

Theory of Place Predicate and Individualization In Japanese Philosophy from Nishida to Izutsu

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Abstract

Identity of human beings is not substantial, nor solid, but variable. In the course of transferring self-recognition, Western philosophy has been introduced into Japan and this factor which made an essential change of self-awareness and representation in Japan, has been playing an important role. Understandably, thinkers in Japan grasp and represent their worldview in a state of modernity differently than before. In other words, they grounded their way and expression of thinking in the midst of modernization through rethinking their traditional terminology and rhetoric in a more universalized framework. Some representative thinkers, who philosophized from such a point of view, thematized the problems of place, predicate, and individualization in a new way. Focusing on the modernization challenge of philosophers in Japan, in this study, I deal with prominent figures like NISHIDA Kitaro, SUZUKI Daisetsu (or Daisetz) Teitaro, HISAMATSU Shin'ichi, SUETSUNA Joichi, NISHITANI Keiji, and IZUTSU Toshihiko. Among these, I would like to pay special attention to the theories of Nishida, Suzuki, Nishitani, and Izutsu, since they are very influential thinkers, who created wider philosophical discourses in the philosophical milieu in Japan.

Keyword: Theory of Place, Predicate, Individualization, Modernization, Japanese Philosophy.

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Introduction

Identity of human beings is not substantial, nor solid, but variable. In the course of transferring self-recognition, Western philosophy has been introduced into Japan, and this factor which made an essential change of self-awareness and representation in Japan, has been playing an important role. Understandably, thinkers in Japan grasp and represent their world view in a state of modernity differently than before. Not only the way of self understanding or expression is changed, but simultaneously with such institutional, social, or conditional change, the agent and its identity have been differentiated, which is committed to comprehend the self. If the self is now understood in a new way, and the awareness, understanding representation of the self differs from before, then the identity is also modified accordingly. Therefore, human beings remain searching for their identities.

Under the current situation, one cannot look for one's identity, while neglecting the ways of representation, which are characteristic to modernity. In the modernization, the representative thinkers of Japan inquired for their identities into Buddhism for example, while they rethought such a traditional vision. We can say, they grounded their way and expression of thinking in the midst of modernization through rethinking their traditional terminology and rhetoric in a more universalized framework. Some representative thinkers in Japan, who philosophized from such a point of view, thematized the problems of place, predicate and individualization in a new way. They found these topics in traditional thoughts, but their endeavor was possible only via their encounter with modernity, as I believe, it becomes immediately anachronic, if one argues that such thoughts were already existing before. Such thoughts were potentially there but not yet actualized. Hence, this actualization or the rethinking of a traditional world view is in my opinion the birth of philosophy in Japan in the modern sense, and it is an example of Japanese modernization and the modernization process of thinking in Japan.

In this study, focusing on the modernization challenge of philosophers in Japan, I deal with prominent figures like NISHIDA Kitaro (1870-1945), SUZUKI Daisetsu (or Daisetz) Teitaro (1870-1966), HISAMATSU Shin'ichi (1889-1980), SUETSUNA Joichi (1898-1970), NISHITANI Keiji (1900-1990),

and IZUTSU Toshihiko (1914-1993). In the following discussion, I would like to pay special attention to the theories of Nishida, Suzuki, Nishitani and Izutsu, since they are very influential thinkers, who created wider philosophical discourses in the philosophical milieu in Japan.

Nishida taught philosophy at Kyoto University and is the founder of the Kyoto school, an influential philosophical group. Suzuki was one of the most productive figures from the Buddhist side, especially Zen Buddhism, who explained its philosophical importance in modern language. Nishida and Suzuki were both from Ishikawa prefecture, and studied together at the University of Tokyo. Nishitani received instructions of Nishida at Kyoto University. He was an expert not only in the history of Western philosophy and mysticism, but also in Zen Buddhism. Izutsu worked on Western philosophy, thoughts and mysticism in a highly professional manner, while inquiring into Eastern thought including Jewish and Islamic thoughts at the same time. As is well known, he practiced Zen Buddhism and obtained a high level of expertise also with other schools of Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism.

It is my intention to demonstrate that Izutsu takes his place at the end point of the modernization of philosophy in Japan and introduced Islam into the horizon of Japanese philosophical thinking. In doing so, it becomes possible to understand how Izutsu came to confront the above mentioned three former thinkers, who formed the philosophical discourse in modern and contemporary Japan. This chapter is thus a kind of historical study of philosophy in Japan. In addition, I aim to show how Islam potentially actively contributed in the discussion about identity formation in Japan, since I understand Izutsu's project as the ground for philosophizing in a Japanese context. Further pursuing this point of view, it could be one of the ideal outcomes if the Far East and Islam realize their intellectual communication.

Nishida's Theory and Tanabe's criticism

The philosophy of Nishida Kitaro is an epoch-making achievement based on Buddhist philosophy. Nishida tried to find a philosophical fundament for experience on the verge of subject-object difference. A first result of his work is his *An Inquiry into the Good* (1911). After this he published a famous article *Place* (1926) in which he established in the context of his "logic of place" the concept of place as a key concept, which presents the

originality of his systematic philosophy. It is said that he is the first prominent thinker who focused on non-dualistic topos where it becomes aware of the “pure experience” in primordial or non-dualistic status. In his next work, *The System of Universals in Self-Awareness* (1930), he completed this philosophical system, which expresses the awareness of non-dualistic modus in to the fullest extent possible non-dualistic manner of verbalization. There, he profoundly inquires into the relation of “place” and “nothingness”. The concept of “nothingness” does not mean anything nihilistic or an ontological absence, emptiness or vacuum state. By “nothingness”, Nishida claimed and characterized the status or locus in which there is nothing that disturbs the awareness recognizing and verbalizing the experience of reality in a non-dualistic way. In the subsequent work, *The Self-Consciousness Determination of the Nothingness* (1932), he examined the mutual relation of “world” and “self” in the context of his set of concepts (like the ones of “place”, “nothingness” or “determination”), which had been completed up to this point. On this occasion, the problem of historicity and temporality in relation to act and expression or body was discussed.

The main subject here is the foundation of the so-called mystical experience of non-dualistic status or reality, and the study focuses on the basis of Nishida’s philosophy, namely the concept of “place”. The “place” is the “place of absolute nothingness” (NKZ 6:216, 225, 231) . It is, in other words, “place” of the “universal of absolute nothingness” or the “consciousness of God” (NKZ 5:9-10). If the dimension of this place would be transcended, the place “without God, and without self”, that is to say of “absolute nothingness”, would be reached (NKZ 5:5). I understand that by the word “God” this philosopher refers to the status of the absoluteness or transcendence beyond any ordinary distinction, and in this context he does not mean any specific divinity of concrete religion, since he is focusing rather on the epistemological problem and the problem of verbalization of the human being in general.

The experience of nothingness is described by Nishida as follows. The experience of nothingness, the union of subject and object, is the experience of “the self seeing the self in the self” (NKZ 5:387f), the “identification of the implicating and the implicated” (NKZ 5:425), the “identity of the place and the wherein” (ibid.), “the identity of the part and the whole” or the experience of “the self mirroring the self in the self” (NKZ 6:124). In this instant, the distinction of subject and object is sublated, according to Nishida, although, as we will see later, Izutsu called this instant, which Nishida identified with the absolute nothingness, just a state of relative nothingness. Anyway, this is the level of the realization of a state in which there is no object, self-awareness in its original meaning according to Nishida. Self-awareness in this sense is therefore the

experience of nothingness, and the buddhist mystical experience. Accordingly, this place is the dimension of nothingness. By proceeding in this way, Nishida terms this dimension the “place of true nothingness” (NKZ 6:90), the self-awareness as the “self-awareness of absolute nothingness” (ibid.), and he recognizes that “in self-awareness the nothingness intuits itself” (NKZ 6:124). In the same paragraph “self-awareness of absolute nothingness” is also termed as “self-aware determination” and it thereby becomes clear that “self-awareness” points to the “determination” occurring in the “place”.

In his later work “The World as a Dialectical Universal” which is central to the second part of Nishida's *Fundamental Problems of Philosophy* (1934), he writes as follows about the absolute : “We collide with something transcending our inmost bottom, in other words, we collide with the absolute exterior” (NKZ 7:357). This absolute is neither “transcendentally thinking substance” nor “absolute spirit”, nor “unboundedly profound creative act”, nor “something simply unboundedly profound” (NKZ 7:393). Rather, the fact “reality determines reality itself, happens through the absolute, and Nishida calls the locus where this fact happens the “ungrounded ground” or “absolute nothingness” (ibid.).

Up to this point, the following became clear: Firstly, the identification of subject and object is the state in which there is neither a subject nor an object, but only the events which carry properties or are verbalized such as “seeing”, “reflecting”, “determining”, “subsuming” or “implicating”. These events are of a self-referential identity structure. Accordingly, the identity of “place” and “the where-in”, as well as the identity of the “whole” and the “part” is structurally identical. That is to say, they are self-referential and refer to identical events. Thirdly, it follows that by means of the absolute “reality determines reality itself” counts as “absolute nothingness”, which is why the dimension of “determination” and the one of the “absolute nothingness” are identical. That is, “place” is the “place” of subject-object identification called self-awareness, or respectively the place of “nothingness”; and self-awareness is “determination”. Nishida's thesis of the “reality determining the reality itself” was later criticized by Izutsu. I will return to this issue later. What is important at this point is the consistency of Nishida's theory.

The self-referential structure Nishida relies on, was criticized also by Tanabe Hajime in 1930 at first. And yet, as we have seen, the theory of Nishida had been consistent before and after 1930 and remained unaltered. With regard to its consistency, as Nishida himself was probably aware of, the pillar of his theory upon which his thoughts on historicity and temporality depended, did not see any change. This consistency is apparent in one of his first articles, “Logical Understanding and Mathematical Understanding” (1912), as well as in the article written the

year before his death, “Logic and Mathematics” (1944), and in his terming, this logic system under referred to foundations of mathematics as a “self-representative system”.

As is well known, this term was coined by Dedekind (1831-1916). Nishida made use of the set theory by Cantor (1845-1918) as well as Dedekind’s, and leaned on thoughts of the philosopher Royce (1855-1916), who adhered to set theory. Royce described the “infinite system” as a “self-representative system” (NKZ 1:264; 2:3). At that time, 1922, Tanabe committed an article to an encyclopedia of philosophy on this mathematical concept. The “infinite system” explains the correspondence and identity of each subset of elements with the whole (that means equinumerous in terms of set theory), and in other words, this system explained that “the system represents itself in itself”.

Nishida certainly recurred to set theory as a foundation of mystical experience. Tanabe refers to it as follows. This subsuming relation of both poles tracing the limit of the subject (the concrete, particular) and the predicate (the general, universal) is established in the limit; this limit is the “absolute nothingness” or “place”. This is highly valued by Tanabe (THZ 4:312). However, Tanabe refers to a point that is structurally identical to set theory and thereby to the impossibility of this to work as a philosophical foundation. That is because, in regard to the logical structure of set theory proposing an identity of the whole and its parts, contradictions have been pointed out by Russell. From this follows, that no proposition of the whole being in the “place” of the self-referential (that is self-conscious) whole, which is the limit of the predicate or the absolute universal, is possible. “Determination”, “subsumption”, “implication” and any other thinkable characterizations in this “place” are impossible. More precisely, nothing can be known about a given specified whole. Tanabe holds therefore that it is impossible for a philosophy to develop a logic of “place” in which on the basis of this logical structure, the correspondence of the whole with the part becomes self-aware (THZ 4:313f).

As is evident from the above, Nishida did not refrain from the use of this logical structure despite his taking into account of Tanabe’s remark. In other words, Nishida’s foundation of the buddhist experience of the unity of subject and object does undoubtedly contain a logical problem. Nishida himself though, describes this paradox of set theory as “absolute contradictory self-identity” and thus tries to describe the profoundness of the religiousness of a subject-object identification. But even so, if its logical structure was not reviewed, the effort or logical, philosophical experiment of an explanation is deemed to failure. On the other hand, by taking into account positivistically another aspect of Tanabe’s critique, namely temporality and globality (universality), Nishida anticipates numerous problems of contemporary philosophy, which extends the scope and

horizon of his original philosophy. More precisely, through the dynamism of “discontinuous continuity”, he finds temporality in the universality of “place”. Although this perspective is a mode of existence of the world, the agent sees after the experience of the unification of subject and object, it nevertheless presupposes the logic of “place”. Philosophers after Nishida’s thesis struggled with this problem.

3. Suzuki’s Theory of Individualization

Thinkers like Hisamatsu Shin’ichi, Suetsuna Joichi, Nishitani Keiji and Izutsu Toshihiko, who were influenced by Nishida’s philosophy, further developed his idea of determination or individualization under the influence of Suzuki Daisetsu. They adopted Nishida’s idea of “self-determination of the universal” and discovered its contradictoriness or rather its significance. By recognizing the “absolute contradictory self-determination” as the reality of “determination of the universal”, they presupposed that dynamism of “discontinuous continuity”. In our discussion, the following fact is important. Namely, in my opinion, Suzuki’s influence is visible in the fact that all of them studied the thoughts of Huayan Buddhism, more intensively even than Nishida did. This means, from my point of view, that they found a philosophical possibility in this school of Buddhism, which clarifies the theory of Nishida, and the continuity of thoughts from ancient to modern times. While they interpreted the traditional thought in a modern way with Nishida, they continued Nishida’s endeavor and connected premodern thoughts with modern thoughts. Such interpretation is not a simple investigation, it is rather a discovery, or creation. They were creating and establishing their identity in the modern form.

To begin with, I will attempt to clarify the influence of Suzuki as he was understood by the thinkers of the Kyoto school. In his “Studies on Huayan”, Suzuki described the ontological structure of things as expounded by Huayan Buddhism in a groundbreaking way. Although Suetsuna did study Huayan under Suzuki, the descriptions of the former remain unsurpassed in terms of clarity. But, Suetsuna brought forward moments where Huayan describes an ontology by a methodology recurring on number theory. Fazang (643-712) demonstrates in the following way: All beings are represented by the numbers one to ten, and their ontological interpenetration of all elements is described in a symbolized form. Suzuki describes this symbolization even more vividly by the use of signs. The representation of the world’s infinite

structure as given by Fazang can be described according to Suzuki as follows:

a1 a2 a3 a4 a5 a6 a7 a8 a9 a10 ...

The identity of the single individual can be represented like this:

a1 = a1; a2 = a2; a3 = a3; ...

The structure of ontological interpenetration lastly can be represented like this:

a1 = a1 a2 a3 a4 a5 a6 a7 a8 a9 a10 ...

a2 = a1 a2 a3 a4 a5 a6 a7 a8 a9 a10 ...

a3 = a1 a2 a3 a4 a5 a6 a7 a8 a9 a10 ...

...

...

Suzuki's descriptions clearly present not only the Huayan idea of the world's infinity, but also the structure in which all individuals are ontologically transparently interwoven with one another. Suzuki himself does not give this representation, but the amalgamation of the pairs of individuals can be represented like this: a1=a2=a3=a4=a5=a6... But, by this representation the differences of the individuals are not readily reflectable. The followers take up this issue again in a modernized way, as this, however, was dealt with already in Buddhism in the premodern way.

It was groundbreaking that Suzuki used alphabet and arabic numbers instead of classical characters just like in the Buddhist texts. From my point of view, it is not the matter of writing in English, rather this diagrammatic illustration meant the start of a new figurative way of thinking which we will see in Izutsu's demonstration

4. Nishitani and Individualization

Nishitani picked up the graphical representation of Suzuki and described the contradictory self-identity of the individual with the universal proposed by Nishida clearer from the point of view of temporality. Nishitani developed a refined version of this representation. In his famous work, *What is religion?* (1960), this student of Nishida represents, just like Suzuki did, the whole by "a, b, c, ..." (NKC 10:159f). The individual "a" is given its cause of being by all the individuals below individual "b" in the whole. All of the individuals show such a relation (NKC 10:166f). In this diagrammatical representation of the individual "a", the self-identity is represented by "a". In fact, the individual's mode of being, of "a1"

becoming “a2”, is infinitely posited along the timeline in the form of “a” = “a1 = a2 = a3 = a4 = a5 = a6 = a7 = a8 = a9 = a10 ...”. The same can be said about “b”, “c”, ... up to infinity for every single individual. The work before this diagrammatical explanation, *The Philosophy of Radical Subjectivity* (1940), contains already a similar type of schema (NKC 1:270ff). The explanation runs as follows. A given individual is at times “a1” and at other times “a2”. Nishitani gives the example of a person “a” being at one time a “young apprentice” and at another time “a prime age artist”, but being in fact infinitely different (a = a1 = a2 = a3 = a4 = a5 = a6 = a7 = a8 = a9 = a10 ...). This applies to any individual (a, b, c, ...). This earlier work contains more detailed description as follows.

Nishitani describes this structure in Nishida’s terms as well, so that one can already see there the direct influence and further re-refinement of theoretical thinking. Such an individual “a” contains in itself and in nature different states (“a1, a2, a3, ...”). This means that the essence of the relevant individual has in nature its own diversity and its very manifold actualizations is described as the form “a1, a2, a3, ...”. This structure of the individual is applied to that of the uni-versals. This idea corresponds to Nishida’s “concrete universal” (NKC 1:274). This concept was the result of Nishida’s thinking which approached the limits of the subject as opposing the predicate in his discussion. The actuality of the real individual “a1” is posited by the concrete individual “a1{a(A)}” (NKC 1:278). Because, although the individual “a” is a particular within the whole of the form “a, b, c, ...”, the concrete individual is in reality “a1”, “a2”, and so on, one has to think that the particular “a” carries the cause “A” of the concrete universal (NKC 1:277). That is to say, for the actual individual “a1” or “a2” which is the actuality at the respective time, “a” is the potentiality and the cause for “a” to further be “a” is indicated by “A”. In reality “a” and “A” are always one (NKC 1:274). In summary, “a” is the potentiality of any being in reality, which you can call “a1” or “a2”, or the like. And in regard to the relation to “b”, “c”, etc., there is the actualizing essence “A” which is potentially in “a” (NKC 1:274-5). It is fair to say, although Nishitani himself does not comment on this point, but for example, the cause of being for the individual “a” is everything but “a”, that is (b, c, d, e, ...), therefore the cause of being of “a”, or better to say the actuality of “A” is (b, c, d, e, ...). This point is later presented by Izutsu more explicitly, who adopted this

same diagrammatical demonstration on the one hand, and on the other hand he configured a new type of ontological image.

I argue that, if temporality is thus also represented in Nishitani's theoretical thinking, although thinkable, its adequacy as a description of "discontinuous continuity" remains not sufficiently demonstrated. But Nishitani presented even more clearly than Suzuki the "ontologically transparent world", which is what Nishida termed the "self-determination of the universal". However, an even greater merit is his clear presentation of the structure remaining, even if the individual is differentiated in time. In addition, he formalized the difference of the individuals that remains, even when the structure of an individual of this kind matches that of the myriad of other individuals. And yet, another aspect of this dimension remains vague, namely the "discontinuous continuity". Although, I would argue that both aspects are regarded as having been explained by Izutsu, which I will turn to below

5. Izutsu's Theory of Individualization

The difference between Izutsu and the other former thinkers presented is his profound knowledge of Yogacara Buddhism, Only-Consciousness Buddhism. Firstly, I will present Izutsu's understanding of "ontological transparency". This thinker represents the individual beings as "A, B, C, ..." and their actuality as an infinite number of structural elements (a, b, c, d, e, ...) (KA:57f). The ontological difference of the respective individuals remains despite their identical structure (a, b, c, d, e, ...), because the state of the structural elements differ. Izutsu clarified this difference, and, in my opinion, this point makes his description the highlight of the modernization course of traditional thoughts in Japan.

A foundation of individualization, that is differentiation of individuals, is provided by the theory of zhuban (powerful-powerless relation, namely actuality-potentiality relation) of Huayan Buddhism in Izutsu (KA:60). Hereafter I would like to rephrase "powerful" to "actual" or "actualized"; and "powerless" to "potential", "hidden" or "virtualized". In other words, "as long as one (or more) from within the group of structural elements is actualized, the remaining elements are set back to the state of potentiality" (KA:59). Thereby the individuals' identity (A is A and not B or C) is secured. By emphasizing the actuality (or advance) in bold print

Izutsu introduced an un-ambiguous scheme (ibid.):

A (a, b, c, d, e, ...)

B (a, b, c, d, e, ...)

C (a, b, c, d, e, ...)

...

In individual A “a” is actualized, therefore in the description “a” is in bold print. The others are described in the same fashion. By doing so, Izutsu represents the identity of the ontological structural elements as a cause of “ontological interpenetration”, which is ontologically made transparent by identical individuals. At the same time, by means of the “actuality and potentiality”, the cause becomes visible as it secures the self-identity of the respective individuals, while it is also visible that each one is differentiated from the other. In the refinement of the diagrammatical configuration by Izutsu, I would like to see his deepening of thinking too.

Due to the fact that the “uncountable ontological structural elements” are identical in all possible individuals, the “ontological transparency” of all beings can be represented by only one scheme (figure 1), which represents the state of the overall context (KA:60).

This scheme represents the ontological nexus, that is, one moment of reality in which all individuals establish relations among each other. Accordingly, this totality is subjected to constant change. It should be understood with this permanent change of the individuals’ relations and the fluctuation of the “actuality-potentiality-relation” in mind. This is the temporal aspect of the individual’s ontological structure, in other words, Nishida’s “discontinuous continuity”. Izutsu as well makes use of this term of Nishida to clarify the beings’ temporal structure as proposed by the Yogacara. He considers the temporality of the ontological structure as being analogous to the stream of consciousness. Izutsu writes as follows:

“Any “A” that appears in an ordinary consciousness as if it continues to exist for a given time span is actually a series of similar “things” ($A_1 \rightarrow A_2 \rightarrow A_3 \rightarrow A_4 \rightarrow \dots A_x$), as to the Yogacara. This “A”, regarded to be an “identical thing”, is said to actually be a chain of discontinuous ontological units of the form “ $A_1 \rightarrow A_2 \rightarrow A_3 \rightarrow A_4 \rightarrow \dots A_x$ ” and this discontinuous continuity is mistaken by our ordinary consciousness for an uninterrupted continuity.” (KA:159)

But actually, this way of the individual's being is the way of the individual's keeping on existing, as it is reflected by an ordinary consciousness. It recognizes the individual that now became its object. The cause of this objectification of the individual is conceptually posited. What is meant, is the cause of any individual "A" being objectified to a here and now existing one (A1). Accordingly, as soon as the objectification takes place (A1 comes into existence), the cause of "A1", which is now symbolized as "a1", seizes its actions. But, in order to be recognizable for an ordinary consciousness "A" as "A", "A" must keep on existing in the form "A1 → A2". For "A2" as well, its cause of being would be necessary in the same way preceding A2. This progresses infinitely in the form of "A1 → A2 → A3 → A4 → ... Ax". Since the ordinary consciousness is not able to recognize the cause "a1 ...", it is an event of the deep structure of consciousness (a1 → a2 → a3 ...). In other words, the discontinuous continuity "A1 → A2 → A3 → A4 → ... Ax" is the actuality of the individual "A" regarded to be on the surface of consciousness. But the series of the cause that actualizes this series is located in the deep structure of consciousness. The whole of these two continuities is the structure of reality of the individual "A". Izutsu shows this by means of the following scheme (figure2):

The cause of being "a", which is for example a past experience, is usually hidden to the individual "A". But, because the individual "A" is "actually a series of similar "things" (A1 → A2 → A3 → A4 → ... Ax)" (KA:159), for "A1" there is the cause "a1" and thereupon with the objectification of "A1" its trace remains in the depths of the consciousness. Immediately from this trace becomes "a2", the cause of A2 and this continuity further progresses discontinuously. So, the experience becomes past but exists potentially, causes the next experience and makes the next experience recognizable. This structure of "discontinuous continuity" is the way of any individual's being of the whole (A, B, C, ...). Reality has to be seen as the second of Izutsu's schemes providing the dynamism for the first one.

It is fair to say that this is the clearest conceptualization of the unity of the part and the whole, as discovered by Nishida and of his “discontinuous continuity”. But, Izutsu did not simply rearrange preexisting theories. Rather, this is the result of his studies in Maha-yana Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism and primarily of Islam. In the next and final section I will show that one reason of the success of Izutsu’s conceptualization is his study of Islam. Furthermore, I will argue that owing to Islamic philosophy, Izutsu managed to fulfill the Nishida project of the modernization of traditional thinking, “theory of place” and “theory of predicate”..

Izutsu’s theory of predicate and Mulla Sadra

According to Izutsu the experience of reality has been structurally similarly described by Plotin, one of the most prominent Japanese Buddhist thinkers, Dogen (1200-1253), of the Soto school of Zen Buddhism, Ibn Arabi (1165-1240) and Mulla Sadra (1571-1640), who developed the teaching of Ibn Arabi. As is generally known, Plotin, just like Huayan Buddhism, presented a world view based on the resemblance of part and whole by means of the symbol of light, while Dogen used the metaphor of the flower (the particular) and the world (the whole). On the one hand, Ibn Arabi used the metaphor of the seeds for a kind of mereological thinking on the relation between the part and the whole; on the other hand, he employed both the symbol of light and a theory on divine names regarding the correspondence between the part and whole. I believe that beyond Ibn Arabi’s theory, Izutsu makes use of it on a meta-level as some sort of language theory in order to clarify his own world view. He rereads Ibn Arabi within the framework of his own philosophical semantics, and interprets the attributes of God to which any of the names refer as semantic units. Izutsu demonstrates therefore Mulla Sadra as the philosopher who conceptualized Ibn Arabi’s “semantics” into a predicate theory. In other words, I argue that Izutsu discovered, through reading Mulla Sadra’s texts, a possibility to develop his new theory of predicate. He supported his predecessor’s, Ibn Arabi’s, theory of God’s names as follows: “Any of divine names implies by itself all other divine names. In other words, any single divine name contains within its field of ac-tion the whole of all other divine names as its attribute. [...] Accord-ingly, regardless of which one of divine names is considered, the re-ality of all thinkable divine

names is concentrated within that. The fact that these names are distinguished from each other is only due to the above mentioned “subtlety” (latifah).” (KA:90)

The concept of “subtlety” (latifah) here in the mind of Izutsu represents the faction of “actuality-potentiality relation” which we discussed above in relation with his interpretation of Huayan Bud-dhism. By employing the scheme clarifying the Huayan world view, Izutsu reads this idea as:

“A, B, C, ... are the forms which become apparent as the divine names. Insofar as the appearance is concerned, “A” for instance is different from “B” as well as “C”. However, in regard of the semantic reality (a, b, c, d, e, ...) “B” and “C” are identical. Despite of that, the reason why each one is able to be a different divine name, is solely due to the fact that one element [of the semantic reality] which represents the linguistic meaning of the respective divine name, like “a” in “A” (“a” is the semantic element which is accidentally linguistically directly linked to “A”), “b” in “B”, “c” in “C” and so on, is “actual-ized” (powerful), overwhelms all other elements and reduces them to “potential” (powerless).” (KA:94)

Although in his presentation of Huayan, Izutsu understands the structural elements ontologically; here, he understands the individual’s reality semantically. His study of Dogen represents the same structural interpretation. According to Izutsu’s interpretation of Ibn Arabi, any of the divine names is a semantic unit. In the semantic version of Ibn Arabi’s thoughts, each semantic unit contains all units as oneness in itself. A certain semantic unit though is actualized, powerful and influential. Hence, the world of Huayan is established, which is the actuality of the “different while the same and the same while different”-situation. This state or connection describes the relation of identity and difference of things. It holds true for the relations of the ontological elements of a thing as well. Ibn Arabi terms this difference relation “latifah”.

Mulla Sadra made use of this idea and developed it further. The relation of the structural elements of being, termed “latifah” by Ibn Arabi, is equated with a number by Mulla Sadra. My translation is based on the translation and interpretation of Izutsu .

“Without any doubt, all numbers are essentially one. It is because in regard of any number there is nothing but the collective unit of one and there is

no difference to show insofar as it is one. However, to the contrary, it cannot be denied that each number differs from each other in its essence. This is because the reason extracts the essential character from each number which is not existent in the other numbers and naturally the various differences of particularity consist of such essentially different characters according to our subjective judgment. [...] Hence, in the very point, the number has the identical structure with the particular being. That is to say, the various universal characters which the reason extracts are namely the very thing itself of which such numbers or beings consist.” (KM 88)

In short, this shows the resemblance or rather the bijectivity or fractal structure. This view is in itself not original in any way, but, Mulla Sadra as such claims the identity of the universal and the particular, or rather the turn towards identity. He thus attempted a turn of predicate theory itself as it is supposed to mirror the structure of reality. Therefore, I believe this is unique entirely in the sense that Izutsu interprets the mereological vision of individuation of the thinkers like Ibn Arabi or Mulla Sadra semantically, and, on the basis of his interpretation, he develops and deepens thoroughly the idea of “place” and “predicate”. In other words, I claim that Izutsu showed us a possibility and sophistication of modernization of Japanese thoughts, caused by Islamic philosophy.

It is the reality of the particular that the universal coincides with a given particular. It is not the concept of being that is intended here, but the reality of being. The subsuming relation of the structural elements that exists in the coincidence or identity of the part and the whole usually is a subsuming relation between universals, but here Mulla Sadra applies the subsuming relation of the universals of numbers, and therefore the same structure is supposed to hold true also for reality (KM12). The concept of being implies the various concepts predicated in reality. Put differently, a universal concept (i.e. existence) conceptually subsumes the subordinated concepts and is predicated by these numerous subconcepts (this means, the concept of existence is predicated attributively to various universals). In the physical reality though, the being is united with the universal quiddity in the special manner that the universal quiddity becomes the predicate of being (KM13).

Izutsu expresses this transferring event of being of reality in a unique language like the following, in which I see the finest and final expression of the serial development of theory of predicate in the modernization of philosophy in Japan. Izutsu writes, in a common predication the proposition of “The flower exists” is composed, but according to the thought of Mulla Sadra, the proposition of “The being is doing flower” (or the being does “flower” here as this specific event) mirrors the structure of reality. “The flower exists” is the logical structure of usual concepts, while “The being flowers” is the structure of reality. Izutsu concisely summarized the thinking of Mulla Sadra by means of expressions like these. And this is Izutsu’s thesis that the predicate structure indicates the mystical experience or the primordial vision of the things of reality.

Moreover, for it is universal, X (the particular’s reality of being) migrates to the particular A (The being does “flower”). The direct experience of a thing’s universal quiddity in this moment and the degeneration of the intelligible inner structure of intentionality occur simultaneously. Even by training of this existential experience, a thing’s identification of its universal quiddity and its particular uniqueness do not reveal itself as consistent status. Only in the in-stant in which the intentionality that tended towards a certain thing disappears, the up to this point hidden, potential, and virtualized reality manifests itself and becomes actual. At this moment, this reality renders itself perceptible. At this moment, the sensuous thing is the thing’s individual reality at this time and this place. X’s turn from the unapparent state into the manifestation is the creation of a new semantic relation, the creation of new existential modes of reality; the recognized is coincidental collision or rather conversion of the particular and the universal on each and every occasion at that time and that place of the respective event.

The universal quiddity is an ambiguous universal in reality. We have already seen that a semantic unit actually is composed of countless potential semantic units. According to the direct experience of the apprehended, or rather the coincidence of individual and universal at each time and place it happens, the conversion of the fabric of the infinite potential semantic units structuring that ambiguous universal is established. This is the actuality of the establishment of semantic conversion. Izutsu calls the “place” of this event of semantic and

perceptive transformation “field” or “field of dynamism”. In this point, I see the establishment of Izutsu’s philosophy and his own version of theory of “place” and “predicate”.

Conclusion

Nishida, who is considered as the first person who established a truly unique philosophy in modern Japan, thematized these very topics. His colleagues, followers and his school, namely the Kyoto school, have investigated the same issues. By discussing Izutsu on the aspect of problems of place, predicate and individuation, we can take the following perspectives. One of the main streams of Buddhist or Japanese philosophy has gained a foundation of mystic experience in the sense of a non-dualistic vision of reality and an orientation thanks to the philosophy of Nishida. At the same time, the worldview of Buddhist mysticism saw a refinement via Suzuki’s and Nishitani’s methods of representation. In doing so, Buddhist worldview acquires the authenticity to be identified with mysticism in the modern sense of religious studies. In this sense, their refinement of representation is the very modernization of thinking.

Within this stream, Izutsu raised Nishida’s attempts to the level of a precise theory. Especially his language theory, originating in semantics and predicate theory, has to be valued beyond a mere completion of Nishida’s philosophy, as we see the critical influence of Islamic thoughts and therefore we can confirm the creative contribution of Islamic thoughts in the formation and modernization of philosophy in Japan. Although Izutsu did not belong to the Kyoto school, we can immediately find the exact same topics in his theoretical expressions. Therefore, from the very point of view, we can place Izutsu in the course of discussions after Nishida. And precisely this last modernist, Izutsu, who was however, trying to overcome even the postmodern thinking, was keeping Islam in mind.

In such a situation of encountering the outside or the non-self, Japan experienced the change and endeavor of the self as influenced by India (mainly Buddhism) and China (mainly Buddhism and Confucianism) for long time. However, in the occasion of ‘serious’ globalization, a second overwhelming impact from the West and another decisive influence from Islam affected the Self. I find the above discussed special effect in the transformation and deepening of philosophical discourses in Japan. Of

course, this viewpoint is possible, only if Izutsu is placed into the history of philosophy in Japan.

Modernization is not equal to Westernization. It is first of all a matter of thinking or perspective, the pursuit of rationality and uni-versality. Perhaps there was and is such a pursuit in each culture. The point is that modernity is the very manifestation of the tendency to be thorough in action and thought of this type of pursuit. Firstly, rational spirit or universalism has the nature to pursue rationality and universality thoroughly. Secondly, modernization manifests itself as globalization. It is understandable that one cannot characterize globalization as Westernization, because the world does not get westernized, but the world is globalized. A globalizing world, that is, to globalize the world, means that the world desires the world. In other words, the situation in which the components, parts, and elements of the world interpenetrate mutually and respectively, is called globalization. That is the reason why in the modernization a new representation of the worldview was required.

Endnote

1. This study is based on my short version published at first in German : ONO Junichi, „Mullā Sadrā und Überwindung der Prädikatstheorie Nishidas“, in C. Bickmann und M. Wirtz, eds., *Selbstverhältnis im Weltbezug*, Teil II, Nordhausen : Traugott Bautz, 2011, pp.75-92.

1. I quote Nishida's texts from his complete works of the earlier edition, *Nishida Kitaro Zenshu* (NKZ), 19 vols., Tokyo : Iwanami shoten, 1987. For convenience I omit in this article specific symbols for transcription.

1. YAMASHITA Masao, *Mathematical Structure in Thoughts*, Tokyo : Chikuma shoten, 2006 [1980], p. 200ff.

1. YAMASHITA 2006, p. 201. I refer to the article written by Tanabe "Self-representative system" which Yamashita quotes in his book.

1. I quote Tanabe's texts from his complete works *Tanane Hajime Zenshu* (THZ), Tokyo : Chikuma shobo, 1963-64.

1. I refer to his complete works, *Suzuki Daisetsu Zenshu* (SDZ), vol. 32, Tokyo : Iwanami shoten, 1968-71. The work "Studies on Huayan" was published 1955 in Japanese which was originally written in English and published in some articles, and is contained in volume 5 in his complete works, SDZ 5:279-284.

1. SUETSUNA Joichi, *World of Huayan Sutra*, Tokyo : Shunjusha, 1957. Suetsuna was a prominent mathematician and professor for mathematics at the University of Tokyo, whose book Nishida read, while he studied Buddhism and Nishida philosophy.

1. The expression “ontological interpenetration” is equal to Izutsu’s “ontological transparency”. Cf. T. Izutsu, *Kosumosu to anchikosumosu (Cosmos and Anti-Cosmos)*, Tokyo : Iwanami shoten, 1989, p. 164. I abridge this title as KA hereafter.

1. NISHITANI Keiji, *Shukyo towa nani ka (What is religion?)*, in volume 10 of his collective works *Nishitani Keiji Chosakushu* (NKC), vols. 26, Tokyo : Sobunsha, 1986-95.

1. Mulla Sadra, *Kitab al-Masha'ir*, translated, annotated and interpreted by Izutsu, Iwanami shoten : Tokyo, 1978. Izutsu adopted Corbin’s edition of Arabic text and numbering, therefore I give the reference passage with KM plus number. Cf. H. Corbin, *Le livre des pénétrations métaphysiques*, Téhéran : Département d'iranologie de l'Institut franco-iranien ; Paris : Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1964.

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