) As mentioned above, Suzuki's influence is evident here and Nishida approvingly quotes Suzuki's explanation of *prajna* as a true self-awareness that is the discrimination of non-discrimination.¹⁸⁶ (Z10 109) Nishida thus comes to detect a connection between his dialectic of contradictory self-identity and the *prajna* stance of the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras* that his friend Suzuki calls the "logic of *soku-hi*" (*sokuhi no ronri*). In his final essay Nishida looks to that literature of the *Prajñāpāramitā s* and its so-called logic of *soku-hi*, to which we now turn.

The intellectual exchange between Nishida and Suzuki was one of mutual influence in each other's scholarships. While on the one hand Suzuki with his expertise on Buddhism shaped Nishida's understanding of that topic, it has also been suggested that Nishida's own philosophy in turn influenced Suzuki's reading of Mahāyāna doctrines. Suzuki had initially stressed the a-rational and experiential dimensions of Zen Buddhism. But by the late 1930s, realizing the importance of its philosophical and doctrinal dimensions, Suzuki came to emphasize — perhaps under the influence of Nishida's logic of

contradictory self-identity — what he viewed to be the characteristic logical structure found in the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras*, especially *The Diamond Sūtra*.¹⁸⁷ The logical structure assumes the paradoxical form of equation *via* negation, which he formulates as “A is non-A, therefore A is A.”¹⁸⁸ This is the logical structure that Suzuki designates as “the logic of *soku-hi* [is and is-not].” But just as Nishida’s logic may have been a catalyst that formed Suzuki’s own reading of Mahāyāna doctrines, Nishida on his part repeatedly received instructions from Suzuki as to the ideas, literature, and terminology of Buddhism, and came to incorporate them into his own works.¹⁸⁹ As we saw earlier in this section Nishida himself, in his final essay of 1945, repeatedly made use of Suzuki’s reading of the *Prajñāpāramitās* in terms of a logic of *soku-hi*. But if Suzuki’s logic of *soku-hi* had influenced Nishida’s own view to contradictory self-identity, Nishida’s thought concerning contradictory self-identity may earlier have very well influenced Suzuki’s reading of those Buddhist scriptures in light of *soku-hi* logic. It appears that the exchange of ideas between Suzuki and Nishida was truly reciprocal. Nishida’s dialectic, as found earlier in the 1930s, despite its affinity with Mahāyāna non-dualism was not simply composed out of pre-existent notions he already possessed on the basis of his understanding of Buddhist doctrines. If Mutai’s observation of the two thinkers is correct not only did Suzuki instruct Nishida concerning Buddhist doctrines but Nishida’s philosophy in turn influenced Suzuki’s interpretations of Mahāyāna doctrines. But to make such reciprocity possible in the first place there must have been something commensurable between Nishida’s dialectic and Mahāyāna doctrines to begin with. In a letter to Suzuki (May 11, 1945), Nishida writes that he takes his own logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity to be in one

aspect the *Prajñāpāramitā* logic of *soku-hi*. He immediately adds however that he thinks that something unique and distinct emerges in its determination as the contradictory self-identity of one and many. (Z23 386) In any case, Nishida during the 1940s — perhaps on the basis of a felt commensurability between the two ideas — begins employing the term *soku-hi* in explicating his own notion of contradictory self-identity.

By the 1940s, as a result of his intellectual exchange with Suzuki, we find Nishida fully incorporating the discourse of *soku-hi* logic into his own dialectical philosophy of religion. In elucidating his own concepts of *basho vis-à-vis* nothing, contradictory identity, and inverse correspondence, Nishida appropriates Suzuki's logic of *soku-hi* while employing passages from Buddhist texts, especially the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras*.¹⁹⁰ For example, after discussing the absolutely contradictory self-identity between the absolute and the relative, between the absolute's holistic oneness and the manifold of individuals, between the absolute's transcendence to and immanence in the world, Nishida — in that final essay of 1945, *Bashoteki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan* — refers to Suzuki's reading of *The Diamond Sūtra (Kongōkyō)* as expressing the same paradox in *soku-hi* logical terms. He quotes the famous passage from the *Diamond Sūtra*: “Because all *dharmas* [thing-events] are not all *dharmas*, therefore they are called all *dharmas*. Because the Buddha is no Buddha, he is the Buddha; Because sentient beings are not sentient beings, they are sentient beings.” (Z10 316-17) The point of the *Diamond Sūtra* is that nothing exists in virtue of itself, nothing is ontologically independent; everything is what it is due to its relationship to what it is not. For something to be what it is, it cannot just be what it is by itself. Even the Buddha can never stand on his own as the Buddha. (Or at least, he

does not regard himself as such; he is free of ego-centricity.) And hence the Buddha is Buddha because he is *not* Buddha.

Nishida takes the *soku-hi* logic of the *Diamond Sūtra* and applies it to God to explain what he means by “absolute.” An utterly transcendent God that is without any reference or relation to anything else, as utterly independent in self-identity, is no true God. God cannot be conceived in terms of object-logic as such a substance. Just like the *dharmas* in the *Diamond Sūtra* are *dharmas* in their emptiness, God must empty Himself in order to be God. The absolute must contain self-negation within itself whereby it inverts itself into the relative. The holistic one maintains itself thus in the plurality of individuals. The creativity of the absolute is in the affirmation of God’s absolute negation within. The divine love that creates the world in self-negation thus cannot be conceived in terms of the object-logic of self-affirmative substance. That would reduce God into a non-self-contradictory Aristotelian substance. God’s self-identity as a true absolute is rather mediated by absolute negation in terms of the *Prajñāpāramitā soku-hi* logic. (Z10 333) Nishida’s God here is thus a dialectical God who is both transcendent and immanent; an absolute that maintains itself in absolutely contradictory self-identity, whereby the absolute “is absolutely being because it is absolutely nothing; in absolute rest because it is in absolute movement.” (Z10 335) Nishida finds this dialectic to be best expressed by the *Prajñāpāramitā* logic of *soku-hi*. He claims that only its thought “thoroughly penetrates such absolute dialectic” to give full expression to absolutely contradictory self-identity. (Z10 317, 321; see also 335) He regards its *soku-hi* logic thus to fully epitomize the *absolute* dialectic that he had been contrasting with Hegel’s *sublational* dialectic. Ni-

shida applies the same *soku-hi* formulation from the *Diamond Sūtra* to the human self or mind that is in inverse correspondence with God as well. In the previous year (*Yoteichōwa o tebiki to shite shūkyōtetsugaku e*, 1944), in order to explain his own vision of self-awareness in terms of self-contradiction or self-negation in distinction from the self-affirmative stance of the Cartesian *cogito*, Nishida quotes another passage from that sūtra: “Because all minds are not minds, they are called mind.” (Z10 109)

The two, man and God, finite and absolute, meet in the inverse correspondence of their mutual self-negation so that they are in absolutely contradictory self-identity. To show this, Nishida makes use of a Buddhist saying taken from Zen master Myōchō (Daitō Kokushi): “Buddha and I, separate through a billion *kalpas* of time, yet not separate for an instant; encountering each other the whole day through, yet not encountering each other for an instant.” (Z10 104) Nishida seems to understand this passage to mean that when one feels one’s separation from God or Buddha, at that moment of utter despair, one in fact is in contact with God/Buddha; and in reverse that when one feels confident that one is in contact with the absolute, one is infinitely separated from it. It illustrates the inverse correspondence of mutual self-negation: one meets God only in dying to one’s ego. Nishida returns to this passage several times in order to exhibit the dialectic of religiosity. What makes such a dialectic possible, according to Nishida, is not Aristotle’s substance logic but rather the *Prajñāpāramitā* logic of *soku-hi*.

Within Indian Buddhist philosophy, the first important interpreter of that paradoxical thought of the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras* was Nāgārjuna of the Madhyamaka school. Scholars usually take this to be the commencement of systematic philosophy within Ma-

hāyāna. This Mādhyamika school further developed what Suzuki and Nishida found in the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras*. We see, for example, a collapsing of opposites, comparable to Nishida's, in Nāgārjuna's *tetralemma* (four-fold negation of is, is-not, both is and is-not, and neither is nor is-not) and the concomitant theory of the two truths of the relative or conventional (*samvrti-satya*) and the ultimate or absolute (*paramārtha-satya*).¹⁹¹ The *tetralemma* is meant to disclose the provisional nature (*samvrti*) of all truth-claims while simultaneously referring to an ultimate truth (*paramārtha*) in regard to their emptiness, i.e., the absence of any permanent eternal essence or substance. A statement, even if provisionally true, is ultimately empty in virtue of its provisional nature. And yet because emptiness signifies this very lack of ontological independence or *ultimacy*, it itself does not point to anything separate and beyond the provisional: "...whatever is dependently arisen, that is emptiness."¹⁹² In that sense, neither is emptiness really "ultimate." Both truths, provisional and ultimate, thus refer to the same reality that things are conventionally real but substantially unreal. While not utterly unreal, neither are they ultimately real as substances. Hence Nāgārjuna's theory of two truths takes *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa* to be not two distinct realms but rather alternative perspectives to the same reality of empty phenomena, with neither side possessing its "own-being" or "self-nature" (*sva-bhāva*).¹⁹³ This is the Mādhyamika standpoint of the middle way that collapses the distinction between opposites such as being and nothing, or many and one, *via* their emptiness, without reifying or annihilating either for the sake of the other. On the basis of emptiness, reality is "one yet many, many yet one." We find similar sorts of non-dualistic collapsing of opposites in later Far Eastern Mahāyāna as well, and this is precisely the standpoint that Ni-

shida — whether consciously or not — inherits in his view to reality as a contradictory self-identity between being and nothing, one and many. His idea of contradictory identity is founded upon the same sort of de-substantialization of opposites. That is why some commentators have suggested that Nishida’s own concept of *basho vis-à-vis* nothing that negates mere affirmation and mere negation, being and non-being, corresponds to, or may have taken a hint from, Mādhyamika thought.¹⁹⁴ Nishida himself, in *Basho-teki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan*, alludes to the Mādhyamika logic of “the middle path.” He claims that Nāgārjuna’s “negative theology” and his “eightfold negations” (*happu*) — the systematic denial of all reifying assertions, repudiating the notion of any underlying substance: “neither ceasing nor arising, neither annihilation nor permanence, neither identity nor difference, neither coming-in nor going-out,”¹⁹⁵ which was then further developed by the Chinese *San-lun* school that inherited Mādhyamika concepts —, along with its cardinal teaching of the non-duality between *nirvāṇa* and *samsāra*, exhibits a version of the structure of *soku-hi* logic.¹⁹⁶ (Z10 317)

In any case by the 1940s Nishida has come to view his own *basho vis-à-vis* absolute nothing as the place wherein the logic of *soku-hi* operates, to unfold its characteristic dialectic that shapes the world-matrix of co-originating or mutually dependent opposites. In general then in the essays of the 1940s, dealing with religiosity and its dialectic, Nishida suggests a deep inter-resonance between his own thought of absolutely contradictory self-identity and Suzuki’s understanding of the *Prajñāpāramitā* logic of *soku-hi*. Seeing the two “logics” — the dialectic of contradictory self-identity and *soku-hi* logic — side-by-side is helpful in reminding us that the “identity” in “absolutely contradictory

self-identity” is always mediated by “absolute contradiction,” i.e., the relationship of mutual self-negation, which in Buddhist terms means emptiness. This is no self-identity that affirms self-substantiality. The whole *qua* absolute is no totalizing principle that erases or dominates its other or its parts. As we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, a decade or so earlier in *Ippansha no jikakuteki taikei* of 1929 Nishida had already expressed this non-substantiality in reference to Buddhist scripture — rare for that time period —, by citing the famous *Prajñāpāramitā* equation from the Heart Sūtra, “form is emptiness, emptiness is form. (Z4 357) In that respect he already had some awareness, though reticent about it, of the closeness of his thinking to Mahāyāna even prior to the influence of Suzuki’s *soku-hi* logic in the late 1930s. During the mid-1930s Nishida develops that non-substantial non-duality in a dialectical direction reminiscent of the Hua-yen doctrine of the *dharma* realm of the mutual non-obstruction between thing-events and their patterning (*li-shi wu-ai; riji muge*) and amongst thing-events themselves (*shih-shih wu-ai; jiji muge*). It is that dialectics of non-substantiality that becomes explicated in the 1940s in terms of *soku-hi* logic with explicit reference to the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras*. In the next section we shall look into any possible connections between that Hua-yen doctrine and Nishida’s dialectics.

Sec. 3: Interdependent Origination and Mutual Non-obstruction

Noticing the general proximity of Nishida’s dialectical thought with the so-called *soku-hi* logic of the *Prajñāpāramitās*, we also find motifs in Nishida’s thinking reminding us of the Mahāyāna concept of interdependent origination (*pratītya-samutpāda; engi*) and

some of its East Asian variations, such as the Hua-yen concept of “mutual non-obstruction” (*wu-ai; muge*) that we just alluded to at the end of the last section. In Nishida’s works from the 1930s (as well as in the 1940s) we notice a conspicuous affinity with these Buddhist doctrines, such as in his concept of the dialectical universal with its fourfold inter-determinations in *Tetsugaku no konpon mondai*. Nishida himself early on in 1933 refers to that similarity between his own “dialectical logic” and the dialectics of what he mentions as the “deepest of Buddhist philosophy,” Hua-yen (Kegon) and T’ien-t’ai (Tendai). (Z13 190)

Nishida, when considering the manifold of individuals, stresses their irreducible individuality. He also reminds us, however, that these individuals are not substances since they are self-negating *vis-à-vis* one another. This non-substantiality of individuals in their interrelationality appears quite Buddhistic when juxtaposed to certain Buddhist notions. The stress on their radical inter-relationality that constitutes the identity of each reminds one of the Mahāyāna doctrine of interdependent origination that individuals are what they are through their dependence upon, and inter-relations with, one another. Each lacks its own being (*sva-bhāva*) or substantiality and as such is empty (*śūnya*). In turn the world as a whole is likewise what it is in interdependence with its co-constituting individual elements. Both the world and its individuals, whole and parts, have each its being in interdependence. The being of each is inseparable from its interdependence, its lack of ontological independence, i.e., emptiness. This doctrine of interdependent origination that juxtaposes dependent being with emptiness or the lack of substantiality, one might then say, contains a similar sort of simultaneity of opposites that we find in Ni-

shida's idea of the contradictory identity between being and non-being, affirmation and negation, that he employs throughout his later (post-1930) works.

Consider Hua-yen's doctrine of the fourfold *dharmadhātu*. The manifold determinations of the dialectical matrix in Nishida — the universal's self-determination, the universal's determination of the individual and the individual's reverse determination of the universal, the individual's self-determination, and the individuals' inter-determination — may be translated into Hua-yen terms with almost the exact same meanings (*li*, *li-shih*, *shih*, *shih-shih*; or in Japanese: *ri*, *ji*, *riji*, *jiji*). For example, what Nishida formulated in the 1930s in terms of the universal's determination of the individual and its reverse (or: counter-) determination by the individual, and then in the 1940s in terms of the inverse correspondence between the absolute and the finite, in Hua-yen terms would be *li-shih wu-ai* (*riji muge*), that is, the mutual non-obstruction between thing-events (*shih*, *ji*) and their pattern (*li*, *ri*). Thus in explaining his own notion of contradictory self-identity, even while discussing Leibnizian ideas, Nishida in 1943 (*Chishiki no kyakkansei ni tsuite*; "The Objectivity of Knowledge") himself makes reference to that Hua-yen understanding of *li-shih wu-ai* and *shih-shih wu-ai*. (Z9 416) In Hua-yen doctrine, it is not that *li* as a transcendent principle orders the material of *shih* (thing-events) from above. *Li* is identical to the very patterning of mutual non-obstruction between *shih* (*shih-shih wu-ai*; *jiji muge*). Taking *li* in its properly Chinese significance as that patterning of how things inter-relate to one another and are thus mutually distinguished from one another, it is immanent to the realm of the myriad *shih*. *Li-shih wu-ai* thus does not entail the unidirectional dominion of a transcendent *li* over the many individual *shih*, but rather its

immanence as the very patterning of their interrelationality and mutual difference. Similarly in Nishida's system of the dialectical universal, the universal is not some transcendent ideal principle ordering its material from above. And just as in Nishida the universal must refer to its non-substantiality, an absolute nothing, in Hua-yen, the non-obstruction obtaining among individual thing-events (*shih*) simultaneously manifests the emptiness (*k'ung; kū*) pervading all, i.e., their patterning of inter-relationality and mutual difference (*li*) and hence their full "wondrous being."¹⁹⁷ By contrast in Hua-yen terms, Hegel's dialectic is one-sided in allowing only for a transcendent *li*'s determination over *shih* while ignoring the true immanence of *li* within *shih-shih*. On the other hand as a self-forming formlessness, Nishida's absolute is itself shaped by the interactivities of its individual elements. In its non-substantiality, *basho vis-à-vis* nothing does not exercise domination over the manifold of individuals.

Nishida's dialectic as we see then accounts for the genuine reciprocity of *li-shih wu-ai* on the vertical plane that is simultaneously *shih-shih wu-ai* on the horizontal plane. Nishida himself in *Nihon bunka no mondai (The Problem of Japanese Culture)* of 1940 mentions the Hua-yen formula of "the non-obstruction among thing-events" (*shih shih wu-ai; jiji muge*), as facts determining facts themselves, when speaking of the self-determination of the world as an absolutely contradictory self-identity. (Z9 73) Just as in Hua-yen *li-shih wu-ai* and *shih-shih wu-ai* imply one another, in Nishida's system of the dialectical universal, the universal's self-determination means the individual's self-determination, which in turn means inter-determination amongst individuals and their reverse determination of the universal itself. (e.g., Z6 236-37) Through such radical in-

terrelationality of the world, each individual thing-event is simultaneously what it is (*shih*), interdependent with others (*shih-shih wu-ai*), and expressive of the whole (*li-shih wu-ai*), while the whole itself simultaneously is expressive of those individual determinations. Nishida's dialectical matrix with its fourfold cross-directional *chiasma* thus appears to fit hand-in-glove with Hua-yen's fourfold *dharmadhātu*. And furthermore, taking off from such comparison, Nishida's notion of *basho vis-à-vis* absolutely nothing that *negates* itself to make room for individuals also comes very close to the Hua-yen understanding of *li* as the patterning of emptiness interpenetrating its terms (*shih*), whereby their interrelations are described as a *non*-obstruction (*wu-ai, muge*). The entire realm of interrelations, the *dharmadhātu* or *basho* in both systems, *via* non-obstruction or self-negation is empty of substance or *sva-bhāva*. In his philosophy of religiosity in the 1940s Nishida translates this reality into what thinkers like Pascal and Nicholas of Cusa have called the infinite sphere without periphery or circumference. In Mahāyāna terms we might in turn reinterpret this sphere in terms of emptiness (*kū*) as the open sky (*kū*), perhaps traceable to the idea of the sky as an "open space" (*ākāśa*) in the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras* that supposedly inspired Nāgārjuna's own use of *śūnyatā*.¹⁹⁸

In light of this discussion it is interesting to note Suzuki's remark in his introduction to Viglielmo's English translation of *Zen no kenkyū*: "Toward the end of his life... Nishida seemed to have felt a new interest in Kegon [Hua-yen] philosophy. We often talked about it.... [Zen's relationship with Hua-yen/Kegon] is likely to have induced Nishida to take up the study of Kegon and to expound it in his characteristic way of thinking."¹⁹⁹ Whether his own formulation of the fourfold dialectical universal was directly

influenced by the Hua-yen fourfold or not, it is clear that Nishida came to notice the proximity of his own thinking with Hua-yen through his conversations with Suzuki in the later part of his life.

Sec. 4: Ordinariness and the Present

Commentators have repeatedly spoken of Nishida's connection with Zen: Nishida practiced *zazen* (seated meditation) from his late twenties through his thirties. Nevertheless, as is obvious by now, the actual stimulus for his philosophical work comes from his encounter with western philosophy and the issues it raised. And yet into his philosophical project that had been stimulated by western philosophy, Nishida incorporated what he had learned from Zen — both experientially and doctrinally. We can see his own Zen experience filtering into his early conceptions of pure experience. This serves in turn as a foundation for Nishida's later incorporation of Zen thought — found most notably in Dōgen — into his own understanding of the absolute present. And finally in the latest years of his life references to Zen doctrines become most pronounced in his conception of ordinariness. All three — pure experience, the absolute present, and ordinariness — are connected and suggest Zen thematics; but here we shall focus upon the latter two that emerge during periods, the 1930s and the 1940s, when Nishida was developing his explicitly dialectical mode of thinking.

We have already noted how Nishida's dialectic not only involves a spatial dimension that encompasses simultaneous terms but also possesses significant implications for a perspective on time in terms of the present. Hegel's view to time is teleological in its

future-orientedness, an inheritance of the general western eschatological perspective deriving from the Abrahamic religions (and before that from the Persian religion of Zoroastrianism). Nishida's view on time that focuses on the absoluteness of the present, by contrast, is akin to Buddhistic notions of time. The teleological premise of the end in Hegel makes his time a closed circle. On the other hand it is the focus on the present — a microcosmic condensation of an infinity of possibilities from out of which past and future flow — that makes time in Nishida open. The genuine novelty it allows for is what permits the individual's reverse determination of the universal, allowing for the transformation of the made into the making. This happens on the basis of the self-negation of each moment *vis-à-vis* all other moments. And this emptiness of each moment is an idea that one might perhaps trace back — or at least, relate — to the Buddhist view to impermanence (*anitya, anicca*) as well as to the *Prajñāpāramitā Heart Sūtra*'s notion of the emptiness of the *dharmas*. The latter was the Mahayanists' contention against the Abhidharist's substantialization of successive *dharmas* that constitute the flow of time. Adding to this one also detects the Zen refinement of that idea within Nishida's own notion of the absolute present in its enfolding of past and future to mirror the whole of time in its very impermanence, whereby there is rest amidst movement. The most obvious Zen source here and who Nishida himself repeatedly cites, is Dōgen. Dōgen understood time to involve what he called, “now” (*nikon*), “passage” (*kyōryaku*), and “abiding-in-a-dharma-position” (*jūhōi*). Nishida's understanding of the present in terms of *basho* comes very close to Dōgen's conception of the configuration of *dharma* (*jūhōi*) in the immediate now (*nikon*), which concentrates the whole of cosmic space-time into a single point by mutual

implication in the net of inter-dependence, only to negate itself for the next moment, allowing for the continual passage (*kyōryaku*) of self-negating moments. In this context what Nishida means by *basho* becomes the place of what Buddhism means by impermanence.

But what is most noticeable in the last stages of Nishida's thought (during the 1940s) in terms of concepts borrowed from, or influenced by, Zen is the motif of "ordinariness" or "everydayness" (*byōjōtei*). This idea takes-off from the Zen notion of "ordinary mind" (*byōjōshin*) that develops the non-duality of *samsāra-nirvāṇa*. What Nishida refers to as ordinariness expresses the dialectic of inverse correspondence between the absolute and the finite in more immediate terms. In explaining this concept, Nishida makes use of a quotation from Chinese Ch'an master Lin-chi (Jpn.: Rinzai) (d.867CE): "[T]here is no use for the Buddha *dharma*. Everything is as usual, nothing is different. One shits and pisses, wears clothes, and eats. And when tired, one lies down." (Z10 353) Nishida also refers to Nanquan's (Jpn.: Nansen's) (748-834CE) statement that "the ordinary mind [*byōjōshin*], just as it is, is the way [*tao*]." (Z10 359) And even before those two the term "ordinary mind" was used by Chinese Ch'an master Mazu Daoi (Jpn.: Baso Dōitsu) (709-788CE). Nishida understands that phrase in terms of the absolute present's self-determination and explains that it is therein that the inverse correspondence between self and absolute, or the non-duality between *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa* (*seishi soku nehan*), is realized. (Z10 334, 356) But Nishida, perhaps to emphasize the infinite depth that extends beyond any "mind" — as in his earlier notion of *basho vis-à-vis* absolute nothing that extends beyond the field of consciousness, a depth that is simultaneously manifest in

the most commonplace or ordinary —, renders his concept “ordinariness.” The point is that the deeply primordial *is* the concretely real; it does not transcend the world of everyday existence but is right before us. The deep ground is right there in everyday appearances. (See Z10 359) The ordinary is thus the very *basho* of concrete reality, which in spite of its ordinariness holds infinite “religious” significance for Nishida. This is another way of speaking of the immanence of the transcendent.

We also see Nishida further extending that Zen “ordinariness” by adding Christian terminology, coining the phrase “eschatological ordinariness” or “eschatology of the everyday” (*shūmatsuronteki byōjōtei*). With this phrase Nishida communicates the idea that the absolute’s self-negation, in all of its worldly or cosmic proportions, happens in the *here and now*, in the immanent and ordinary reality of our immediacy, whereby our present self-awareness as finite already bears the religious meaning of the “end-times.” In other words, the *end*, the *eschaton*, is in the *here-and-now*. This is also another way of talking about inverse correspondence. As the standpoint wherein one truly finds one’s self in self-authentication, Nishida characterizes it as the standpoint of the free will or the freedom of self-conversion, and opposes it to the Kant’s version of the free will whereby reason follows a self-imposed moral imperative. To make his case, Nishida cites the Zen notion of “absolute freedom” (*zettai jiyū*) found in Lin-chi (Rinzai), whereby one is the self-expression of the absolute. (Z10 355) “Absolute freedom” in Rinzai is the standpoint “of always acting freely, in whatever the circumstance, by establishing one’s identity without being captivated by anything” and “of everything embodying the truth wherever one may be.”²⁰⁰ As Kosaka²⁰¹ explains absolute freedom here is determined neither by

instinct nor by reason. Rather true freedom as such entails one's exhaustive self-negation in the awareness of one's finitude, one's impermanence, as a self-determination of the present. Hence one is free of attachment, even to the self. And this freedom happens not in view of the future but in the present that is ordinary and yet eschatological. The connection of Nishida's thinking to Zen, which was there in his earlier works due to his own Zen training but remained implicit, thus becomes more pronounced in his later works, especially in the 1945 essay, where he makes explicit reference to Zen thinkers and their thoughts.

Sec. 5: Inverse Correspondence and *Kenosis*, *Gratia*, *Myōgō*, *Tariki*

Nishida's religious thought was not only inspired by the Mahāyāna ideas that come to expression in Zen. When examining his late works of the 1940s one comes to notice references to what has often been stereotypically regarded as a form of Buddhism antithetical to Zen, the True Pure Land school of Mahāyāna Buddhism.²⁰² Moreover references to these ideas are often conjoined with references to Christian doctrines. Both are devotionalist and grace-oriented religions that stereotypically appear to be very distinct from the Buddhism of Zen. In discussing these religions, we find Nishida here trying to clarify his own dialectical ideas about religiosity in general. The set of Christian ideas that Nishida found inspiration from, and often refers to, is the rubric connecting or encompassing a certain reading of the notions of *kenosis*, *gratia*, *agape*, and *logos*, i.e., ideas belonging to a line of Christian thought that one might trace through from St. Paul, St. Augustine, Martin Luther, Kierkegaard, perhaps up to modern German Protestant theol-

ogy. In the mid-1930s, in *Tetsugaku no konpon mondai*, as if to pre-view his later concept of inverse correspondence, Nishida speaks of the establishment of the world as an affirmation of absolute negation, a self-determination of an absolute alterity that we ourselves as finite beings can also reach through our own corresponding absolute negation. The latter happens when in deep anxiety we become aware of our self-contradiction within our depths. Nishida declares this to be the message of Mahāyāna Buddhism. But he also goes-on to identify this with what Christianity calls “the Word of God.” (Z6 334) Then later in the 1940s Nishida compares this Christian notion of *logos* (Word) with the True Pure Land Buddhist notion of *myōgō*. Both imply a profound sense of absolute alterity in the face of which we are but powerless finite beings. Proper comportment *vis-à-vis* that excess *other* on our part would hence be self-negation. Nishida thus relates these ideas found in both religions to his own understanding of inverse correspondence.

In his final essay of 1945 (*Bashoteki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan*) Nishida finds support for his notion of inverse correspondence in the Christian tradition. He takes both statements, “The Word became flesh to dwell among us...” from the *Gospel of John* (1:14) and, “...as in Adam all die, so in Christ all shall be made alive” from *Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians* (15:22) as exemplifying the paradoxical mutual self-negation between God and man. (See Z10 342, 351) In self-negation God *qua logos* becomes man in Christ and then dies *qua* man and in self-negation man dies to his sinful ego (“Adam”) so that Christ may dwell in his self. In both cases any objectification of God or self *qua* substance is deconstructed. The religious conversion of sinful and deluded man entails the working dynamic of God’s self-emptying (*kenosis*) that signifies God’s divine love

(*agape*) or, in Buddhist terms, the Buddha's compassion. And simultaneously it also means the existential self-negation of that deluded or sinful self on the part of man. In this way *via* mutual self-negation God and man encounter one another. Nishida views this to be the meaning of "faith" in Christianity and cites Luther's point that faith as such is not really one's own working but the working of God within oneself. Only through this attitudinal belief that one is not working to help oneself but rather being helped by God working within one's self can one's sinful ego truly be killed so that one is made anew to live in God. Nishida understands "enlightenment" in Buddhism in a similar fashion. Another Christian thinker, one who Nishida often cites, in whom we may find a comparable understanding of this conversion experience, is Pascal who stated:

True conversion consists in self-annihilation before the universal being whom we have so often vexed and who is perfectly entitled to destroy us at any moment, in recognizing that we can do nothing without him and that we have deserved nothing but his disfavor. It consists in knowing that there is an irreconcilable opposition between God and us, and that without a mediator there can be no exchange.²⁰³

And just as "the finite is annihilated in the presence of the infinite and becomes pure nothingness.... [s]o it is with our mind before God..."²⁰⁴ Such alterity is what undermines the rationalism of a self-thinking thought. And in modern Christian thought Kierkegaard especially provides a standpoint antithetical to Hegel's rationalism. Hence in his attempts to understand the self-contradictory or paradoxical nature of human existence Nishida finds inspiration in Kierkegaard's nineteenth century polemic against rationalism. To support his own dialectic Nishida takes Kierkegaard's "unity of paradox"²⁰⁵ — between negativity and positivity, the absolute unlikeness and the absolute likeness between man and God²⁰⁶ — as what sustains and yet simultaneously undermines, from the bot-

tom, Hegel's dialectical logic.²⁰⁷ (Z7 275) But in regard to Nishida's interest in the structure of mutual self-negation or inverse correspondence that he finds in the religions, we need to remember that for Nishida it is the relationship itself of inverse correspondence and its placiality that is more fundamental than God *per se* as in mainstream Christianity. For Nishida it is the absolute *qua basho* that is originary, not the absolute *qua* God the Father (i.e., as objectified).

The emphasis upon the absolute's alterity and one's own finitude in inverse correspondence with one another, while much inspired by Christian ideas, is ultimately mediated through the Mahāyānistic understanding of *śūnyatā śūnyatā* transposed into Nishida's dialectic of self-negation. Accordingly the notion of God's self-negation, for example, would express the inseparability between *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*. But a significant mediator that brings together Christianity and Mahāyāna, in particular, is Shinran's True Pure Land school of lay devotionalist Buddhism, a religious sect of which Nishida's own mother was a devout follower. Nishida juxtaposes the two religions, Pure Land and Christianity, when speaking of the inter-relationship between the absolute and man as solely by means of expression, involving "the Word (*logos*) of God" (*kami no kotoba*) or "the name of the Buddha" (*myōgō*). (Z10 347, 349-50) Here he compares the Pure Land concept of "calling the name of the Buddha Amida" (*myōgō*) with the biblical "Word of God" (*logos*) as both instances, in separate religious traditions, of a dialectical encounter of contradictory self-identity between God and man or between absolute and finite, i.e., their inverse correspondence. (See Z10 351)

Masao Abe thus argues that Nishida's development of the idea of inverse correspondence was itself stimulated, at least partially, through his interest in True Pure Land Buddhism with its notion of *myōgō*. *Myōgō* refers to the act of "calling the name of the Buddha Amida" as well as to the very vow made by Amida himself to save suffering beings who would be calling on his name. In other words it means at the same time both Amida's salvific voice calling on the sinner *and* the recitation of Amida's name by the sinner who hears his calling voice. The two calls happen in synchrony. And as in the Lutheran understanding of faith we saw above, the sentient being's calling *to* Amida is itself conceived to happen under the direction of Amida. (Z10 351) This idea also exemplifies the True Pure Land school's emphasis on reliance on "other-power" (*tariki*).²⁰⁸ When Nishida read Suzuki's *Nihonteki reisei*, he found inspiration not only in its explication of the *Prajñāpāramitā* logic of *soku-hi* but also in its concept of *myōgō*. In a letter to Mutai Risaku (January 6, 1945), Nishida expresses his approval of Suzuki's "logic of *myōgō*" and adds that he would like to conceive it from his own standpoint of contradictory self-identity to consider *myōgō* as what is heard in the depths of one's self as the self-determination of the absolute present. (Z23 319-20) There is also evidence (Z10 356) that Nishida was stimulated not only by his exchanges with Suzuki but also with his student Mutai himself, who explicates Shinran's notion of absolute other power and incorporates True Pure Land notions into his exposition of Nishida's *basho* theory in his *Basho no ronrigaku (The Logic of Basho)*.²⁰⁹ Another commentator Kosaka suggests that Nishida had discovered something in the logic of *myōgō* that was lacking, or at least not as evident, in his own theory of contradictory self-identity, and that this in turn led

him to re-formulate his idea in terms of inverse correspondence.²¹⁰ Nishida does come to take the Pure Land concept of *myōgō* to coincide with his idea of inverse correspondence. In his *Bashoteki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan*, Nishida states, "...the relationship between absolute and man that is thoroughly in inverse correspondence, happens nothing other than by the *myōgō* expression." (Z10 350) And on this basis he can argue, *ala* Luther, that the religious mind occurs not from oneself but from, or as, the calling voice of the absolute, as "the work of God or Buddha." (Z10 325) In Amida's salvation of the evil man, there is the inverse correspondence between, on the one hand, the sinner's self-awareness of his own desiring nature and his heavy load of sin while also believing in salvation by Amida; and, on the other hand, Amida Buddha's original vow and work to save such sinful and wandering beings.²¹¹ Through the mediation of that True Pure Land idea of *myōgō*, it appears as if Nishida was attempting a synthesis of Mahāyāna *śūnyatā* and Christian *kenosis* and *gratia*. But the entire synthesis is founded upon his own system of *basho*. And one might also argue that the Christian notions were seen in light of Suzuki's reading of Pure Land Buddhism tinted in turn by his reading of the *Prajñāpāramitās* — which in turn however may have been influenced by Nishida's earlier understanding of contradictory self-identity as suggested in a section above.

Sec. 6: Conclusion

As we can see the relationship between Nishida and Buddhism is no simple matter. On the one hand Nishida's thought was most certainly inspired by his own Zen practice of his early years (when he was in his twenties). But it was really in his later years (late

1930s to early 1940s) that through intellectual exchanges with his friend D.T. Suzuki and through Suzuki's books, as well as exchanges with others like his former student, Mutai, who was interested in Pure Land Buddhism, that Nishida came to realize and give frequent expression to the closeness of his own dialectical ideas to some of the non-dualistic doctrines of Mahāyāna. We certainly do find conspicuous similarities of his own dialectical formulations during the early-to-mid 1930s with Mahāyāna notions, most notably Hua-yen's four-fold *dharmadhātu* of mutual non-obstruction. And we notice explicit references in the 1930s and 1940s — the later the more frequent — to Chan or Zen thinkers like Lin-chi and Dōgen, among others. Nishida was certainly not ignorant of the more important doctrines of Mahāyāna Buddhism. And in 1944 Nishida characterizes his thinking as "Buddhistic." (Z10 59) Contentwise his dialectic, centered on self-negation and self-contradiction, is closer in spirit to Mahāyāna than to Hegel. On the other hand, we ought not to deny Nishida the status of an independent thinker, the creativity of which cannot be pigeonholed within the confines of "Buddhist thought" or "Mahāyāna thought" or "Zen thought." What stimulated Nishida's work, for the most part, were issues raised within western philosophy — most notably the issue of dualism. In his attempts to answer such issues he made good use of concepts and terms borrowed from western philosophy, mostly of nineteenth century German philosophy. As we have seen he was very much inspired by the religious thought of the western world as well, not necessarily confined to the academic philosophy of that region. While he does admit to commensurability with Mahāyāna thought, his dialectic thus cannot be confined to the doctrinal category of "Buddhist thought." This is for the following two reasons: 1) Its eclectic nature

that brings in elements drawn from various sources, both western and eastern, thereby constituting his work as a “world philosophy.” And 2) Nishida’s own creative contributions, especially in his formulation of *basho* that provides the foundation for his dialectic. It would not do justice to his syncretic and creative intellectual endeavor to reduce it within sectarian boundaries. The very nature of his project precludes categorization as simply Buddhist philosophy. Rather Nishida’s work is a true case of cross-cultural or world philosophy.

The closeness of Nishida’s thinking to Mahāyāna thought, in his response to the issue of dualism, is of course undeniable. But much of Nishida philosophy also extends beyond previous Buddhist formulations. For example, the cross-dimensional complexity of its dialectic that encompasses our bodily interactivity and even the unfolding of history in time, together with the founding of this dialectic upon the notion of a “place” (*basho*), I think, are uniquely Nishidan developments that cannot be reductively categorized as just Buddhist even if relatable in certain aspects to Buddhist notions. In the next chapter I would like to look-into that complexity of inter-determination that is *chiasmatic* together with the placial aspect of *basho* as a *chōra*, borrowing Plato’s concept and understood in light of recent discussions in European philosophy and phenomenology. While commensurable with Mahāyāna notions, Nishida’s development of his notion of “contradictory self-identity” and its “placial” (*bashoteki*) or *chōratic* nature in conjunction with a bodily *prāxis* — i.e., embodiment as dynamic implacement — encompasses the complexity of a multi-dimensional *chiasma* that extends beyond the previous formulations of Nishida’s forebears, Buddhist or Hegelian.

In general, if we are to compare and contrast the Hegelianism and the Buddhism within Nishida's thoughts, we might say that on the one hand much of Nishida's terminology and formulations, as well as certain concepts, have been borrowed from Hegel. And yet we have found many connections of his ideas, implicit or explicit, with Buddhist sources as well. The formulation of a concrete universal and the dialectical language involving the relations between universal and individual is Hegelian, and yet the non-substantiality brought-forth in Nishida's appropriation of that dialectic, as an absolute nothing or as a contradictory identity, the radical relationality that undermines any substantiality, in content are closer to Mahāyāna doctrines than to Hegel. Nishida's emphasis upon individuality, materiality, and the body, undercut the residue of Platonist universalism in Hegel. But the extension of that dialectic to the social world of inter-acting persons and its concomitant ethics, and his interest in the historicity of that world-dialectic, exhibits a concern that is more typical of modern philosophy than traditional Buddhist discourse. As a marvelous example of a world philosophy, an intellectual product of the encounter between East and West, between Buddhist thought and western philosophy, Nishida's philosophy, while bringing the two together, stands on its own.

CHAPTER 10:
THE *CHIASMA* AND THE *CHŌRA*

On the basis of the previous two chapters one might surmise as to the inadequacy of Nishida's appropriation of Hegelian (and general nineteenth century German philosophical) terminology to capture the content of what he strove to express. The matter that he attempted to capture and express through the language of dialectical philosophy slips away from its structure, *ex-ploding* beyond any bounds erected to systematize it. But neither would simply repeating the paradoxical and parabolic modes of speaking of traditional Zen discourse be satisfying philosophically. The two aspects of Nishida's thinking that I think confound traditional metaphysical discourse despite the fact that they are essential to his mature philosophy are what I call the *chiasmatic* aspect *of*, or implied *in*, his so-called "dialectic" on the one hand, and the *chōra* that embraces or enfolds it on the other. Combining these two terms I shall present in this chapter Nishida's mature philosophy, what he calls his "absolute dialectic," as a *chiasmatic chorology* in an attempt to better characterize the real matter of his thinking and to suggest that therein lies Nishida's own philosophical contribution that makes his work more than a mere appropriation or development of Hegelian dialectics and Mahāyāna non-duality.

Sec. 1: Dialectic and *Chiasma*

One of the central themes in Nishida's *benshōhō* was the theme of contradictory self-identity, an identity that by its very nature is not static but dynamic involving the whole

of oppositional processes. If dialectical logic involves the inter-relationship reflecting a system wherein the terms in relation are what they are only in their inter-relations and in the context set by their system, the dialectical whole,²¹² Nishida's system may be included in the general category of what constitutes a "dialectic." Certainly, Nishida described his own depiction of reality as a "dialectic" (*benshōhō*). The mature Nishida, in an attempt to preclude misunderstandings of his "predicate logic," emphasizes that true self-identity, in its dialectical nature, can neither be objectified in the direction of what can be stated as a grammatical subject nor simply be conceived in the opposite direction of the thinking subjectivity *qua* absolute spirit. Rather he views his dialectic as involving genuine *inter*-determination that can never be reduced to either side of its terms. And this "inter-determination" is what Nishida characterizes in terms of *mujun*, "contradiction" or "paradox."

What does Nishida mean by "contradiction" (*mujun*)? Some commentators²¹³ have expressed the view that perhaps "contrary" is a better translation for *mujun*. The term *mujun* comes from a Chinese story appearing in the text of *Han Fei Tzu* (*Han Feizi*) wherein a vendor is selling lances (halberds) and shields. On the one hand the vendor advertises his lances as so sharp that there are no shields that the lances would fail to penetrate. But on the other he advertises his shields to be so strong and solid that nothing, no lances, can penetrate them. His characterizations are inconsistent; they are contradictory.²¹⁴ Nishida's dialectic involves the play between being and non-being, affirmation and negation, in other words, logical contradictories, which from a *trans*-logical perspective can be seen as bi-conditionals in that each implies the other and conditions the other

as the contradictory that it is. We have seen how this involves a *radical* dialectic of mutual self-negation (*jiko hitei*) precluding any conceptual synthetic resolution of the opposites.²¹⁵ The mediator is not a sublating concept but *mutual* self-negation, or from another perspective, their very field or *basho* that is *nothing*. Any sort of self-affirmative act is seen to be predicated upon this prior self-negation: the self's affirmation requires its prior delimitation by environing conditions, a negation that can give shape to the affirmation. Its affirmation is obtained only in self-negation, i.e., de-substantialization, to preclude any substantial inter-obstruction of others. The self must come to terms with its fact of finitude or contingency in a self-negation *vis-à-vis* the world acting upon it. And such self-negation, on the part of each individual, mirrors the absolute nothing (*zettai mu*) that is the *basho*, the field, of the world's dialectical self-formations (*via* self-negations). It mirrors the self-negation of the abysmal place that *qua* world clears room for the emergence of correlative beings. (See Z10 315-16) The relationship between the individual and the world involves this radical interdependence *via* mutual self-negation. The entire world is a unity-in-flux of such contradictories, irreducible to any simple identity.

And yet Nishida is also careful to avoid any sort of the nihilism that might result from self-negation and that would deny the reality of the world of things. The self-negation is a double negation that is not a negation *vis-à-vis* simply the positive. Absolute nothing encompasses both negativity and positivity, non-being and being, destruction and creation, as a "middle" irreducible to either terms. The *basho* of the world escapes *both* reification as substance *and* annihilation into utter nothing. Insofar as its self-negation is what makes room for beings, creating and affirming them, it is positive. As

we can see Nishida's dialectic does involve logical contradiction but seen from a broader perspectival stance that can witness the very relationship of contradiction. That is, it encompasses logical contradiction but in that sense also cannot be reduced to the mere terms of being or non-being, affirmation or negation, positivity or negativity.

Broader and deeper than what can be reduced to the dialectical structure involving bi-conditional opposites, Nishida's absolute dialectic, with its multi-dimensional complexity of a self-determining matrix, involves a *chiasma* of (over)inter-determinations. Does this *chiasma* undermine the very language of that "dialectic"? *Chiasma* (χιασμα)²¹⁶ is a term used in anatomy and in genetics, and in general refers to a "crossing." The word derives from the Greek *khiasma* (χιασμα), meaning "cross-piece," "cross-over," or "X-shape." It also comes from the Greek *khiazein*, meaning "to mark with an X," and the Greek letter *khi* (X, χ). I use *chiasma* and *chiasmatic* here to refer to the cross-configuration or intersection between the horizontal inter-relatedness amongst individuals (relative beings) and the vertical inter-relatedness between individuals and what envelops them (whether understood as *basho*, world, absolute, nothing, etc.) in Nishida. This means also, for example, the various cross-dimensional inter-sections between the spatial and the temporal, vertical and horizontal, linear and circular, individual and universal, the body and its social and natural environments, etc. And this certainly includes the dialectic of logical contradiction between being and non-being, affirmation and negation, as well. By taking Nishida's "contradiction" (*mujun*) as a *chiasma*, we can focus upon its character as a inter-dimensional cross-section where opposites, *including contradictories*, meet and condition each other, and as their source from out of which

they are abstracted out. The expression of contradictory self-identity seems to depict, however, only the tip of the iceberg of a vast complexity that is *chiasmatic*. While Nishida at times emphasizes *logical* contradiction in its ontological significance, i.e., yes and no as being and non-being — so that even time and space become viewed in their mutual exclusivity, i.e., time is *not* space and space is *not* time —, we might also take this as a surface manifestation or expression of a logically irreducible plethora²¹⁷ of a manifold in *chiasmatic* interaction.²¹⁸

Even in his earlier works, such as in *Geijutsu to dōtoku (Art and Morality)* of 1923, Nishida had already recognized the *chiasmatic* nature of the concrete in terms of our embodiment that connects our subjectivity with objects, while also serving as the locus for the inter-section (*kōsa*) between the object-world of cognition and the object-world of volition. The body with its sensibility and motility serves to connect the various object-worlds of facts, truth, reality, beauty, and good, whereby we can enter into and exit each world. (Z3 246) And a little later in *Hyōgen sayō* of 1925, Nishida speaks of the “cross-section” (*kōsaten*) between the ideal and the real in the body where content, expression, and act all intersect. And the world is also such a cross-section between volition and cognition. (Z3 382) The significance of the body in the 1930s deepens that *chiasmatic* aspect as an intersection that gathers various forces into a microcosmic creative funnel whereby the world creates itself in our acting-intuitions. The human body itself thus serves, in its very inter-activity, as a place of intersection, a *chiasma*. While working upon this *chiasmatic* nature of the body, Nishida also develops the *chiasma* on a macrocosmic level, taking the creative world to be a world of inter-action (*aihataraki*) be-

tween individuals that are simultaneously active and passive, affirmative and negative, toward each other. Their bodies are thus influenced by others as something made (*tsukurareta mono*) but simultaneously influence others as something creative (*tsukuru mono*). (See Z8 299/LL 27-28; Z10 94, 97-98) Embodiment is at the criss-crossing intersection of the world where the horizontal (interaction with other bodies) and the vertical (interaction with the world as a whole) meet, as a *chiasmatic* axis uniting inner and outer, self and environment, individual and universal, affirmation and negation, subjective and objective, time and space, etc.

In the manifold dialectic of the dialectical universal, what on the vertical plane is the universal's self-determination and its reverse determination by the individual, on the horizontal plane is the inter-determinations of individuals belonging to that universal. The *chiasmatic* (and *chiatic*)²¹⁹ inter-reactions between them on these different planes constitute the unfolding of the world-matrix in society and history. The vertical and the horizontal here are inseparable in that they are different ways of speaking of the same dialectical matrix: the universal's self-determination *is* the individuals' co-determinations and neither side can be prioritized over the other or reduced to the other. The different directions and planes of dialectical determination are mutually implicative so that the dialectical universal's self-determination means the individual's self-determination and the individual's self-determination also implies inter-determination among individuals, which in turn also means the self-determination of the universal to constitute the world of those individuals. (See Z6 236-37) Hence as Nishida states the world is thoroughly universal and thoroughly of individuals. (Z6 159) The matrix simultaneously is *both* universal de-

termination *and* individual determination. (Z6 234) We can comprehend that reciprocity involving the self-determination of the universal of nothing and the mutual determinations of individual beings conjoined *via* contradictory identity and inverse correspondence, as an inter-dimensional and inter-directional *chiasma*. Universal and individual meet in the *chiasma* of inter-determinations. Moreover the *chiasma* in its radical reciprocity — in its reverse determinations, mutual self-negations, and inverse correspondences — involves a *chiasmus* that must extend in complexity beyond the mere triadic formulas of bi-nomial interplay. What we have here is a *chiasmatic* (and *chiatic*) intercrossing of dimensions. With its maturation in the 1930s Nishida's dialectic between subjectivity and objectivity, inner and outer, thus comes to involve the interrelationship between the world as whole and the individual person as the world's elemental part, and between the individual's internal self-determination as "linear" in time and the world's external determination as "circular" in space. The co-determinations of these various dimensions, whereby "inner is outer and outer is inner," meet in the *chiasma* of the world-matrix that is neither simply ideal nor merely material.

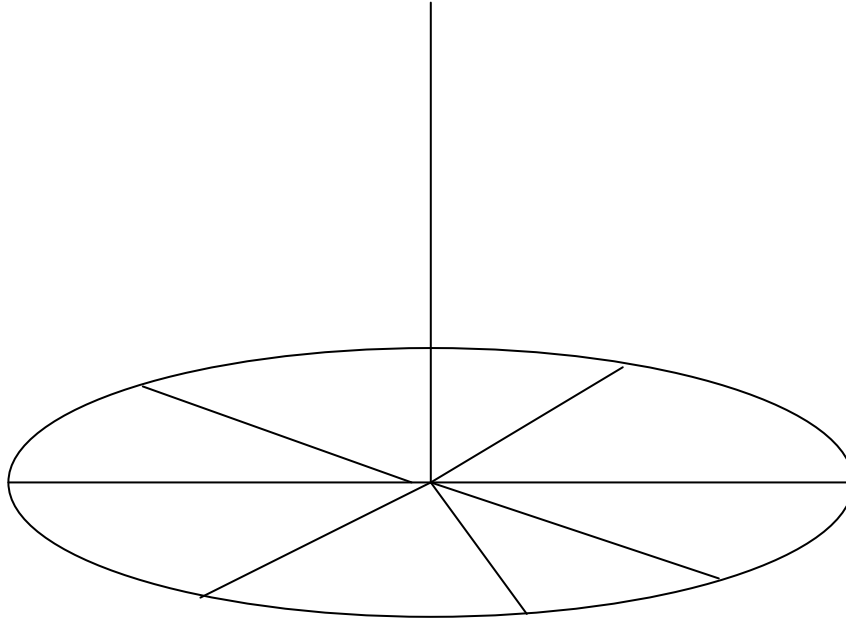
As we already saw in our previous chapters, Nishida characterizes that world-matrix in terms of Pascal's infinite sphere without periphery with everywhere its center.²²⁰ We would have to conceive this spherical un-limitedness as being filled *chiasmatically* with such criss-crossing intersections even while being a "nothing" in terms of substance. The world of matter and the world of consciousness ultimately are what become abstracted out of that *chiasmatic* sphere as their concrete but empty foundation. And in turn the embodied individual mirrors that macrocosmic *chiasma* as a *chiasmatic*

microcosm, the meeting point of the diverse dimensions, caught in-between the “two abysses of the infinite whole and of nothing.”²²¹

This *chiasmatic* sphere certainly has spatial significance but that “spatiality” also encompasses time. For Nishida understands the “eternal present” as a *basho* that enfolds and unfolds time. We might add here that Nishida’s concept of ordinariness (*byōjōtei*) from the 1940s also exemplifies this cross-sectional *chiasma* of temporal and spatial interrelations, horizontal and vertical interrelations, whereby depth is manifest at the very surface. Concrete reality is realized in that surface point of the present, concentrating an unfathomable *chiasmatic* complexity where temporal and spatial axes intercept. We have already discussed how the abysmal nature of that present is the source of novelty as well as of the freedom and creativity of individuality. It loosens the determinist hold of mechanistic causality. Human creativity as partaking in world formation seems to be predicated upon the seizure, in self-awareness, of the singularity of the here-and-now *vis-à-vis* that abyss, realizing the inter-section, the *chiasma*, of spatial and temporal conditions. In his reading of Nishida, Nakamura Yūjirō relegates the horizontal dimension of this dialectic to the moment-to-moment temporalizing sequence of its process unfolding in time. However since inter-determination also occurs among the spatially co-relative, we ought to recognize the spatiality of the horizontal *as well*, allowing for the synchrony of co-determination among events or individuals. The horizontal cannot be restricted to time because interrelations among co-relative beings happen not only diachronically but also synchronically. As Nishida himself states in *Tetsugaku no konpon mondai*, the mutual determination of individuals cannot be understood in light of mere process.²²² (Z6 74)

Furthermore, along with temporality and spatiality, Nishida's *basho* must encompass the spatiality of *both* the vertical and the horizontal dimensions. The *chiasmatic* nature of the world-matrix as *basho* then would be *both* horizontal as the spatial field of co-relative beings and the temporal course of successive beings; *and* vertical in its own self-negating inversion that makes room not only for those horizontal relations but also for its relationship *qua* place with the implaced — or: *qua* absolute with the relative, or *qua* nothing with beings. While the vertical in the self-emptying process — what Nishida comes to call inverse correspondence — collapses into the horizontal in the interrelations among beings, it simultaneously encompasses the horizontal in giving it space. (See the following figure 1.)

Figure 1:



The Dialectic of *Basho* as a Dialectic of Vertical and Horizontal Inter-Determination

Zettai mu (absolute nothing) as an undetermined *basho* (place) that self-negates to make room for beings.

Vertical Line: *Gyakutaiō* (inverse correspondence) and *zettai mujunteki jikodōitsu* (absolutely contradictory self-identity); mutual self-negation between nothing and beings, absolute and co-relatives, one and many, place and implaced.

Horizontal plane: co-relativity of beings. This plane is both temporal and spatial since the interdependence amongst thing-events entails both diachronic and synchronic relationships.

Place/field *vis-à-vis* absolutely nothing is non-distinct from place/field *vis-à-vis* co-relative beings and not transcendent to it. Beings are interdependent both diachronically and synchronically, thus temporally and spatially. When seen *vis-à-vis* absolutely nothing, this place/field is a circle (or better, a sphere) without periphery or center.

So the “spatiality” of the infinite sphere here is really *trans*-spatial. It encompasses the horizontality of *both* space and time as media for the interrelations and inter-determinations between individual actors and between individual moments. *And* it also encompasses the sphere’s own vertical interrelations and inter-determinations with those individual elements (in space-time). The matrix of the world, the concrete *basho* of reality, is an infinite self-inverting space-time *chiasma*, an indefinite openness that in itself is both *trans*-temporal and *trans*-spatial. *Basho* then we might say is this cross-dimensional self-inverting *chiasmatic* spatiality of the world. But paradoxically in making-room even for its own self-negation that in turn makes-room for beings — making space for its making space for beings —, this space that is *basho* then is a space that escapes geometrical representation. As I stated above, it is a *trans*-temporal and *trans*-spatial space.

In the late 1930s Nishida also names that structuring of the concrete, *logos*. It is the structuring of reality wherein there is inter-resonance *via* mutual self-negation and contradictory self-identity between universal and individual, whole and part, world and element. Nishida’s *logos* then involves the *chiasmatic* structuring of multi-levels, dimensions, and directions; it really names what *exceeds* the logical. The world *qua* dialectical universal is a multi-directional *chiasma* of inter-dimensional self-negation. First and foremost, prior to any theoretical abstractions or reductions, we find ourselves implaced within this concrete *chiasma*, wherein we are born, dwell, and die, and wherein we are generated and perish at every moment upon an abyss of nothing. (See Z8 38) We take part in that *chiasmatic legein*, or “gathering,” of *logos*. Only thus can we also speak of the *chiasma* in one’s own deep personal and existential dimension — the *chiasma* in the

depths of one's being, where one crosses the threshold between life and death, being and nothing, wherein one directly confronts one's contradictory identity and one's inverse correspondence with the absolute *basho* of one's implacement, the dimension of what Nishida calls "the religious," where we come face-to-face with alterity defining our finitude.

The *chiasma* of inter-dimensional inter-determinations — vertically and horizontally, in "linear" time and in "circular" space, microcosmically and macrocosmically — is the world's matrix, the *logos* of its unfolding. But this matrix, whose elements are mediated by self-negation, is itself non-substantial. For its radically *chiasmatic* nature precludes the very possibility of substantialization. To construe Nishida's philosophy as comparable to Spinozism and as promoting a "one body that is non-dual" (*ittai funi*), even if both Nishida and Spinoza look to a "universal principle as God," is then highly dubious.²²³ Kosaka's emphasis of the non-discrimination and equality between self and world, individual and universal, and the utter elimination of any distinction between subjectivity and objectivity, inner and outer, one and many, absolute and relative, etc. accomplished *via* an exhaustive self-negation, is somewhat misleading.²²⁴ This still sounds like a kind of monism whereby everything sinks into nothingness. It downplays the very tension between these opposites that are never resolved whether under an absolute concept or an absolute substance or even under utter nothingness. Nishida himself distinguishes his thinking from Spinoza's. The difference is obvious when we notice that Nishida's universal is not a substance and escapes being made into a grammatical subject of a sentence. The *chiasmatic* nature of his dynamic non-dualism precludes any universaliz-

ing monism as well as any self-affirmation, from the other end, regarding the ultimacy of the individual *qua* substance. As Ueda Shizuteru states, neither the one nor the many, neither monism nor dualism nor pluralism is taken as the foundation.²²⁵ Concrete reality is non-substantial because it is predicated upon difference, alterity, and inter-relationality. Substance emerges only in abstraction from that concreteness. The path that Nishida treads thus avoids the pitfalls of an absolutizing conceptualism or substantialism on the one hand as well as nihilism on the other. Nishida's stance is rather one of what Ueda calls a "dynamic non-foundationalist multi-dimensionalism."²²⁶ Its dynamic tension — the *chiasma* — is the "Dionysian dance from out of which gods are born."²²⁷ (Z8 396-97)

Hence we might say that Nishida's philosophy, in its "logic of contradictory self-identity" — the dialectic of the dialectical universal that is really a dialectic of negation —, implies, as opposed to Aristotelian *ousiology* — a "logic of substance," i.e., a logic of non-contradictory identity —, a *chiasmology*. Perhaps the language of the "logic of contradiction" can then be re-stated in terms of a field of an inter-acting or inter-folding manifold, a *chiasmology*, the *legein* of *chiasma*. As mentioned briefly above, if "dialectic" is but the interrelationship between two opposites, even as bi-conditionals, it would seem to be a simplification of, or abstraction from, what concretely speaking is a *chiasma* of multiple disparates, or of an inter-folding manifold of the abysmal *basho* constituting identities through mutual differences in those folds. Taking our discussion beyond Nishidan formulations, the dialectic of bi-conditional opposites or contradictories then ultimately gives-way to a *chiasma* of manifold forces and dimensions in (over)inter-determination, each term of which precludes reduction to any other in virtue of its own

chiasmatic complexity. Even the primal opposition between being and non-being in fact would have to dissolve into this *chiasma* of manifold *chiasmas*, each of which is too complex to be declared merely “being” or “non-being,” “is” or “is-not.” It is not that there are two distinct absolute principles that we name “being” and “non-being,” which subsequently oppose and inter-relate to constitute things. Rather the very enfolding-unfolding play of being and non-being that constitute the finitude of things itself consists of a *chiasmatic* manifold of forces or folds, each in turn irreducibly composed of further such *chiasmas*. The *chiasmatic* manifold of *chiasmas*, extending without end outwardly and inwardly, to explode and implode de-limiting boundaries, is thus what would constitute the infinite sphere without periphery. The Greek term for Aristotle’s substance, *ousia* (ουσία), is also the abstract noun form for the verb *einai* (εἶναι), “to be.” In contrast to the Aristotelian *ousiology* of being the *chiasmology* points to a cross-sectional place of manifold intricate inter-activities. This is what surfaces in Nishida’s terms of the contradictory identity between *on* (being) and *mēon* (non-being). If Aristotle’s *ousiology* is an *ontology*, Nishida’s *chiasmology* is then an *an-ontology* implying the en-folding of *on* and *mēon* within a *chiasmatic* mani-fold. That place of *chiasma*, enveloping the manifold, is Nishida’s *basho*. To that *basho* in its self-withdrawing self-negating character,²²⁸ making possible the *chiasmatic* (over)inter-determinations, we now turn.

Sec. 2: Place and *Chōra*

There are similar ideas among the ancient Greeks comparable to Nishida’s notion that to be is to be in a place, to be implaced (Z3 415), as well as to his general notion of *basho*

vis-à-vis nothing. Simplicius quotes Pseudo-Archytas as saying: “all existing things [*ta onta panta*] are either in place [*en topō*] or not without place [*ouk aneu topō*].... it is necessary for other things to be in place, but for place to be in nothing.”²²⁹ Nishida’s idea was that everything is in a place which ultimately is in nothing: *basho vis-à-vis* absolutely nothing (*zettai mu no basho*). In the beginning of his 1926 essay, *Basho*, Nishida tells us that he drew inspiration for his idea of *basho* from Plato’s concept of *chōra* in his *Timaeus* in order to adapt it to the subject-object relationship. In the *Timaeus* (52b), for example, it is said: “...everything that exists must of necessity be somewhere, in some place [*topos*; τοπος] and occupying some *chōra* [*χωρα*], and that that which doesn’t exist somewhere, whether on earth or in the heaven, doesn’t exist at all.”²³⁰ It may help us to understand Nishida’s dialectic of *basho* if we examine the implications of this Greek Platonist notion of *chōra*.

In the initial stages of his *basho*-theory, where his concern was primarily to overcome epistemological dualism, Nishida adapts Plato’s *chōra* (from *Timaeus* 49) to that epistemological subject-object sphere. Thereby he transposes the Platonic *ideas* into epistemological categories that form sense-matter, and *chōra* becomes the *basho qua* field of consciousness for that interrelationship of form and matter. (See Z3 415, 498; Z10 59) The source of that general adaptation of Platonic cosmology into Kantian epistemology may be found in Hermann Cohen, who took the sensibly given in terms of Platonic non-being and the forms of thought in terms of being.²³¹ In working out his idea of *basho* as the field of consciousness (*ishiki no ba*), Nishida also appears to be referring to the modern German — Neo-Kantian and even phenomenological — conceptions of *Ge-*

biet, *Region* and *Bewußtseinsfeld*. (See Z3 416-17) But the final *basho* that is delimited by nothing, as we have seen amply by now, must envelope both subjectivity and objectivity, or *noesis* and *noema*. Husserl's *Region* either only implies *noesis* or, in Nishida's view, is an objectified, noematized *noesis*.²³² (See Z4 191) In any case, taking over the Neo-Kantian appropriation of Platonist thought, Nishida regarded the field of consciousness as a *basho vis-a-vis* relative or oppositional nothing (*sōtai mu*, *tairitsuteki mu no basho*) in relation to its objects that are thus beings (*yū*).

Ueda Shizuteru understands Nishida's *basho* to involve a multi-layered structuring of meanings, a horizon of meaning for experience, that constitutes the place wherein one *always already* finds oneself existing. Each horizon of experience is in itself always limited, implying a "beyond" that constitutes the very condition for the horizon's possibility.²³³ That "beyond" is always dark and unknowable, unobjectifiable, what Nishida called *mu* (nothing). And yet to acknowledge it is "self-awareness" (*jikaku*). A significant point here is that in his very attempt to construct a complete system of self-awareness that would surmount the gap of Kantian dualism Nishida has ingeniously allowed for the very impossibility of its completion as an aspect integral to his "complete" account.²³⁴ Yoko Arisaka has thus pointed out that Nishida's theory of *basho* is an attempt to construct a theoretical system that is inherently irreducible to thought, i.e., theory itself, in virtue of its unreifiable concrete source, a self-grounding principle of ungroundedness, the nothing that horizons as an open system, a "circle without periphery." What Nishida comes to call "the world" (*sekai*) in the 1930s can then be viewed in light of that final *basho* or horizon of sense (meaning) encompassing the many other delimited

bashos. On the other hand if we take the “world” itself as a delimited and restricted horizon, however, it would imply a further openness enveloping it, itself unrestricted, undelimited, the open that Nishida calls *basho vis-à-vis* absolutely nothing which in the world-dialectic of the 1930s comes to take on the significance of that *trans-temporal* and *trans-spatial* space, enfolding and unfolding its *chiasmology* as we discussed above. Our being-in-the-world essentially involves our implacement within the world, in turn, implaced within that open sphere without periphery.²³⁵ On this basis Nishida develops an “absolute dialectic,” or what I have called above his implicit *chiasmology* whence the dialectical implications of his thoughts on *basho* can be drawn. The self-determining open sphere that is the world’s matrix is the field, *basho*, of the inter-dimensional, inter-directional, inter-determining *chiasma* that we touched upon above. It is this open however that we may further understand in terms of the *chōra* in its more than merely epistemological significance.

Why *chōra*? *Chōra* (χωρα) is a Greek term that has been variously translated as “place,” “space,” “land,” “area.” In Plato’s *Timaeus*, the term is used to mean the “receptacle” (*hupodochē*; υποδοχη) onto which the *ideas* are in-formed or in-scribed to make their particular copies. Plato variously characterizes *chōra* also as the “nurse” (*tithēnē*; τιθηνη) of all becoming²³⁶ (49a), the ultimate “in which” (*en hō*) for all transient and changing things, their “seat” (*hedra*) or matrix (*ekmageion*) (50c).²³⁷ The character *Timaeus*, after whom the book is named, explains:

Not only does it always receive all things, it has never in any way whatever taken on any form [*morphē*; μορφη] like any of those things that enter it. For its nature is to be a matrix [*ekmageion*; εκμαγειον] for all things; and it is modified, shaped, and reshaped by those things that enter

it. These are the things that make it appear different at different times.
(50b-c)

It is the third “something” or genus — *triton genos* (52a) — necessitated by the relationship between copy (thing) and paradigm (*idea*), i.e., between the formed individual *qua* “becoming” and the forming universal *idea qua* “being,” for “the image must be *in* something and made *out of* something other than that of which it is an image.”²³⁸ Because it *receives* the *types* (*ideas*) and gives them *place*, Timaeus names that *something* the “receptacle” (*dekhomenon*) or “place” (*chōra*). This motif of the place wherein things are formed as images appears close to Nishida’s notion of *basho*.

That idea of *chōra* expresses an in-definition that is neither subjective nor objective, neither *idea* nor thing, neither paradigm nor copy. As *all-receiving* it becomes stamped or in-formed by all sorts of intelligible paradigms, the *ideas* (*eidē*; εἰδη), so that it serves as the receptacle of all formations of things, the *wherein* of their generation and the *whence* of their passing. But in itself it remains undetermined by any of them and hence characterless, formless. (50e) Remaining un-determined or un-defined, *chōra* then is neither intelligible (in the order of the *ideas*) nor sensible (in order of those in-formed beings that exemplify or imitate, image, the *ideas*). (52a-c) It is distinguished by the utter lack of determinations. Belonging to neither of the two genres of being — intelligible-formal and sensible-material —, lacking its own identity, *chōra* remains amorphous (*amorphon*), formless. The phenomenologist Eugene Fink thus characterized *chōra* as “the dark nocturnal space-matter of the universe” (*die dunkle, nächtige Raum-Materie des Weltalls*), “the great mother,...’earth” (*die Große Mutter, die ‘Erde’*) and as “chaos” (*das Chaos*).²³⁹ And the hermeneutic philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer suggest *chōra* to

be something like an undifferentiated “*that*” which we hit upon in our immediate experience prior to being able to identify *what* a thing is in distinction from others.²⁴⁰ As the seat of generation and destruction of all, it is itself “always” (*aei*; αει). Within that eternal formlessness, an empty opening of a formless space, it makes-room for things, providing the space to be occupied by whatever *becomes*. We might point out here the verb form of *chōra*, *chōreō* (χωρεω), which along with the sense of being in flux has the sense of making-room for another by giving-way or withdrawing.²⁴¹ In such a way it provides an *abode* (*hedra*; εδρα) to all insofar as they are generated. As the *wherein* and *whence* of every *this* and *that*, *chōra* withdraws from any designation as *this* or *that*.

Nishida’s dialectic of negation is predicated upon that amorphous nothingness, the *chōratic* nature, of *basho*. The *chōratic* open, which in Mahāyāna would translate into the emptiness (*kū*) of the open sky (*kū*), in Nishida translates into the place (*basho*) delimited by nothing (*mu*). Nishida thus refers to Plato’s *chōra* when first formulating the concept of *basho*. (See Z3 415) Like *chōra* Nishida’s *basho* at its most concrete level eludes positive description, and yet in its very *no-thingness*, opens a space for things determined and differentiated from one another and envelopes them. As Nishida himself was inspired by this strange idea we find in Plato’s *Timaeus*, we ought to acknowledge this *chōratic* nature of his notion of *basho*. Although some English translators of Nishida have rendered the term *basho* into the Greek-English *topos*, and occasionally into the Latin *locus*, and while certainly Nishida himself also refers to Aristotle’s conception of the soul as a “*topos* of forms”²⁴² (Z3 419), the sense of *basho* is truly closer to *chōra* than to the defined or de-limited place that is *topos*.²⁴³ However we do need to also acknowl-

edge the difference between Plato and Nishida. For Nishida *basho* — rather than being the mere receptacle of formation that becomes in-formed by the transcendent *ideas* — is a *self-forming* formlessness. It is in this sense of a self-forming formlessness, that it is a nothing (*mu*) that gives rise to being (*yū*). *Basho forms itself via* the inter-determinations of things for which it makes room. In distinction from the transcendent *idea/s* of Plato and Hegel, Nishida's version of *chōra* is thus *self-formative* but *via* its individual elements, whereby the transcendent, the universal, is in fact immanent as their very *place*, a self-negating nothing that allows, by making-room, for their self- and co-determinations. But in its opposition to idealism, this does not necessarily imply a materialism as in Marxism. The understanding of *chōra* as pure matter or *hylē* (*hulē*) was rather an Aristotelian imposition and the *chōratic* nature of a self-withdrawing clearing precludes any such characterization. We ought to remember that Plato himself never used the word *hylē* to describe *chōra*. It is Aristotle who interpreted Plato's *chōra* in such terms to reduce *chōratic* space to matter.²⁴⁴ But whether as matter or as idea, *chōra* cannot be described other than that it makes-room for such oppositions.²⁴⁵ In its nature of giving-place to the various inter-relations between opposites — such as form/idea and matter — without itself being subject to the laws it situates,²⁴⁶ Nishida's *basho*, as an *empty* or *formless place*, is indeed *chōratic*.

If we are to look back at that *chōra* in light of Nishida's dialectic of contradictory self-identity, Jacques Derrida who most certainly was unaware of Nishida's appropriation, nevertheless comes close to Nishida's conception when he remarks that Plato's *chōra* seems to defy that either-or “logic of non-contradiction,” “the logic of binarity.”²⁴⁷

For as a *triton genos* (52a), the essential space standing *behind* and *enveloping* both being (*ideas*) and becoming (*images*, things), *chōra* is *neither* of the immutable intelligibles *nor* of the becoming and corruptible sensibles; *neither* being *qua* universal or transcendent paradigm *nor* becoming-and-unbecoming beings *qua* particulars in-formed by or copying the universal paradigm; *neither* intelligible being *nor* sensible being. As a dark “beyond” that gives place to their oppositions, it is in *excess*, irreducible, to either opposites.²⁴⁸ As neither sensible nor intelligible, it then is *beyond* sense and meaning. Only from and within it, can their cleavage, including also that between body and mind, “*have and take place*.”²⁴⁹ In its withdrawing that makes-room, it perpetually slips *beyond* any reduction to the presence of an *eidos*. As an *excess* it is ontologically “nothing,” preceding all beings and allowing for all such binary or dialectical determinations. Nishida’s *basho*, as itself absolutely nothing (*zettai mu*) that enfolds every opposition is *chōratic* in precisely that way, slipping away from any law of contradiction that would reduce it to exclusively being or non-being.

In its movement of clearing space for the happening thing-events, *chōra* is dynamic, not static. Everything happens in relation to everything else, near and far, in its contextual implacement. Things are predicated upon the space wherein they belong, their concrete place. But those environing or contextualizing conditions continually recede the further we inquire after them, without ever revealing any absolute answer or final principle that explains the *reason* for the way things ultimately *are*. The clearing continually recedes into the darkness of in-definition. And hence the “absolute” for Nishida is ultimately nothing or *basho* delimited by absolutely nothing. This idea echoes the *chōra*’s

rejection of either-or logic, concurring as to its ambiguity as the *wherein* of all beings and their opposites. For as the place wherein everything is marked but which itself remains unmarked, *chōra* is a place without a place, an un-implaced — even if irreplaceable — place.²⁵⁰

Basho qua chōra, furthermore, implies our very embodiment. In terms of Nishida's concept of self-awareness, the self's deepening into that abysmal place in the late 1920s is what led Nishida to realize the pre-epistemic inter-activity of the self with its environment within the world *via* embodiment. The human body in this respect mirroring the *basho* of the world is a *chōra* not unlike Plato's understanding of the human body as a receptacle of opposing forms. For example in Plato's *Phaedo*, the human body was said to be like a *chōra*, mirroring that primal *chōra* of the cosmos, which in fact may explain the later conflation of *chōra* and materiality or corporeality. For Nishida as well, the human body itself serves as the receptacle, the *chōra*, for the self-forming *chōra* that is the world. The body serves as a place, a *chōra*, mirroring the placiality of the world with its *chiasma*. Both world and body, as macrocosmic and microcosmic places, are *chōratic*. Plato in *Phaedo* depicts that *chōratic* nature of the body as a receptacle that takes-on the opposites of life and death. In Nishida, similarly, the individual body is the *basho* of the existential contradiction between life and death. However we ought not to make light of their important differences as well, namely, that ultimately for Plato, the life-force that in-forms the receptacle body *qua chōra*, the *psyche*, is foreign to it. Again, due to his dualism, the *chōra* in Plato here is in-formed by something transcendent to it. But for Nishida the reception or mirroring of the cosmos' self-formation in man's indi-

vidual body is simultaneously man's own active self-doing. The self-forming formlessness happens on the level of the individual as well so that within the infinite expanse of *chōra*, we have *chōras* within *chōra*. The human body as a place or *chōra* is itself implaced, contextualized, horizoned, within, to mirror, the world of meanings and its further implacement within an ever-receding and endless amorphous *chōra*. That is, instead of simply being projectors of meaning upon the world, we are born into that world of pre-given meanings. Meanings are contextualized and these contexts are themselves contextualized by the succession of further hidden contexts receding from our grasp. As meaning-giving subjects, we are thrown-into or find ourselves already implaced within that pre-contextualizing environment, enveloping the flux of contextualized realities. Within that *chiasmatic chōra*, what is immediately present to our embodied being is but a drop in the ocean, but which mirrors and expresses the ocean, itself uncontextualizable, beyond meaning or purpose, neither *arche* nor *telos*, no beginning nor end.

Chōra as such is a theme that, in its indeterminacy and self-withdrawal — paradoxically contributing to the generation of things —, undermines any hegemony of a universal *idea* or ideal universal. In Nishida's terms this translates into the absolute nothing's self-formation *via* self-negation as *basho*, in its inverse correspondence with the manifold of individuals. Only when understanding the universal precisely *in light of* that an-ontological *chōratic* opening or self-negation *qua basho*, in its formless nothingness, can the idea of a universality permit the irreducible singularity of individuals as in Nishida's notion of the dialectical universal. Hegel had inherited the primacy of the *idea* from Plato as what in-forms, orders, the material of world history. Nishida, by taking-off

from and developing the *chōra* rather than the *ideas* in Plato, hoped to overcome that dichotomy between form and matter with his notion of a self-forming formlessness as a place enfolding its own forms. In opposition to the *idealism* of Plato and Hegel, or more precisely, their *idea-logy* (*logos* of the *idea/s*) Nishida thus puts forth what we might call a *chorology*.²⁵¹ It serves as a dark undertow that pulls apart and tears asunder any metaphysical tendency even within Nishida's own thinking, as well as in his misguided interpreters, toward reifying absolutes — for example in Nishida's own occasional use of the word “substance” (*kitai*). John Sallis has remarked that the *chōra* both originates metaphysics and exposes it to its abyss; it engulfs metaphysics as its beginning and end.²⁵² Working behind the light of reason, *chōra* is what both founds and displaces metaphysical posits. It is in this ever present *absence* of the *chōra*, the self-negation of nothing *qua* absolute that metaphysical “firsts”, e.g., substances, principles, and absolutes, are erected but also toppled. Such “*chorology*” of a place of nothing allowing for the criss-crossing inter-dimensionality, the *chiasma* of being-and-non-being, places Nishida's so-called dialectic not only *beyond* previous Buddhistic formulations in unfolding their implications. It also places it *beyond* Hegel's dialectical *idea-lism* founded upon the concept conceiving itself *via* its dialectical structure. But this in turn is what leads us to the question of the adequacy or inadequacy of the language of a dialectical logic, borrowing Hegelian terminology, in expressing that *chiasmatic chōra*, Nishida's matter of thought.

Sec. 3: Conclusion: *Chiasmatic Chōra*

The *chōra* both supports, or rather engulfs in its gaping abyss, and is constituted by the *chiasma* we discussed above. Nishida's mature thought entails both together as a *chiasmatic chōra*. The *chōra* engulfs and supports in its abyss an an-archic economy of generation-and-dissolution whereupon quasi-substances and apparent principles are generated and cease as singular constellations within a *chiasmatic* concurrence of manifold forces and dimensions. The self-determination of the abysmal *chōra* then is a *chiasma* of (over)inter-determinations, a perpetually reconfiguring *chiasmatic chōra*, the sheer complexity of which undermines any final *Aufhebung* or even any structure that might be characterized as "dialectical." It is the concrete indicated by what Nishida called the "dialectic of *basho*." What we have here then is a *chiasmology* in opposition to Aristotelian *ousiology* and a *chorology* in distinction from Platonist and Hegelian *idea-logy* (i.e., their idealism). Both *chōra* and *chiasma* here work together to undermine, in Nishida's system of in-completion, any semblance to a metaphysics of self-closure under the postulation of an absolute — whether as *idea* or concept or *Geist* or substance. It is the very matter of Nishida's own thinking that has undermined his own repeated attempts to grasp it under the structure of a completed system once-and-for-all. Never reaching its end, his philosophy is thus parabolical. To read Nishida in such terms allows us to bring him into a more intimate dialogue with the more recent post-Hegelian thinkers of the twentieth and twenty first centuries, who in countering the *ousiology* of traditional western meta

physics have also been looking towards place, *chōra*, and *chiasma*. Nishida's dialectics based on his idea of *basho* will have something to offer to such recent western philosophy.

In regard to the relationship of the *chiasmatic chorology* in Nishida to Mahāyāna non-dualism and Hegelian dialectics, we can make the following conclusion. The concrete *chiasma* of what Nishida calls "absolute dialectic" cannot be expressed adequately in terms of Hegelian dialectics. And *basho* in its nature as a self-withdrawing *chōra* that founds this dialectic — enfolding and unfolding its *chiasma* that in turn determines its shape — also escapes the grasp of a conceptual systematic such as that of Hegel's self-conceiving concept or self-knowing spirit. The grounding and ungrounding of Nishida's absolute dialectic in this gaping *chōra qua basho*, releasing the dialectic's *chiasmatic* complexity, is what distinguishes Nishida's dialectic as "absolute dialectic" from Hegel's dialectic. But this absolute dialectic founded upon *basho* as such also extends beyond previous formulations within Buddhism.

CHAPTER 11: CONCLUDING THOUGHTS, CRITICISM AND EVALUATION

Now that we have discussed in detail Nishida's dialectic, in this final chapter I would like to conclude our work with some final thoughts to evaluate and assess Nishida's dialectical philosophy. I would like to ask two challenging questions of Nishida's dialectics: 1) To what extent is the language (or terminology) he employed adequate for expressing the matter of his thinking; and 2) What does Nishida's dialectical thinking have to offer us today? We shall discuss the first question in relation to the issues of *logic* and *dialectics* in Nishida and the second question in relation to the so-called post-modern world and globalization of today.

Sec. 1: Language, Logic, Dialectics

Nishida's theory of *basho* seeks to provide a philosophical glimpse to the very concrete standpoint we all live and experience as *always already*, the ever-implicit *wherein* of our implacement. And yet this is also the *wherein* from which we inevitably "fall from grace" in the very act of reflecting upon it. Perhaps this attempt to philosophically formulate the inexpressible concrete is one of the attractions of Nishida's *basho*-theory. The very attempt makes us aware of our finitude and contingency. This brings up the issue of Nishida's mode of presenting that concrete. To what extent is it viable? One point of Mahāyāna Buddhist practice, such as Zen, one might say is to experience concrete reality in its non-dualistic or contradictory nature without the coverings of concep-

tual thought. Paradoxically Nishida strives to articulate the un-articulable, to speak about what he himself stresses cannot be a subject of speech, to bring the concrete into discursive expression. While telling us to look for it in the direction of the “predicate” since it cannot be made into a subject of judgement, he could not but speak of it, treating it as the subject of discussion. Does his mode of locution succeed in portraying that ineffable sphere? This question may be raised more succinctly in regard to the metaphysical and epistemological terminologies he appropriates, especially from nineteenth century German philosophy — most notably, that of the Neo-Kantians and of Hegel. This includes the conceptual schemata of the universal-individual relationship or of the concrete universal, the *logic* of contradiction, the very language of a dialectic, etc. Do these terms and phrases do justice to the very matter of Nishida’s thinking. My concern here is not whether Nishida had adequately understood those German philosophers. The point is whether his appropriation of their terms and concepts — Hegelian dialectics, the epistemological hylo-morphism of the Neo-Kantians, or even the *noesis-noema* scheme of Husserl from the early twentieth century — fits what he wanted to express.

That issue of language is related to the issue of logic and of dialectics in general. Nishida liked to characterize his philosophy in both terms, as dialectical (*benshōhōteki*) and as a kind of logic (*ronri*). To what extent then can the ineffability of the dialectic’s subject-matter be rendered in logical form? This system was to be a “logic” (*ronri*) explicated as unfolding in the structure of a “dialectic.” In his *Watashi no ronri ni tsuite* (“Concerning My Logic”), published in 1946 and serving as the afterward to his final essay, *Bashōteki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan*, Nishida reflects upon his dialectical logic as

a form of thinking that "...clarifies the logic of the historically formative act... from the standpoint of our historically active self..." (Z10 431) He responds here to those who attack his logic of contradictory self-identity as "not a logic at all." His reply was that his critics are mis-understanding rather than clarifying his dialectic. (Z10 431) And in *Ronri to sūri* ("Logic and Math"), also from the same period, he views his own notion of contradictory self-identity as rendering form to the "logic of nothing" (*mu no ronri*) that can be found in Buddhist philosophy. (Z10 69) Why did Nishida insist upon a "logic"? Nishida's frame of reference was nineteenth century German philosophy in the context of which "logic" serves as a synonym for epistemology (e.g., in the systems of Kant, Hegel, and the Neo-Kantians). For example, the Neo-Kantian use of the term "logic" can be traced to Hermann Lotze, who, while doing what we would call "epistemology" (or: "theory of knowledge"), refused to use that term for the reason that what was called "epistemology" during the 1850s and 60s in Germany were "psychologicistic," or more precisely even psycho-physiological attempts to reduce Kant's transcendental philosophy to nerve-energies.²⁵³ Following Lotze, the Neo-Kantians formulated their epistemology as a kind of "logic" in order to overcome psychologism, the point being that cognition is unrelated to psychological or physiological contingencies. Nishida's *basho*-theory takes-off from this Neo-Kantian attempt to "logicize" (or: logically found) (*ronrika*) the dynamic of cognition without reference to the psychology of the subject-knower. Like the Neo-Kantians, Nishida, when first formulating his theory of *basho*, felt the need to avoid the charge of psychologism by providing a "logical foundation" (*ronriteki kiso*) for his ideas that would not call to mind the contingencies of the psyche. (See Z3 254-55)

Nishida, however, also considered his “logic of *basho*” to be a kind of “intuitionism.” In contrast to the Neo-Kantian emphasis upon conception, his cognitive theory was to be grounded upon a fundamental *intuition* (*chokkan*). As indicated in his preface to the 1927 *Hatarakumono kara mirumono e*, Nishida believed that with the formulation of his theory of *basho* he was making a “turn” from his earlier “voluntarism” involving Bergsonian and Fichtean formulations to an “intuitionism” (*chokkanshugi*) of a “seerless seeing,” i.e., an intuition *of* the nothing — as both subject and object — that sees through self-differentiation. Such “intuitionism” as underlying Nishida’s “logical founding” is indicative of what lies in the depths of human existence, which Nishida often spoke of as “the religious,” the extreme limit-point of one’s existence, one’s “vanishing point,” where the self-contradiction of one’s being in its generation-and-extinction, its radical contingency, is made explicit. Intuition here is the self-seeing of the very place (*basho*) where life meets death. What Nishida calls “the religious” in this significance — what in today’s philosophical parlance we may translate as “the existential,” — entails the self-awareness of one’s finitude *vis-à-vis* the excess reality of the concrete, the awareness of the nothing wherein one is ultimately implaced and to which one belongs. It seems obvious that this would be irreducible to any logical formulation. *Basho* in its concrete whole, in its very transcendence, is irreducible to logical formulations and rules of thought.

The issue of the appropriateness of the language of “logic” thus arises especially in connection to Nishida’s own allusions to that a-rational aspect of *basho*. In the late 1930s (e.g., in *Ronri to seimei*) Nishida further develops the alleged *logic* of concrete re-

ality to understand it in terms of the *proto*-logical structure or *logos* of the historical world. Furthermore he understands that latter structure dialectically, which he comes to elaborate in terms of the contradictory self-identity. (See Z8 68, 97, 100) Nishida here views what we normally call “logic” — formal logic — to be mediated by *logos*, which he in turn understands as this dialectic of historical reality. The essence of logic (*ronri*) as such is generated from out of the historical world’s formative act, *logos* that is dialectical (“the logic of absolute negation,” “the logic of absolute nothing”). (See Z8 97; Z9 442, 452-53) This leads to the very issue of dialectic itself that structures that *logos* underlying world history. To what extent does the dialectical structure adequately portray the complexity of the concrete?

David Dilworth, for example, has pointed out that the Mahāyāna doctrine of the non-duality between *nirvāṇa* and *samsāra* cannot be adequately framed in the dialectical language of Plato or Hegel. Noticing the closeness between Nishida and Mahāyāna, Dilworth thus refuses to speak of a “dialectic” in Nishida.²⁵⁴ And yet the fact of the matter is that Nishida himself, in describing his own thinking, employed the term *benshōhō*, the term commonly used for transposing “dialectic” into Japanese. While Dilworth speaks of Nishida’s paradoxical logic *contra* Hegel’s dialectical logic, Nishida himself used the term “dialectic” (*benshōhō*) to characterize his way of thinking, the kind of philosophy he was engaging in, even if ultimately of a different sort than Hegel’s. “Paradox” rather translates *mujun*, also meaning “contradiction.” What Dilworth renders as Nishida’s “paradoxical logic” in opposition to Hegel’s “dialectical logic” really means a “dialectic of contradiction” in contrast to Hegel’s “dialectic of sublation.” For Nishida

views his own version of dialectic, that he comes to call “absolute dialectics” (*zettai ben-shōhō*), as involving genuine self-contradiction or self-negation in contrast to Hegel’s dialectic of sublational synthesis. A related issue then is what Nishida means by “contradiction” (*mujun*). For Nishida’s “absolute dialectic” is a dialectic of contradiction, as I just mentioned. David Putney has criticized Nishida’s concept of a contradictory identity, stating that propositions or concepts cannot really be contradictory unless both sides of the dichotomy are asserted to be true. Nishida, however, does not reject the dichotomy of opposites outright by sublating or resolving the opposition. Nishida’s point is that contradictories co-exist in tension, in mutual reference, and within a self-nullifying place. Putney thus concedes that perhaps Nishida’s idea should be viewed from a *broader* perspective.²⁵⁵ But that broader *trans*-logical perspective is what we get in Nishida’s own concept of an un-delimited *basho* that negates itself to make room for the very relationship of contradiction. The Japanese word Nishida employs for “contradiction” is *mujun*. On the one hand this can be translated as “paradox” — the word that Dilworth prefers as we noted above —, which certainly would give a broader meaning than the merely formal-logical. This may have been the sense Nishida had in mind when referring to the *mujun* of the Heraclitean strife and its *logos* that underlies world history. It is only from out of that non-logical paradoxicality that formal-logical distinctions could be derived and hence logical contradiction subsequently obtained. In this respect Nishida does not always clearly distinguish logical from non-logical opposition.

Yet as we mentioned in the previous chapter the compound *mujun* also comes from a Chinese story in the *Han Fei Tzu* (*Han Feizi*) about a vender selling

lances/halberds (*mu* of *mujun*, pronounced *hoko*) and shields (the *jun* of *mujun*, pronounced *tate*). On the one hand he advertises that there are no shields that his lances cannot penetrate and on the other hand he advertises that there are no lances that can penetrate his shields.²⁵⁶ Accordingly, the concept then does have the sense of mutually *exclusive* alternatives.²⁵⁷ Nishida's point is that such alternatives in their mutual exclusion refer to one another and in that respect are bi-conditionals, and that furthermore such correlating terms assume the *place* of their relationship, even if a relation of mutual exclusion. Ontologically the primordial opposition of mutual exclusion would be between being and non-being. And we can transpose this ontological opposition logically into the contradiction between yes and no, affirmation and negation. Nishida often has in mind precisely this ontological opposition which is also a *logical* contradiction although it is more than just that. Furthermore the logical and ontological senses merge into the existential sense of one's own "self-contradiction" as a finite being in the fact that life entails death or, in religious terms, that salvation or enlightenment entails the self-awareness of one's inescapable sinfulness or ignorance. What Nishida means by "contradiction" entails all of these senses. The problem lies more in Nishida's mode of articulation that makes use of the language and categories of German metaphysics and epistemology to put forth his own thinking as a "logic." This usage can tend towards abstraction and reification,²⁵⁸ and away from the concrete, despite Nishida's own warnings against abstraction. On this basis one might view Nishida's *logic* of contradictory self-identity as instead "a complex system of abstractions which tend to defeat themselves."²⁵⁹ But on the other hand to fault Nishida for that shortcoming is perhaps unfair when taking into con-

sideration that Nishida was the “first” in his milieu (i.e., the first generation of Japanese intellectuals trained in western philosophy) to attempt such a project of immense proportions. What he means by contradictory self-identity is in fact the concrete from out of which opposing abstractions are made. In any case the question may still be asked: Does Nishida’s employment of a dialectical terminology serve to fetter and congeal the fluidity or complexity of the concrete into the mere formula of a *dialectic*?

And from the other side, in the face of that abstraction, one might wonder whether the concreteness of the matter of that “concrete logic” or “concrete dialectic” undermines in escaping that logicity, its dialectical formulation? One cannot help but ask the question of whether Nishida’s dialectical systematic is still a rationalization of the a-rational that ultimately eludes, slips away from, the reductive categories of its “dialectical logic.” In other words, does Nishida’s explication of the paradoxical nature of concrete reality in the terms of a dialectical *logic*, even of contradiction, really do justice to the *chiasmatic* nature of its matter? Can the dialectical language adequately capture and portray the undelimitedness of *basho* as absolutely nothing? Nishida spent over thirty years reconstructing versions of his system one after another. But in virtue of the nature of its very subject matter the system he attempted to build could never be completed. The system was incompletable. The language he employed as building blocks for this system repeatedly met its limit in the very matter it attempted to structure and express. Its foundation touches an undertow that perpetually undermines, threatens to deconstruct, its construction. He was erecting his system upon that which escapes systematization — a dark ineffable non-substantiality, whose openness can never meet closure. Yet this was Ni-

shida's life-long philosophical project — the paradox of a philosophical system that allows for its in-completion. Its in-completion is its openness in the face of an irreducible *other* and in the midst of which it finds itself — the philosophical system along with its thinker — implaced. But in that case, does the dialectic, as an anti-logic, serve to facilitate that opening — at least as a pointer to the ineffable? How might Nishida answer Martin Heidegger's contention that "all dialectic in philosophy is only the expression of an embarrassment."²⁶⁰ But if dialectic is only derivative of tautology as what is more originary as Heidegger contends,²⁶¹ Nishida's self-seeing self-awareness of the undelimitable nothing — the intuition of a seerless seeing discussed above —, its stillness amidst the dynamism of movement that becomes formulated in dialectical terms, may intimate an answer.²⁶² Dialectics may be "embarrassing" if it assumes synthesis under conceptual super-impositions. On the other hand the *absolute* dialectical tension that Nishida has in mind entails a complexity that is lived rather than artificial and greater and more intense than mere binary opposition, the *chiasmatic* complexity we discussed in the previous chapter whereby that self-awareness of one amidst many can never be fixed into a grammatical subject or concept or substance.

Indeed if we fully abandon object-logic, the very dynamism that is the matter of Nishida's thought, exceeding rules of formal or binary logic, would *not* have to be seen as contradictory. It is self-contradictory only from the *logical* perspective. It is only under the reification of alternative sides, through their abstraction from the concrete dynamism of their implacement, that they become seen as mutually contradictory. Nishida is not utterly unaware of this and that is why he points to *basho vis-à-vis* nothing as the ba-

sis allowing for such logical abstractions and dichotomizations and their dialectic. It is the very concept of *basho* in overcoming or overstepping the Aristotelian principle of non-contradiction that points to the broader context *wherein* that logical principle can make sense. The broader perspective from the *basho* that is neither/nor allows for the narrower focus upon each term as contradicting, excluding, the other. It is from that deeper and broader perspective that Nishida speaks of “the religious” as the place wherein one faces the intersection between life and death, being and nothing, where one faces what logically speaking is a contradiction in one’s own existence. So in one sense we can say that *basho* logically is self-contradictory, but in another sense it lies beyond such logical formulations, having surpassed, while making possible, binary opposition.

If the opposing terms of a dialectical relationship are but abstractions from, derivations of, their co-implication in that pre-dichotomized place, the *logic* itself of a dialectic (of binary opposition) unfolding from what enfolds them seem to be derivative, *a posteriori*, in relation to that enfolding place. This brings us back to the *basho*-nature, the *chōratic* aspect, of Nishida’s dialectic. We might note again the verb form of *chōra*, *chō-reō*, meaning “to make room.” To make-room for all that can be grasped *via* the senses or the intellect, *chōra* itself eludes our grasp. Nishida’s *basho* implies an openness that extends into the dark, defying any attempt to conceive it or capture it within some system. We have seen the very matter of Nishida’s thinking perpetually slip away from his own repeated attempts to systematize it, to complete its structure, in the language of dialectical philosophy. That darkness would precede any *logic* of a dialectic. And yet we must not forget that Nishida *also* emphasized the very *inter-relationship* of terms that

give shape to that openness. But the question here is whether the structure of a dialectic, and not necessarily inter-relatedness *per se*, designates a system of thinking imposed upon what is pre-dialectical and exceeds such system?²⁶³ Does the language of “dialectic” shape the very matter *ex-ceeding* its form, in the very attempt to express it? If dialectics necessarily involves the interrelationship between two opposing terms, even as biconditionals, could the relationship be a simplification of, an abstraction from, what concretely is a *chiasma* involving a multiplicity? The sense one gets from Nishida’s key thought-motifs such as the four-fold dialectical matrix, the irreducibility of *basho* to being or non-being, and inverse correspondence as mutual self-negation, is that the dialectic of opposing terms is but the tip of an iceberg of what is concretely there. If each of the terms in their mutual contradiction are themselves self-contradictory, i.e., in their mutual self-negations, this indicates — as we suggested in the previous chapter — a further *chiasmatic* complexity that extends beyond the mere dichotomy of opposing terms. The complexity of the concrete, in the *chiasma* of (over)inter-determinations, thus exceeds the dialectic.

And thus we return to the question raised in the previous chapter: Can the *chiasmatic chōra* that is the matter of Nishida’s thought be captured by the language of dialectics? Does the multi-dimensional complexity of the self-determining matrix that is the world, as a *chiasma* of (over)inter-determinations, along with its nature as an undelimited *basho*, a self-receding *chōra* that clears room for those inter-relations, undermine the very language of a “dialectic”? Does the very matter of Nishida’s “absolute dialectics” undermine its dialectical structuring? To what degree was Nishida’s choice of

terms and modes of articulation, borrowed from traditional western metaphysics, adequate for expressing his own insights concerning concrete reality? The *chiasmatic* complexity of (over)inter-determination and the *chorological* openness of that matter, allowing for perpetual in-completion, work together, to undermine any attempt at systematic closure. The matter of Nishida's thinking is in *excess* to any conceptual or logical system, irreducible hence even to the structure of a dialectic. It is the unthought and the unsaid that cannot be made into a grammatical subject. And yet despite that dark in-completion, this is what Nishida found to be the most immediate, concrete, basis of our existence. It is what must be assumed, the contextualizing place that implaces our being in an unhorizoned horizon, the empty sky of openness that Nishida calls the sphere without periphery.

If traditional metaphysical language, the language of logic and of dialectics, fails to capture that *chiasmatic* complexity and the *chōratic* openness of *basho*, what would suffice instead? Can we find another mode of expression to convey what thus escapes while enveloping us? Do the more "poetical" or "existential" modes of expression of some of Nishida's Kyoto school descendants do greater justice to the content of what he aimed to express? We might suggest a post-metaphysical or even post-phenomenological language such as what one might find in Nishida's student, Nishitani Keiji, or in turn Nishitani's student, Ueda Shizuteru. These thinkers, taking-off from Nishida's work, appear to provide, or at least move towards, alternative modes of conceiving, articulating, and discussing the very matter of the concrete that traditional metaphysics failed to grasp and of responding to the traditional metaphysical issues of the one and the many and of

dualism that Nishida was struggling with. This however would require another long study and would take us beyond the immediate concerns of our present work.

Sec. 2: Globalization and the Ethics of Humility

As we stated at the beginning of this work, the world today in its globalization is unfolding its *chiasmatic* nature as a place of manifold contradictions and oppositions. As Nishida states in *Sekai no sinchitsujo no genri (Fundamental Principles of a New World Order)* of 1943, formerly dis-connected nations “...have been brought into a common world space due to developments in science, technology, and economy.” (Z11 445) The technological shrinking of the globe in the last few centuries has torn and erased what previously were cultural and geographical boundaries. Forced to face *others*, like and yet unlike ourselves, the spatial contingencies in the constitution of our being, our implacement, previously invisible becomes apparent, explicit. The cultural relativity of certain truths, previously held to be unquestionable, now becomes obvious. As the crossing of borders between formerly isolated worlds becomes increasingly accessible and frequent, anxiety grows in the face of broader and more complicated horizons that unfold from the merging and twisting of older ones. No horizon — cultural, religious, political, ideological — is ultimately self-contained. The present situation that brings distant horizons in the midst of one another on a global scale, increasingly reveals their emptiness.²⁶⁴ What is the relevance of Nishida’s dialectic of *basho* to this current state of affairs?

The global spread of technology, as noted by some twentieth century and contemporary thinkers, such as Martin Heidegger and more recently Edward Casey, reduces the

place of human dwelling to calculability, erasing or concealing its unique or singular “homeliness” with the homogeneity of measured space. The world, thus made calculable is no longer the *wherein* of our dwelling but becomes reduced to “measurable objectness.”²⁶⁵ We see this, for example, in the world of capitalism made into a vast market of numerical exchange-values. As societies, enamoured by an ideology of equality and sameness — colored by the latest fashions and trends —, move towards greater homogeneity under this “globalization of capitalism, technology, scientific rationality, and political uniformity,”²⁶⁶ man becomes uprooted from his traditions and humanity loses any sense of a grounding in identity.²⁶⁷ Casey has identified this “homelessness” of the contemporary world as the very lack of a primal place, as being without the means of orientation in a complex and confusing world.²⁶⁸ The increasing sense of placelessness threatens us with disorientation and dispossession.

And yet modern technology’s leveling of place, from another perspective, has also led to the unveiling of its own contradictions. With the increased speed and efficiency of both physical travel and information exchange — e.g., airplanes and the Internet —, distances are abolished, bringing the far near and displacing human existence into alien lands. On one level, as we just noticed, this has led to the globalization of consumer “culture” on a mass scale, threatening with homogenization the unique ways of life of the many indigenous cultures of the world. Mass consumerism that levels everyone down to the “lowest common denominator” makes many long for that home-place from which we have been uprooted, the place that would provide a secure ground for our being. But the technological shrinking of the globe at the same time also makes the heterogeneity be-

tween cultural places, previously isolated or distant from one other, all-too obvious. We thus find ourselves faced with the extreme contrast between the homogeneity of consumer pseudo-culture and the rich multiplicity of differences amongst world cultures. Globalization involves this double-tendency or duplicity between homogenization and the realization of diversity. Countering global homogenization then is the increasing pronouncement of difference.²⁶⁹ Forced to face one another, each horizon claims autonomy for itself now threatened with erasure. Modern consumerism's "ideology of equality," in its global expansion, thus may be heading towards its exhaustion and destitution. With its globalization, it spreads itself thin as it finds itself displaced from what seemed to be its natural embeddedness or implacement in the world. The hegemony of a principle (the ideology of modernity), in its universalization, in Nishida's terms, then finds its extreme limit in its counter-determination by disparities. And in its exhaustion, globalization would reveal the surrounding abyss underlying the ground from which modernity was erected. In Nishida's words, this is *basho vis-à-vis* nothing.

What can Nishida's thinking offer us today in this context of globalization? What does his dialectic of an open circle or sphere without end provide? When borders crumble and boundaries are being torn-down, life can flourish only when people learn to respect *others*, with a sense of humility in the face of mutual *differences*. Amidst these alterations, mutations, and conflicts of traditions and horizons, it may do us well to bear in mind the infinite and irreducible expanse *wherein we all are in co-implacement* amidst differences. Nishida himself experienced the global heterogeneity or split within his own soul as someone growing up in an eastern culture opening itself to the world's globaliza-

tion.²⁷⁰ His philosophical project of overcoming dualism was also a search for a common ground that could contextualize the disparity between East and West on the basis of a deeper unifying source. Ueda Shizuteru claims that the East-West split was exemplified in Nishida's own dual activities of Zen meditation and philosophy: "The split was itself his gateway to the 'deeper foundations' of unity."²⁷¹ But that foundation can be no universalizing essence that would impose upon, and hence erase, mutual differences among elements. It must rather be *nothing* that gives them space for co-existence.

During the period from the 1930s up to the end of his life, Nishida sought to extend his *basho*-theory to this arena of globalization and world politics. It is remarkable that when Japan was becoming engulfed in military conflicts in Asia and the Pacific, Nishida sought to give expression to his vision of a multi-cultural world. In *Tetsugaku no konpon mondai (Fundamental Problems of Philosophy)* of the early-to-mid 1930s, rather than looking to the domination of a single culture to solve the inevitable and unavoidable encounter between regions and horizons, Nishida looks to their mutual mediation whereby each develops *vis-à-vis* one another in interrelationship: "True world culture will be formed by various cultures developing themselves through the mediation of the world while preserving their own respective standpoints." (Z6 353) And in *Nihon Bunka no Mondai (The Problem of Japanese Culture)* of 1940, the question of inter-cultural encounter is no longer one of "us or them" or even East vs. West: "It is not the question of negating eastern culture by means of western culture or negating western culture by means of eastern culture, nor of enveloping one into the other. Instead the point is to bathe both in a new light by discovering an even deeper and broader ground." (Z9 91)

The depth is to be plumbed *via* mutual difference and co-relativity. This idea of a “world culture” resulting from inter-cultural encounter culminates in 1943 in his *Sekai no shinchitsujo no genri* (*Fundamental Principles of a New World Order*), wherein Nishida promotes the idea of a “global world” as a “multi-worlded” inter-civilizational world-culture. In this global vision of a “multi-world” or “worldly world” (*sekaiteki sekai*), each nation, moving beyond itself but also remaining true to itself, unites with others. There would be no single dominating national force and each culture is able to retain its own way of being, its horizontal world, while simultaneously developing itself and world culture in relation to others in the medium of the global world. (Z6 353)

In *Sekai no shinchitsujo no genri* Nishida writes:

For the various national peoples to constitute a global world by transcending themselves while realizing themselves, each must first constitute a particular world by transcending itself and by following its own regional tradition. The world can accordingly form a single global world by the union of these particular worlds, each constituted upon its historical foundation. (Z11 445)

Nishida’s vision here then is no nationalist imperialism. But neither is it an “internationalist globalism” that aims to eradicate or subsume differences under the assumed universality of an allegedly authentic way of being-human, be it communism or consumerism: “Each nation or race, possessing its respective world historical destiny, combine into a single global world while each living its own unique historical life.” (Z11 445) He calls for each nation’s simultaneous self-realization and self-transcendence whereby each reaches beyond itself to participate in erecting a global world. Each nation opens itself up to the global world, first by opening to its own concrete regional sphere or “co-prosperity sphere” (*kyōeiken*) (Z11 446) founded upon geographical conditions and cul-

tural bonds. The global world was to be realized only from out of the cooperative inter-relationship between these particular worlds (*tokushuteki sekai*) or co-prosperity spheres, precluding the domination of powerful national or multi-national entities.²⁷² This also means that the “historical life” belonging to the regional traditions and cultures of specific peoples were to be respected.²⁷³ On this basis Nishida foresaw the potentiality of the twentieth century to be an age when nations of the world will overcome colonialism and undergo a world-awakening.

With no privileged or dominating center, the globe is thus spatialized as the *basho* for the co-implication of regions. Rather than possessing a universal essence that imposes upon the various cultures, the globe is their *basho* wherein they inter-act and must co-exist. This globalized vision of *basho* is of an *Ur-Kultur* (*genbunka*) — a term inspired by Goethe — that possesses disparate cultural possibilities in non-distinction, a “nothing” (*mu*), from out of which they are realized in their mutual differences. In this *Urkultur*, Nishida sought for a deeper foundation or original source, from which spring the branches of East and West.²⁷⁴ (See Z9 80; Z13 19-20) Within this space of its primal nothing cultures of the world interact to dialectically create their own identities *vis-à-vis* one another, accounting for *both* deep-rooted commonality *and* irreducible diversity. Nishida thus writes in 1944 (*Dekaruto ni tsuite*) that the path towards the fusion of East and West lies in returning to that primal source of “self-contradiction” and to begin from that standpoint of true “contradictory self-identity.” (Z10 138)

Nishida however warns, in his *Nihonbunka no mondai*, that one must carefully avoid making one’s own country, e.g., Japan, into a subject-body (*shutai*) encountering

other subject-bodies. To thus attempt to negate them or reduce them according to one's own national standpoint would be imperialism. Rather one must work *vis-à-vis* other nations from the standpoint of the world enveloping multiple subject-bodies. Each *kokutai*, or “national polity,” must renounce its own subjectivization in self-negation. The dialectic of nations in his global vision then is one of mutual self-negation. Each nation comes together in mutual determination *via* mutual self-negation. The country must forego any aggressive designs and must take care not to impose its own policies upon the variety of regional traditions both within and without. (See Z9 52, 59, 76-77) Without imposing itself on others, each nation is to learn from one another in their interrelations. This is the sense of “self-negation” extended to the global context. With nations thus transcending their own self-interested standpoints, global co-existence becomes possible, mediated *via* mutual self-negation. Nishida was convinced that such global self-negation — a “worldism” or “globalism” (*sekaishugi*) —, as opposed to self-affirmation for world dominance, would be the reverse of totalitarianism (*zentaishugi*). (Z23 386)

In Nishida's thoughts on the co-prosperity sphere and *kokutai*, despite what the army ideologues might have hoped for, we thus find reference to a de-totalizing undertow of the uncontainable and un-systematizable, the globe as a place environed by nothing (*mu*) to perpetually dis-place any totalizing, totalitarian, inclinations or universalizing claims. We find the *chiasmatic chōra* that is the matter of Nishida's thinking thus undermining the tendency not only towards absolutization or essentialism in metaphysics but also towards totalitarianism in politics. The sort of ethics one finds here is one of mutual self-negation, an ethics calling for humility *vis-à-vis* one's others. This vision that

would apply an ethics of mutual self-negation, with the concomitant attitude of humility, to the field of world politics, are suggestive for us today in this age of global plurality. It calls for an openness in the face of others and caution against attaching oneself dogmatically to one's own stance. Rather than totalizing or absolutizing one's position in self-affirmation over and above others, it calls for a de-totalization in openness to alterity. When this occurs reciprocally one is no longer necessitated to stake blood and life to defend one's turf or assert one's honor. Nishida's vision of the global world here without a doubt presupposes his *basho* theory. Nishida states in his *Bashoteki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan* that a nation's nationhood lies in its "religious character" (*shūkyōteki*) as a self-expression or self-formation of historical life. (Z10 360, 366) As in his discussions of the "religious" in human existence, by the "religious essence of nationality" here, Nishida has in mind the undelimited *basho* in its activity of self-negation. In the context of the political arena of nations, it serves as the groundless ground of global co-existence *via* mutual self-negation.

As we come to a close in our study, let us recall the main issue that spurred Nishida's thinking. First there was the epistemological issue of how one goes from one's mind to the source of the material of what one knows, the thing-in-itself, in its independence from what we impose upon it. This was the dualism of western epistemology that pressed Nishida to formulate and develop his *basho* theory. But from the 1930s on this issue of bridging the gap of separation increasingly takes on an ethical significance that in the global confrontations of the 1940s also becomes a political issue. Hence in the early 1940s, immediately prior to beginning work on his dialectic of religiosity, Nishida was

also attempting a dialectical theory of the global world. The global and political here still boils down to the ethical issue of how we are to communicate, inter-relate, and mutually respond to one another without imposing our own ego-centricity upon one's other; the issue of how one makes contact with one's other without forcing one's self upon the other. Nishida's theory of *basho* — with its idea of self-negation on the part of both the individuals implaced and the implacing place — implies an ontology that could found such an ethical posture *vis-à-vis* one's other. As suggested above, rather than a substantializing position that would affirm and assert one's own absolutized truth-claim over and above others in self-affirmation, it sets forth a posture of reciprocal humility on the basis of its an-ontology that acknowledges one's finitude in being-in-the-world. This posture of reciprocal humility allows for co-implacement amidst others in an empty space permitting multiplicity and difference. Looking to the globe as a non-substantial place in Nishida's sense of *basho vis-à-vis* nothing, in its self-negation, would thus preclude privileging one way of being over another in its universalization by instead encouraging an ethical stance of humility. And this doubtlessly applies to the human world's relationship to its natural environment as well.

Just as there is the violence in modern times of global homogenization towards indigenous cultures, there is "violation" directed against nature, in man's plundering of the environment without concern or respect for the *place of* nature or of our *place within* nature. The posture that attempts to colonize nature and rape its source of energy for the sole purpose of consumption becomes questionable in the face of environmental hazards. For in spite of the will-to-power whereby man "exalts himself to the posture of lord of the

earth,²⁷⁵ nature always *exceeds* his grasp. Nishida's concept of *basho* as a world-matrix, understood in light of an ecological dynamism, becomes suggestive here, i.e., to no longer regard ourselves as ontologically independent of, separate from, our natural environment but rather as partaking in its dynamic ecology. The issue again is one of humility: to no longer regard nature as mere stock-material for our technical and instrumental reasoning and instead to comport to it while remembering our own finitude, thus with a sense of "respect." Such a posture could contribute to the engendering of a healthier ecological co-existence with beings of the earth, both alive and inanimate.²⁷⁶

Closing Thoughts

We find ourselves today surrounded by the ever-increasing multiplicity of truth-configurations sounding in the global web of communication-and-information, competing for universal and eternal validity. Amidst the confusion in the global encounter of worldviews, religions, philosophies, ideologies, truth-claims, ways of life, etc., the question thus arises: What is one's place in the midst of others, the position one occupies within the environing world, how or where does one fit? Over a century ago Japan as a nation was asking similar questions concerning its implacement in the world. Nishida as a thinker tried to make sense of that period of inter-epochal and inter-horizonal chaos. As the country underwent radical changes in its appropriation of foreign influences, straining to synthesize different cultural horizons of the globe, e.g., East and West, Nishida's own thinking reflected that environing circumstance. What does he offer us then today?

Looking at Nishida's *basho*-philosophy as a whole, in its *chiasmatic* and *chōratic* aspects, I think that an understanding of reality in terms of a field or place — whether taken internally or externally, mentally or physically, taking into consideration all the complexities of reality —, an abysmal (under)ground that is ultimately un-delimited or undifferentiated to encompass all differences and delimitations, may have something to offer us today, especially today when we find ourselves faced with the post-modern world of difference, multiplicity, ungroundedness, uprootedness, etc. And the understanding of *basho* as such in terms of an absolute nothing, or in the face of absolutely nothing, I think allows for, or takes into cognizance, the finitude of human reason *vis-à-vis* our existence in the world, the alterity of the source of being and knowing that is always in excess to human conception. We ought to be listening to what sounds in its *chiasmatic* manifold from the abysmal *chōra*, *basho vis-à-vis* absolutely nothing.

Nishida Kitarō was at the forefront in the intellectual confrontation between, and synthesis of, East and West at the turn of the century from the nineteenth to the twentieth. His dialectic was born out of his philosophical readiness to cross cultural and intellectual boundaries. Presently we have already entered into another century as globalization, for better or worse, continues its advance. Nishida's thinking is not totally irrelevant to our contemporary situation. As a marvelous synthesis²⁷⁷ of its cross-cultural inheritances, his philosophy serves as a model for today's philosophizing to germinate even further possibilities of thoughtfulness in the face of the world. But it is much more than a mere "synthetic product of Zen and Hegel." The source of the distinct ways of being and thinking, East and West, that Nishida sought is what they must assume despite differences as the

wherein of their being-in-the-world. While its nature remains non-substantial and un-objectifiable, its formlessness provides the space allowing for the co-being of truly different ways of being and thinking. And this is what Nishida attempted to express with his notion of *basho*, which is thus quite distinct from Hegel's absolute concept and for which Hegelian formulations are not exactly adequate. And despite its "Buddhistic" nature as acknowledged by Nishida himself, Nishida's work is more than just that. In its character as a creative philosophy of global proportions, Nishida's work surpasses categorization as merely Hegelian or merely Buddhist.

In short we may summarize the conclusion of this present work as follows. Nishida, in his attempt to surmount Kantian dualism, was led to Hegel's dialectical terminology and formulations, e.g., in the notion of a concrete universal or in the universal-individual relationship, whether in the structure of judgment or in the historical unfoldings of the world. Yet the core ideas of Nishida's dialectic, e.g., in its founding upon the notions of *basho*, absolute nothing, and absolute negation, and in its radical reciprocity, such as in the dialectical universal or in inverse correspondence, extend beyond the purview of Hegelianism. Nishida's dialectic, centered on self-negation and contradictory identity, in content is closer in spirit to Mahāyāna. While Nishida does admit to commensurability with Mahāyāna, we nevertheless ought not to confine his thought to the doctrinal category of "Buddhist thought." This is for two reasons: 1) Its eclectic nature that brings in elements drawn from various sources, western and eastern, thereby constituting his work as a "world philosophy." And 2) Nishida's own creative contributions, especially in his formulation of *basho* that provides the foundation for his dialectics. *Ba-*

sho in its nature as a self-withdrawing *chōra* escapes the grasp of a conceptual system, such as that of Hegel's self-conceiving concept or self-knowing spirit/mind. The (un)grounding of Nishida's dialectic in this notion of *basho*, enfolding and unfolding the *chiasmatic* complexity of the dialectic, is what distinguishes Nishida's "absolute dialectic" from Hegel's dialectic. But this "absolute dialectic" founded upon *basho* as such also extends beyond previous formulations within Buddhism.

END NOTES

¹ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* Book VII, chs.1-3, 1028b-1929a39 in Richard McKeon (ed.), *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (NYC: Random House, 1941), pp. 783-85. All my references to Nishida's works in Japanese will be to the volumes from the most recent editions of the collected works of Nishida: *Nishida Kitarō zenshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami, 2003) unless otherwise noted. They will be indicated in the text in parentheses by *Z* followed by the volume number. Other texts will be cited in footnotes.

² See Renford Bambrough's introduction in Aristotle, *The Philosophy of Aristotle* (NYC: Penguin, Mentor, n.d.), p. 33; and see Andrew J. Reck, "Aristotle's Concept of Substance in the Logical Writings," *Southwestern Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 3 (Spring 1972), p. 7.

³ Aristotle, *Categories* ch.5, 2a14-19 in McKeon, p. 9.

⁴ Aristotle, *Categories* ch.5, 2b5f in McKeon, p. 9.

⁵ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* Book IV, ch. 2, 1003b5ff and 1003a33-35 respectively, in McKeon, p. 732.

⁶ It is interesting to note here that the term "category" (κατηγορία) itself means "predicate," that which is said of something, in ancient Greek. The first category, substance, in that sense is not really a category since it can never be a predicate. As the subject of which something is said, that which has something predicated of it, it is το κατηγορούμεον. See Aristotle, *Categories*, ch.5. Also see Reck, p. 9.

⁷ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* Book IV, ch.7, 1012a25 in McKeon, p. 750.

⁸ Parmenides, *Parmenides of Elea* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), frag.2, pp. 54-55, and frag.8, pp. 64-76. See also G.S. Kirk, J.E. Raven, and M. Schofield (ed.), *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, 1957), pp. 244-46, 248-53.

⁹ Aristotle, *Physics* Book I, ch.6, 189a29-33 in McKeon, p. 229.

¹⁰ Aristotle, *Physics* Book II, ch.9 – Book III, ch.1, 200b32-201a3 in McKeon, p. 252-53. As a metaphysical truth holding primarily of substances, the principle of non-contradiction then plays a role exceeding the merely formal-logical. On this see M.J. Cresswell, "Non-Contradiction and Substantial Predication," *Theoria*, vol. LXIX (2003) Part 3, pp. 169-70; J. Lukasiewicz, "Aristotle on the Law of Contradiction" in Jonathan Barnes, Malcolm Schofield, and Richard Sorabji (ed.), *Articles on Aristotle: 3. Metaphysics* (NYC: St. Martin's Press, 1960), p. 58; and John Peter Anton, *Aristotle's Theory of Contrariety* (London: Routledge, 1957), pp. 51-52, 62, 63, 92. Lukasiewicz states that for Aristotle, "The changing world of sense perception may contain as many contradictions as it pleases; but beyond it there lies another, eternal and immutable, world of *substantial essences*, intact and safe from the ravages of contradiction." (p. 58)

¹¹ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* Book IV, ch.4, 1007a20 in McKeon, p. 739.

¹² Aristotle, *Categories* ch.2, 1b3-8 in McKeon, p. 8; ch.5, 2a10-13 in McKeon, p. 9; and ch.5, 2b15-17 in McKeon, p. 10.

¹³ See Aristotle, *Categories*, ch. 5, 2b5-6 in McKeon, p. 9; and *Metaphysics* Book XII, ch.1, 1069a25 in McKeon, p. 872. On this also see Anton, pp. 60-61.

¹⁴ See Aristotle, *Metaphysics* Book VII, ch.3, 1028b36 in McKeon, p. 785; and *Posterior Analytics* Book II, ch.19, 100a16-100b3 in McKeon, p. 185.

¹⁵ For example, the species extracted from its individual members and the genus opposing the species in biological classification are *both* abstract universals, while reason as operative within the activities of human beings is a concrete universal. See Hegel's *Encyclopedia Logic* in *Hegel's Logic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), §163 Zusatz, p. 227-28. The example is borrowed from Kosaka Kunitsugu, *Nishida Kitarō no shisō* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2003, 2003), p. 160 and p. 363.fn.132. More on Hegel's "concrete universal" in the next chapter.

¹⁶ Hegel, *Encyclopedia Logic* in *Hegel's Logic*, §166, p. 231.

¹⁷ The meaning of these paradoxical terms should become clear in Part II of this work.

¹⁸ In this respect it appears that Nishida was not familiar with Husserl's later theories on intersubjectivity or the life-world.

¹⁹ This is evident, for example, in his *Matter and Memory* (Mineola, NY: Dover Pub., 2004), where Bergson argues against both materialism and idealism and against the division between extended, divisible, and multiple matter on the one hand and the unextended pure unity of the mind on the other hand, taking note of the inseparability between mind, organism (i.e., the body), and environment. We are in the midst of the surrounding environment, as one part in a greater whole, taking part in the rhythmic flow of surrounding matter *via* perception (centripetal motion) and action (centrifugal motion) *vis-à-vis* environing matter. Bergson distinguishes this movement with its "concrete extensity" as prior to "homogeneous space." The origin of one's independence and freedom *vis-à-vis* that continuous flow of surrounding matter has to do with human perception's capacity to prolong in memory the duration of that movement affecting it and the human capacity to act on its basis. For Bergson the mind-body relation or the subject-object distinction thus boils down to the difference in degrees of duration in the vibrations of "continuous extensity," a difference in the "rhythm of time." See Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, pp. 11-12, 43-44, 71, 77, 178, 186, 278-79, 235-36, 289, 295.

²⁰ For example, in his *Time and Free Will*, Bergson explains "pure duration" to be the form of lived succession of our states of consciousness inter-permeating one another as a whole. See Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will* (NYC: Harper & Row, 1960; London: George Allen & Unwin, 1910), p. 100. In this work, Bergson establishes the priority of pure duration as such over what he calls "homogeneous space." See also pp. 104 and 229.

²¹ See Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, pp. 11-12, 71, 278-79, 289.

²² See Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 295.

²³ We will provide a more detailed discussion of this concept of "continuity of discontinuity" in a later chapter.

²⁴ See J.S. Haldane, *The Philosophical Basis of Biology* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1931), especially his Lecture I: "The Axiom of Biology."

²⁵ Hai Tai Kim, "The Logic of the Illogical: Zen and Hegel," *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. V, Nr. 1 (April 1955), p. 28.

²⁶ Ha Tai Kim, "The Logic of the Illogical: Zen and Hegel," *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. V, Nr. 1 (April 1955), p. 27-28.

²⁷ See Kim, pp. 25 and 27.

²⁸ Hegel did use triadic formulas and owed much to Fichte's formulations, which involved the terms of thesis-antithesis-synthesis. However Hegel himself did not use those exact terms of thesis-antithesis-synthesis except when discussing Kant's triads, i.e., the four groups of categories, each consisting of three concepts with the third concept arising from the combination of the other two.

²⁹ *Aufheben* or *Aufhebung* has also been translated as "supersession," "superceding," and "transcendence."

³⁰ In this chapter we shall identify Hegel's works as follows: EL = The *Encyclopedia Logic* in *Hegel's Logic*, trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975); DFSg = *Differenz des Fichteschen und Schellingschen Systems der Philosophie* in *Werke 2* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970); DFSe = *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, trans. H.S. Harris and Walter Cerf (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1977); GF = *Glauben und Wissen oder Reflexionsphilosophie der Subjektivität in der Vollständigkeit ihrer Formen als Kantische, Jacobische und Richtesche Philosophie* in *Werke 2*; MF = *Mancherlei Formen, die bei dem jetzigen Philosophieren vorkommen* in *Werke 2*; NL = *Natural Law* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975); NR = *Über die wissenschaftlichen Behandlungsarten des Naturrechts, seine Stelle in der praktischen Philosophie und sein Verhältnis zu den positiven Rechtswissenschaften* in *Werke 2*; PG = *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1952); PS = *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1977); PH = *Philosophy of History* (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1991); WL1 = *Wissenschaft der Logik* Erster Teil (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1971); WL2 = *Wissenschaft der Logik* Zweiter Teil (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1969); SL = *Science of Logic* (Amherst: Humanity Books, 1969). The little *z* denotes *Zusatz*, notes taken by students based on Hegel's lectures and added to the original text.

³¹ This self-enclosure of the circle of dialectic may be noticeable to a certain extent in Plato as well. See the *Republic* wherein Socrates describes the dialectic as an upward advancement that culminates in the origin, the first principle (*arche*) itself (533c-d). Through the process of dialectic, Plato tells us, reason grasps the *arche*, the origin or first principle of everything (511b). See Plato, *Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, pp. 1132 & 1149). Plato's dialectic thus also proceeds towards the beginning of everything, including itself. Hegel's contribution here would be in formulating this culmination in terms of an explicit *self*-grasping of the origin.

³² However this was prior to the Neo-Kantian movement that Nishida was primarily responding to. In fact the Neo-Kantian movement in turn developed partially in response to Hegel.

³³ Hegel, GWF. *System der Sittlichkeit*, ed. Georg Lasson, Hamburg: Verlag von Felix Meiner, 1967. For the English, see Hegel, *System of Ethical Life and First Philosophy of Spirit*, trans. & ed., H.S. Harris and T.M. Knox (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1979).

³⁴ The full title of this work is: *The Scientific Ways of Treating Natural Law, Its Place in Moral Philosophy, and Its Relation to the Positive Sciences of Law*.

³⁵ On this see Terry Pinkard, *Hegel: A Biography* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

³⁶ Hegel provided us with two version of his system of logic, of which the *Science of Logic* was the first one, first published during 1812-16. The second version constitutes the first part of his system of science, the *Encyclopedia*, first published in 1817.

³⁷ It should be interesting to contrast this with Nishida's non-substantialist notion of *basho* that allows for a "contradictory self-identity." We shall discuss this in the ensuing chapters.

³⁸ This is obviously a departure from Aristotle's conception of self-identity as founded upon that substantiality of the individual. The individual is the primary substance without which both its accidental characteristics or qualities and the secondary substance, i.e., the universal to which it belongs, cannot exist. The universal must inhere in the individual and in that sense Aristotle prioritizes the individual as the primary substance.

³⁹ Hegel thus distinguishes this concrete universal from the abstract universal that remains a mere conceptual form imposed upon its subject-matter in thought. In remaining opposed to the particular, it proves to be yet another particular. (EL §80z 113-15)

⁴⁰ In the *Science of Logic*, Hegel thus also speaks of the concept as "soul and substance" ("Seele und Substanz"). (WL2 486/SL 826)

⁴¹ I do not, however, want to deny other possible ways of reading Hegel. For example one might emphasize the unknown future rather than the *retroactive* circularity of the *re-cognized*. The past is known but not the future. Realization then may also be viewed as inexhaustible and in that sense irreducible to any concept or consciousness. Since the alleged *telos* is only detected retrospectively, teleology itself is constituted in recollection, with a view to the past – justifying past sufferings in light of the present *only* in their de-legitimation, their sublation. The future on the other hand is still unknown. On this, see Agnes Heller, *A Theory of Modernity* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1999), p. 21. Hegel himself, however, in viewing history retroactively regarded its culmination in the self-grasping concept, the *absolute idea*. This is the point in Hegel's dialectic that we want to emphasize *vis-à-vis* Mahāyāna non-dualism and, in a later chapter, Nishida's dialectic.

⁴² See Dilworth's introduction in Nishida, *Last Writings*, trans. David W. Dilworth (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), p. 2.

⁴³ "Form" (*rūpa*) here designates the material or phenomenal thing-event." "Emptiness" (*śūnyatā*) is generally taken to mean the lack of "own-being" or "self-nature" (*svabhāva*), or ontological independence, namely, substance.

⁴⁴ *Chinese translation* ought to be put in quotation marks here. Some scholars suggest that the original was first composed in Chinese and then translated into Sanskrit. In any case the identification or equation between form and emptiness may have to do with the lack of a copula in the Chinese language. This latter suggestion was made to me by Dr. Shigenori Nagatomo.

⁴⁵ The Indian Buddhist texts will be identified as follows: MMK = Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*; MS = Asanga's *Mahāyānasamgraha*; TK = Vasubandhu's *Trimśikā*; TN = Vasubandhu's *Trisvabhāvanirdeśa*.

⁴⁶ See Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (Root Verses/Stanzas on the Middle) in *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*, trans. & commentary Jay Garfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); and in *Nāgārjuna, the Philosophy of the Middle Way*, trans. & commentary, David Kalupahana (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1986).

⁴⁷ In his *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* Nāgārjuna applies his tetralemma to various subject-matters, such as time, self, Buddha, causality, among others.

⁴⁸ A major target of Nāgārjuna here was the substantialism and dualism of the Abhidharmist schools, such as the Sarvāstivāda, that dichotomized reality into the conventional (what appears to be real) and the ultimate (the atomic or elemental thing-events, *dhammas*, that constitute the apparent). Nāgārjuna's aim was to return Buddhism to its original "middle way" of refusing dichotomies and refusing attachment to either of the alternative positions.

⁴⁹ In other words one must realize that emptiness itself is not something ultimate to cling and become attached to.

⁵⁰ In Asanga's *Mahāyānasamgraha* (*Compendium/Summary of the Mahāyāna*) and Vasubandhu's *Trīṃśikā* (*Thirty songs*) and *Trisvabhāvanirdeśa* (*The Teachings/Treatise on the Three own-beings*). For the English, see *The Summary of the Great Vehicle* by Bodhisattva Asanga, trans. John P. Keenan (Berkeley, CA: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1992); and see *Seven Works of Vasubandhu*, ed. & trans. Stefan Anacker (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, n.d.).

⁵¹ In his *Mo ho chih kuan* (*Great Insight into Dwelling in Tranquility*). In the following I am relying on Paul L. Swanson's commentary on the *Mo ho chih kuan*. His relevant citations are to the *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* volume 46, 24a3-6, 24a13-15, 24c8-11, and 24c21-26. See Swanson's *Foundations of T'ien-t'ai Philosophy* (Berkeley, CA: Asian Humanities Press, 1989), pp. 117-120.

⁵² *Dharmadhātu* means "the realm of thing-events (*dharmas*)" seen from the point of view of the *dharma* or the true nature of reality.

⁵³ *Li* has traditionally been translated into English as principle, reason, or universal and mistakenly compared to Plato's concept of *idea* (*eidos*) or Aristotle's form (*morphē*). But we ought to be aware of the distinction of the Chinese concept of *li* from these western notions. The etymological origin of the term points to the line-pattern of grain one observes in a piece of wood or stone such as jade. One might thus understand *li* in the sense of the criss-crossing lines of interconnection constituting the coherence or order that differentiates an individual thing while simultaneously relating it to others. In Buddhist terms this means interdependent origination and hence emptiness. Its relationship to *shih*, the individual phenomenon or thing or occurrence, then, is not the same as the relationship between the universal *qua idea* and the particular *qua* individual thing, e.g., in Plato. The *li-shih* relationship is really the relationship between things and their very interdependence or emptiness. This vertical interrelationship becomes further expressed in Nishida in terms of the relationship between nothing and beings, whole and parts, absolute and relative, place (*basho*) and implaced, universal and individual, world and individuals, etc.

⁵⁴ In his *Fa-chieh-kuan-men* (*Gate of Insight into the Dharmadhātu* or *On the Meditation of the Dharmadhātu*). In the following I am basing my interpretation primarily on the commentaries and short translations in Garma Chang, *Buddhist Teaching of Totality* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 1971) and Kang-Nam Oh, "Dharmadhātu; An Introduction to Hua-yen Buddhism" in *The Eastern Buddhist*, vol. XII, no. 2, October 1979, p. 72-91. Relevant passages (for example see T45.652c28, 653c16f, and 653c25f) are cited in the above and found in the third patriarch Fa-tsang's (Fa-zang's) (643~712CE) commentary on Tu-shun's *Fa-chieh-kuan-men* in his *Hua-yen Fa-p'u-ti-hsin-chang* in the *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* volume 45 (T45.652a-654a). Also see Francis Cook, *Hua-yen Buddhism* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 1977).

⁵⁵ In his *Fa-chieh-hsüan-ching* (*Mirror of the Mystery of the Avatamsaka* or *Great Exegesis of the Hua-yen Sūtra*).

⁵⁶ See Abe Masao's commentary on this in *Zen and Western Thought* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985), p. 4. He is quoting Aishin Imaeda (ed.), *Gotō egen* [Chin.: *Wu-tēng Hui-yüan*] (Tokyo: Rinrōkaku shoten, 1971), p. 335. Abe inserts the word "really" in the final concluding lines to say "mountains are really mountains, waters are really waters." The word does not really appear in the original and in fact this insertion could lead to the misunderstanding. The point is not that they are *ultimately*, i.e., *really*, what they are. They are not ontologically independent (substances, essences). Rather the point is that they are what they are in their emptiness, i.e., their interdependent origination. But rather than signifying their "nothingness," this means their "suchness."

⁵⁷ In Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō* (*Treasury of the Eye of True Teaching* or *Treasury of the True Dharma Eye*).

⁵⁸ The following is primarily based upon Dr. Shigenori Nagatomo's analysis presented in a seminar. Also see Mizuno Yaoko (annotation), Dōgen, *Shōbōgenzō* (Tokyo: Iwanami, 2000, 1990), p. 53. For the English see Abe Masao and Norman Waddell, *The Heart of Dōgen's Shōbōgenzō* (Albany, SUNY Press 2002), p. 40; and Thomas Cleary, *Shōbōgenzō, Zen Essays by Dōgen* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1986), p. 32.

⁵⁹ On this and the following, see Kosaka Kunitsugu, *Nishida Kitarō no shisō* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2003, 2002), p. 280ff.

⁶⁰ See Suzuki Daisetsu, *Kongōkyō no zen* in *Suzuki Daisetsu zen senshū* (Tokyo: Shunshūsha, 1991), p. 15.

⁶¹ See Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, "Reason and Intuition in Buddhist Philosophy" in Charles A. Moore (ed.), *Essays in East-West Philosophy: An Attempt at World Philosophical Synthesis* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1951), p. 18.

⁶² We shall examine this interaction between the two more closely later in chapters seven and nine.

⁶³ See Kim, p. 23.

⁶⁴ See Alfonso Verdu, *Dialectical Aspects in Buddhist Thought* (Kansas: University of Kansas: 1974) and *The Philosophy of Buddhism* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Pub., 1981).

⁶⁵ Verdu, *Dialectical Aspects*, p. 3.

⁶⁶ See Verdu, *Dialectical Aspects*, pp. 57 and 235-36. And even the notion of the *ālayavijñāna* becomes seen as "an eastern replica and forerunner of the Hegelian absolute 'idea'," encompassing all aspects of reality in the identity between absolute and relative. See Verdu, *Dialectical Aspects*, p. 5. And he also finds the "true infinite," containing within itself the finite as the indeterminate's "power of self-determination," in the notion of the *tathgata-garbha* in the *Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun* ("Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna"). See Verdu, *Philosophy of Buddhism*, p. 33.

⁶⁷ See Verdu, *Philosophy of Buddhism*, pp. 36-37.

⁶⁸ See Shizuteru Ueda, "Pure Experience, Self-Awareness, Bashō," *Etudes phénoménologiques*, vol. 18 (1993), pp. 63-86, p. 68. This is a translation of a chapter from Ueda's *Nishida Kitarō o yomu* (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1991).

⁶⁹ For English translations of this work, see *An Inquiry into the Good*, trans. Masao Abe and Christopher Ives (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1990); and see *VA Study of Good*, trans. H. Viglielmo

(Tokyo: Japanese Government, 1960). The more recent one by Abe and Ives is by far the superior translation.

⁷⁰ This word *ri*, which in modern Japanese has come to mean reason, has its origin in Kegon (Chn: Hua-yen) Buddhism, whereby it had the sense of the patterning of the inter-relationships between things.

⁷¹ On this see Tadashi Ogawa, "The Kyoto School of Philosophy and Phenomenology" in Yoshihiro Nitta and Hiroataka Tatematsu, *Japanese Phenomenology: Phenomenology as the Trans-cultural Philosophical Approach. Analecta Husserliana* Vol. VIII. (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Pub., 1978/79), pp. 207-21, pp. 214-15.

⁷² On this see Ueda, "Pure Experience, Self-Awareness, Basho," pp. 69-71.

⁷³ For the English see *Intuition and Reflection in Self-Consciousness*, trans. Valdo H. Viglielmo, Takeuchi Yoshinori, Joseph S. O'Leary (NYC: SUNY Press, 1987).

⁷⁴ For the English translation see *Art and Morality*, David A. Dilworth and Valdo H. Viglielmo (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1973). Unfortunately these translations are not always accurate.

⁷⁵ Josiah Royce, *The World and the Individual* vols. 1 & 2 (NYC: Dover Pub., 1959).

⁷⁶ See Yoko Arisaka and Andrew Feenberg, "Experiential Ontology: The Origins of the Nishida Philosophy in the Doctrine of Pure Experience," *International Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. XXX, no. 2 (June 1990), pp. 173-205, p. 184; and Gereon Kopf, "Between Identity and Difference: Three Ways of Reading Nishida's Non-Dualism," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 31/1 (2004), pp. 73-103, p. 98.

⁷⁷ J.G. Fichte, *Science of Knowledge*, ed. & trans. Peter Heath and John Lachs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982, 1970), pp. 108-09 (German p. I, 109).

⁷⁸ Here Nishida even refers to Hegel's *Encyclopedia*, sec. 166 that speaks of the judgement as the differentiation of the concept (*Begriff*). But the question is, can we equate Nishida's concrete universal with Hegel's if what Hegel means is the concept?

⁷⁹ Again we need to be aware of the subtle relationship between *basho* at its most concrete level and what Nishida means by "universal" (*ippansha*) which he does not always carefully delineate or make clear. When discussing judgement in the 1925 essay *Hatarakumono* ("That which Works") in the same volume, Nishida explains how the system of self-determining universal concepts requires at its root a self-identity that contains its own principle of individualization, allowing for self-differentiation. He tells us that a universal concept (*ippan gainen*) enveloping the mutually distinct is required for their differentiation. And the contradiction of two concepts require an "objective unity" (*kyakkanteki tōitsu*) enveloping them. (Z3 400) Nishida then goes-on to speak of what unifies contradictory concepts as the *basho* or place of the generation-and-extinction, rise-and-fall, of concepts, which is also what establishes beings by becoming nothing. (Z3 402) So it appears that Nishida here speaks of *basho* in terms of universal concepts or certainly at least in relation to them. The distinction between the most concrete *basho* and universals *qua* concepts is not as clear in the first passage. In the second passage however Nishida seems to make a subtle distinction between that *basho* enveloping universal concepts and those implaced concepts. It is important to remember that *basho* itself at its most concrete level is not a concept.

⁸⁰ The abstract universal on the other hand, for Hegel, is reached through the exclusion of the particular features distinguishing individuals while retaining what is common to them. See Hegel's *Logic*, part

one of his *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (1830), §163 in *Hegel's Logic*, trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 227.

⁸¹ Hegel, *Logic, Encyclopedia*, §166, p. 231.

⁸² On *basho* as “horizon,” see Ueda Shizuteru, “Pure Experience, Self-Awareness, ‘*Basho*’,” *Etudes Phénoménologiques*, no. 18 (1993), p. 80.

⁸³ This relationship between the predicate plane and the concrete universal is also subtle and not as clear as it should be. In the 1927 essay *Shirumono* (“That which Knows”) in the same volume Nishida makes an equation between 1) the no-longer determinable universal grounding the concrete universal, 2) the predicate plane that becomes the predicate but not the subject, and 3) *basho vis-à-vis* nothing. When we view the predicate plane as containing the transcending object — what becomes the grammatical subject but not the predicate, i.e., Aristotle’s substance —, Nishida tells us, the universal is concrete. (Z3 523) So the transcendent predicate plane that envelopes the individual, the grammatical subject, is a concrete universal. He then goes-on to speak of the concrete universal’s triadic movement in affirmation, negation, and the negation of negation which is its contradictory unity. (Z3 528) But in speaking of the universal that grounds the concrete universal — the universal in its self-determination or in its triadic movement — in terms of the predicate plane that encompasses the transcendent object *qua* grammatical subject, Nishida obviously means *basho*. So one might try to add precision to Nishida’s explanation here by clarifying that *basho vis-à-vis* nothing is what envelopes that dynamism of the concrete universal. But we also have to be careful to not separate that *basho* from everything else, including the concrete universal’s self-determinations, to make it into something utterly transcendent without any immanence.

⁸⁴ Here I use the Greek prefix *an-* to denote absolute irreducibility not only to the ontological (i.e., beings) but also to its negation denoted by the Greek prefix *me-* (i.e., the meontological as non-being).

⁸⁵ That is to say, one’s lived experience prior to theorizing about that experience in the epistemological terms of subject and object and the grammatical terms of subject and predicate.

⁸⁶ On the nature of this “logical contradiction,” see Gereon Kopf, “Between Foundationalism and Relativism,” *Nanzan Bulletin* 27 (2003), p. 26 & fn.5.

⁸⁷ Kopf, “Between Foundationalism and Relativism,” p. 27.

⁸⁸ See Kopf, “Between Foundationalism and Relativism,” p. 31.

⁸⁹ Nishida also applies this same sort of analysis that he applied in regard to the structure of judgement when looking at the syllogistic relationship between propositions. He accordingly regards the universal enveloping judgements as itself enveloped by the universal of syllogisms, which is also thus shown to be self-contradictory. (See Z3 529-31, 548)

⁹⁰ See James Wargo, *The Logic of Nothingness* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), pp. 123, 136, 155, 160.

⁹¹ I disagree with Wargo’s use of the term “resolution” or “resolve” to characterize this seeing of contradiction from the deeper level. See Wargo, p. 160.

⁹² On this, see Arisaka’s account in her “System and Existence: Nishida’s Logic of Place,” in Augustin Berque (ed.), *Logique du lieu et dépassement de la modernité*, (Brussels: 1999) p. 44.

⁹³ This is in fact a reference to Pascal's notion of an "infinite sphere." See Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, trans. A.J. Krailsheimer (London: Penguin, 1995, 1966), sec.199 (§72), p. 60.

⁹⁴ See his afterward to the 1931 *Watashi no tachibakara mita hēgeru no benshōhō* (Z7 278).

⁹⁵ This is from a 1935 lecture included in the 1966 edition of the *Zenshū* volumes. I was unable to locate it in the newest 2000 editions.

⁹⁶ See J.S. Haldane, *Philosophical Basis of Biology* (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1931), e.g., pp. 13-14.

⁹⁷ We shall discuss this concept in a later section in this chapter.

⁹⁸ On the body as mediator, see Kosaka, pp. 221-22.

⁹⁹ We find similar notions of the microcosmic mirroring of the macrocosm in many places, among which we might note the Romantic thinkers of Germany immediately preceding Hegel, such as Herder and Goethe, and before them the Renaissance. The spirit expresses itself in external nature and comes to full expression in human consciousness that reflects the whole. See Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (NYC: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 43. Nishida however takes this in a different direction predicated upon his notion of absolute nothing.

¹⁰⁰ On this see, Kosaka Kunitsugu, *Nishida Kitarō no shisō* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2003, 2002), p. 199.

¹⁰¹ On this see, Kosaka, p. 202.

¹⁰² I use "an-ontological" here as signifying what encompasses both being and its opposite, non-being, both the ontological and the meontological. Further explanation is provided in a footnote in chapter 10.

¹⁰³ Some commentators have identified only four. For example, see Gereon Kopf, "Between Foundationalism and Relativism," *Nanzan Bulletin* 27, pp. 31-32. To Kopf's fourfold I am however adding the mutual determination of individuals as an important feature of this dialectic that we should not neglect. Each of the fivefold can be translated into one of the fourfold mutual non-obstructions of Hua-yen Buddhism. We will discuss this in chapter seven.

¹⁰⁴ In virtue of this reverse determination, and also of what Nishida in the 1940s call "inverse correspondence," the *chiasmatic* nature of Nishida's dialectic also proves to be *chiatric*, that is the *chiasma* also encompasses the nature of a *chiasmus*, a radical reciprocity. See chapter ten and its footnotes on these concepts.

¹⁰⁵ See G.W.F. Hegel's *Encyclopedia Logic in Hegel's Logic*, trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975) §166, p. 231.

¹⁰⁶ We shall return to this topic in chapters seven and nine.

¹⁰⁷ Nishida explains in *Tetsugaku no konpon mondai* that the mutual determination of individuals requires a universal (*ippansha*) that establishes their reciprocity. (Z6 75) The point is that the dialectic of inter-determination that is simultaneously the dialectical universal's self-determination involves not just a process but a place, *basho*. So in this context Nishida uses the term "universal" as meaning *basho*. And he goes-on to state that what mediates individuals is the dialectical universal and determination *via basho*. (Z6 253) He is making an association between the dialectical movement of the dialectical universal and the self-determination of *basho*.

¹⁰⁸ E.g., Rene Descartes, *Principle of Philosophy* Part I, Principle LI, for example, in *The Philosophical Works of Descartes* Vol. I, trans. Elizabeth S. Haldane and G.R.T. Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), p. 239.

¹⁰⁹ Does Nishida mean by this that we literally transform into those things metaphysically? On the other hand to consider this as a mere metaphore may fall short of what he really means. I take him to mean here the realization in acting-intuition of the lack of any essence within oneself that would substantially separate or isolate oneself from those other things. It is the realization of the relationality (i.e., in Mahāyāna terms, “emptiness”) of one’s being *vis-à-vis* other beings.

¹¹⁰ In 1939 Nishida even uses the German dialectical terminology — popularized by Fichte and Hegel — of *an und für sich* (“in-and-for-itself”) to characterize such contradictory identity. (e.g., Z8 390)

¹¹¹ “...zettai ni sōhansurumono no tōitsu toshite zettai no jikodōitsu ...” (Z6 187)

¹¹² St. Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), Book XI §20, p. 235.

¹¹³ “De-cision” here should not be taken here anthropomorphically in its ordinary sense as something “we” do. Rather it should be taken literally as the dividing point or “break,” *caesura*, where past and future meet and separate.

¹¹⁴ This is where Nishida’s understanding of time is reminiscent of Dōgen’s notion of time as “being-time” (*uji*), involving the concepts of *nikon* (here-and-now), *kyōryaku* (passage), and *jūhōi* (abiding-in-a-dharma-position), according to which each moment is distinct and yet implicative of all others as a microcosm focussing the whole of space-time-being into one momentary point.

¹¹⁵ In fact, this is an idea reminiscent of Dōgen’s notions of time, especially “being-time” (*uji*) and “abiding in a dharma-position” (*jūhōi*).

¹¹⁶ Dilworth translates the term *kateiteki benshōhō* here as “dialectical process.” See Nishida, *Fundamental Problems of Philosophy*, trans. David Dilworth (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1970), p. 47. But the meaning is really “dialectic of process,” having the significance of a certain type of dialectic, namely a dialectic unfolding diachronically, as opposed to another type, a dialectic of synchronic terms. The former involves the temporal dimension and the latter involves the spatial dimension. Ultimately Nishida’s dialectic of the world-matrix is both.

¹¹⁷ In his *Time and Free Will* (NYC: Harper & Row, 1960; London: George Allen & Unwin, 1910), Henri Bergson provides a definition of what he means by “pure duration”: “[T]he form which the succession of our conscious states assumes when our ego lets itself *live*, when it refrains from separating its present state from its former states..., [forming] both the past and the present states into an organic whole.” (p. 100); “[A] succession of qualitative changes, which melt into and permeate one another, without precise outlines, without any tendency to externalize themselves in relation to one another, without any affiliation with number; it would be pure heterogeneity.” (p. 104); and: “Duration..., restored to its original purity, will appear as wholly qualitative multiplicity, an absolute heterogeneity of elements which pass over into one another.” (p. 229).

¹¹⁸ For example, Nishida in *Ronri to seimei* (“Logic and Life”) contrasts his own acting-intuition as “circular” (*enkanteki*) to Bergson’s pure duration and creative evolution as “linear” (*chokusenteki*). (See Z8 89)

¹¹⁹ As I mentioned in chapter one Nishida's critique of Bergson may seem unjustified when seen in light of Bergson's discussion of mind, body, and environment in his *Matter and Memory* of 1896. Nishida's intended target is most certainly Bergson's *Time and Free Will* (1889) wherein Bergson distinguishes duration as qualitative and intensive from space as quantifiable extension. Ed Casey has pointed out the irony in Bergson's assertion of the primacy of durational time in human experience in that in the previous year in his Latin dissertation Bergson had taken up the topic of Aristotelian *topos*. But with *Time and Free Will*, the temporocentrism of modern western philosophy is reinforced. See Edward S. Casey, "Smooth Spaces and Rough-edged Places: The Hidden History of Place," *The Review of Metaphysics* 51 (December 1997), p. 288. In *Time and Free Will* Bergson differentiates on the one hand quantitative multiplicity as applicable only to magnitudes and involving the intuition of space; and on the other hand qualitative multiplicity as belonging to states of consciousness that are unquantifiable. That qualitative multiplicity unfolds in continuous succession, without distinction, in an "organic evolution" that constitutes "duration," whereby the heterogeneous moments inter-permeate one another. (See *Time and Free Will*, pp. 105, 110, 120, 226) In that respect it is an occurrence of pure interiority. The difference is between "simultaneity..., mutual externality without succession" and "succession without mutual externality" (pp. 226-27); between simultaneity, extensity, and quantity on the one hand and succession, duration, and quality on the other hand (p. 240). In other words, Bergson reduces spatiality to the quantitatively measurable and homogeneous "pure extension," and takes the qualitatively heterogeneous intensity as belonging to temporal duration. And in his later 1907 *Creative Evolution* (NYC: Barnes & Noble Pub., 2005), Bergson relegates spatiality as a "degrading of the extra-spatial [i.e., pure duration]," and reduces it to the self's extension into the fixed and mutually external "...in place of the tension it possessed as an indivisible active will." (*Creative Evolution*, p. 171) He views spatiality *qua* extension as emerging in the shift from "tension to extension..., freedom to mechanical necessity." (p. 195) As such, "[e]xtension..., appears only as a *tension* which is interrupted." (p. 201) But such reduction of spatiality ignores its pre-theoretical modes that we have direct access to in our concrete existence — whether conceived in terms of alterity or exteriority, embodiment, world, or the place or space of clearing wherein things appear and wherein we find ourselves implaced. When Bergson speaks of pure duration as pure heterogeneity (e.g., *Time and Free Will*, p. 104), one might ask whether such heterogeneity would not also have to involve the lived spatiality of alterity in one's encountering of the *other*-than-I. In its lived aspect that spatiality is not quantifiable and escapes reduction to geometrical extension. We notice a groping towards such an understanding of spatiality in later twentieth century thinkers such as Heidegger, Levinas, Merleau-Ponty, and most certainly Nishida. Bergson moreover seems to ignore, at least in *Time and Free Will*, the dialectical intersection of duration with that space of our concrete dwelling that Nishida describes in terms of *basho* and the dialectical world.

¹²⁰ See Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, trans. A.J. Krailsheimer (London: Penguin, 1995, 1966), sec.199 (§72), p. 60.

¹²¹ He opposes this to Leibniz's idealism of monadology.

¹²² Leibniz in his *Discourse on Metaphysics* (1686), §12, refuses to reduce the substance of bodies to extension, e.g., size, figure, motion, and claims that instead we must recognize in them something akin to the soul that serves as the principle of identity for bodies. See G.W. Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics and Other Essays*, ed. Daniel Garber and Roger Ariew (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub., 1991), pp. 11-12; and G.W. Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics, Correspondence with Arnauld, and Monadology*, trans. George R. Montgomery (Lasalle, IL: Open Court Pub., 1937), pp. 18-19.

¹²³ See G.W. Leibniz, "New System of the Nature of the Communication of Substances, as Well as the Union that Exists Between the Soul and the Body (27 June 1695)" in *The Shorter Leibniz Texts: A Collection of New Translations*, ed. Lloyd Strickland (London: Continuum, 2006), pp. 69-70 and p. 73, where he says: "There are only *atoms of substance*, that is to say, real unities absolutely devoid of parts, which are the sources of actions, and the absolute first principles of the composition of things, and as it were the ultimate elements of analysis of substantial things. They can be called *metaphysical points*: they have some-

thing vital in them, and a kind of *perception*, and *mathematical points* are their *points of view* for expressing the universe.”

¹²⁴ On this see Kosaka Kunitsugu, *Nishida Kitarō no shisō* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2003, 2002), pp. 233-34 and p. 365.fn.161.

¹²⁵ See Kosaka, p. 234.

¹²⁶ All of this is a development of Leibniz’s notion of expression in his monadology. See Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz, *The Monadology and Other Philosophical Writings*, trans. Paul Schrecker and Anne Martin Schrecker (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Pub., 1965), pp. 156-57, §56-57, p. 158, §62.

¹²⁷ See David A. Dilworth, “Introduction: Nishida’s Critique of the Religious Consciousness,” in Nishida, *Last Writings: Nothingness and the Religious Worldview* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, p. 32.

¹²⁸ See Nicholas of Cusa, *De docta ingorantia* (“On Learned Ignorance”) in *Nicholas of Cusa: Selected Spiritual Writings*, trans. H. Lawrence Bond (NYC: Paulist Press, 1997), Bk. 1., ch. 21, p. 116ff.

¹²⁹ Nicholas states: “...[B]ecause the absolutely maximum is absolutely and actually all that can be, and it is without opposition to such an extent that the minimum coincides with the maximum, it is above all affirmation and all negation. It both is and is not all that is conceived to be, and it both is and is not all that is conceived not to be... [T]he absolute maximumness, to which nothing is opposed and with which the minimum coincides, is infinite.” (Nicholas of Cusa, “On Learned Ignorance,” Bk. 1., ch. 4, p. 92.

¹³⁰ I.e., nature as creator or cause and nature as creation or effect. For Spinoza God is the creator manifest in his creations, His essence is expressed therein, and as such he is “nature” in both senses. E.g., see Benedict de Spinoza, *The Ethics*, Part II, Definition I in Spinoza, *On the Improvement of the Understanding: The Ethics; Correspondence*, trans. R.H.M. Elwes (NYC: Dover Pub., 1955, 1883), p. 82.

¹³¹ On this, see Dilworth, “Introduction,” p. 27; and Gereon Kopf, “Between Identity and Difference,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 31/1 (2004), p. 83.

¹³² “...naizaiteki naru mono ga chōetsuteki ni, chōetsuteki naru mono ga naizaiteki ni...” (Z9 469)

¹³³ See the previous chapter for discussion of this dialectic of the “dialectical universal” that entails its reverse determination by individuals even while it determines them.

¹³⁴ “Neither ceasing nor arising, neither annihilation nor permanence, neither identity nor difference, neither coming-in nor going-out.” This appears at the very beginning of Nāgārjuna’s *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* in the dedicatory verses. See Nāgārjuna, *the Philosophy of the Middle Way; Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, trans. David Kalupahana (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1986), p. 101; and *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way: Nāgārjuna’s Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, trans. Jay Garfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 2. Also see David A. Dilworth, “Nishida’s Final Essay: The Logic of Place and a Religious World-View”, *Philosophy East and West* Vol. XX, No. 4 (October 1970), pp. 360-61. This is not exactly the same as the four double-negations (of is, is-not, both is and is-not, and neither is nor is-not).

¹³⁵ The term, “*kenosis*,” meaning to empty oneself appears in Paul’s *Letter to the Philippians* ch.2, v.6-8: “God... emptied himself [or: made himself nothing], taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.”

¹³⁶ This is called *akuninshōkisetu*, “the doctrine that [even] the evil person has the chance for salvation,” meaning that the evil person is Amida’s *true* object of salvation. While the expression *akuninshōki* itself does not appear in any of Shinran’s writings, its idea is expressed variously in his different writings. For example, in his *Tannishō (A Record in Lament of Divergences)*, paragraph 3, Shinran says, “Amida made the vow, the essential intent of which is the evil person’s attainment of Buddhahood. Hence, evil persons who entrust themselves to other power [*tarikī*] are precisely the ones who possess the true cause of birth.... Accordingly he [Amida] said, ‘Even the good person is born in the Pure Land, so without question is the person who is evil.’” (*The Collected Works of Shinran Volume I: The Writings* (Kyoto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997), p. 663.) See also paragraph 16. Also see Daisetz Teitarō Suzuki, *Collected Writings on Shin Buddhism* (Kyoto: Shinshū Ōtaniha, 1973), p. 135; and James C. Dobbins, *Jōdo Shinshū: Shin Buddhism in Medieval Japan* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1989), p. 37, 53-54, 70-71, 75, 193. However some claim that it can also be traced to Hōnen. See Fujimoto Kiyohiko, “A Study of Hōnen’s Doctrine of Evil Persons as the Object of Salvation” (<http://www.jsri.jp/English/Jodoshu/conferences/AAS/fujimoto.html>). See the discussion of this doctrine in the context of Nishida in Asami Hiroshi and Sakurai Kan, *Nishida Kitarō* (Kanazawa: Kanazawashi Kōkusai Bunkaka, 2005), p. 143. The main point of this idea is the overcoming of self-righteousness that relies on “self-power” (*jiriki*), an overcoming which Nishida transposes into what he calls “self-negation.”

¹³⁷ Dilworth has described this as Nishida’s “hermeneutical repossession” of the Mahāyāna *sam-sāra-nirvāṇa* non-duality. See his “Introduction,” p. 36.

¹³⁸ Nishida had already made this point in a lecture in 1933 as well. (See Z13 235)

¹³⁹ In this passage (Z10 342) from *Bashoteki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan*, Nishida first understands Adam’s “original sin” of eating the fruit from the “tree of knowledge” as God’s *own* self-negation that establishes humanity. He then associates this with his own idea of the “self-contradiction” (*jiko mujun*) that is at the source of man’s establishment.

¹⁴⁰ Nishida here may be dispelling the stereotypical portrayal of Zen as a religion of “self-power” or “self-reliance” (*jiriki*) in opposition to Pure Land as a religion of “other-power” (*tarikī*) or Amida’s “grace” (*onchō*). That becomes clear in his statement in the 1945 essay that religion primordially is not founded upon “self-reliance” or “self-power.” (See Z10 326)

¹⁴¹ Nishida’s concept here of inverse correspondence and along with his understanding, in terms of self-negation, of the Christian idea of divine incarnation may bear some influence from Kierkegaard’s notion of the “absolute paradox” that he opposes to Hegel’s sublational dialectics in both his *Fear and Trembling* and *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. See e.g., Kierkegaard’s *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, trans. David F. Swenson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), p. 183 on the paradox of “eternal essential truth” in its “relationship to an existing individual”; p. 187: “The eternal truth has come into being in time: this is the paradox”; and p. 194-95: “That God has existed in human form, has been born, grown up, and so forth, is surely the paradox *sensu strictissimo*, the absolute paradox.”

¹⁴² This point emphasized by the Protestant Reformists Martin Luther and John Calvin is also an idea traceable to St. Augustine and St. Paul. In the case of Paul, he described his conversion experience as having died to his old self (“Saul”) so that Christ may live in him.

¹⁴³ See Kosaka, pp. 287-88.

¹⁴⁴ Of course he already did this in his earlier works as well but this identification now has a clear place of belonging in the philosophy of religion he systematizes in these last essays.

¹⁴⁵ Here we must not take the verb “respond” to be something undertaken by the volitional self. Rather the correspondence or *co-responsence* is prior to what might be reduced to the individual’s activity. In other words, the dialectical inter-relatedness, the concrete whole, in its dynamism is prior.

¹⁴⁶ This idea is traceable to the Chinese Ch’an master Mazu Daoi (Jpn.: Daso Dōitsu) (709-788CE) and his notion of “ordinary mind.” Nishida refers to related ideas in Lin-chi (Jpn.: Rinzai) (d.867CE) and Nanquan (Jpn.: Nansen) (748-834CE). We shall discuss these again in chapter nine.

¹⁴⁷ See Kosaka 295, 298.

¹⁴⁸ Dilworth. “Introduction,” p. 15.

¹⁴⁹ See Yoko Arisaka, “Beyond ‘East and West’: Nishida’s Universalism and Postcolonial Critique” in Fred Dallmayr (ed.), *Border Crossings: Toward a Comparative Political Theory* (Lanham, KY: Lexington Books, 1999), p. 240.

¹⁵⁰ Although the afterward was probably added immediately prior to the publication of *Zoku shisaku to taiken* in 1937.

¹⁵¹ In this chapter, similar to how we did in chapter two, we shall identify Hegel’s works as follows: DFSg = *Differenz des Fichteschen und Schellingschen Systems der Philosophie* in *Werke 2* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970); DFSe = *The Difference Between Fichte’s and Schelling’s System of Philosophy*, trans. H.S. Harris and Walter Cerf (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1977); EL = *The Encyclopedia Logic* in *Hegel’s Logic*, trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975); EPM = *The Philosophy of Mind* (of the *Encyclopedia*), trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971); GPR = *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (Berlin: Nicolaischen Buchhandlung, 1833); PG = *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1952); PH = *Philosophy of History* (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1991); PR = *Philosophy of Right* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967); PS = *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1977); WL1 = *Wissenschaft der Logik Erster Teil* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1971); WL2 = *Wissenschaft der Logik Zweiter Teil* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1969); SL = *Science of Logic* (Amherst: Humanity Books, 1969). The little *z* denotes *Zusatz*, notes taken by students based on Hegel’s lectures and added to the original text.

¹⁵² On this, see James Lawler, “Hegel on Logical and Dialectical Contradictions” in Erwin Marquitt, Philip Moran, Willis H. Truitt, eds., *Dialectical Contradictions: Contemporary Marxist Discussions* (Minneapolis: Marxist Educational Press, 1982), pp. 19, 22.

¹⁵³ See Lawler, pp. 22, 24, 39. This idea that the determination of each entity or idea is *via negation* is a development of a conception inherited from Spinoza, that all determination is negation.

¹⁵⁴ The best example is hence motion itself, involving its self-contradiction between “here” and “not here,” and in this “here,” it’s self-contradiction between “is” and “is not.”

¹⁵⁵ “...die Bewegung der daseiende Widerspruch selbst ist.” (WL2 59)

¹⁵⁶ For Hegel the concrete universal (*konkrete Allgemeinheit*) allows for specific differences while the abstract universal (*abstrakte Allgemeinheit*) abstracts from them. (See EL §163z 227)

¹⁵⁷ Strictly speaking, however, one ought to distinguish *basho* from what we ordinarily think of as a “universal.” What Nishida means by *basho* is un-delimited by any universal. Nevertheless he seems to have *basho* in mind when speaking of the “universal of universals” or as the “universal of nothing.” (See Z6 14)

¹⁵⁸ On this see Funayama Shinichi, *Hēgeru tetsugaku to Nishida tetsugaku* (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1984), p. 21.

¹⁵⁹ On this question, see e.g., Masao Abe, “Nishida’s Philosophy of ‘Place,’” *International Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. XXVIII, no. 4 (December), p. 365-66; and his “The Logic of Absolute Nothingness As Expounded by Nishida Kitarō”, *The Eastern Buddhist*, vol. XXVIII, no. 2 (Autumn 1995), pp. 170-71.

¹⁶⁰ And *subject* here can simultaneously have two significances — grammatical and epistemological.

¹⁶¹ Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (NYC: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 569.

¹⁶² See Masao Abe, “Nishida’s Philosophy of ‘Place,’” *International Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. XXVIII, no. 4 (December), p. 366; and his “The Logic of Absolute Nothingness As Expounded by Nishida Kitarō”, *The Eastern Buddhist*, vol. XXVIII, no. 2 (Autumn 1995), pp. 171-72.

¹⁶³ Karl Barth, *From Rousseau to Ritschl* (London: SCM Press, 1959), p. 304.

¹⁶⁴ For this Hegel has been accused by the Neo-Kantians, among others, of a kind of pan-logism.

¹⁶⁵ E.g.: “The special interest of passion is... inseparable from the active development of a general principle.” (PH 32)

¹⁶⁶ To an extent this self-enclosure of the dialectical circle can be found in Western philosophy even prior to Hegel in Plato’s Socratic dialogues as well. See the *Republic* wherein Socrates describes the dialectic as an upward advancement that culminates in the origin, the first principle (*arche*) itself (533c-d). Through the process of dialectic, Plato tells us, reason grasps the *arche*, the origin or first principle of everything (511b). Plato’s dialectic then as well proceeds towards the beginning of everything, including itself. See Plato’s *Republic* in John M. Cooper (ed.), *Plato: Complete Works* (Indianapolis: Hackett), 1997, pp. 1132, 1149. However Hegel’s contribution here seems to be to make this culmination an explicit self-grasping of the origin.

¹⁶⁷ See Robert Carter, *Nothingness Beyond God* (St. Paul, MN: Paragon, 1997), p. 32.

¹⁶⁸ See for example, *Watashi no tachiba kara mita Hēgeru no beshōhō* of 1931 (Z7 278) and also his 1938 lecture *Nihonbunka no mondai* (*The Problem of Japanese Culture*). (Z13 22)

¹⁶⁹ See for example, Kosaka Kunitsugu, *Nishida Kitarō no shisō* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2003, 2002), pp. 157, 164.

¹⁷⁰ See Kosaka Kunitsugu, *Nishida Kitarō no shisō* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2002) and Nakamura Yūjirō, *Nishida Kitarō* (Tokyo: Midorigawa, 1983) and *Nishida Kitarō no datsukōchiku* (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1987).

¹⁷¹ Nakamura Yūjirō regards this as a trans-temporal simultaneity with respect to the horizontal process of Hegel’s dialectic. In Nakamura’s reading, Nishida’s dialectic accordingly is, in fact, a *meta*-dialectic that relativizes Hegel’s dialectic of process by enfolding it within its own dialectic of place (*bashoteki beshōhō*). See Nakamura, “Nishida Kitarō no shūkyōron to rekishiron” (“Nishida Kitarō’s Theory of Religion and Theory of History”) in his *Nishida Kitarō no datsukōchiku*, p. 238f and in *Nishida Kitarō II* (Tokyo: Iwanami, 2001), p. 222f. This leads Nakamura to conclude that Nishida’s dialectic is really *not* dialectical. The question then is how one is to define “dialectic.” If we take the meaning of “dialectic” in a

broader sense as involving the interrelations between opposites in general, then this co-relationship between the field of nothing and the co-relative terms implaced within it is certainly *dialectical* as Nishida claims. And yet one might still question whether that dialectical language adequately expresses the content matter of Nishida's thought.

¹⁷² Hegel distinguishes such a concept from ordinary ones in his *Encyclopaedia Logic* (EL §9 13, §160z 223-24) and in his *Science of Logic*, "On the Concept in General" (WL2 213ff/SL 577ff).

¹⁷³ The emphasis is mine.

¹⁷⁴ See William James, "A World of Pure Experience" in *The Writings of William James: A Comprehensive Edition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977, 1967).

¹⁷⁵ E.g., see Yoko Arisaka, "Beyond 'East and West': Nishida's Universalism and Postcolonial Critique," in Fred Dallmayr, ed., *Border Crossings: Toward a Comparative Political Theory*, Lanham: Lexington Books, 1999, p. 240.

¹⁷⁶ On this and the difficulties of uniting the discursive activity that is philosophy with the practical path that is Zen, see Michiko Yusa, "From *topos* to environment: a conversation with Nishida Kitarō" in Christopher Lamb and Dan Cohn-Sherbok (ed.), *The Future of Religion: Postmodern Perspectives* (London: Middlesex University Press, 1999), p. 115.

¹⁷⁷ Yusa Michiko, *Zen and Philosophy: An Intellectual Biography of Nishida Kitarō* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), p. 249.

¹⁷⁸ The *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras*, "Great sūtras of the wisdom that reaches the other shore," were a series of about forty Mahāyāna scriptures gathered together, from the centuries before and after the start of the common era, all dealing with the realization of *prajna*, the intuitive wisdom in regard to certain truths, such as emptiness and dependent origination. The best known are the *Diamond Sūtra* and the *Heart Sūtra*, and their most important interpreter was Nāgārjuna.

¹⁷⁹ David Dilworth, "Introduction: Nishida's Critique of the Religious Consciousness" in Nishida Kitarō, *Last Writings; Nothingness and the Religious Worldview*, trans. David Dilworth (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1987), p. 28.

¹⁸⁰ See Mutai Risaku's *Shisaku to kansatsu (Thought and Observation)* (Tokyo: Keisō shobō, 1968), pp. 150, 151, and 154-55. Also see Kosaka Kunitsugu's discussion of this in his *Nishida Kitarō no shisō* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2003, 2002), pp. 277-78.

¹⁸¹ See Funayama Shinichi, *Hēgeru tetsugaku to Nishida tetsugaku* (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1984), p. 18.

¹⁸² On this see Dilworth, "Introduction" in Nishida, *Last Writings*, p. 34-35.

¹⁸³ See Dilworth, "Nishida Kitarō: Nothingness as the Negative Space of Experiential Immediacy," *International Philosophical Quarterly* Vol. XIII, No. 4 (December 1973), p. 474. And see *The Awakening of Faith Attributed to Āśvaghosha*, trans. Yoshito S. Hakeda (NYC: Columbia University Press, 1967), pp. 42f.

¹⁸⁴ This letter appears only in the old edition of Nishida's *Collected Writings (Zenshū)* but not in the new one. It appears in vol. 19 (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1980), p. 90.

¹⁸⁵ Arisaka, “Beyond ‘East and West’: Nishida’s Universalism and Postcolonial Critique,” in Dallmayr, p. 240.

¹⁸⁶ Nishida also adds that in the West, Nicholas of Cusa’s learned ignorance (*doctora ignorantia*) comes closest to this idea. See his *On Learned Ignorance (De docta ignorantia)* in Nicholas of Cusa, *Nicholas of Cusa: Selected Spiritual Writings*, trans. H. Lawrence Bond (NYC: Paulist Press, 1997), pp. 85ff.

¹⁸⁷ *Vajrachhedika-sūtra* from around the second or first century BCE. This scripture propounds the idea of the emptiness or lack of self-ness or substantiality in all reality and opposes the conceptual understanding of reality in terms of such self-being or substance. The work was said to be sharp like a diamond in that it cuts away all unnecessary conceptualization to bring one to enlightenment, and hence its title.

¹⁸⁸ See Suzuki Daisetsu, *Kongō-kyō no Zen* in *Suzuki Daisetsu Zenshū* Vol. 5 (Tokyo: Iwanami, 2000), pp. 380-83. The full formulation of this “logic of *prajna*-intuition” is given in English as follows: “A is not-A, therefore A is A.” See D.T. Suzuki, *Studies in Zen* (NYC: Delta, 1955), pp. 119-120.

¹⁸⁹ On this interaction between the two, see Mutai Risaku’s *Shisaku to kansatsu*, p. 150ff. And see Kosaka’s depiction of this exchange as witnessed by Mutai (in his *Shisaku to kansatsu*) in Kosaka, pp. 276-77. Mutai’s discussion of their interaction shows the reciprocity and mutual influence between the two thinkers.

¹⁹⁰ Nishida had in fact already been making much use of the Japanese expression *soku* throughout his earlier works as a copula that joins opposites in their simultaneous mutual independence and contradiction, for example in the self-determination of the world and the self-determination of the individual (in the 1930s), to illustrate their contradictory self-identity. On this, see Nishitani Keiji, *Nishida Kitarō*, trans. Yamamoto Seisaku & James W. Heisig (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991), p. 195. And so Nishida’s adoption of *soku-hi* logic at this stage meshes well with that use of the copulative *soku* in explicating contradictory self-identity.

¹⁹¹ Nāgārjuna, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* chapter 24, verses 8-9. See *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way: Nāgārjuna’s Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, trans. Jay L. Garfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 68; and *Nāgārjuna, the Philosophy of the Middle Way; Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, trans. David J. Kalupahana (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1986), pp. 330-31.

¹⁹² Nāgārjuna, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* chapter 24, verse 18 in Garfield, p. 69 and Kalupahana, p. 339.

¹⁹³ Nāgārjuna, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* chapter 25, verses 19-20 in Garfield, p. 75 and Kalupahana, p. 366-67.

¹⁹⁴ See Masao Matsumoto, “The Absolute, Relatives and Nothingness,” *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, No. 107-108 (1974, Fasc. 1-2), p. 77.

¹⁹⁵ This appears at the very beginning of Nāgārjuna’s *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* in the dedicatory verses. See David Kalupahana (trans), *Nāgārjuna, the Philosophy of the Middle Way; Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1986), p. 101; and *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way: Nāgārjuna’s Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, trans. Jay Garfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 2.

¹⁹⁶ On this see David A. Dilworth, “Nishida’s Final Essay: The Logic of Place and a Religious World-View”, *Philosophy East and West* Vol. XX, No. 4 (October 1970), pp. 360-61 & fn.17.

¹⁹⁷ I am primarily basing my interpretation on the commentaries and short translations in Garma Chang, *Buddhist Teaching of Totality* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 1971) and Kang-Nam Oh, “*Dharmadhātu: An Introduction to Hua-yen Buddhism*” in *The Eastern Buddhist*, vol. XII, no. 2, October 1979, p. 72-91. Relevant passages (for example see T45.652c28, 653c16f, and 653c25f) are cited in the above and found in Fa-tsang’s commentary on Tu-shun’s *Fa-chieh-kuan-men* in his *Hua-yen Fa-p’u-ti-hsin-chang* in the *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* volume 45 (T45.652a-654a). And in the following I am also relying on Francis Cook, *Hua-yen Buddhism* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 1977).

¹⁹⁸ In the *Astasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā sūtra, śūnyatā* (emptiness) was used synonymously with space. See Nancy McCagney, *Nāgārjuna and the Philosophy of Openness* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Pub., 1997), pp. xix-xxi, 25-26, 35, 58. We might also remember here that the Chinese translation of *śūnyatā* as *k’ung* (Jpn: *ku*) has also the connotations of “sky” and “space.”

¹⁹⁹ D.T. Suzuki, “How to Read Nishida,” Introduction to Nishida, *A Study of Good*, trans. V.H. Viglielmo (Tokyo: Japanese Government, 1960), p. v.

²⁰⁰ Kosaka, p. 371-72.fn.203.

²⁰¹ Kosaka, pp. 296-97.

²⁰² The True Pure Land sect (Jōdō-shin-shū) of Buddhism was a sect founded by Shinran (1173-1262CE) off shooting from the Pure Land school (Jōdō-shū) of Honen. The original Pure Land practice was based on the recitation of a formula for venerating Amida Buddha (Buddha Amitabha) which was to lead one to rebirth in Amida’s Pure Land through Amida’s grace. While the Jōdō-shū regarded recitation as strengthening the devotee’s faith in Amida, the Shin sect sees it as an act of gratitude for Amida’s exertion to save the individual, a radicalization of reliance on “other-power” (*tariki*). Nishida appropriates Suzuki’s interpretation that the devotee’s act of recitation is in itself Amida working through the devotee, an idea that Nishida in turn compares to Christian grace in Paul, Augustine, and Luther.

²⁰³ Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, trans. A.J. Krailsheimer (London: Penguin, 1995, 1966), §378 (470), p. 110.

²⁰⁴ Pascal, *Pensées*, §418 (233), p. 121.

²⁰⁵ Søren Kierkegaard, “The Absolute Paradox: A Metaphysical Crotchet” in *Philosophical Fragments or A Fragment of Philosophy by Johannes Climacus*, trans. David F. Swenson (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962), esp., p. 59.

²⁰⁶ In other words, the unity of humanity between Adam the fallen sinful man and Christ the risen God-man (savior-saved).

²⁰⁷ In his critique of Hegel’s dialectic, Nishida here also turns to the younger theological Hegel, who, as noticeable in his *Theological Essays*, had experienced deep distress in regard to the issue of fate. Nishida suggests that it is this experience that Hegel later grasped systematically in terms of his logic. (Z7 275) See Hegel, “Der Geist des Christentums und sein Schicksal” (“The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate”) (1798-1800) in Hegel, *Werke in zwanzig Bänden I: Frühe Schriften, Theorie – Werkausgabe* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1971).

²⁰⁸ On this see Kosaka, p. 285.

²⁰⁹ See Mutai Risaku, *Basho no ronrigaku* (Tokyo: Kobushi shobō, 1996). In addition Masao Abe makes the suggestion that Mutai’s ideas had stimulated Nishida to develop his notion of “inverse corre-

spondence.” See his “‘Inverse Correspondence’ in the Philosophy of Nishida: The Emergence of the Notion,” *International Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. XXXII, no. 3 (September 1992), p. 331.

²¹⁰ See Kosaka, pp. 286-88.

²¹¹ See Kosaka, p. 291.

²¹² See Joachim Israel, *The Language of Dialectic and the Dialectics of Language* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1979). And see G.S. Axtell’s discussion of Israel’s definition in his “Comparative Dialectics: Nishida Kitarō’s Logic of Place and Western Dialectical Thought,” *Philosophy East and West*, vol. XLI, no. 2 (April 1991), p. 176.

²¹³ E.g., James W. Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press 2001), p. 66.

²¹⁴ Dr. Shigenori Nagatomo initially related this story to me. The text in which the story appears was written during the end of the Warring States period (ca. 222BCE) or the beginning of the Ch’in (Jp.: Shin) Dynasty (221-206BCE), the first unified state of China. See Han Fei Tzu, *The Complete Works of Han Fei Tzu*, vol. II, trans. W.K. Liao (London: Arthur Probsthain, 1959), p. 143.

²¹⁵ We should also keep in mind here that “radical” comes from the Latin root *radix*, which refers to “the root of things.”

²¹⁶ This term *chiasma* (adj. *chiasmatic*) is not to be confused with *chiasmus* (adj. *chiatic*), a figure of speech based on inverted parallelism, whereby the order of terms in parallel clauses is reversed in one of the clauses (e.g., “one should eat to live, not live to eat.”). The dictionary treats these two as separate words. And yet in the radical reciprocity of the dialectic, the *chiasma* in Nishida also contains the sense of a *chiasmus*.

²¹⁷ This means that even the basic contradiction between life or birth and death can be viewed as a simplification into bi-conditional opposites of a complex *chiasma* of multiple processes on a variety of levels, e.g., social-ethical, physical, biological, etc.

²¹⁸ It may be interesting to note at this juncture that Maurice Merleau-Ponty also had a comparable notion he called *chiasm*, the paradoxical form of a whole composed of parts, interrelating in inverse structural orders. An example, suggested by Andrew Feenberg in his discussion of this would be history as what is “drawn” by the subject and what “draws” the subject. See Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968), pp. 130ff, especially p. 138; Yoko Arisaka and Andrew Feenberg, “Experiential Ontology: The Origins of the Nishida Philosophy in the Doctrine of Pure Experience,” *International Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. XXX, no. 2 (June 1990), p. 202; and Andrew Feenberg, “Experience and Culture: Nishida’s Path ‘To the Things Themselves’,” *Philosophy East and West*, vol. 49, no. 1 (1999), p. 38. I was unaware of Merleau-Ponty’s concept when first drawing up my own interpretations of Nishida’s dialectic in terms of a *chiasma*. Merleau-Ponty’s sense of *chiasm* is in fact closer to the dictionary definition of *chiasmus* (i.e., a figure of speech based on an inverted parallelism, e.g., “One should eat to live, not live to eat.”). And yet the *chiasma* in Nishida also contains this sense of a *chiasmus* or what Merleau-Ponty’s calls *chiasm*, as is evident in Nishida’s notion of dialectical inter-determination, such as between individual and environment, or in the universal’s determination of the individual and its reverse determination by the individual, and in the inverse correspondence between absolute and finite.

²¹⁹ See previous footnotes on the *chiasma* as also a *chiasmus*.

²²⁰ See Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, trans. A.J. Krailsheimer (London: Penguin, 1995, 1966), sec. 199 (§72), p. 60.

²²¹ Pascal, *Pensées*, sec. 199 (§72), p. 61.

²²² The original reads: “...tann naru kateiteki benshōhō kara kobutsu to kobutsu to no sōgōkankei to iūmono wa kangaerarenai.” (Z6 74) Dilworth translates this as: “...mutual determination of individuals is not merely a dialectical process.” (*Fundamental Problems of Philosophy: The World of Action and the Dialectical World*, trans. David Dilworth (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1970), p. 47.) However *kateiteki benshōhō* has the sense of “dialectic of process” rather than simply “dialectical process.” That is, it has the significance of a certain type of dialectic, namely the dialectic of process, as opposed to another type of dialectic, namely Nishida’s own dialectic of *basho*, that takes “spatial” or synchronic relations into consideration.

²²³ See Kosaka Kunitsugu, *Nishida Kitarō o meguru tetsugakusha gunzō* (Kyoto: Mineruva shobō, 1997), chapters 3-5; and see Gereon Kopf’s critique of it in “On the Brink of Postmodernity: Recent Japanese-Language Publications on the Philosophy of Nishida Kitarō,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 30/1-2 (2003), p. 138.

²²⁴ Kosaka Kunitsugu, *Nishida Kitarō no shisō* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2002), pp. 301-02.

²²⁵ Shizuteru Ueda, “Pure Experience, Self-Awareness, Basho,” *Etudes phénoménologiques*, vol. 18 (1993), p. 67.

²²⁶ Ueda, p. 67.

²²⁷ Nishida here is referring to an idea found in Jane Ellen Harrison’s *Themis: A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), pp. 13-14.

²²⁸ I neologize the term *anontology* to characterize this structure of *basho* as what Nishida calls *absolute* negation. We cannot call it *meontology* because □□ (*mē*) is still a conditional adverb (e.g., “I think *not*...”). I use *anontology* on the other hand to mean the structure encompassing both *on* and *mēon*, or being and non-being, ultimately referring to *basho vis-à-vis* absolute nothing.

²²⁹ See Shmuel Sambursky, *The Concept of Place in Late Neoplatonism* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1982), p. 36-37.

²³⁰ Plato’s *Timaeus* in *Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), p. 1255. The translation is by Donald J. Zeyl.

²³¹ See Takeda Hiromichi, “Brief Note on Nishida’s Doctrine of Universals,” *Monumenta Nipponica* vol. 23, nr. 3-4 (1968), p. 499 & fn.7.

²³² On the Neo-Kantian notion of *Gebiet*, see Emil Lask’s *Die Logik der Philosophie und die Kategorienlehre* (1911) in Emil Lask, *Sämtliche Werke Zweiter Band* (Jena: Dietrich Scheglmann, 2003) pp. 60-61, 82-94; and on Husserl’s *Region*, see his *Ideen*, First Book, Part One, ch.1, §§9-10 in Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy* First Book, trans. F. Kersten (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Pub., 1983), pp. 18-23.

²³³ Ueda, p. 80.

²³⁴ On this and the following, see Yoko Arisaka, “System and Existence: Nishida’s Logic of Place” in Augustin Berque (ed.), *Logique du lieu et dépassement de la modernité* (Brussels: 1999), p. 44.

²³⁵ On the world’s implacement in an “unrestricted openness,” see Ueda, pp. 78-79.

²³⁶ Plato, *Complete Works*, p. 1251.

²³⁷ This and the following is from Plato, *Complete Works*, p. 1253. The translation here is however slightly modified on the basis of Edward S. Casey, “Smooth Spaces and Rough-edged Places: The Hidden History of Place”, *The Review of Metaphysics* 51 (December 1997), p. 271; and John Sallis, *Chorology: On Beginning in Plato’s Timaeus* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999), p. 108.

²³⁸ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Dialogue and Dialectic: Eight Hermeneutical Studies on Plato*, trans. P. Christopher Smith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), pp. 174-75.

²³⁹ Eugene Fink, *Zur Ontologischen Frühgeschichte von Raum-Zeit-Bewegung* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1957), p. 187-88.

²⁴⁰ See Gadamer, p. 174.

²⁴¹ On this see Sallis, p. 118.

²⁴² See Aristotle’s *On the Soul (De Anima)*, 429a15, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (NYC: Random House, 1941), p. 589. See also *Metaphysics* 1032a35-b1 (*Basic Works*, p. 792) where he speaks of the artist’s soul as wherein the form of artificial products (the essence of each thing) lie; and see *De Anima* 406a16-20 (*Basic Works*, p. 543) where he speaks of the soul as itself *having* a place (*topos*).

²⁴³ And we ought not to erase the important distinction between Plato’s *chōra* and Aristotle’s *topos* from the *Physics*. (See Sallis, p. 115.) Plato himself, in the *Timaeus*, distinguishes *chōra* from *topos* by depicting its violent thrashing motion whereby bodies (*sōmata*) are separated out, the dense and heavy sinking down and the light and rare floating upward, each to its own place (*topos*) to settle. (52e-53a)

²⁴⁴ See Aristotle’s *Physics*, Book IV, ch.2, 209b11-17 in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, p. 272.

²⁴⁵ John Sallis (Sallis, p. 151) explains that after Aristotle this conflation between matter (*hylē*) and *chōra* was furthered when Plutarch in his *On the Generation of the Soul in the Timaeus* claimed that it is “corporeal being” (*sōmatos ousia*) that Plato called the *chōra* and *hedra* (abode) of all generated things (5, 1014c-d), to link the material (*hylikon*) to *chōra* (6, 1014e). See Plutarch, *Plutarch über die Seelenschöpfung im Timaeus*, ed. Berthold Müller (Breslau: Druck von Grass, Barth und Comp., 1873), p. 28-29. Much later Plotinus comes to take this identification for granted. See Plotinus, *The Enneads*, trans. John Dillon (London: Penguin, 1991), Second Ennead, ch.4.1, p. 92.

²⁴⁶ And that is how Jacques Derrida characterizes *chōra*. See his “*Khōra*” in *On the Name* (Stanford, CAL: Stanford University Press, 1995), p. 90.

²⁴⁷ Derrida, p. 89.

²⁴⁸ The expression *epekeina tēs ousias* (επεκεινα της ουσιας), “beyond being,” was used by Socrates in the *Republic* to refer to *to agathon* (το αγαθον), “the good.” Derrida however points out the possibility of extending the expression to *chōra*. He bases this on a passage where Socrates speaks of how the liberated prisoner, having exited the cave, could turn his gaze upward and “...be able to look upon the sun

– not in its appearances... or in some other base [*hedra*], but the sun itself by itself in its own *chōra* ... and behold how it is.” (*Republic* 516b) On this see Sallis, pp. 113-14.fn.23; and see Derrida, “Tense,” in *The Path of Archaic Thinking: Unfolding the Work of John Sallis*, ed. Kenneth Maly (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995), pp. 73-74.

²⁴⁹ Derrida, p. 103; see also pp. 92-93.

²⁵⁰ Derrida speaks of *chōra* as an “irreplaceable and unplaceable place.” See Derrida, p. 111.

²⁵¹ I am borrowing this term from John Sallis’ discussion of the *chōra* in his *Chorology*.

²⁵² See Sallis, p. 123.

²⁵³ See Hermann Lotze, “Philosophy in the Last Forty Years. First Article” (1880) in *Kleine Schriften* Dritter Band, Zweite Abtheilung (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1891), p. 467.

²⁵⁴ See Dilworth’s introduction to his translation of Nishida in *Last Writings* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1987), p. 28. Nevertheless some scholars have expended a lot of effort in trying to assimilate Buddhist non-dualist thought to Hegelian sublational thought. Alfonso Verdu’s works exemplify such attempts. See his *Dialectical Aspects in Buddhist Thought: Studies in Sino-Japanese Mahāyāna Idealism* (no city, Kansas: University of Kansas, 1974) and his *Philosophy of Buddhism: A Totalistic Synthesis* (Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981).

²⁵⁵ See David Putney, “Identity and the Unity of Experience: A Critique of Nishida’s Theory of Self”, *Asian Philosophy*, vol. 1, no. 2 (1991), p. 149.

²⁵⁶ Han Fei Tzu, *The Complete Works of Han Fei Tzu: A Classic of Chinese Political Science*, vol. II, trans. W.K. Liao (London: Arthur Probsthain, 1959), p. 143.

²⁵⁷ To understand it merely as “contrary” would not do it justice.

²⁵⁸ On this see Putney, p. 150.

²⁵⁹ Putney, p. 154.

²⁶⁰ “Alle Dialektik in der Philosophie... ist der Ausdruck einer Verlegenheit.” Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik* in *Gesamtausgabe* Band 29/30 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1992), p. 276; *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995), p. 187. In the sentence immediately prior, Heidegger states: “It is characteristic that we repeatedly find in the history of philosophy such attempts to level off... [the] circularity and ambiguity of philosophical thinking through the use of dialectic, and most recently in a grand and impressive form.” Heidegger in disparaging dialectics most certainly has Hegel’s system in mind. However while disclaiming any affinity to such a “dialectic,” Heidegger in the mid-to-late 1930s (e.g., in his *Beiträge*) does speak of the reciprocity or inter-play in “the event of en-owning” (*Er-eignis*) that opens up a new epoch. He calls this the “turning” (*Kehre*) of being, whereby in his projection (*Entwurf*) that opens up a world, man himself is “thrown” into that world, i.e., the thrower is thrown (*werfen*). Such reciprocity that underscores the finitude of man in Heidegger may perhaps be comparable to Nishida’s notion of inverse correspondence.

²⁶¹ “...tautology is the only possibility for thinking what dialectic can only veil.” See Martin Heidegger, “Seminar in Zähringen, 1973,” *Vier Seminare* in *Gesamtausgabe* Band 15 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1986), p. 400; and in *Four Seminars*, trans. Andrew Mitchell and Francois Raffoul (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003). This statement comes much later (1973) than the above quotation (1929/30).

²⁶² The dialectic in Nishida's case is an expression of the self-forming formlessness, the abysmal nothing, that envelopes and allows for the irreducible complexity of its *chiasma*, in excess to mere tradic or bi-nomial formulas and structures.

²⁶³ For example, see J.S. O'Leary's chastisement of Nishida in his later works for obscuring his own themes in "complex dialectical language." See J.S. O'Leary's foreword to Nishida, *Intuition and Reflection in Self-Consciousness*, trans. V.H. Viglielmo, Takeuchi Yoshinori, and Joseph S. O'Leary (NYC: SUNY Press, 1987), p. ix.

²⁶⁴ "Emptiness" here should be taken in its Buddhistic sense of being empty of "own-being" (*svabhāva*). What I mean is that these horizons, whether religious or cultural or ideological, brought into the midst of each other, are themselves shown to be contingent, conditioned, both historically and environmentally, i.e., they can no longer be taken to be absolute.

²⁶⁵ Gianni Vattimo, *The End of Modernity*, trans. Jon R. Snyder (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), p. 152.

²⁶⁶ Peyman Vahabzadeh, "Of Hegemonies Yet to be Broken: Rhetoric and Philosophy in the Age of Accomplished Metaphysics," *The European Legacy: Toward New Paradigms*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (July 2005), p. 376.

²⁶⁷ On this issue of homogenization in modernity, see Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (NYC: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 412-14.

²⁶⁸ Edward S. Casey, *Getting Back into Place* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993), p. xv, and see also pp. xii and xiv.

²⁶⁹ The situation is even more complicated however since that "pronouncement of difference" itself is often mediated and thus muted by the global media serving consumerist tendencies.

²⁷⁰ On this and the following see Ueda Shizuteru, "Nishida, Nationalism, and the War in Question" in Heisig and Maraldo (ed.), *Rude Awakenings* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994), pp. 102-03.

²⁷¹ Ueda in Heisig & Maraldo, p. 103.

²⁷² In other words, Nishida means by "co-prosperity sphere" something quite distinct from what the Japanese army really had in mind when promoting their idea of an "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere."

²⁷³ Ueda in Heisig & Maraldo, p. 89.

²⁷⁴ The term is inspired by Goethe's "primal image" (*Urbildliche*) and "primal plant" (*Urpflanze*) which does not really exist but serves as a regulative ideal, "plantness," that is empirically valid. See Goethe, *Zur Morphologie* (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau Nachfolger, 1977). For a discussion of Goethe's concept of the "primal plant," see Zemplén Gábor, "Form as Movement in Goethe's 'The Metamorphosis of Plants'," <http://hps.elte.hu/~zemplen/goethemorph.html>.

²⁷⁵ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (NYC: Harper Torchbooks, 1977), p. 27; see also p. 19.

²⁷⁶ The ecological usefulness of Nishida's philosophy has been suggested by Kosaka in *Nishida tetsugaku to gendai: Rekishi, shūkyō, shizen o yomitoku (Nishida Philosophy and Today: Reading History, Religion, and Nature)* Tokyo or Kyoto: Mineruva shobō, 2001.

²⁷⁷ But by "synthesis" here I do not mean to say that Nishida has constructed a synthesizing theory that claims to speak for, or encompass with some universal essence, the various modes of thinking from the disparate traditions of East and West. It is not a universal theory that would resolve distinctions. And this of course has to do with how he understands *basho vis-à-vis* absolute nothing and its distinction from Hegel's absolute concept. At least the eclectic nature of his thinking is undeniable in that it brings together elements drawn from a variety of sources. In responding to issues he finds in western philosophy — i.e., dualism — he brings insights that he identifies as "eastern" (i.e., "the form of the formless") or finds commensurate with Mahāyāna Buddhism together with the very method of western philosophy and more specifically its various terminologies and conceptual formulations, especially that of Hegelian dialectics. And yet to classify his thought as a mere synthesis of those two elements — Buddhism and Hegel — would be to ignore his own unique contributions that extend beyond either.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Works by Nishida Kitarō

Japanese Language

Nishida Kitarō zenshū (Collected Works), multiple volumes. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2002, 1965. [Pagination in the work refers to the newest edition unless otherwise noted.]

Nishida Kitarō tetsugaku ronshu (Philosophical Essays), vols. 1-3. Edited by Ueda Shizuteru. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2000, 1989.

English Translations

Art and Morality. Translated by David Dilworth and Valdo H. Viglielmo. Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1973.

“*Basho*.” Translated by John Krummel and Shigenori Nagatomo. Manuscript.

Fundamental Problems of Philosophy: The World of Action and the Dialectical World. Translated by David Dilworth. Tokyo: Sophia University, 1970.

“Historical Body.” In: *Sourcebook for Modern Japanese Philosophy*. Edited by David Dilworth, V. Viglielmo, and Jacinto Zavala. Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1998, pp. 37-53.

An Inquiry into the Good. Translated by Masao Abe and Christopher Ives. New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1990.

Intelligibility and the Philosophy of Nothingness: Three Philosophical Essays. Translated by Robert Schinzinger. Tokyo: Maruzen, 1958.

Intuition and Reflection in Self-Consciousness. Translated by Valdo H. Viglielmo, Takeuchi Yoshinori, and Joseph S. O’Leary. NYC: SUNY Press, 1987.

Last Writings: Nothingness and the Religious Worldview. Translated by David Dilworth. Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1987.

“Logic and Life.” Translated by John Krummel and Shigenori Nagatomo. Manuscript.

“The Logic of *Topos* and the Religious Worldview Part I.” Translated by Yusa Michiko. *The Eastern Buddhist*, vol. XIX, no. 2, Autumn, 1986, pp. 1-29.

“The Logic of *Topos* and the Religious Worldview Part II.” Translated by Yusa Michiko. *The Eastern Buddhist*, vol. XX, no. 1, Spring, 1987, pp. 81-119.

“My Philosophical Path.” Translated by Yusa Michiko. In: Yusa Michiko. *Zen & Philosophy: An Intellectual Biography of Nishida Kitarō*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 2002, pp. 301-304.

“On the National Polity.” In: *Sourcebook for Modern Japanese Philosophy*, pp. 78-95.

A Study of Good. Translated by V.H. Viglielmo. Tokyo: Japanese Government, 1960.

“Towards a Philosophy of Religion with the Concept of Pre-Established Harmony as Guide.” Translated by David Dilworth. *The Eastern Buddhist*, vol. III, no. 1, June 1970, pp. 19-46.

Works by Other Authors

Abe Masao. “‘Inverse Correspondence’ in the Philosophy of Nishida: The Emergence of a Notion.” *International Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. XXXII, no. 3, September 1992, pp. 325-44.

Abe Masao. “The Logic of Absolute Nothingness as Expounded by Nishida Kitarō.” *The Eastern Buddhist*, vol. XXVIII, no. 2, Autumn 1995, pp. 167-74.

Abe Masao. “Nishida’s Philosophy of ‘Place’.” *International Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. XXVIII, no. 4, December 1988, pp. 355-71.

Abe Masao. *Zen and Comparative Studies*. Edited by Steven Heine. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997.

Abe Masao. *Zen and Western Thought*. Edited by William R. LaFleur. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985.

Abe Shinobe. “Modern Sports and the Eastern Tradition of Physical Culture: Emphasizing Nishida’s Theory of the Body.” *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, vol. XIV, 1987, pp. 44-47.

Anton, John Peter. *Aristotle’s Theory of Contrariety*. London: Routledge, 1957.

- Arisaka Yoko. "Beyond 'East and West': Nishida's Universalism and Postcolonial Critique." In: *Border Crossings: Toward a Comparative Political Theory*. Edited by Fred Dallmayr. Lanham: Lexington Books, 1999, pp. 236-52; and *The Review of Politics*, vol. 59, no. 3, Summer 1997, pp. 541-60.
- Arisaka Yoko and Andrew Feenberg. "Experiential Ontology: The Origins of the Nishida Philosophy in the Doctrine of Pure Experience." *International Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. XXX, no. 2, issue no. 118, June 1990, pp. 173-205.
- Arisaka Yoko. "The Nishida Enigma: 'The Principle of the New World Order' (1943)." *Monumenta Nipponica*, vol. 51, no. 1, Spring 1996, pp. 100-105.
- Arisaka Yoko. "System and Existence: Nishida's Logic of Place." In: *Logique du lieu et dépassement de la modernité*. Edited by Augustin Berque. Brussels: 1999, pp. 41-65.
- Aristotle. *The Basic Works of Aristotle*. Edited by Richard McKeon. NYC: Random House, 1941.
- Aristotle, *The Philosophy of Aristotle*. Translated by J.L. Creed and A.E. Wardman. NYC: Penguin Books, Mentor, n.d.
- Asami Hiroshi and Sakurai Kan. *Nishida Kitarō: Sunshin no Shisō (Nishida Kitarō: The Thought of Sunshin)*. Kanazawa: Kanazawashi Kokusai Bunkaka, 2005.
- Asanga. *The Summary of the Great Vehicle by Bodhisattva Asanga*. Translated by John P. Keenan. Berkeley, CA: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1992.
- Aśvaghosha. *The Awakening of Faith Attributed to Aśvaghosha*. Translated by Yoshito S. Hakeda, NYC: Columbia University Press, 1967.
- Augustine. *Confessions*. Translated by Henry Chadwick. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Axtell, G.S. "Comparative Dialectics: Nishida Kitarō's Logic of Place and Western Dialectical Thought." *Philosophy East and West*, vol. XLI, no. 2, April 1991, pp. 163-84.
- Barth, Karl. *From Rousseau to Ritschl*. London: SCM Press, 1959.
- Bergson, Henri. *Creative Evolution*. Translated by Pete A.Y. Gunter. NYC: Barnes and Noble Pub., 2005.

- Bergson, Henri. *Matter and Memory*. Translated by Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmert. Mineola, NY: Dover Pub., 2004.
- Bergson, Henri. *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*. NYC: Harper and Row, 1960; London: George Allen & Unwin, 1910.
- Carter, Robert E.. *The Nothingness Beyond God: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Nishida Kitarō*. St. Paul, MN: Paragon House, 1997.
- Casey, Edward S. *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993.
- Edward S. Casey. "Smooth Spaces and Rough-edged Places: The Hidden History of Place." *The Review of Metaphysics*, 51, December 1997, pp. 267-296.
- Cestari, Matteo. "The Knowing Body: Nishida's Philosophy of Active Intuition." *The Eastern Buddhist*, vol. XXXI, no. 2, 1998, pp. 179-208.
- Chang, Garma Cheng Chi (Zhenji Zhang). *The Buddhist Teaching of Totality: The Philosophy of Hwa Yen Buddhism*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University. 1971
- Chan, Wing-tsit. *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963.
- Cleary, Thomas. *Entry Into the Inconceivable*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1983.
- Conze, Edward. *Buddhist Thought in India: Three Phases of Buddhist Philosophy*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1967, 1962.
- Cook, Francis H. *Hua-yen Buddhism: The Jewel Net of Indra*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1977.
- Cresswell, M.J. "Non-Contradiction and Substantial Predication." *Theoria*, vol. LXIX, 2003, part 3, pp. 166-83.
- Cusa, Nicholas of. *Nicholas of Cusa: Selected Spiritual Writings*. Translated by H. Lawrence Bond, NYC: Paulist Press, 1997.
- De Bary, William Theodore. *The Buddhist Tradition in India, China and Japan*. NYC: Vintage Books, Random House, 1972, 1969.
- Derrida, Jacques. "Khōra." In: Derrida, *On the Name*. Stanford, CAL: Stanford University Press, 1995.

- Derrida, Jacques. "Tense." In: *The Path of Archaic Thinking: Unfolding the Work of John Sallis*. Edited by Kenneth Maly, Albany: SUNY Press, 1995.
- Descartes, Rene. *The Philosophical Works of Descartes* Vol. I. Translated by Elizabeth S. Haldane and G.R.T. Ross. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911.
- Dilworth, David. "The Concrete World of Action in Nishida's Later Thought." In: *Japanese Phenomenology: Phenomenology as the Trans-cultural Philosophical Approach*. Edited by Yoshihiro Nitta and Hirotaka Tatematsu. Dordrecht: D. Reidel Pub., 1979, pp. 249-270.
- Dilworth, David A. "Introduction: Nishida's Critique of the Religious Consciousness." In: Nishida Kitarō. *Last Writings: Nothingness and the Religious Worldview*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987, pp. 1-45.
- Dilworth, David A. "Nishida Kitarō: Nothingness as the Negative Space of Experiential Immediacy." *International Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. XIII, no. 4, December 1973, pp. 463-483.
- Dilworth, David A. "Nishida's Final Essay: The Logic of Place and a Religious World-View." *Philosophy East and West*, vol. XX, no. 4, October 1970, pp. 355-367.
- Dilworth, David A., Valdo H. Viglielmo, and Agustin Jacinto Zavala (ed.). *Sourcebook for Modern Japanese Philosophy: Selected Documents*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1998.
- Dobbins, James C. *Jōdo Shinshū: Shin Buddhism in Medieval Japan*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1989.
- Dōgen. *The Heart of Dōgen's Shōbōgenzō*. Translated by Abe Masao and Norman Waddell. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2002.
- Dōgen. "Shōbōgenzō Genjōkōan." Translated by Abe Masao and Norman Waddell. *The Eastern Buddhist*, vol. V, no. 2, October 1972, pp. 129-40.
- Dōgen. *Shōbōgenzō: Zen Essays by Dōgen*. Translated by Thomas Cleary. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986.
- Dōgen. *Shōbōgenzō*. Annot. Mizuno Yaoko. Tokyo: Iwanami, 2000, 1990.
- Elwood, Brian D. "The Problem of the Self in the Later Nishida and in Sartre." *Philosophy East and West*, vol. 44, No. 2, April 1994, pp. 303-316.

- Feenberg, Andrew. "Experience and Culture: Nishida's Path 'To the Things Themselves'." *Philosophy East and West*, vol. 49, no. 1, 1999, pp. 28-44.
- Feenberg, Andrew. "The Problem of Modernity in the Philosophy of Nishida." In: *Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School, & the Question of Nationalism*. Edited by James W. Heisig and John C. Maraldo. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994, pp. 151-173.
- Fichte, J.G. *Science of Knowledge*. Edited and translated by Peter Heath and John Lachs. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982, 1970.
- Fink, Eugene. *Zur Ontologischen Frühgeschichte von Raum-Zeit-Bewegung*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1957.
- Frank, Frederick (ed.). *The Buddha Eye: An Anthology of the Kyoto School*. NYC: Crossroad Pub., 1991, 1982.
- Fujimoto Kiyohiko. "A Study of Honen's Doctrine of Evil Persons as the Object of Salvation." <http://www.jsri.jp/English/Jodoshu/conferences/AAS/fujimoto.html>.
- Gábor, Zemplén. "Form as Movement in Goethe's 'The Metamorphosis of Plants'." <http://hps.elte.hu/~zemplen/goethemorph.html>
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Dialogue and Dialectic: Eight Hermeneutical Studies on Plato*. Translated by P. Christopher Smith, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980.
- Garfield, Jay L. *Empty Words; Buddhist Philosophy and Cross-Cultural Interpretation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Gethin, Rupert. *The Foundations of Buddhism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Goethe. *Zur Morphologie*. Weimar: Hermann Böhlau Nachfolger, 1977.
- Haldane, J.S. *The Philosophical Basis of Biology*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1931.
- Han Fei Tzu. *The Complete Works of Han Fei Tzu: A Classic of Chinese Political Science*, vol. II. Translated by W.K. Liao. London: Arthur Probsthain, 1959.
- Harris, Ian Charles. *The Continuity of Madhyamaka And Yogācāra in Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism*. Leiden, Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1991.
- Harrison, Jane Ellen. *Themis: A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912.

- Hegel, GWF. *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*. Translated by H.S. Harris and Walter Cerf. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1977.
- Hegel, GWF. *Differenz des Fichteschen und Schellingschen Systems der Philosophie*. In: *Werke in zwanzig Bänden 2*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970.
- Hegel, GWF. *The Encyclopaedia Logic (with the Zusätze): Part I of the Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences*. Translated by T.F. Geraets, W.A. Suchting, H.S. Harris. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1991.
- Hegel, GWF. *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*. Edited by Friedhem Nicolin and Otto Pöggeler. Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1959, 1830.
- Hegel, GWF, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*. Edited by J. Hoffmeister. Berlin: Nicolaischen Buchhandlung, 1833.
- Hegel, GWF. *Hegel's Logic; Being Part One of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830)*. Translated by William Wallace. Oxford: Clarendon/Oxford University Press. 1975, 1873.
- Hegel, GWF. *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind: Being Part Three of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830)*. Translated by William Wallace. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.
- Hegel, GWF. *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. Translated by T.M. Knox. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967.
- Hegel, GWF. *Natural Law: The Scientific Ways of Treating Natural Law, Its Place in Moral Philosophy, and Its Relation to the Positive Sciences of Law*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975.
- Hegel, GWF. *Phänomenologie des Geistes*. Hamburg: Verlag von Felix Meiner, 1952.
- Hegel, GWF. *The Phenomenology of Mind*. Translated by J.B. Baillie. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1931, 1910.
- Hegel, GWF. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Translated by A.V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- Hegel, GWF. *Philosophy of History*. Translated by J. Sibree. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1991; NYC: Colonial Press, 1899.
- Hegel, GWF. "Preface to the *Phenomenology*." In: *Hegel: Texts and Commentary*. Edited and translated by Walter Kaufmann. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966, 1965.

- Hegel, GWF. *Science of Logic*, 2 vols. Translated by W.H. Johnston and L.G. Struthers. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1961, 1929.
- Hegel, GWF. *Science of Logic*. Translated by A.V. Miller. Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, Prometheus Books, 1969.
- Hegel, GWF. *System der Sittlichkeit*. Edited by Georg Lasson. Hamburg: Verlag von Felix Meiner, 1967.
- Hegel, GWF. *System of Ethical Life and First Philosophy of Spirit*. Edited and translated by H.S. Harris and T.M. Knox. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1979.
- Hegel, GWF. *Werke in zwanzig Bänden 2: Jaener Schriften 1801-1807, Theorie Werkausgabe*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970.
- Hegel, GWF. *Werke in zwanzig Bänden 1: Frühe Schriften, Theorie–Werkausgabe*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1971.
- Hegel, GWF. *Wissenschaft der Logik*, Erster Teil. Edited by Georg Lasson. Hamburg: Verlag von Felix Meiner, 1971.
- Hegel, GWF. *Wissenschaft der Logik* Zweiter Teil. Edited by Georg Lasson. Hamburg: Verlag von Felix Meiner, 1969.
- Heidegger, Martin. *Four Seminars*. Translated by Andrew Mitchell and Francois Raffoul. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003.
- Heidegger, Martin. *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*. Translated by William McNeill and Nicholas Walker. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995.
- Heidegger, Martin. *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt – Endlichkeit – Einsamkeit*. In: *Gesamtausgabe*: II. Abteilung: Vorlesungen 1923-1944, Band 29/30. Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1992, 1983.
- Heidegger, Martin. *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Translated by William Lovitt. NYC: Harper Torchbooks, 1977.
- Heidegger, Martin. *Vier Seminare*. In: *Gesamtausgabe*: I. Abteilung: Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910-1976, Band 15. Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1986.
- Heisig, James W. *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press 2001.

- Heisig, James W. and John C. Maraldo. *Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School, & the Question of Nationalism*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994
- Heller, Agnes. *A Theory of Modernity*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell. 1999.
- Hofstadter, Albert. "How to Escape from Hegel's Aesthetics!", *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*, vol. 9, no. 1, Winter 1982.
- Holy Bible*, New International Version. East Brunswick, NJ: International Bible Society, 1984, 1973.
- Holy Bible*, Red Letter, Dictionary-Concordance, Revised Standard Version. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1972.
- Hubbard, Jamie and Paul L. Swanson (ed.). *Pruning the Bodhi Tree: The Storm Over Critical Buddhism*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997.
- Huh, Woo-Sung. "The Philosophy of History in the 'Later' Nishida: A Philosophic Turn." *Philosophy East and West*, vol. XL, no. 3, July 1990.
- Husserl, Edmund. *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy First Book: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*. Translated by F. Kersten. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Pub., 1983.
- Hyppolite, Jean. *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*. Translated by Samuel Cherniak and John Heckman. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1974.
- Inwood, Michael. *A Hegel Dictionary*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Pub, 1992.
- Israel, Joachim. *The Language of Dialectics and the Dialectics of Language*. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1979.
- Jacinto-Zavala, Agustin. "The Relationship between the Historical Body and the Environment in Late Nishida Philosophy." *Transactions of the International Conference of Orientalists*, no. XXXV, 1990, pp. 44-57.
- James, William. "A World of Pure Experience." In: *The Writings of William James: A Comprehensive Edition*. Edited by John J. McDermott. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977, 1967.
- Keenan, John P. "Yogācāra." In: *Buddhist Spirituality; Indian, Southeast Asian, Tibetan, and Early Chinese*. Edited by Takeuchi Yoshinori. NYC: Crossroad, 1997.

- Kierkegaard, Søren. *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. Translated by David F. Swenson. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941.
- Kierkegaard, Søren. *Philosophical Fragments or A Fragment of Philosophy by Johannes Climacus*. Translated by David F. Swenson. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962.
- Kim, Ha Tai. "The Logic of the Illogical: Zen and Hegel." *Philosophy East and West*, vol. V, no. 1, April 1955, pp. 19-29.
- Kim, Hai Tai. "Nishida and Royce." *Philosophy East and West*, vol. 1, no. 4, January 1952, pp. 18-29.
- King, Richard. "Early Yogācāra and its Relationship with the Madhyamaka School." *Philosophy East and West*, vol. 65, no. 9, 1994, pp. 659-683.
- Kirk, G.S., J.E. Raven, and M. Schofield (ed.). *The Presocratic Philosophers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, 1957.
- Kopf, Gereon. "Between Foundationalism and Relativism: Locating Nishida's 'Logic of Bashō' on the Ideological Landscape." *Nanzan Bulletin* no. 27, 2003, pp. 24-45.
- Kopf, Gereon. "Between Identity and Difference: Three Ways of Reading Nishida's Non Dualism." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, vol. 31, no. 1, 2004, pp. 73-103.
- Kopf, Gereon. "On the Brink of Postmodernity: Recent Japanese-Language Publications on the Philosophy of Nishida Kitarō." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, vol. 30, nos. 1-2, 2003, pp. 133-56.
- Kosaka Kunitsugu. *Nishida Kitarō no shisō*. Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2003, 2002.
- Kosaka Kunitsugu. *Nishida Kitarō o meguru tetsugakusha gunzō: kindai nihon tetsugaku to shūkyō (Portraits of Philosophers Surrounding Nishida Kitarō: Modern Japanese Philosophy and Religion)*. Kyoto: Mineruva shobō, 1997.
- Lask, Emil. *Sämtliche Werke Zweiter Band*. Jena: Dietrich Scheglmann, 2003.
- Lawler, James. "Hegel on Logical and Dialectical Contradictions, and Misinterpretations from Bertrand Russell to Lucio Colletti." In: *Dialectical Contradictions: Contemporary Marxist Discussions*. Edited by Erwin Marquit, Philip Moran, Willis H. Truitt. Minneapolis: Marxist Educational Press, 1982.
- Leibniz, G.W. *Discourse on Metaphysics and Other Essays*. Edited by Daniel Garber and Roger Ariew. Indianapolis: Hackett Pub., 1991.

- Leibniz, G.W. *Discourse on Metaphysics, Correspondence with Arnauld, and Monadology*. Translated by George R. Montgomery. LaSalle, IL: Open Court Pub., 1937.
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm von. *The Monadology and Other Philosophical Writings*. Translated by Paul Schrecker and Anne Martin Schrecker. Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Pub., 1965.
- Leibniz, G.W. *The Shorter Leibniz Texts: A Collection of New Translations*. Edited by Lloyd Strickland. London: Continuum, 2006.
- Lotze, Hermann. "Philosophy in the Last Forty Years. First Article." In: *Kleine Schriften* Dritter Band, Zweite Abtheilung. Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1891.
- Loy, David. *Nonduality: A Study in Comparative Philosophy*. Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 1998; New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1988.
- Lukasiewicz, J. "Aristotle on the Law of Contradiction." In: *Articles on Aristotle: 3. Metaphysics*. Edited by Jonathan Barnes, Malcolm Schofield, and Richard Sorabji. NYC: St. Martin's Press, 1960, pp. 50-62.
- Maly, Kenneth (ed.). *Archaic Thinking: Unfolding the Work of John Sallis*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1995.
- Marquit, Erwin, Philip Moran, and Willis H. Truitt (eds.). *Dialectical Contradictions: Contemporary Marxist Discussions*. Minneapolis: Marxist Educational Press, 1982.
- Matsumoto Masao. "The Absolute, Relatives and Nothingness." *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, no. 107-108, Fasc. 1-2, 1974, pp. 69-81.
- McCagney, Nancy. *Nāgārjuna and the Philosophy of Openness*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1997.
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *The Visible and the Invisible*. Translated by Alphonso Lingis. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968.
- Moore, Charles A. (ed.). *Essays in East-West Philosophy: An Attempt at World Philosophical Synthesis*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1951.
- Mutai Risaku. *Basho no ronrigaku (The Logic of Basho)*. Tokyo: Kobushi shobō, 1996.
Mutai Risaku's *Shisaku to kansatsu (Thought and Observation)*. Tokyo: Keisō shobō, 1968.

- Nagao Gadjin M. *Mādhyamika and Yogācāra; A Study of Mahāyāna Philosophies*. Translated by Leslie S. Kawamura. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1991.
- Nāgārjuna. *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way: Nāgārjuna's Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. Translated by Jay L. Garfield. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Nāgārjuna. *Nāgārjuna, the Philosophy of the Middle Way: Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. Translated by David J. Kalupahana. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1986.
- Nakamura Hajime. "Mahāyāna Buddhism." In: Kitagawa and Cummings (ed.). *Buddhism and Asian History; Religion, History, and Culture*. NYC: MacMillan, 1987.
- Nakamura Yūjirō. "Chōetsu — 'Zettaimujunteki jikodōitsu'" ("Transcendence — 'Absolutely Contradictory Self-identity'"). In: *Nishida Kitarō*. Tokyo: Midorigawa, 1983.
- Nakamura Yūjirō. "Nishida Kitarō no shūkyōron to rekishiron" ("Nishida Kitarō's Theory of Religion and Theory of History"). In *Nishida Kitarō no datsukōchiku (The Deconstruction of Nishida Kitarō)*. Tokyo: Iwanami, 1987, pp. 217-258; and In: *Nishida Kitarō II*. Tokyo: Iwanami, 2001, pp. 299-244.
- Narski, Igor S. "A Commentary on Hegel's Interpretation of 'Contradiction'." In: *Dialectical Contradictions: Contemporary Marxist Discussions*. Edited by Erwin Marquit, Philip Moran, Willis H. Truitt. Minneapolis: Marxist Educational Press, 1982.
- Nīgata Nobukazu. *Mu no hikakuteki shisō: nōvarisu, hēgeru, heidegā kara nishida e (The Comparative Thought of Nothing: From Novalis, Hegel, and Heidegger to Nishida)*. Kyoto: Mineruva shobō, 1998.
- Nishitani Keiji. *Nishida Kitarō*. Translated by Yamamoto Seisaku and James W. Heisig. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991.
- Odin, Steve. "The Epochal Theory of Time in Whitehead and Japanese Buddhism: An East-West Study of Whitehead, Dōgen, and Nishida." *Process Studies*, vol. 23, no. 2, Summer 1994, pp. 119-133.
- Ogawa, Tadashi. "The Kyoto School of Philosophy and Phenomenology." In: *Japanese Phenomenology: Phenomenology as the Trans-cultural Philosophical Approach*. Edited by Yoshihiro Nitta and Hirotaka Tatematsu. *Analecta Husserliana*, vol. VIII. Dordrecht: D. Reidel Pub., 1978/79, pp. 207-21.

- Oh, Kang-Nam. "Dharmadhātu: An Introduction to Hua-yen Buddhism." *The Eastern Buddhist*, vol. XII, no. 2, October 1979, pp. 72-91.
- Olson, Carl. *Zen and the Art of Postmodern Philosophy: Two Paths of Liberation from the Representational Mode of Thinking*. NYC: SUNY Press, 2000.
- Parmenides. *Parmenides of Elea*. Translated by David Gallop. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984.
- Pascal, Blaise, *Pensées*. Translated by A.J. Krailsheimer. London: Penguin, 1995, 1966.
- Pinkard, Terry. *Hegel: A Biography*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Piovesana, Gino K. *Recent Japanese Philosophical Thought: 1862-1962, A Survey*. Tokyo: Enderle Bookstore, 1968.
- Plato. *Complete Works*. Edited by John M. Cooper. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997.
- Plotinus. *The Enneads*. Translated by John Dillon. London: Penguin, 1991.
- Plutarch. *Plutarch über die Seelenschöpfung im Timaeus*. Edited by Berthold Müller. Breslau: Druck von Grass, Barth und Comp., 1873.
- Putney, David. "Identity and the Unity of Experience: A Critique of Nishida's Theory of Self." *Asian Philosophy*, vol. 1, no. 2, 1991, pp. 141-60. Also available online: <http://sino-sv3.sino.uni-heidelberg.de/FULLTEXT/JR-ADM/putney.htm>
- Reck, Andrew J. "Aristotle's Concept of Substance in the Logical Writings." *Southwestern Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 3, Spring 1972, pp. 7-15.
- Raud, Rein. "'Place' and 'Being-Time': Spatiotemporal Concepts in the Thought of Nishida Kitarō and Dōgen Kigen." *Philosophy East and West*, vol. 54, no. 1, January 2004, pp. 29-51.
- Royce, Josiah. *The World and the Individual* Vols. 1 & 2. NYC: Dover Pub., 1959.
- Sallis, John. *Chorology: On Beginning in Plato's Timaeus*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999.
- Sambursky, Shmuel. *The Concept of Place in Late Neoplatonism*. Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1982.

- Shinran. *The Collected Works of Shinran Volume I: The Writings*. Kyoto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997.
- Spinoza, Benedict de. *On the Improvement of the Understanding; The Ethics; Correspondence*. Translated by R.H.M. Elwes. NYC: Dover Pub., 1955, 1883.
- Stambaugh, Joan. *Impermanence is Buddha-nature: Dōgen's Understanding of Temporality*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990.
- Suzuki, Daisetz Teitarō. *Collected Writings on Shin Buddhism*. Kyoto: Shinshū Ōtaniha, 1973.
- Suzuki Daisetz T. "How to Read Nishida." In: Nishida Kitarō. *A Study of Good*. Translated by V.H. Viglielmo. Tokyo: Japanese Government. 1960.
- Suzuki Daisetsu. *Kongōkyō no zen (The Zen of the Diamond Sūtra)*. In: *Suzuki Daisetsu zen senshū*. Tokyo: Shunshūsha, 1991.
- Suzuki Daisetsu. *Kongō-kyō no Zen (The Zen of the Diamond Sūtra)*. In: *Suzuki Daisetsu zenshū (Collected Works)* Vol. V. Tokyo: Iwanami, 2000, pp. 363-455.
- Suzuki, Daisetz Teitarō. "Reason and Intuition in Buddhist Philosophy." In: *Essays in East-West Philosophy: An Attempt at World Philosophical Synthesis*. Edited by Charles A. Moore. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1951.
- Suzuki, Daisetz Teitarō. *Studies in Zen*. Edited by Christmas Humphreys. NYC: Dell, 1955.
- Swanson, Paul L. *The Foundations of T'ien-T'ai Philosophy; the Flowering of the Two Truths Theory in Chinese Buddhism*. Berkeley, CA: Asian Humanities Press, 1989.
- Tachikawa Musashi. "The Tetralemma in Chinese *Hua-Yen* School: In Comparison with that of the Madhyamaka-Kārika." In: *Kalyāṇa-mitta: Professor Hajime Nakamura Felicitation Volume*. Edited by V.N. Jha. Delhi: Sri Satguru Pub., Indian Books Centre, 1991.
- Takakusu Junjiro. *The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy*. Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1956.
- Takeda Hiromichi. "Brief Note on Nishida's Doctrine of Universals." *Monumenta Nipponica*, vol. 23, no. 3-4, 1968.

- Takeuchi Yoshinori (ed.). *Buddhist Spirituality: Indian, Southeast Asian, Tibetan, and Early Chinese*. NYC: Crossroad, 1997.
- Takeuchi Yoshinori. "The Philosophy of Nishida." In: *The Buddha Eye: An Anthology of the Kyoto School*. Edited by Frederick Franck. NYC: Crossroad, 1991, 1982, pp. 179-202.
- Taylor, Charles. *Hegel*. NYC: Cambridge University Press, 1975.
- Thurman, Robert A.F.. "Voidness and Totalities: Mādhyamika and Hua Yen." In: *Studies in History of Buddhism*. Edited by A.K. Narain. Delhi: B.R. Pub. Corp, 1980.
- Tucker, John Allen. "Nāgārjuna's Influence on Early *Hua-yen* and *Ch'an* Thought." *Chinese Culture: A Quarterly Review*, vol. XXV, no. 2, June 1984, pp. 43-61.
- Ueda Shizuteru. "Nishida, Nationalism, and the War in Question." In: *Rude Awakenings*. Edited by Heisig and Maraldo. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994.
- Ueda Shizuteru. "Pure Experience, Self-Awareness, Basho", *Etudes phénoménologiques*, vol. 18, 1993, pp. 63-86.
- Ueda Shizuteru (ed.). *Nishida tetsugaku botsugo gojyusshūnen ronbunshū (Essays on Nishida Philosophy Commemorating Fifty Years since the Death of Nishida)*. Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1994.
- Ueda Shizuteru (ed.). *Nishida tetsugaku e no toi (Questioning Nishida Philosophy)*. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1991, 1990.
- Unno, Taitetsu. "San-lun, T'ien-T'ai, and Hua-yen." In: *Buddhist Spirituality*. Edited by Takeuchi. NYC: Crossroad, 1997, pp. 343-365.
- Vahabzadeh, Peyman. "Of Hegemonies Yet to be Broken: Rhetoric and Philosophy in the Age of Accomplished Metaphysics." *The European Legacy: Toward New Paradigms*, vol. 10, no. 4, July 2005, pp. 375-388.
- Vasubandhu. *Seven Works of Vasubandhu: The Buddhist Psychological Doctor*. Translated by and Edited by Stefan Anacker. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, n.d.
- Vattimo, Gianni. *The End of Modernity: Nihilism and Hermeneutics in Postmodern Culture*. Translated by Jon R. Snyder. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985.

- Verdu, Alfonso. *Dialectical Aspects in Buddhist Thought; Studies in Sino-Japanese Mahāyāna Idealism*. Kansas: Center for East Asian Studies, University of Kansas, 1974.
- Verdu, Alfonso. *The Philosophy of Buddhism: a "Totalistic" Synthesis*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Pub., 1981.
- Waldenfels, Hans. "Absolute Nothingness: Preliminary Considerations on a Central Notion in the Philosophy of Nishida Kitarō and the Kyoto School." *Monumenta Nipponica*, vol. XXI, nos. 3-4, pp. 354-91.
- Wargo, James J.J. *The Logic of Nothingness: A Study of Nishida Kitarō*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005.
- Yuasa Yasuo. *The Body: Toward an Eastern Mind-Body Theory*. Translated by Shigenori Nagatomo and Thomas Kasulis. NYC: SUNY Press, 1987.
- Yusa Michiko. "Contemporary Buddhist Philosophy." In: Eliot Deutsch and Ron Bontekoe (ed.). *A Companion to World Philosophies*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Pub. 1999, 1997.
- Yusa Michiko. "The Religious Worldview of Nishida Kitarō." *The Eastern Buddhist*, vol. XX, no. 2, Autumn 1987, pp. 63-76.
- Yusa Michiko. "From *Topos* to Environment: A Conversation with Nishida Kitarō." In: *The Future of Religion: Postmodern Perspectives*. Edited by Christopher Lamb and Dan Cohn-Sherbok. London: Middlesex University Press, 1999, pp. 112-27.
- Yusa Michiko. *Zen & Philosophy: An Intellectual Biography of Nishida Kitarō*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002.

