

# 世界史的立場と日本

## The World-Historical Standpoint and Japan

(Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 25 March 1943)

*The pages that follow comprise no more than a draft translation of about one-third of the 中央公論 discussions. They contain all of the comments of Nishitani Keiji in all discussions, and several sections of the first discussion with the remarks of all the participants. All ellipses are in the original. Omissions are indicated by asterisks.*

*Most of the work was done on trains and airplanes traveling throughout Europe and the United States in the summer of 1993, without access to dictionaries and reference works. After returning, there has not been time to revise it. It is offered here only as an aid to navigating your way around the discussions. I recommend that you do not quote this translation verbatim without checking it against the original.*

*J. W. Heisig*  
15 October 1994

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## Preface

Two years ago this fall the staff of *Chūōkōron* suggested arranging for a completely free round-table discussion to take up issues circulating among us for some time now. There was no pre-arranged agenda for our discussion when we gathered together last November 26th in the evening, just thirteen days before the declaration of the Greater East Asian War. We had no reason at the time to feel pressured by circumstances. But the sense of real alarm rising in the world day by day did not escape us, and helped concentrate the discussion on world history and Japan's subjective place in it. Thus the record of that evening's discussion was only *later* given the title "The World-Historical Standpoint and Japan" by *Chūōkōron*. The outbreak of the Greater East Asian War took place when the proofreading was already almost completed. Overcome by feelings difficult to express and a sense of resolve, we watched intently as our speculations were being judged by the realities of world history. But the pure essence of the nation was exalted more and more as it faced hardships with honor, and the dignified mien of the imperial army at land and at sea captured the hearts and minds of the world. And of course, as we observed not only the behest of imperial prestige, but also the brave loyalty of the officers and their men and the cooperation of 100 million subjects, we were deeply impressed by the great beneficence of the Empire and privately consoled that our discussion had hit the mark as well as it did.

The account of this discussion attracted an unanticipated amount of public attention, and was graced with both praise and criticism. In particular we were questioned in many cases about moral energy and the actual policy in the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. The fact that the stronghold of British aggression in East Asia for a century, Hong Kong and Singapore, had already caved in, and that the concrete means for the erection of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere with Japan as the subjective center was become an ever more pressing issue, were perhaps an important part of the reason for this attention. The second discussion held under these circumstances, which again was *later* assigned the title "The Morality and Historicity of the East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere," was published in the *Chūōkōron* in April of last year.

But as we prepared to face the year 1943, which would have important and epoch-making significance for later developments in the Greater East Asian War, in particular the carrying out of the Greater East Asian War and the foundation of the East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, we felt obliged to rethink the "philosophy of all-out war." This was the setting for the third discussion which was printed in the year's first edition of the *Chūōkōron*. At present a movement demanding the conversion of everything from culture and thought to the nation and its economy has emerged from the ground of world history. We endeavored to get a hold on problem of "all-out war" from the core of world history as one indication of what was going on. This was why we did not consider it merely a question of war or peace, but of the need to take the stance of a higher historical reality that permeates times of war and peace alike.

On this basis, from immediately before the outbreak of the Greater East Asian War up until now, we held three unplanned but inter-related discussions in the very midst of the transitions going on in Japanese and world history. As the form of free discussion shows, our

speculations were no more than the fruit of provisional, interlocutory, unripened ideas. They are not something to be offered to the readership the public far and wide. But *Chūōkōron* saw a fervent wish from the public for these discussions and in order to complete the job they had started, asked us for permission to reprint them in a single volume. On reading through the galleys, we could not help feeling that corrections and additions were needed in several places. But to do so would have completely destroyed the free form the discussion had taken, and since the aim was not so much to offer fixed conclusions for the intelligentsia as something more in the nature of a groping for clarity in the face of reality, the discussions were left to stand as they were, with no more than minor editing of grammar here and there. If there is some measure of significance in this one intellectual contribution by specialists in philosophy and history to the service of the nation, we shall consider ourselves blessed beyond expectation.

As just noted, in the discussions themselves opinions were expressed in an undeveloped and unprepared manner. We ourselves were not always in complete agreement on the details, and there are surely not a few points that need to be thought out more deeply. But at bottom, there was something on which we stood in full agreement with each other: the standpoint of world-historical Japan. This basic agreement runs throughout the three discussions. Hence, the general title of present volume is identical with that of the first discussion, *The World-historical Standpoint and Japan*.

We would like to express our appreciation and gratitude for all the advice and stimulus—both informed and otherwise—that came our way already from the time of the first discussion. Perhaps the answers we gave to them may be considered an expression of our thanks. Without going into further detail, there are two main areas in which we feel profound gratitude. First was the criticism that Japanese subjectivity was missing from our standpoint. Reading through our three discussions, one will probably feel that this is a misunderstanding without foundation. The strong emphasis we put on the subjectivity of Japan in the world neither glosses over, nor of course completely overlooks the question. But we endeavored to make clear in theoretical terms how Japan's subjectivity is not something that should be self-righteous and dogmatic. At bottom, our reference to world-historical necessity is not merely a matter of natural inevitability, but of a subjectivity necessity that is unfolded through the self-awareness and praxis of Japanese subjectivity, and at the same time carries the added significance sense of a world-historical "ought." In contrast, a second criticism claimed that our debate had glamorized Japan's reality, that we were being too idealistic. But we ourselves believe that the truth of Japan is gradually unfolding through the Greater East Asian War. We are moreover convinced that through the praxis of that truth, distortions of reality are being corrected. While this conviction has come transmitted through the waves of intellectual upheavals that have troubled country's past, it has also become more and more solid.

In the course of planning this publication, Nishinakama Masao ??, a student in the Tokyo Imperial University Faculty of Law, and Shibasaki Kōmiryō ?? of the Faculty of Economics, echoed their accord and offered to contribute their editorial skills to the compilation of the discussions, including a copy of a preface they had composed. The theory of patriotic planning explained there contained many points worthy of attention, but after some consideration, we decided to limit the publication to our own discussions. In acknowledging the hearty stimulus from the younger generation that we received through the zeal of these two students, we would like to extend our gratitude to Professor Nagano Takeshi ?? who was favorably excited after the initial discussion and introduced the two students to us.

In bringing this preface to a close, we wish to extend our sincerest gratitude to Hatanaka

Shigeo ??, Shinohara Takeshi ??, Asaishi Akiyo ??, and Ebihara Mitsuyoshi ?? of the *Chūōkōron* editorial staff, and to Fujita Oyamasa and Hiratake Nisho ?? of the publication department for their kindness and consideration, and in particular to Ōie Masatoshi ?? of the *Mainichi Shinbun* for all his help in the extraordinarily difficult task of transcribing all three discussion.

1 February 1943

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# The World-Historical Standpoint and Japan

Chūōkōron Discussion 1: 26 November 1941

## WHY WORLD HISTORY IS A PROBLEM [3–8]

Kōsaka: Recently I was caught somewhat by surprise when someone asked me what kind of philosophy of history Japan has, but on further reflection it seem to me that one can distinguish three stages. In the first stage Richartean theories of the epistemology of history were in vogue, but that now seems like ages ago. Next came a period in which attempts were made to consider the philosophy of history in terms of a philosophy of life or hermeneutics along Dilthey's lines. This we may broadly refer to as a second stage. But now we have taken a step further and come to the awareness that the philosophy of history has to be a philosophy of world history in the concrete. This I would consider a third stage. Why did we come to it? I consider it a result of the present place of Japan in world history. In making this step, of course, a great deal has been learned from the thought of figures like Hegel and Ranke, but in the end, when it comes to the question what is to become of Japan faced with the new world now in the making, of what meaning Japan is being made to bear and what meaning it must realize—in a word, when it comes to the task of Japan within world history, then of course there is no question of learning from any Western thinker, whoever it may be. For this, the Japanese must use their own heads. This is Japan today, and this I think in particular is why a philosophy of world history is being called for.

Suzuki: I feel exactly the same. As Kōyama said recently, the consciousness of world history is very strong today, and I see it as consisting in the analysis of the present. The main thing is that the present is engaged in self-criticism and self-examination, and in this sense the consciousness of world history is emerging across the world. It is especially strong in Japan, though in a distinct sense. There is a problem here. The concept of world history has a rather long history in Europe and even the word *world history* is very old. When the term is used today to refer particularly to the present age, in the case of Europe it is tied to what Europe is thinking about as a crisis. It is tied to the notion of crisis. But in Japan the recent rise in consciousness of world history is a very different matter. There—how shall I put it?—Japan's desire for reform is seen reflected very clearly. But there is more than desire at stake, for reform can do nothing in fact if it is no more than a subjective desire for reform without an adequate objective basis. Japan finds itself today at the point of having to wake up to this realization, and it seems to be here that the emphasis has been laid on the consciousness of world history. At the same time, there are scholarly reasons given like Troeltsch's idea of the overcoming of historicism, but ...

Kōsaka: The way of thinking has changed rather much, too. Philosophy has become the academic discipline of clarifying one's posture in the midst of the workings of his-

tory and of suggesting the direction one should take. In this sense it has to analyze the present. But actually this analysis of the present cannot consist of anything other than the analysis of one time—our present time—within the context of world history. This is what it means to analyze the present. Philosophy is more than the academic discipline of laying the ground for what already exists. It takes a further step as the scholarly discipline that gives an orientation to things in historical transition. It is the discipline of orientation. But does not the orientation of world history look different viewed from the East and from the West? Is there not a basic difference in the way the world is conceived? In short, the question for me is how the world is thought about. From the viewpoint of the European, as Suzuki said, it is a matter of the crisis of Europe, but from our viewpoint things are a bit different than for the Westerners. The very way the world is seen and thought about is somehow different. We must give careful thought to just what is world is.

Kōyama: The world history that the Europeans are thinking of and the one that we think of do differ quite a lot.

Kōsaka: I have the sense that there are differences ...

Kōyama: There *should* be. In the real sense, it is we Japanese who are more deeply touched by the question of world history than the Europeans. And I think this is only right. I am not referring here to a subjective conception of the Japanese but to something that has roots in the history of the world itself. That is how I see it.

Kōsaka, Suzuki: I agree.

Kōsaka: I don't really know anyone other than the Japanese who take the problem of the philosophy of world history seriously, though somewhat earlier people like Spengler spoke of the rise and decline of the West.

Suzuki: Really a kind of Japanese revolutionary world consciousness ...

Kōyama: In Germany there is a historian named Brandenburg who wrote a book called *Europe and the World*; his thought seems to be representative. In his view, true world history only begins in the twentieth century. For with the twentieth century came concern with things like the gradual resistance to Europe by the world outside of Europe, and the traditional idea of Europe as ruling the world was no longer so simple a matter. Nations outside of Europe—like Japan and Arabia and other colonial regions—stopped doing what Europe told them to do. It has come to the point that when international alliances are formed, all parties at least formally have equal rights. What he is arguing is that Europe has become *a* world and that very recently the real world has started to come into its own. If I remember correctly, he looks back at past history from this vantage point and finds it to consist of relationships within the European cultural sphere, the East Asian cultural sphere, and the West Asian cultural sphere. The question is also raised whether Russia belongs to Europe or to the non-European world. Brandenburg warns of the danger of Europe eventually breaking up. In any case, I found it interesting as a new approach.

**THE PHILOSOPHY OF WORLD HISTORY AND THE STUDY OF WORLD HISTORY [9–11]**

Nishitani: I feel the same. In general Europeans, even today, have not gotten away from the habit of looking at world problems from the perspective of Europe ...

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**THE CRISIS CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE EUROPEANS AND THE WORLD-HISTORY CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE JAPANESE [11–7]**

Nishitani: For the Europeans, the problems of Asia were not something that keenly affected them personally. Not in the way the problems of Europe affected us, I mean. This is the difference. While to Europe Asia was seen as no more than raw materials for their own activities, for us the problem was how actively to cope with Europe's activeness. Seen in terms of an I-thou relationship, Europe's position was one of an exclusive "I." Thus in Europe it is a matter of crisis consciousness and in Japan of a new world order. So if present-day Japan thinks about world history and the philosophy of world history in a new sense, I think it goes back to this kind of distinction.

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Nishitani: That way of looking at things seems to be common in Europe.

\* \* \* \* \*

Nishitani: That reminds me of a Swiss going to Japan whom I met coming back on the ship from Germany. He lent me a large book entitled *The Vanguard of the Colored Races*, a German translation from the English. I don't remember what edition it was, but it was widely read. And it had to do precisely with the rise to power of the colored races. The biggest problem in the book was Japan. This might sound a little funny, but Mr. Saionji appears, and the meeting with him .... well anyway, as far as quantity goes there seem to be plenty of such books around. In the end, I had the sense of the approach from beyond the horizon of the consciousness of Europe as a special region, and behind it like a great shadowy figure the colored races and their rise to power.

Kōyama: So to be in Europe means to be in the crisis consciousness of Europe.

Kōsaka: Yes, and simply put ...

Kōyama: It's different from what we mean by consciousness of world history.

Nishitani: That is not so surprising. There is an awful ignorance of the East. Academic specialists are different, but people in general feel it as somehow far away. For us, Europe is right near at hand.

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**REFLECTIONS IN EUROPE ON THE UNITY OF EUROPE [17–9]**

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Nishitani: Basically the unity of culture means the unity of spirit. When all is said and done, the Europeans have pride in their own culture. If a strong self-awareness of the spiritual unity of Europe were to arise from that pride, it would be a frightening historical force. It is only an uneducated guess, but it seems to me that the tendency towards European unification will become a formidable force in the future. But that is complicated by the trend towards Anglo-Saxon unity, which entails difficult problems.

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#### THE EUROPEAN SENSE OF SUPERIORITY [19–23]

Nishitani: That isn't all. The other half of it is that besides defending themselves, there seems to be at bottom a sense that they themselves will give to the world, to put it kindly, some kind of new order. Put in radical terms, the idea that only the Aryan race is *kulturschaffend* while the Japanese are below at the *kulturtragend* level, in some sense is a fitting expression of the feeling of the Europeans at large, that if of their feeling of superiority. That and their feeling of respect for the Japanese. There is a kind of terror of what the Japanese in their shrewdness might be up to. I am only joking, but something like that also comes into the picture.

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Nishitani: That is why East Asian Culture is seen as at a lower level. It is true that those who really study the culture of East Asia admit that the only cultures that can really rival those of Europe are the East Asian cultures. I have often come across many things that ... but that is only among those who understand. People in general are not that way. On this point, the distinction between the culturally creative and the culturally retentive is a viewpoint that really fits the feeling of the general populace.

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Nishitani: In a certain sense, capitalism can be accepted as is, in certain cases even surpass Europe. What has kept us down, especially Japan's intellectuals in general, is a superiority of culture, is it not?

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#### THE SPECIAL CHARACTER OF EUROPEAN CULTURE [24–6]

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Kōyama: That being so, we are left with the extremely difficult problem of superior and inferior civilizations, ... but in order for there to be a consciousness of the fact that civilizations that are different can also be outstanding, does there not have to be a force working outside of civilization? Consciousness of value of civilizations as superior or inferior seems to have come to Japan along with the conception of overpowering with economic and military strength, as Japan was overpowered

after the end of the feudal period ...

Nishitani: I think there is a point to that. The fact that in matters of military armament and the economy Japan has been able to hold its own seems to me a matter of character. In contrast, if we can imagine for example the mind-set of people around the time of the Meiji Restoration, the feeling that Western culture gave was, as we say today, of something “scientific,” in the broad sense ... as in the case of astronomy and medicine and the like, all of which came for the most part from the Chinese but with Europe fit the actual facts. Call it positivism, call it scientific in the broad sense of the term, this was the sense that people had. It was the same with literature. Why does European literature catch on with us? Because there is something positivistic to it (to take the term in its broad sense), because it seeks for human life or psychology and what have you in a form that accords with the facts, because in the broad sense it tries to ask after things positivistically. In other words, even in literature there is a sense of the quest for “truth.” This inspired confidence that things were really that way, that the facts were as they were stated. To that extent it was a powerful cause.

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#### THE IDEA OF TWO MODERNITIES IN JAPAN [26–30]

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Nishitani: I don’t see why we can’t say that before the closing of the country, the merchant forces has risen to power, while isolation put the warriors in the central place.

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#### THE NOTION OF A HISTORY OF THE EAST [31–5]

Kōsaka: One can distinguish the positive from the metaphysical here, but at bottom I feel that logic is different in the East and in the West. For even in China there is a Chinese-style positivism.

Suzuki: You could go as far as that, would you?

Kōsaka: Nowadays history books written by Europeans, compared with those written by Chinese, seem to me to differ in their mode of composition. Looking at what the Europeans do, it is fairly clear to the reader that a variety of themes are developed one after the other. But open a Chinese history book and one finds very little development of themes, that the flow is interrupted from one moment to the next. As one moves from one age to the next or one dynasty to the next, there are breaks and thematic exposition is uncommon. A fundamental principle is laid out and in terms of that principle all kinds of materials are lined up one after the other. This is often the case. But the ongoing development of the principle itself is relatively rare. For example, the principle of the five elements of wind, fire, earth, metal, and water is given; and from there east, north, middle, west, and north, or spring, summer, fall, and winter, or again anger, joy, thought, gentle-

ness, and fear are made to correspond to it. Or the three colors of black, white, and red are made to correspond to the transition between three dynasties. In such cases, even if one grants the connections among the give elements, it is not clear why they should correspond to the directions, and only with a relation of correspondence or application, while relationships of development or deduction are wanting. This is discontinuous and has no continuous development. The Chinese have an interest in finding this kind of connection that fits well with a fundamental principle, and think that when this kind of application is possible, then understanding is possible. This seem to be the Chinese-style of logic.

Nishitani: It's contradictory, isn't it?

Kōsaka: And that's why there's no progress. There is no deepening, only application. So, temporally speaking, it becomes contradictory.

Kōyama: I find the notion of developmental progress a particularity of European modernity. It would seem that Japan also lacks a notion of developmental progress. Around the middle of the Heian period the idea of *mappō* was current and it was thought that Japan was in decline. In particular, in the world of the samurai families Japan went bad, or so the notion of *mappō* embraced by the aristocracy. The warrior class felt their own world did not seem to have an idea of history with development and progress. The idea of reviving the past emerges around the Edo period, but this is not a concept of a modern world eager to develop by progressing beyond the medieval.

Nishitani: That is the way it is in the West. Traditionally to take a standpoint in religion means that the past can be revived at any time. But what is needed at present is a standpoint of religion that will embrace a modern notion of progress or pragmatic idealism, and yet resist becoming an idealistic religion.

Suzuki: I am by and large in agreement with Kōyama's idea of two modernities in Japan. By and large. But I admit I was predisposed to agree with Kōsaka already from two years ago because of what he has written in *Philosophy of History and Political Philosophy* [laughter]. That is, there is an ancient world in the East that was a world of true greatness, but however great the ancient world, whatever the level of its achievement, whose heights in no way pale in comparison with Europe but even exceed it at times, it is not the modern age. There is a splendid ancient world in the East that does not have a modern age. The modernity of Japan, and that fact that Japan has this modernity evokes a new era in the East, which is something very much world-historical. I find myself in agreement with Kōsaka here.

Kōyama: There is a tendency to imagine something primitive when one hears the term *ancient world*, but in Japan it is not the case that the ancient world has only a primitive culture. From the Nara period to the early Heian period, if I may exaggerate, it is already a modern nation or cultural nation. There was a fine system of law—or ordinances. Monetary economics was also at work in the Nara and early Heian periods. Of course, there is some doubt as to how much it was practiced, but the phenomenon does exist of a natural economy coming after the monetary economy. Even with the advance of monetary economy, natural economy continued, and even in the midst of a world of natural economy, a monetary economy was unfolding. For the Edo period this represented the most classical age, an

age when natural economy and monetary economy existed side by side. On the theory of Dobbs it was the most expedient age.

## A CRITIQUE OF THE THEORY OF STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT [35–7]

### MECHANICAL CULTURE [37–43]

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Nishitani: There was talk of the academic study of the environment, but is not this really a human standpoint? Thus I wonder if the split between the inside and the outside is not finally rooted in a split within the human as such.

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Nishitani: The scientific standpoint is what was mentioned earlier as the positive spirit. Once one's eye's have opened to it, there is no going back.

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Nishitani: For me that is the most fundamental problem facing Europe today—the problem of religion and science. Europe is Christian, but the problem is still the same for Japan.

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Kōyama: Recently a translation appeared of Dessauer *Technology and Philosophy*, which takes a clear and decisive stance on the question. According to Dessauer, the supreme proposition of technology—its categorical imperative—consists in the eradication of war. Therefore his idea is not to curse the future of mechanical civilization as something gloomy, but rather to see the progress of technology as saving modern civilization from the ill fortune into which it has fallen.

Nishitani: He tries to go with technology because religion has so far been banished from modern life and become powerless. He talks of saving the world as viewed from the standpoint of the technologist but ... standpoints like a “technological world-view” are terrible modern and somewhat interesting, but things are not so simple. There is too much confidence in technology.

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### HISTORICISM [43–6]

Suzuki: Earlier Kōsaka mentioned how the historical records of China and of Europe differed, and Troeltsch has remarked to the effect that in the East there are historical records but not historicism. What about this?

Kōsaka: I think this should be admitted.

Kōyama: Which is why there is no crisis of historicism. The notion of historicism is used nowadays, but the consciousness of history in such cases differs in Europe and Japan. It also differs in Christianity and Buddhism.

- Kōsaka: Yes, it does. The Chinese way of recording history and the European way, as was said, differ, but this is based on differences in historical consciousness. And if one looks at it more closely, in the West and China, in China and Japan, there are differences in the way history moves. The dynamics are different. This is the basis. In Japan, one does not find the kind of severe oppositional conflict one sees in the West, but there is a reformational, developmental dynamic. Is there not a difference here with China? There are differences in the way history moves in the East and in the West.
- Suzuki: I feel the same. Even in the way history moves, there seem to me to be in the East completely different laws showing up than in the Western idea of “development.” By the way, to go back a bit, Japan’s historical consciousness is not a crisis consciousness that feels the crisis of historicism, but appears in deeds full of the desire for reform.
- Kōyama: In the last analysis, the historical is not considered as a separate world from the suprahistorical. Therefore, clearly there is no generation of oppositions or provoking of confrontations. So, too, a consciousness of value-relativity is not an uncommon way of deepening history. The transhistorical, the eternal and undying, are always thought of only in conformity to the things of history. And so historical consciousness in the sense of a crisis of historicism in general was lacking in Eastern culture.
- Nishitani: While historicism could not get a firm hold in Japan, in the present conditions one wonders whether in the long run this was a good thing or not. The overcoming of historicism also seems better if it proceeds by way of historicism.
- Kōyama: This is a good argument. Today ahistorical modes of thought are rampant, but this is not right. It is necessary to radicalize historical consciousness. For example, one often hears the question raised of whether liberalism includes the nation or whether individualism goes counter to the Japanese spirit. If one listens carefully to those who talk in these terms, there is a complete ahistorical mode of thinking. They never bother to ask at all what kind of social and historical reality liberalism and individualism they emerge from, what kind of historical role they are playing, or why such ideas have to be around today. The distinguished retainers of the Meiji period are called traitors or rebels. There is nothing constructive at all about this. In these conditions individualism or liberalism is thought of as abstracted from history, and therefore ends up in a conceptual debate cut off completely from reality. And then together with banishing all modern-like individualism and liberalism, the individual’s spontaneity and autonomy in general also end up being banished as something bad. This is a grave mistake, and with the sense of human responsibility disappears. A strong sense of responsibility emerges because there is true individual spontaneity and autonomy. If the individual is only an organ for transmitting orders, a cog in the machine, the concept of responsibility for the whole disappears. The fact that this sense of responsibility, the responsibility of modern people towards Japan with its 2,600 years of history, towards the totality of the nation, the notion of such a strong sense of responsibility is lacking—is this not Japan’s newest vice?

### INDIVIDUAL CONSCIOUSNESS [47–57]

Kōyama: I have always thought that individual consciousness has a long history in Japan. In a world where underlings replace their superiors, at times like civil war, the son of a water-drinking peasant takes over the world. It was a disorderly development of individual consciousness without distinction of royalty, military, or political leaders. Development abroad was the same, for in the end the development of the individual consciousness transcends the narrow boundaries of one's own land and overflowed across the seas. In the Tokugawa era with its fixed order of social position, the task that one is to perform is determined and individual consciousness at the time becomes manifest as the subject of a strong responsibility. Though not restricted to the Edo period, the samurai demonstrates a truly intense free and individual consciousness in the act of apologizing by committing harakiri when worst comes to worst. Of course this free and individual consciousness is different from unlimited pursuit of profit or nonrestraint, that is to say, from the freedom of civil society of the modern villager. Yet there is true freedom and a true individual. To miss the point here is to be completely out of touch with our ancestors. For me, therefore, it is a mistake to think of a feudal society based on the master-servant relationship as no more than a totalitarianism or despotism. This is an outdated, modern way of thinking. It is a negative idea deduced by applying the vantage point of modern individualism backwards in time. In the feudal society of the samurai families, relationships of personal trust were fundamental. The master had absolute trust in the servant, and the servant in the master. Without this relationship of trust, feudal society could not have continued. How could such a relation of absolute trust have been possible between persons?

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Japan's middle ages, simply put, relationships among persons were carried out through the mediation of relationship with an absolute. If there were not so, how would it have been possible to forfeit one's life for a dim-witted master? It would not. During the period of civil war, one chose one's master and if he were not too bright one could change for an intelligent master. But because there was a possibility of giving up one's life once the relationship between master and servant was made, one can say it was done because of one's master, but at the same time the act of forfeiting one's life itself has an absolute meaning and was made possible because of the mediation of something absolute. It is very wrong to think of this as simply the mediation of practical reason. And of course by the same token to think of ambition or personal advantage as a mediating force is no less mistaken.

Kōsaka: Yes, it is.

Nishitani: But at the same time shouldn't we consider the limitations of the medieval spirit? No doubt a profound awareness of personality appears for the first time in the middle ages, particularly in the religious consciousness of the age. Furthermore, this awareness came about in relationship to an absolute, so that this medieval spirit was able to form the basis for the master-servant relationship of the warrior. But when we come to the modern age, the establishment of the person in relationship to an absolute gives way to the absoluteness of the individual. In effect,

the individual comes to possess a meaning that cannot be clearly distinguished from public order. If one considers this a step backwards, then a step backward it was. But even if we cannot speak of progress, at least some advance seems to have taken place here. For it seems as if the individual had gone as far as it could, as if it had touched bottom. Odd as it may sound, I think that the life of the modern human being is fundamentally an *adventure*. One sees this in the things like emergence of business economy and the discovery of a new lands, but in a wider sense it is also related to things like the positive spirit spoken of earlier. What makes life an adventure is that the individual lives it out with experience at the center. Is not experience in this sense the defining trait of the modern individual, in the sense that anything that cannot be seen, touched, anything that is not convincing for the individual is not acceptable? The same may be said to apply to philosophy and science insofar as they have flourished in the modern age. And, as I noted earlier, it is also present in literature and the arts.... For me this is the great step forward of the modern age, and there is no way to overcome individualism without returning to this point and making a new start. What do you think? I cannot think that the way we have been going so far—namely, imagining the country or being Japanese as something that has dropped directly down from heaven—will do.

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Nishitani: [turning to Suzuki] How about the West?

#### WESTERN RENAISSANCE AND MODERN HISTORY [57–70]

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Nishitani: You mean the ideas of people like Burdach. When I read Burdach, I find myself nodding in agreement, but at the same time I feel it is more essential to see the history of the middle ages as fundamentally oriented towards secularization and to see how this orientation links it to the Renaissance.

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Nishitani: The kind of movements Burdach points to, when set within the mainstream of history as a whole, look to be mere tributaries.

Suzuki: In other words, you follow Gilson on this point?

Nishitani: Yes. The idea is that the ancient world was subsumed into the middle ages and for a time submerged to the bottom. But around the twelfth century it gradually surfaced again, and this ancient world is the one that is continuous with the Renaissance ...

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Nishitani: Actually I think in terms of a discontinuity in continuity, and a continuity in discontinuity. For me, the Renaissance and Protestant reformation are continuous with the middle ages in the sense that they are the self-unfolding of the middle ages. Well, for instance, can we not say that from around the twelfth century Jewish elements entered in simultaneously with the Greek and Roman, and that

there were German and Celtic elements as well, thus presenting the dawn's light of a new "world," and that this is tied to the Renaissance ...?

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Nishitani: If one considers the case of Frederick II and his Sicilian court, already in the seventeenth century we find less a deep religiosity than a kind of reemergence of ancient culture. At the same time, I understand the Renaissance as basically linked to an orientation to the modern age. The desire to return to antiquity is the outward form of an orientation of history to step out of the middle ages and into the modern world. Because this orientation to modernity showed up in the middle ages as a trend towards secularization, the trend goes back to the antiquity that was absorbed into the middle ages. From the very outset, the orientation towards what is absolutely new and modern could not but take the form of a return to antiquity. In that age, there was no place else to return to. Hence, too, for a long time there was no other choice than the simple return to antiquity. And then, from within the Renaissance, there had to appear an orientation to a modern age that transcends the Renaissance. Perhaps there was something along the lines of what Burdach calls a movement towards the rebirth of the human. In a certain sense, the Protestant Reformation was the same. Even though it took the form of a return to primitive Christianity, it was actually oriented to something completely new. The historical reasons of why the movement of the Protestant reformation came to a deadlock lies here as well. History—and in particular, such great turning points in history—advance like a vortex in the sense that it moves ahead by first making a return to the past, and this movement of return sets up a swirl that propels it forward. Thus the Renaissance contains within it things very modern. Or within the Protestant Reformation, as in the case of the radical social theory of those like Münster, one sees a sharp budding. So this is more or less the sense in which I speak of a discontinuity in continuity and a continuity in discontinuity ...

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Nishitani: Isn't it more or less so? The discovery of new continents or the colonizing of lands are continuous with such things.

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#### **HISTORICISM AND EDUCATION IN NATIONAL HISTORY [70–6]**

Nishitani: On the earlier question of historicism, I see a connection with the fact that Japan did not pass through historicism. Nowadays Japanese history has become rather rigid, which is all right, but there are problems that remain.

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Nishitani: But really, it is probably necessary that ordinary people, and not just people who specialize in history such as we, should study history as part of the process of bringing the power of insight to bear on historical reality. This being so, I have to question the educational policy of putting all their efforts into the study of

Japan's history. In the worse cases, this only makes frogs in a well. Even in order to immerse people in a patriotic spirit, I am doubtful if this is the most suitable method in the long run. The patriotism it cultivates rests on an awfully fragile basis. I myself went through period in high school when I strongly resisted the kind of education in national education we had received up until then. As a result, I myself do not love Japan today because of my education but because of what I found on my own—not *because* of my education but *in spite of* it ...

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Nishitani: To be sure, in Europe's history countries were in confrontation with one another and were interrelated to one another in a complex way. How else can one make this history into a strength without studying it?

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## LOOKING AT NATIONAL HISTORY FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF WORLD HISTORY [76–82]

### WORLD-HISTORICAL MODES OF THOUGHT [82–92]

Kōsaka: World is said to contradict nation, but this is never the case. Far from being anti-national it is national, and there is no reason at all to think of a contradiction here. In the case of the three states of Korea, Buddhism ultimately became a Buddhism of national stability. Japan and the three Korean states both thought of Buddhism in this way and from there grew antagonistic towards one another.

Nishitani: Chinese Buddhism was probably that way. Gradually it turned into stable nation ...

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Nishitani: I wonder if it is only then. If the connection between Japan, three Korean states, and China, or what one might call “the world” for Japan at the time, if this world also belongs to Japan's history, that is because somehow it was seen as such from the viewpoint of Japan. But for Europe, in addition to Germany history and British history there was also European history, and that history begins from Egypt and Greece. That is to say, it was a European world history. Thus, in the same way, is not the most important thing to cultivate a historical outlook for an East Asian history that comprises Japan, the three Korean states, China, and the rest as one “world”?

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Nishitani: Therefore once again the viewpoint is unilateral.

\* \* \* \* \*

Nishitani: Still I feel that to cultivate a true historical *Denken*, knowledge of European history is the best thing—or if that is too strong, then at least a very good thing.

\* \* \* \* \*

Nishitani: In the West, the middle ages are close to that, are they not? In ancient Greece or the modern world, there were various confrontations among nations, and it is

there that what we speak of nowadays in general as history has come about.

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Nishitani: This is the world of the present, and Japan has entered into the world in this sense. Thus, for example, in order to reinforce the general, non-specialist understanding of the place of Japan within the world, the best thing is really to teach a bit of modern European history. Even reading something like the history of Greece, there are points that somehow click for us today. I find this rather interesting....

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Nishitani: Yes, studying the political ways of the warring states is interesting.

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Nishitani: I also once felt that reading Ishida Mikinosuke's Spring in Chan-an.

\* \* \* \* \*

Nishitani: As to architecture and *sabi*, I feel somewhat differently. *Sabi* also depends on one's way of seeing, and here there Buddhist—and in a special way Zen Buddhist—elements come into play. In this sense, there is a kind of step beyond the architectural. Even after the architectural has broken down, something severe is left over. It should not be reduced to the “poetic taste” of the *haiku*, or the “tea-master's taste.” The real spirit here.... well, if what you have been calling the world-quality of ancient Japan appears in the architectural ... there's a kind of sense of intensive world-quality here, a world-quality found in Zen and the like.

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Kōyama: That is fine as far as it goes, but I want to resist the idea of looking at Japanese culture only in terms of *sabi*.

\* \* \* \* \*

Nishitani: Once again, I was looking at it the other way around. Even in cases where it is adopted politically, there are things that cannot be resolved politically but only by direct person-to-person contact, and if the idea of an idea being adopted politically also has this kind of meaning, ...

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## PHILOSOPHY AND REALITY [92–100]

Suzuki: Someone today brought up the question of philosophy's leadership at the present time and mentioned how the age of the particular sciences, the way of thinking about things we find in the sciences in the nineteenth century, has reached its limits. The way businessmen think about economics or lawyers about the law—namely thinking about things within the context of a contract—has taken the idea of contractual agreement about as far as it can go. There is talk of a real reformation but there is no world outlook strong enough to direct it and see it through. So the reform is simply going along on its own or yielding to a narrow-minded

subjective outlook. In any case, breaking beyond the limits requires philosophy. As I noted yesterday evening, perhaps ideas that at first sound very circumlocutory like philosophical politics, philosophical war, and philosophical economics are the most real for our times.

Kōyama: Traditionally the word philosophy has meant something special, something high-flown and splendid. For example, philosophy of law or philosophy of economics seemed no more than the *flatus linguae* of methodology or epistemology stuck on to the practice of law and economics<sup>1</sup> like a stick grafted onto a bamboo. If this situation is not rectified, philosophy can hardly take a leadership role for law and economics as a real philosophy of economics and law. It seems to me that in refusing to be something “grafted on,” philosophy now needs to attach itself directly to the fundamental divisions of the particular sciences. What one would hope for above all is that the points of contact would gradually increase.

Kōsaka: This may sound odd, but as a student when I thought to do philosophy my parents were shocked that I would do something so terrible, as if I had thrown myself into a Kegon Waterfall.

Kōyama: My mom said something similar to me.

Kōsaka: The fact is, people think of philosophy as so cut off from real life. They have forgotten that they carry a philosophy within themselves.... But a new philosophy, one with leadership, a revolutionary philosophy is being founded today by looking critically at historicism. To speak of leadership or reform from the standpoint of philosophy may only be the substitution of a new image of the world for an old one. This is why investigating historicism is the right way to go. For a new world is being shaped to replace the old East and the old West. More than a new image of the world, a new strength is emerging. And now that the idea of the world as divided into a Western world and an Eastern world is itself being broken down by a re-examination historicism on all sides, an absolute wellspring, if you will an absolute nothingness, seems to be emerging from the foundations and coming into view. This makes it possible to do away with a simple historicism, but it also helps make a philosophy with meaning for the particular sciences more concrete. I think philosophy needs to be mediated with by historical reality. Historical reality ...

Suzuki: I think that if awareness of world history is not made more keen, the effort of historicism cannot get off the ground. One thinks in terms of a philosophy of world history, but there is also the study of world history. These are different matters but not unrelated. The study of world history needs philosophical motifs that are able to get beyond the limits of what history could do in the past.... To overcome the bad side of historicism ...

Nishitani: The philosophy of today must go this way. At the same time, I myself find it good that philosophy has its splendor, its Kegon Waterfall.

Suzuki: What! A Kegon ...?

Nishitani: Yes, but not a *Kegon Sūtra*, just a Kegon Waterfall. [laughter]

<sup>1</sup> The text reads *philosophy* here instead of *economics*, but the context suggests that it is a misprint. — Translator

Kōsaka: Quite so. Without it philosophy is not genuine. It is not serious.

Kōyama: If by the Kegon-Waterfall aspect you mean to add the historical world to the way the individual and the absolute are connected, then it is all right. It is all right to make the historical world flow into the Kegon Waterfall and to jump in from the high rock of the Japanese spirit.

Suzuki: Yes, but there's another issue we cannot overlook. As I said a while ago, the philosophy we need must be keenly alert to reality, and must look at first to be circumlocutory. This is because it asks after principles. Ours is an age in search of *principia*. At the same time, the danger in the tendency today is that by putting too much weight on creativity and conversion one distracts from reflection on what is already self-evident. This seems to me a danger for scholarship. Even though new things need to be sought out, this must not obscure what has become clear in the past. On the one hand, it is the task of scholarship to make what is already clear still more clear, and this is something important for any time and age; it doesn't change. On the other hand, with this in mind it is extremely important to preserve the spirit of scholarship.

Kōsaka: There may be a dislike of making obscure what is clear.

Nishitani: So maybe that is just what we are doing.

Suzuki: No, that was not what I meant.

Kōsaka: Then it's mysticism. [Laughter.]

Nishitani: But mysticism itself is clear.

Kōyama: Obviously I do not mean really to argue the point with Suzuki, but I do not like the idea of thinking too much that all people are in some sense philosophers. Philosophers are not without their faults, but there are cases where those in the particular sciences make crude philosophers.

Suzuki: I am trying to say that the need to preserve what is clear includes that.

Nishitani: I wish that those in the particular sciences would do more philosophy, even if they do it idiosyncratically. More people from within the various specializations of the particular sciences. One does not expect the results to be polished at first, but the longer it goes on and the more the two sides draw closer together, surely the two sides will improve as a result.

Kōyama: That would be a healthy development.

Nishitani: And then the two need to criticize each other. If not, they grow self-complacent with each other.

Suzuki: Quite so. Dogma must not be mistaken for philosophy. Dogmatism and philosophy are completely different.

Kōsaka: There is a fear that if things biological enter into the question of the phenomenon of life, philosophy will become unintelligible.

Kōyama: That was Holden's idea.

Kōsaka: Holden was still all right. What does Suzuki think of the relation between the study of world history and the philosophy of world history ...? I have several ideas of my own but ...

Suzuki: The question is too difficult to answer simply, but this might be because, to put

it simply, it does not come down to a matter of the differences between philosophy and the study of history. The study of world history does not forfeit the methods of historical studies, but take it as a pretext from which to start thinking. In other words, I consider the study of world history as opposed to a metaphysics of world history. Today's philosophy of world history seems to differ in that regard, but in the end philosophy will be philosophy.

Kōyama: I see the philosophy of world history as different from what it was in Hegel's time in the sense that it is necessarily mediated by the study of world history. Otherwise the philosophy of world history would turn into straight metaphysical speculation.

Suzuki: In that case it would hardly have any connection at all with the standpoint of the study of world history. The kind of philosophy of world history that has recently become an issue is not such a metaphysics but something deeply related to us here. And yet, the "method" is different ...

Kōyama: There is no doubt that philosophy and the particular sciences have to be in contact with each other, but we must give serious thought to the form that that contact takes. From time to time I get the impression that there is a kind of unspoken absolute trust vis-à-vis philosophy, but this is odd. Such absolute trust only shows that one does not know what philosophy is. For example, I am occasionally pressured to come up quickly with a Japanese philosophy. Whatever this "Japanese philosophy" turns out to be, the idea is that it would immediately spawn a "Japanese economics" and a "Japanese constitutional law" and all sorts of other Japanese academic fields. This way of thinking is around, but I find it extremely unphilosophic. It amounts to thinking that merely by locating the universals, the particulars will fly out on their own. The idea needs reforming. If something comes about as a result of some principle from the noble heights of Japanese philosophy, those who do not know philosophy will flock to it. But this is not philosophy. Nishitani made the point earlier that principles must always be sought from within the particular sciences, and that only from there must philosophy be entered into. I wish those who are engaged in the particular sciences would see this more clearly. I am uncomfortable with the shallow expectations of those who trust philosophy like a little hammer that can bang things out. For such people, all of one's own responsibilities can be laid on the shoulders of the philosophers. The principles of the particular sciences need always to be pursued. Then the thorny problems of principle that are run into are to be resolved always from the standpoint of the particular sciences. This is the point at which genuine philosophy comes into the picture.

## WORLD HISTORY AND "MORALS" [101–5]

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Nishitani: I agree. I dislike intensely the popular word going around today that was mentioned earlier, *cheerful*.<sup>2</sup> It is used to indicate health and well-being, but when I hear it, it makes me really unhappy. I don't know about its etymology, but the word association of a cave,<sup>3</sup> something empty, comes to my mind. I find it a sym-

bolic expression of the spirit of the age that is lacking in energy, élan, and vigor.

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Nishitani: Somehow to speak of the moral is to erase the aspect of energy, and vice-versa.  
*Moral energy* is a very good term.

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Nishitani: You mean what Kōsaka called subjectivity ...

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### TRIBE, RACE, PEOPLE [106–12]

Kōsaka: On this point, as unpopular as it is, it seems to me that Gobineau is worth considering. To be sure, the idea that an Aryan race defined by a purity of the blood and *Rasse* is innately world-dominant makes one uncomfortable, and yet there is something interesting in thinking about tribe or race as one of the foundations of world history. Gobineau tries to explain the rise and fall of culture in terms of the purity of the blood of the race that carries that culture, arguing that when the blood is contaminated the vital energy of a race is sapped. If interprets the idea of purity of blood subjectively, substituting moralische Energie for it, then I don't think the idea is entirely without merit.

Kōyama: For me, the subject of moral energy is a people. Race is an idea from nineteenth century cultural history, but today, whatever the history of the past be, there is no world-historical strength in "race." In the true sense of the term, the key that resolves everything is a country's "people." Moral energy is neither individual morality nor personal morality, nor does it have to do with how clean the blood is. Is not moral energy the core of what is concentrated in a cultural, political "people" today?

Kōsaka: I agree. If race is no more than simply race, it doesn't amount to much. When race has subjectivity, it must take on the meaning of a national race. A race without subjectivity or self-determination, that is a race that is not a people, is powerless. To make the point, a group like the American Indians do not represent a race that is really independent, since they have been absorbed into another nation's race. Is this not ultimately the case with the Jewish race as well? In this sense, I believe that the subject of world history is the national race.

Suzuki: In terms of life energy, can one speak of the age of a race? Is it possible to think in terms of a race being young or old, of being a living thing or an organism?

Nishitani: I find that academically unacceptable. It is not so much that as ... whether we can completely ignore the question of purity of the blood. [turning to Suzuki] It is said that the Italians of today have African blood in them.

Suzuki: That is what the famous anthropologist Sergi is studying. He said that there is

<sup>2</sup>朗 (ほがらか).

<sup>3</sup>洞 (ほら).

considerable mixture of blood, including African blood.

Nishitani: Looking at the Italian one senses this.

Kōyama: There isn't a hint of the ancient Roman left.

Nishitani: The ancient Romans seem to have been of very different stock. As to what influence this mixture of blood makes is a difficulty question. In general, there are cases where new blood is a good thing, and cases where it is not. But I feel the whole issue is a complicated one.

Kōsaka: Think of it this way. When blood is mixed in—as in the case of Spain, or Hungary, where there is a good deal of mixture—the point at which the mixing takes place is where cultures mix together. Moreover, it is not at the core of the different cultures that the commingling takes place, but at the periphery where a culture is spreading out. If that is so, you can't even speak of a mixing of culture. The commingling of blood does not weaken a culture, but at the same time from the start a mingling of blood is going on at the outer extremes of a cultural sphere, and therefore the culture that is present there is of course also at the outer extremes; it is not pure. In the same way, to speak of race's youth is not merely to speak of its blood. One may even say that age should be measured in terms of a culture's creativity. As I said before, it is another thing to see this as moral energy, but I am not myself comfortable with getting at the issue merely from an idea of the purity of the blood like Gobineau's.

Kōyama: I have given some thought to this question also, but have not yet made up my mind on it. Blood is not something that can be decided by the superiority or inferiority, by the strength or weakness of the blood alone. Is not blood something that lives or dies according to how it is led, that is according to principles outside of blood itself? Where blood relations are the same, one may think that this is a cause for peace, but such is not in fact the case. Blood contends with blood. It is said that otherness begins among siblings, or that an outsider close at hand is more important than a relative far away. Is not blood something that can be turned in any direction? Does not the way in which the relationship actually works matter more than the relationship? So I have the sense that the deciding factors lie outside of blood.

Nishitani: The problem is a difficult one.

Kōyama: Frobenius thought of culture as something alive, not merely as something that *belongs to* an age but as something *with* age. But there are differences: some are youths, some are mature, some are old; and a culture declines, so does a race.

Kōsaka: There is something to that.

Suzuki: But can't one also think in terms of a rejuvenation of a race? For instance, the old historical races of Europe, races advanced in years, were rejuvenated in America. At least this is possible, it seems to me. Of course, in general, as Nishitani says, there are no academic grounds for speaking of the age of a race, and we would like as far as possible to avoid such language.

Kōsaka: In case of the rejuvenation of the ancient Latin race in America, I see it as the emergence of the American nation and also as the birth of a new moral energy. In any event, to think of race merely as something alive with an age is unscholarly.

Nishitani: Is there not some connection with stages or strata of a people, in the sense that a

new stratum can rise to the surface as a historical power ...?

Kōyama: In Japan the dominant stratum is changing. In place of the aristocracy, the military, and in place of the military, village folk ... are forming into a single unity. Is this not the case in China?

Kōsaka: Yes, the social class of the bureaucrats is solidifying.

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Nishitani: I don't know, but I wonder if there is some connection in the youth of a people with the development of the city.

Kōyama: I suppose it is not entirely unconnected, but .... Well, Japan's cities, Edo and Osaka, when compared with the West at the time are said to have been highly developed.

Nishitani: Somehow I feel that the nation as a whole very much puts on an urban character, or on the contrary in some cases an agricultural character. Here one should consult with the sociologists ...

#### THE CITY [112-9]

Nishitani: Actually, last year I returned for the first time in a long time to my home town. It is a very small fisherman's village in a very remote place. Anyway, at some point it became awfully urbanized. The young women wear proper Western clothes, put on make-up powder and lipstick .... They did not as one might expect go so far as to wear shoes, but cafés have appeared and bars—all a very great change. It is not visible but I feel there is a profound connection with a nation's so-called moral energy here.

Kōyama: A way to rejuvenate ...

Nishitani: No, I do not mean a rejuvenation. Instead of becoming cultural, something seems to have been lost, that is the sense I had.

Kōyama: The healthy taste of the wild, a vital strength—perhaps this is what has been lost? .... There are old folks in my home town who resent the fact that today's young people ride on bicycles to the fields.

Nishitani: In Tokyo, things have become large, but of late when I go there it is quite different from what it was.

Kōyama: In what way?

Nishitani: There is a very strong feeling of a city. [laughter]

Kōsaka: In former days country folk liked Tokyo. But today, I don't know. It seems rather rustic. [laughter]

Nishitani: Hmmm. If everyone were caught up in that current, I suppose we'd be in an awful fix.... But in the cities there is something straightforward and warm about people. Something cultural in the good sense of the term.

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Nishitani: This is only my personal feeling, but comparing Japan and Germany, we have few cities that have the sense of the large German municipality, but our middle to

smaller cities are more developed. And in Japan they have the cultural facilities that are only found in large cities in Germany.

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Nishitani: In Germany this remains to the present. This is the healthiness of Germany.

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**EXPLAINING AMERICA [119–24]**

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Nishitani: In his recent book *The Philosophy of the History of Science*, Shimomura says that America has been an experiment in restoring European civilization to pure potential. I found that somewhat interesting.

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Nishitani: How is it that Japan’s historians have not studied America very much?

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**CONTEMPORARY JAPAN AND THE WORLD**

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Kōsaka: Of course, the problems of history are not discovered at random, but are mediated to us through the past. But the meaning of history lies in advancing towards a resolution of those those problems and the unfolding of a new world. The subject of the resolution is the national race. A new world opens up through the country. As Kōyama says, the beginning of heaven and earth is in the present. This is important.

Nishitani: Very well put.

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Suzuki: For me, the problem of East Asia is not something that can be resolved only conceptually, but must be thought out without transcending the meaning of history today. This seems to me the most important thing.

Nishitani: Yesterday the matter of historical necessity came up. This necessity is also not unrelated to our own work. We become aware this necessity only in what we are doing.

Kōsaka: Only when you try to do something does necessity show itself clearly.

Nishitani: You cannot consider this aspect apart from the contemporary, practical natural question of why this must be so; otherwise necessity becomes no more than fate. But the necessity of history is not fate.

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# The Ethics and Historicity of the East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere

Chūōkōron Discussion 2: 4 March 1942

## HISTORY AND ETHICS [135–40]

## THE PHILOSOPHY OF WORLD HISTORY AND THE STUDY OF WORLD HISTORY [140–5]

## METHODS OF WORLD HISTORY [145–53]

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Nishitani: On this question, while the study of world history and the philosophy of world history initially have distinct tasks and are distinct fields of study, there points at which they are mediated together at present.

Kōsaka: I agree.

Nishitani: I wonder if we couldn't provisionally consider the question this way. The traditional view of ethics has it somehow cut off from history. But in the concrete ethics is not something separated from historical reality, but rather something discovered in the very midst of historical reality, something as it were forced out by historical necessity. Ethics in this sense is fundamentally bound up with the philosophy of world history.

Kōsaka: Yes, I think so.

Nishitani: I mean, in this sense the standpoint of ethics is, on the one hand, the starting point from which it can be deepened into philosophy. At the same time, on the other hand it represents a positive standpoint in the sense that ethics cannot be grasped if it is cut off from the insight of historical knowledge into the workings of history. If it is not linked to historical knowledge, ethics somehow becomes abstract. Accordingly, on the standpoint of the pure historian as we spoke of it earlier, positive historical knowledge has points of intersection with ethics. Even though one may speak of historical knowledge, it is not a mere reconstruction of the data or events of the past, but goes beyond reconstruction to be a deeper grasp of the great workings of history that flow throughout history. Then, in some way, it is tied to the reality of ethics. By the same token, ethics posits itself on historical knowledge.

Suzuki: It must be so.

Kōsaka: History and ethics, knowledge and praxis seek each other out.

Nishitani: In that sense, within ethics the standpoints of the study of world history and the philosophy of world history are mediated. Conversely, if ethics does not mediate both of those standpoints, it cannot come into being as ethics. It seems to me that this is also part of the picture. The voice of the ethical ought speaks from the ground of historical reality, from the deepest level of the workings of history....

Kōsaka: At some points, yes.

Nishitani: The study of world history and the philosophy of world history are mediated in the depths of human *Existenz* within the historical world of reality.

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Nishitani: Not only that, in the subjective posture of making a choice, there is a shallow and a deep ...

Suzuki: Yes, there is this mixture of the shallow and the deep.

Nishitani: And there is objectivity. The subjective attitude's ...

Suzuki: Yes, there really is such objectivity.

Nishitani: In a sense different from the objectivity of historical materials, can one not conceive of an objectivity appearing in the degree of the depth of insight into history?

Suzuki: Yes, Meinecke says something like that. There is a kind of subjectivity that is not individual, a subjectivity that has slipped away from subjectivity ...

Nishitani: Which reminds me, when I was listening to Heidegger lecture in Germany, Burkhardt's name came up in discussing the problem of historical consciousness—yes, I'm sure it was in that context. At many points Burkhardt's explanations were wrong. At times, perhaps he was all wrong. And yet, as was pointed out, in his attitude to history, in his consciousness of history there was something genuine, and there lies his value as a historian.

#### THE ETHICS OF TURNING POINTS AND THE SELF-AWARENESS OF WORLD HISTORY [153–7]

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Nishitani: It is in the turning points that consciousness of world history becomes the clearest. Turning points occur precisely at the point of history's discontinuity. At the same time, as Kōyama just said, what is ultimate in history there, in a certain sense the metaphysical, appears as it were from the very heart of the world of history. That is, a gap shows up in the continuity of history ... as if the abyss of the historical world had opened up, and that gap is not only a gap in history itself, a historical gap, but at the same time is a point that is, if one may say so, *beyond* history: it is both historical and ultimate. This historical and at the same time metaphysical point has to be grasped philosophically. This is the point at which we find ourselves in time.

#### WORLD-HISTORICAL RACES AND THE ETHICAL DIMENSION [157–65]

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Nishitani: I also feel the point is important. The fundamental characteristic of a world-historical race, to take the case of Japan today, is that it is historically aware of itself. In a sense up until now, even with the Greeks and Romans, a race became a world historical race out of historical necessity, but not working out of self-awareness, that is out of a practical, constructive consciousness aimed at setting up a

new order in the world. Such a consciousness was present among the Israelites, but they were rather alienated from the realities of history. There was not a self-awareness that came from the ground of the historical world but one that was handed down from heaven on high. But at present, for the standpoint of what can be called a world-historical race, the self-awareness of historical necessity just referred to on the one hand, and an ethics or the awareness of a practical, constructive subject on the other come together. This is the character of a world-historical race in our times.

The Romans and the Germanic peoples were, of course, world-historical races, but they lacked self-awareness of being a world-historical race, a constructive consciousness towards the world. But Japan has taken a constructive position and thus has come to a self-awareness of world history. This strikes me as something very singular.

Kōsaka: I agree. World-historical races of long ago only extended their self into the world at large, without the self-awareness to acknowledge the existence of other subjects or to seek to reform the world order. There is the point of difference.

Nishitani: I would like to return to the question of moral energy. The primary issue is the concrete form that the ethical or moral dimension (moral energy) takes in East Asia. This is fundamental, and is also, I think, tied to the resolution of the China incident. I mean, the most basic issue is the “China consciousness” of the Chinese, the consciousness of always being the center of East Asia, and of Japan as having been educated through the grace of Chinese culture. In such a situation, the main thing is somehow to make them see and to realize that Japan is now the leader in the construction of the Greater East Asia of today, and *must* be the leader as a matter of historical necessity.... This would run counter to the Middle Kingdom consciousness of the Chinese, but the road that China itself must take is to make its people realize that the fact that China itself did not end up partitioned among the colonizing countries is ultimately due to the strengthening of Japan and the efforts of Japan. It must call its people to an awareness of world history, to make them leave aside their Middle Kingdom consciousness and cooperate with Japan in the construction of Greater East Asia. This would make it possible to think of a kind of manifestation of moral energy in Greater East Asia. Because Japan’s contemporary role of leadership relies basically on Japan’s moral energy. It was Japan’s moral energy that prevented the colonization of China. To take a world-historical standpoint and achieve historical consciousness of that depth means both that Japan itself recognizes its own place historically and that it carries through to the consciousness of the Chinese. In so doing, a new burst of moral energy in Greater East Asia can become a rudimentary force for the construction of Greater East Asia.

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Suzuki: In any case, as was mentioned earlier, China had morality but not moral energy.

Nishitani: At least the nation as a whole.

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**JAPAN AND CHINA [166–80]**

Nishitani: There's another thing we should keep in mind here, too. The Chinese probably consider Japan's growing stronger to be the result of the culture and technology it has taken in from Europe, so that in the end Japan's strength is Europe's strength. Someone has said that studying in Europe is gold-plating and studying in Japan is silver-plating. The origins of Japan's modern culture are in European culture, and therefore if can come directly into contact with European culture, there is no need for Japan. This is the sense that underlies the kind of contempt that Japan is subjected to. In the last analysis it is probably a feeling that long ago Chinese culture made Japan strong and nowadays European culture is doing it, so that ultimately its strength comes from outside. And this accounts for why Europe is placed on a level higher than Japan. This lack of understanding ...

Kōyama: This is the most fundamental misunderstanding on the part the Chinese.

Nishitani: As Kōyama says, the fact that Japan was able to take in Europe's culture and technology voluntarily is due to the moral energy of the race. This is an important point. Culture and technology are great in themselves, but because there was a spirit of confidence to take them in willingly, it was able to digest European culture in a very short time—and that is greater still. This is what the Chinese have failed to understand about the Japanese. It is of the highest importance that we get them to swallow it.

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Nishitani: This reminds me of when I was on the ship to Europe. A Filipino from Shanghai said that he was highly envious of Japan, that Filipinos must take in more of Western culture if they want their country to become like Japan. I remember thinking to myself at the time that things are not so simple. Japan's spirit has been refined through a long historical process. Before the arrival of European culture, Japan was possessed of an extremely high spiritual culture of its own, and an extremely vital energy was a work. Since that is lacking in the Philippines, even if they take in the same European culture the results will be very different.

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Nishitani: At the same time, the Japanese themselves need to be clearly aware of this.

Kōsaka: Yes, they need such self-awareness.

Nishitani: The treatment of China up until now, seen from the outside has taken a form that can be mistaken to some degree for imperialism. It is probably the same in the political arena but ...

Suzuki: In effect, it was not transparent.

Nishitani: There was a kind of opacity. But in some sense that was unavoidable given the extraordinary world situation and the stage of historical development. But conduct that was interpreted from the outside as imperialistic, when viewed from the present and its continuity with the present, has another, deeper significance. On this point, at that historical stage there were probably things that were not clear to the Japanese themselves. At present the Japanese themselves are very conscious of this and are liquidating the opacities of past consciousness ...

Kōsaka: Yes, we must liquidate the opacities of past consciousness.

Suzuki: I quite agree.

Nishitani: The fact that Japan's treatment of the Chinese took a form that was misunderstood is due to the historical limitations of the world order at the time. But today these actions are necessarily tied up with the construction of a Greater East Asia and with actions that have in a sense ideally overcome imperialism. Looking back from this point, we can see that beneath the surface of these actions in the past there was a hidden meaning that cannot be identified as imperialistic.

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Nishitani: Yes, there is no need particularly to gloss over the actions that took place in the past ...

Kōsaka: No, there is not.

Nishitani: They should be admitted frankly for what they were. At the same time, this does not justify depreciating the conduct of the past. As for Japan's behavior at the time, there are things that had to be given the state of the world at the time. Including the protection of one's own country. The constellation of the world as a whole was different from what it is today.

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#### **WORLD HISTORY AND GREAT SPHERES [180–3]**

#### **RACE ETHICS AND WORLD ETHICS [184–202]**

Nishitani: I don't mean to cut you off, but the special place of Japan in Eastern Asia that Suzuki spoke of is most important. The relations of England and the United States with China ultimately stop at economic interest; but for Japan, relations go beyond the economic to include the assurance of continued existence. And it is there that the meaning of self-defense comes directly into the picture. The failure of England and American to understand this special economic-and-defensive position of Japan is a world-historical issue. There is a kind of gap between nations that support the old world order and those that are trying to shape the new world order, a gap that is related to consciousness of history and of the historical "world." This is why the former are unable to understand the latter.

In any case, in addition to the economic and defense elements just mentioned, I wonder if we cannot also try to connect the element of race. I wrote something on this once, but every country that is trying to construct a new order—be it Germany or Italy or Japan—are countries grounded consciously on a racial basis. This being so, we have to ask why they should choose a racial position. The answer lies, I think, in the fact that they were backward countries. In order for these nations to assert the continuation of their own existence in this world, it is necessary for them to become internally a tight-knit country. So they turned to race for a bond. Thus in the case of both Italy and Germany, when they formed into a unified nation, the nation took shape as a racial movement, in the form of an awareness of racial spirit—that is, by standing on the ground of racial unity. The

meaning of Japan's Meiji restoration lay in the reorganization of the people into a nation on the basis of race as such. This is the meaning of the disbanding of the clans and the abolition of social classes, that is, of the demolition of feudal society. Even the movement to "revere the emperor, repel the barbarians" was an attempt by Japan to become self-aware of itself as a single racial unity.

All of this is part of the development of those countries into as modern states, and this situation runs like a thread right up to the present. That is, for a race to be able to step anew into the midst of the established world order and assert the continuation its own existence positively, it must have moral energy. Only then can a nation be shaped that is grounded on race as such. In such a race, nation can be said to signify the manifestation of the moral energy of the race itself. Thus, as bad as the terms racialism or nationalism sound to democracy, these terms really contain great moral significance. However, it is morality as moral energy, not formal morality as such. Furthermore, such a moral quality becomes visible only when it can uphold a nation within history. If it is grasped merely as a pure legal concept or in some other "academic" form, the moral energy is drained. In any case, when a nation with moral energy grounded in this kind of racial unity is impeded from developing within the established world order, a movement to tear down the old order necessarily rises up. This, as Suzuki said, is what broke out on the occasion of the formation of the economic block of the British Empire: a movement to construct a new order for the world and a wider sphere. Thus, in the construction of a new and wider sphere, economic autarchy and a national defense in the sense of safeguarding a more elemental survival are joined as one, and at their root is the moral energy to direct construction, the moral energy of a nation grounded on race in the sense explained above. Here is where the call for a new world order comes from, too. Thus there are racial elements at the root of economic and defense elements, and these racial elements, appear with moral significance as moral energy. This is the stage we are at now. It is what I have called a "world ethic" .... Of course, if such a world ethic really takes a further step, it comes to a position of denial-in-affirmation of the race ....

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Nishitani: Does not this difference stem from a difference of motivation in becoming a nation state? In the case of Japan and Germany and Italy, insuring one's own survival against the forces of other countries requires committing the nation to ground itself radically on racial unity. It is a kind of self-concentration. America, which by itself and on a new continent developed into a nation, lacks this motivation. Quite the opposite, it gradually grew into a nation by committing itself to self-expansion.... Thus Japan, Germany, and Italy, if they are to uphold their nationhood, must by all means think about disciplining and training their individual citizens. In a sense, it is necessary for them to cultivate genuine moral energy within each and every citizen. The nation that leads the construction of a new order must bind itself to a world ethics and at the same time, to that end, see to the educating its individual citizens to a new morality. On the one hand, moral energy must take root within the subjectivity of each and every citizen, and on the other be broadened to the worldwide level of a new world order. It must be the energy of a country that can lead by joining these two together. Thus the

moral energy of the people, as Kōsaka said earlier, becomes a real issue.

Kōsaka: What Nishitani calls a “world ethic” rightly becomes concrete in the form of a “world historical ought” (I am not sure this is the right term) that serve as an ethic for the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere.

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Nishitani: I have a problem with Kōyama’s viewpoint. I am in general agreement about intellectual differences between Japan, Germany, and Italy. But I wonder in the case of countries like Germany if that sort of movement can be called an internal movement or one that sees unity as the main thing. Looking at it historically, the German Social Democracy that was based on acknowledgement of the treaty of Versailles was aimed at securing the continued existence of Germany, but finally ended in failure. The reason that the Nazis came to power so quickly is that they arose out of that failure, determined from the start to scrap the treaty of Versailles. They started by saying that the treaty of Versailles was designed to dry up the Germany nation, to starve them. This is where the movement began from. No doubt this is all essentially bound up with the internal unification and unity of thought based on racialism, but this does not necessarily mean that internal problems were the main element.

The point of difference from Japan, as Kōyama rightly put it, is that the Nazis have put forth a particular ethnic strain and, unlike Japan, lack an intellectual position with a world-historical outlook. And the reason, I think for this, lies in the fact that Germany does not leave behind the standpoint of the European world. Thus what Germany initially put forth as a new world order was a repartitioning of colonies, an idea that is greatly at odds with Japan’s ideal of giving each country its due place.

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Nishitani: I agree that these differences exist. At the same time, in both Japan and Germany, there was a relationship from the start between internal and external relations. This shows up in the fact that in addition to the unification of thought, Germany at once began preparations for a system of national defense. In Germany’s case, though, it was necessary first to take care of internal problems before turning to the outside. It is the opposite with Japan. Only after external problems arose did Japan become conscious of its internal problems.... For one thing, Japan’s internal order was not in need of such urgent attention as Germany’s; for another, Germany had not fallen into the hardship that Japan was experiencing. But in both cases internal and external conditions were interrelated. At the same time, the German people’s had a high degree of political consciousness. Moreover, Hitler was more clearly conscious of the need for internal organization than the political leaders of Japan were. In terms of internal conditions, there is some sense to saying that Japan was late in getting started. In terms internal structures there would seem to be points at which Japan is still obscure compared to Germany. For new structures to ...

Kōsaka: At the same time, there seem to be several differences in the demands of world history, in world-historical self-awareness. In Nishitani’s words, there are some opacities here.

Nishitani: To get still closer to the root of the problem, I have the sense that what is needed is are new and more vital structures. Also to unify various aspects .... Of course, in a place like Germany which is in the middle of Europe surrounded by so many other countries, the political consciousness of the people will be qualitatively different from what it is for the Japanese. After December 8th, this has have changed by leaps and bounds, but up until now Japan has been a little ...

Kōsaka: Lax. To go about constructing a new world order, it needs to advance beyond the Germany tendencies to a more advanced way of thinking about a new world order. There is no room for compromise.

Nishitani: That seems to be so.

Kōyama: As for a world ethic, the prospects are far better for the principle that Japan is championing now.

#### THE GREATER EAST ASIAN SPHERE AS A RACIAL SPHERE [202–11]

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Nishitani: I wonder if the problem isn't here: the basic difference from the traditional colonial policies of Europe and America—as with England in Malaya, Holland in the Dutch East Indies, and America in the Philippines—is that while to some degree they secured a comfortable life for the local inhabitants, under that umbrella they exploited the people. As is often said, it was a kind of opium policy. In the case of Japan, while this was not entirely absent, when compared with Europe and America, the fundamental issue in the Greater East Asian Sphere is rather a human problem. For example, the individual races and nations that make up Europe have reached a very high standard of living. But in Greater East Asia, it is more or less only Japan that has reached such a high level, while the other races are for the most part at a low level. A racial self-consciousness is needed to educate them and pull them out of this. And within Greater East Asian Sphere, it is the vocation of Japan to empower the Greater East Asian Sphere to bear the burden spontaneously and subjectively. On this point, the attitude of Japan towards the various races of the Greater East Asian Sphere ought to have a fundamentally different spirit from that of the attitude of Europe and America. On the one hand, it must open the eyes of the various races to racial self-awareness and transforms it into a power of voluntary active participation; and on the other, Japan must continue to maintain the position of leadership in the process. While these two aspects are interrelated, on the surface they seem to contain a contradiction. The fundamental question is how to make it possible to reconcile this contradiction.

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Nishitani: In short, it comes down to revitalizing the native human ethics of the East by linking it to history....

Kōsaka: Yes.... Nishitani's world ethics is fine, but I prefer to speak of a "world-historical ethics."

Nishitani: Both world and world-historical.

**WESTERN ETHICS AND EASTERN ETHICS [211–3]**

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Nishitani: In terms of Greater East Asia, an ethics that is neither individual nor totalitarian rather sublates the two is really called for in the country of Japan. For instance, in recognizing the independence of a race, that race's independence must mean something very different from what it has meant in the past. Independence in the midst of Greater East Asia must mean an independence of solidarity that bears joint responsibility for coexistence within that sphere. Radical independence as a subject and at the same time radical co-responsibility that grows up from the ground of independence. There lies the problem of ethics.

**THE ETHICS OF WAR AND THE WAR OF ETHICS [214–9]**

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Nishitani: I have the same idea. And on the other side of the coin, it is important that Japan reach and maintain a clear self-awareness of a standpoint that is historical in its ethics and ethical in his historicity.

Suzuki: And this is where awareness of world history comes into the picture.

Nishitani: For example, Rome went corrupt after the conquest of Carthage. For this not to happen to Japan, it is very important for the Japanese people to be conscious of their world-historical vocation—and that that consciousness be thorough. Otherwise, at the same time as it wins the war it will forget its vocation and ignore what is right underfoot. Then Japan and then East Asia could end up falling apart.... In the same connection, this is not restricted to the economic development of Greater East Asia and the development of its resources. Human relations are also necessary. I mean the spiritual development of the races within the Greater East Asian sphere. There isn't any other choice than for Japan to act here. It is a task that has been laid on Japan's shoulders. But without the development of other races, if there is no other superior race to uphold the Greater East Asian sphere than Japan, the possibility exists of being held down by Europe in the future. However, since this human development necessarily depends completely on the development of the developers themselves, in this sense the raising of the quality of individual Japanese is extremely important. The Japanese themselves are very much in need of cultivating themselves ethically in the sense I spoke earlier of being historical in their ethics and ethical in their historicity.

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**PHILOSOPHICALLY ENLIGHTENED POLITICS [220–4]**

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Nishitani: Ultimately the problem is related to the question of the religion of the Greater East Asian sphere. Because the Greater East Asia sphere contains within it Islam,

Christianity and Buddhism, to which one may add Confucian and Taoist thought, in other words because it has a mixture of virtually all the world's religions, it harbors within itself a problem that is not seen in other regions of the world. The most difficult problem is what to do about the relations among these religions. I have given this matter some thought myself.

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Nishitani: [turning to Kōyama] What do you mean by referring of this relationship as “everything under one roof”?<sup>3</sup>

### THE ETHICS OF THE “HOUSEHOLD” [225–42]

Kōyama: Well now, there's a difficult question. I am not clear on this, but it seems to me that there is great meaning to thinking about the phrase “everything under one roof” that appears in the *Jimmuki* as a carrier of new life.

In doing so, we returned to the problem of the “household.” The ethical structure of the household is the most fundamental prototype of human ethics in the sense of parents raising their children and giving them guidance.

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Kōyama: The husband-wife relationship is more central than that of parent and child.

Nishitani: Yes. The configuration of the household, like that of the nation, can take the shape of a totalitarianism or a liberalism. So the problem is know in what the original essence of the “household” consists. Therefore, the question of what structure the *house* that *holds* everything under one roof must take is more critical. It is possible to interpret it in the sense of the self-expansion of Japan alone, where it takes in all other races, but at the opposite pole, it can be interpreted as a mere surface coexistence, a most superficial life-and-let-live that does not give the slightest thought to Japan's leadership. *Genossenschaft*<sup>4</sup> relationships are very concrete, but there again the question of Japan's leadership position comes into question. The strict question of the structure of the relationships seems to me a very important one.

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Nishitani: Does this not bring us back to the earlier question of moral energy? Japan is now charged with the role of leadership in Greater East Asia, and moral energy, as noted before, is fundamental here. The source of this moral energy can be thought to spring from several places, but at bottom it comes down to what we may call with Kōyama the *Genossenschaft*, or at any rate the working of the spirit of the household in its essential meaning, which is particularly strong and vital throughout the nation of Japan with its unique national structure. To repeat, when racial unity reaches self-awareness and this becomes the basis for the nation, the nation itself can be seen as a discovery of moral energy. At the same time,

<sup>3</sup> 八紘一字.

<sup>4</sup> A cooperative society or association.

there are points at which one can speak of the working spirit of the household within the nation. For example, the restoration of administrative authority to the Emperor in the Meiji restoration, which has no precedent in foreign countries, is a clear display of the household spirit. At the same time, the moral energy of the Japanese race showed up in this splendid reform. And this moral energy worked within the Japan that was restored through this reform to become a source of energy for strengthening the country. Accordingly, present-day Japan's leadership in Greater East Asia depends on this same moral energy.

Incidentally, the idea of present-day Japan's leadership is to transmit its own moral energy to various races within the Greater East Asian Sphere, to call up the same energy to consciousness from their own background, and to them to self-awareness of their subjectivity as a race. The idea is to nurture those races by transmitting to them Japan's fundamental moving force of moral energy and making it work within themselves. This is the new mode in which moral energy will work in the future; this is its leap to a new development. It is the self-nurturing of Japan's own moral energy. Of course, this has a fundamentally moral meaning, but at the same time it has a political meaning in the sense that it contains a political necessity rooted in reality. To repeat what I said earlier, the distinctive task of the Greater East Asian sphere consists in the fundamental question of human development. Without it the Greater East Asian sphere cannot be maintained and the continued existence of Japan itself cannot really be maintained. In this sense, both the ethical element and the political necessities of the moment come together in human development through the preaching of moral energy.

Therefore, even in giving a particular race its independence, it cannot be a mere independence. If there is not an ongoing change in the spiritual content of a race that has been made independent, nothing will come of it. If they become suddenly arrogant, aloof, self-complacent after independence, then independence has done them harm. Thus together with the granting of independence the former spirit of the race must undergo a process of change. This change of spirit belongs fundamentally to moral energy. Hence the root of the ethics of the Greater East Asian sphere consists in transmitting Japan's moral energy to each of the races, the elevating of them to a high spiritual level where they can cooperate with Japan and where upright inter-racial relations can be constructed; this is what upholding the Greater East Asian sphere means for me. The foundation is in morality and its energy. Looked at this way, the country's internal moral quality that Kōsaka spoke of on the one hand, and the widespread moral quality of a new East Asian order and a new world order on the other, represent both a leap and yet a continuity.

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#### **POLITICS AND THE SPIRIT OF THE "HOUSEHOLD" [243-8]**

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Nishitani: There is another problem in Japan today. On the one hand, we can say that the

spirit of the household is alive and well among the Japanese, but it is thought to be rather unconnected with the political. In particular one senses a lack of internal ties with the realm of the political in Greater East Asia or in the world of today. This is why now solid relations between national politics and the household have not been very transparent up until now. The insufficient consciousness or cultivation of the historical reality of women in general is a particularly serious problem. The country's moral energy cannot be considered apart from women. The problem of women, who make up half of the population, and especially the problem of women's education, must be given weightier consideration. One feels this keenly walking down the street and looking at young women.

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Nishitani: So far I have been saying that moral energy is alive and well in Japan, but at the same time in Japan today—how shall I put it?—at a deeper level one feels great perplexity on this point. The contemporary Japanese is not provided with a paradigm or model of what it means to be human. Previous to the Meiji restoration and after it at least up until around 1890, there was a traditional paradigm, a standard orientation to human fulfillment. But after that continuity with the culture of the past was broken off and one generation after the other appeared with no connections to the past. The intelligentsia turned instead to make ties with Western culture. A small number of them came up with a model for human fulfillment, but the majority of the intelligentsia stopped with the fragment of a merely superficial “cultivation,” and the general populace—including the women—were still less able to find anything of real substance from either traditional Japanese culture or Western culture. In a word, the old model had broken down and a new model was nowhere to be seen. This gave rise to a certain discontinuity and disorientation appeared that has remained up until the present. In this regard very serious problems lie beneath the surface at present.

But it seems to me that a new paradigm is not something that can be constructed out of one's head but really only from historical reality. It is something that comes to awareness in the process of making history. Today's Japanese have to see themselves as Japanese within East Asia, as Kōyama says, to form themselves as new Japanese with a spirituality able to embrace the role of leadership. On this point, from the bottom of I heart I am honestly pessimistic. But when I look at the spirit, the soul of the navy that showed itself recently in the war in the Hawaiian seas, I see a ray of light. Such soul among the officers and soldiers of the navy, such vital spirit, such discipline day in and day out—I do not feel that it is impossible to carry that to the whole nation of Japan, to make it the goal of systematic discipline (though not too inflexible), to temper the nation as a whole to greatness. If a systematic, planned tempering of the nation as a whole were possible, such as the history of the world has never before seen, the dream of Plato would be fulfilled...

#### ETHICS AS THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM OF A CO-PROSPERITY SPHERE [249–56]

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Nishitani: This comes out clearly in the war in the Hawaiian seas. It shows clearly how far science and spirit can be conflated. In the joining of the two we see an orientation towards the most genuine way of living in the midst of reality. This cannot begin if either science or spirit is made into a merely conceptual ideology.

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#### THE MAKING OF NEW JAPANESE [256–64]

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Nishitani: Japan's leadership, in the last analysis, is a question of people leading people. If the Japanese have no more to them than their leadership and do not look to other races, not even leadership in the basic sense will be possible.

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Nishitani: I would like to say something here. It is completely off the subject, but Japan's population is too small for the construction of the Greater East Asian sphere. Some years hence Japan must grow to over 100 million, and this is the problem. At that point, is it not possible to turn those among the races of the Greater East Asian sphere with superior qualities into a kind of "half-" Japanese. The Chinese race or the people of Thailand, as peoples with their own history and culture, have a kind of brotherhood that inhibits such a transformation in their case. Or again, those like the Filipinos who have no culture of their own but have so far been indulged with America's culture are perhaps the most difficult to handle. In contrast, races that have no historical culture of their own but are possessed of superior qualities, such as the Malays, I'm not sure but I mean quite superior ...

Suzuki: Perhaps the Indonesians.

Nishitani: Yes, or at least one hears that they have really superior qualities. Haushofer calls the Malays *Adelvolk*.<sup>5</sup> It is said the Japanese also have Malay blood in them. True, the Japanese are a *Herrenvolk*.<sup>6</sup> Well, I am thinking that it is not impossible to take such a race or the Filipino Moro (this is second hand knowledge, but the Moro are said to be good also), races of high quality, and from their early years educate them and turn them into half-Japanese. For example, I have heard that if one educates the Takasago they become indistinguishable from the Japanese. Is that so? I mean that they would become half-Japanese in the sense of being educated until spiritually they are exactly the same as the Japanese. This would be one measure to counter the small numbers of Japanese, and at the same time would call forth from them their racial self-awareness as well as their moral energy. I have been thinking of this as one possible plan. It is no more than the fantasy of a complete amateur, but ...

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<sup>5</sup> An aristocratic race.

<sup>6</sup> A master race.

# The Philosophy of All-Out War

Chūōkōron Discussion 3: 24 November 1942

## THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO ALL-OUT WAR [267–75]

## THE IDEAL OF ALL-OUT WAR [275–86]

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Nishitani: My thinking is by and large the same. The meaning of most wars up until now, in particular wars that of significance for great historical turning points, has lain in their profound influence on all fronts, beginning from economics and politics and extending to culture and world-view. By and large wars of old were conducted among sovereigns or governments—at any rate war among leaders. True, there were things like crusade armies and inter-urban wars .... As noted earlier, ever since the time of the Napoleonic wars, war has become a matter between nation states, resulting in a new mode of war. That mode of war has at last come to an end with the last war. The last war was basically motivated by things like raw materials and the redistribution of colonies or raw materials, and there it stopped. Even though the entire nation was at war, in the end the motives were economic. In other words, the main thing was that each country was centered on its own economic motives, and to this extent we can speak of imperialism. But what is very different about war this time is that in addition to being a war among nation states, it has also a completely new, positive motivation. Not only is it a matter of the continued existence or disappearance of our own country, but also of the continued existence or disappearance of a Co-Prosperity Sphere—that is, of a new world order. We may speak of this as something new in war among nation states. In any case, our nation's life and death hangs in the balance with the Co-Prosperity Sphere. Or put the other way around, without it war would not be waged and the continued existence of the country would not be secure. This is what is new. From the time of the Napoleonic wars to the last great war, national or ethnic issues have been involved in waging a war that required the all-out effort of the people appeared. In the present war, this consciousness of a people has unfolded into what should be called the consciousness of a world-historical people. There has appeared the self-awareness of a subjective people that it is theirs to decide the order of the world as a whole. This is one reason why today's all-out war means something very much different from "total war." The external goal is the reform of world order, the reform of the image of the world; internally, a reform is called for deep in the consciousness of each member of the country.

Put in these terms, the basic problem is that war has traditionally been thought of as abnormal phenomenon. For example, in matters of ethics or world view, it has been assumed that the correct ethics and world view belong to times of peace and that in time of war these things are temporarily perverted. What is character-

istic about the present war is that the very essence of war itself lies clearly exposed as something that is not a mere passing abnormality. The same thing applies to life and death. In moral terms, “life” is considered ordinary and “death” as its interruption; but in reality death is contained in the essence of life, and there is no way to truly understand life without taking this into account. This is how I see it. The present war seems to have sunk roots to deep into that ground that is common to war and peace alike. One feels as if the war has swelled up from deep from the depths of history as something transcending war and peace. Precisely on this point Nietzsche says that several centuries hence war will become the normal thing and we will have entered into a “classical age of wars.” This makes is a fundamental link between pre-war time and war time. Moreover, within war itself the so-called elements of peace are important. In other words, war is truly becoming war. So, too, in the post-war period, it is unthinkable that the end of the war will mean merely the return to a former kind of peace. The peaceful elements at work in war itself must be thought to reach over into the post-war period and there continue to develop. So it is a very grave error to think of war only as a temporary abnormality. Indeed, the obstinacy of such lack of insight is a grave obstacle to waging war. The same holds true on both the economic and the intellectual front, in fact on all fronts. The idea somehow after the way things will return to the way they were before, the hesitation about adjusting to the war system, lingers on.... Quite the opposite, those entrusted with political power need to build up the war system from a base that grounds both war and peace.

#### ALL-OUT WAR AND TOTAL WAR [286–92]

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Nishitani: The one-sided war and one-sided construction that is talked about of late—this is not enough.

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Nishitani: To consider the aspects separately feels like looking at all-out war from a traditional perspective. But since there is construction in the midst of war itself, one cannot think of construction and war separately.

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Nishitani: To take it a step further, to give too much attention to the word *war* in the phrase *all-out war* is rather too narrow a viewpoint.... Paradoxically, the fight is too serious for that. I want to look at things as sharply as possible and at the same time from as broad and deep a base as possible.

Kōsaka: I agree.

Nishitani: As I said before, because all-out war does away with the distinction between time of war and time of peace, one can also speak of the resurgence of a power that works at a deep level unifying military strength and economy and culture and so forth..., and this power surfaces to self-awareness in the form of military strength. Therefore, seen as the energy to fight, military strength in essence transcends the traditional, narrow understanding of “fighting” and continues into the so-called

“post-war” period....

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#### WAR TIME AND PEACE TIME IN ALL-OUT WAR [293–9]

Nishitani: At the same time, all-out war requires creation in the midst of war. Within the country, the war system serves to creative promote the overall strength being exercised in the military power of the present war, and is also directly linked to the construction of the Co-Prosperity Sphere. Seen this way, there is peaceful construction and creativity within war. Put the other way around, all peacetime undertakings are already directly, just as they are, a fight. It is a modern version of the principle of “arms and letters—a single path.” Looking at the whole this way, to speak of “national defense” in such things as a national defense economy or a national defense state to express the standpoint of all-out war seems too negative and narrow. That is, seen in terms of the creativity in all-out war, it is too negative; and in terms of the construction of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, too narrow....

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#### THE MEANING OF THE WAR OF IDEAS [299–308]

#### LEADERSHIP AND CONSENT IN A WAR OF IDEAS [308–13]

Nishitani: Perhaps we can look at it all this way. As I said earlier, the emergence of a mode of all-out war is by and large tied to the unfolding of a national or racial consciousness. But insofar as it stops merely at a nation state, war takes on the economic aspect of acquiring colonies or markets or raw material, and therefore takes a form that can be called imperialistic. The present war not merely a matter of nation states at war, but in some sense carries the meaning of a world-historical war among races, or of an international war among races with a world-historical consciousness. That is, it can be called a war around the forming of a world order. If this is so, then it naturally includes the standpoint Kōyama spoke of before. It becomes necessary to devise a way of thinking or to extol an ideal of what is right that can earn consent of the world as a whole, including our enemies. It is a matter for both within and country and without.

I think of the nation, in the most broad terms, as composed of the three layers of economy and politics and ethics (or spirit in general). Up until to now these layers have been thought of only as layers and not really as relative elements that both confront and penetrate each other. In fact, it was rare to think of the nation itself in terms of such confrontational penetration. One distinctly striking point about the present war is that with the addition of the regulatory control of politics to the economic layer, the nation has taken on a subjective character. In turn, further ethical and spiritual elements have been added to the political element so as to move politics from within. The ethical has become a kind of subject within

the subject, becoming as it were the primary essence of the nation. Of course, in the case of Japan nationalism there are links that go beyond the ethical, but in any case the ethical has gone as far as the essence. In such a situation, spiritual and ethical things have become fundamental. The ethical gives guidance to the political, and politics in turn directs the economy, so that ethical and intellectual dimensions have become extremely important. Thus, what Kōyama earlier called “leadership,” even in matters internal to the country, comes to take on an important significance. One cannot consider internal and external matters separately. Without thought of sufficient compelling quality to turn the minds of those outside to consent, without thought that can be universally recognized as correct, there is no way to get people inside the country to submit. For some time to come, perhaps for a long time such thought will be necessary. The ideas of America and England have seeped in among the various peoples that come under the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. Even now American and Britain carry on their ceaseless propagandizing. To combat and overcome it, we must have thinking of the nature I’ve just been speaking of. In short, if the Japanese are to turn around the world order as a truly world-historical people, they must establish internally a morality and thought that can win the consent of the world as a whole, including their enemies.... Naturally, enemies are not so quick to grant their consent. But if thought is reasonable, it cannot but also seep into enemy lands, and whether they like it or not, their minds will pay it heed—for such is the power of thought—and this will bring divide them against themselves.

Therefore, in order for us Japanese to nurture ourselves into a world-historical race, as Kōyama said, we cannot be content with a thought that will not command the consent of the people of Japan themselves. If it does not, those who refuse to accept it are really the healthy ones ...

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#### AMERICA AND THE SYSTEM OF ALL-OUT WAR [313–6]

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Nishitani: There is no denying that along with the banner of democracy, America parades standpoint of “freedom” and the pursuit of self-interest. In the long run, the possibility is strong that it will stop short at a system that recognizes individual freedom and the pursuit of self-interest only to a certain extent. Whether it can really carry through a system of all-out war is dubious.

#### ORIGINAL THOUGHT [316–9]

Nishitani: Actually, the same problem faces Japan. Nowadays one often hears of respect for popular originality or for the popular autonomy. So far political leadership has been half-hearted about this autonomy or originality but what remains must not be plowed under. If they do, no matter how much they talk of freedom of thought and autonomy, theirs is a standpoint of arbitrariness—the dregs of liber-

alism. In Japan, such things need to be elevated to what Hegel calls objective spirit. Even at the level of the economy the nation's organizational strength needs to be so thorough that the nation as a whole can be a clear and straightforward unity. Otherwise, we do not really have a system of all-out war. What is more, autonomy and free thinking at the popular level of the country is not the real thing if it does not emerge from a ground where so-called freedom is utterly negated in such thoroughgoing regulations and if the holes in the net of the regulations cast over the nation as a whole are not filled in. So long as strength of leadership from above is only half-hearted, do we not end up with an autonomy that is no more than the negative pole of leadership? However much we may speak of self-restraint or a tension of spirit, without a structured system that works as one, this sense of tension is scattered to the winds. Ultimately, the negative feeling takes over in the workplace that one is merely doing what is expected without fail and thus retreats into one's private ambition. Therefore, whether the mind of the people is spurred to the thought that they are working or deadened to it, all depends on political leadership. This courtesy of showing respect for autonomy is fine, but it is necessary to give some thought to what kind of respect is genuine respect by taking into consideration the needs of the nation at present.

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Nishitani: Among the people, for example among any businessmen and industrialists, there is a rather keen consciousness of the political state of affairs, is there not? Of course there are many examples where this is not the case ....

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Nishitani: But even then, political leadership must come out still more strongly. This works to deepen knowledge. People are fairly well prepared to accept this as necessary. Of course, this is only my sense, but ... leadership could be spurred on more resolutely, and perhaps it should be.

## THE IDEAL STRUCTURE OF ALL-OUT WAR [319–25]

### ALL-OUT WAR AND CREATIVITY [325–35]

Nishitani: The kind of structure Kōyama has mentioned also comes in here.

Fundamentally, the totality of the nation, including economy, politics, thought, and a variety of other aspects, has arrived at the point where it can work actively as a unit. Since this is creative, the structure of the nation must see that this creativity is active to the highest possible degree. The essence of the nation today takes the form of a system of all-out war. Thus the basic meaning of the system of all-out war consists in the nation's manifesting this creative power.

In the present war, creativity must play a vital role in productive strength, in political strength, in intellectual strength, so that we can build up and enlarge a base that is unmovable and invincible before enemy lands. It is also a matter of shouldering the task that world history has set and bringing to birth a new order. Hence, this creation must be a leap—the emergence of a kind of *élan vital*—for the sake of the structure Kōyama spoke of.

Up until the present, we have what the natural sciences call the a priori of natural science, and what economics calls the economic a priori—each working within its own field with the end result that each thinks only of the consequences for itself. Each pursues a logic or rationality internal to its own subject matter. But the all-out war of today requires something more than just this sort of rationality. Earlier I stressed the need for objective mechanisms or a radical organization ... that is, the need for the mechanisms or structures to work as a clear and straightforward unity. If they do not, the subjective spirit of individual peoples cannot truly be elevated to an objective spirit, and the strength of the individual will not become the strength of the nation. But at the same time, if one takes the objective side seriously, there is a fear that it might turn into a negative way of thinking in which stability or balance of the system and its freedom from internal contradiction becomes the all-important and all-embracing preoccupation. But the fundamental problem of all-out war, whether within a given realm or in the relation among realms, lies not in a rationality in the sense of a mere balance or harmony, but in an irrational leap (or perhaps the rationality in this leap is what we may call a rationality of the irrational). This is where I see the fundamental significance of Kōyama's "leadership." This is how I would explain it.... To repeat, if we view economics only within the sphere of economics, or politics only within the sphere of politics, in the end we are left with no more than a mode of thought that maintains stability and guards against unraveling in its own sphere alone. It becomes a pursuit of logical rationality. This viewpoint, to my way of thinking, agrees with the viewpoint of living organisms like the human body. That the body is alive may be said to be the result of a permanent imbalance within the unity of the various forces that make it up. This imbalance in turn is continually brought back into balance, and through the dynamic relation of this balance between balance and imbalance the body continues to exist and grow. It is the same with economics and politics. The attempt to maintain the balance and systemic security of political and economic forces betrays a of organic thinking.

But this is not an adequate model for thinking about the system of all-out war. If the basis of this system of all-out war is creative and if one sees it as consisting of a leap of *élan* rather than as a structural formation of organic forces along the lines of the living body, the model should rather be that of a body working as a single unit, where the hands and feet and other extremities maintain a balance in motion. This is the case not only in walking but also in running and jumping and other such "leaping" activities. Right now the nation must run. It is literally caught up in a foot race with enemy countries, because this is what all-out war is. In its activity, the force of the total body emerges from within and breaks through the body's posture of balance. This is the leap. Of course, even in a leap requires balance. There is a balance of the extremities in running and jumping. Without it, one would fall down. But this balance appears within a fundamental negation and transcendence of balance as what we may call a higher balance. This is what I meant earlier by the rationality within the irrational. The point to calling it a higher balance is that usually balance means that one is able to move because one is balanced. What I have in mind is a force emerging from within this balance that acts on it and negates it, a creativity within which and by means of which a balance appears within imbalance itself. Now in order to negate balance, balance

must become active. In the very negation of the balance among the extremities that takes place in getting up, walking, and running ahead, a higher balance appears in the running. It is not balance that is primary but activity; balance appears within activity. Balance usually means rest, but the higher balance I am speaking of is the balance of motion. Or perhaps we can call it the balance of the leap. In any case, one must think in terms of the work of breaking through reason—which I consider a subjective activity—and of the rationality within irrational activity. Only then we speak of real creativity. In this sense, the usual way of considering the realms of politics and economics and so forth as a system of balance and stability of forces is inadequate, particularly when it comes to all-out war.

There is a connection here, too, with “leadership” or “leading” in general. Earlier I said that if we think of the nation in terms of three strata of politics, economics, and ethics or thought, then politics monitors the economy, while ethics and thought give a direction to politics; and that out of this emerges the sense of the nation as a subject. The essence of the modern nation consists in its power to give unity and consistency to the three strata by ground them in ethical, spiritual roots. Only in this way can the nation become one and act. Incidentally, what I just said—that politics leads economics, moral and thought or spirit lead politics—is related to what I said earlier about the activity of “leaping.” For example, when one jumps it is not only the body by the mind that moves the flesh; that is to say, the subject must be there. The subject makes the decision to jump, the power of the body is concentrated, and then one jumps. This is a metaphor of the subjectivity of leadership of the nation today. In short, what I want to say is that a the essential thing is leadership that leads towards the creative, leaping activity of total power. Leadership must be a leadership to *élan*.

My thinking here, if I may jump to another subject, certainly has something to do with reading *Japan's Outer History* ... but anyway, when Hideyoshi heard of the assassination of Nobunaga immediately retreated to make peace with Mōri. At that moment Hideyoshi took a bold leap all on his own. The lower officials later followed him, the military united were assembled, and the fight began in Yamazaki. This same kind of act can be seen in Nobunaga's turning to Okehazama, and certainly with Yasutoki in the Jōkyū disturbances. Leaping out by on his own, the military officers and soldiers followed—and with that the for first time they gained “time.” Does this not show true rationality? Ordinary rationality would have dictated to wait for the legion to be assembled first and then take off for Yamazaki, but in a fight where “time” and timing are in contention, this would not be a real rationality. The actions of Hideyoshi and Nobunaga seem to be a mindless disregard for what is reasonable, but in fact they embrace a deep rationality. What I called creativity and leaping within all-out war (in particular the leap to creativity in “leadership”) and the rationality they contain (what I called earlier an irrational rationality) shows up most clearly in the example of Hideyoshi. For example, even in “commanding an army,” troops should be assembled by taking a bold leap forwards and not looking back ...

<sup>7</sup> 驀直去.

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Nishitani: Yes, quite. In this regard, what I said earlier, if compared with Tendai and the like, corresponds to what Zen calls “departing foresquare.”<sup>7</sup> It’s a kind of simplification.

Kōsaka: “Foresquare”?

Nishitani: It means straightaway, forthrightly—to depart foresquare.

#### THE CO-PROSPERITY SPHERE AND ALL-OUT WAR [335–7]

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#### THE CO-PROSPERITY SPHERE AND RACIAL PHILOSOPHY [337–44]

Nishitani: From this all-out war of the Co-Prosperity Sphere—as I said in our earlier roundtable—the Japanification of certain races within the East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, a thoroughgoing Japanification through education, is not a mere fantasy. Kōsaka also noted in this *Philosophy of Race* that race makes history, but at the same time that history makes race. Race is something that as it were bubbles at its fringes, fusing and assimilating with other things in the historical process. To take the case of Korea, though it probably doesn’t apply in other cases, the general idea of the “Korean race” up to now is too rigid and inflexible to be adequate any more. The standpoint that considers individual established “races” as something fixed has generated ideas like racial self-determination. But in a situation like today when Korea has been subjected to military inscription and where what is spoken of as the “Korean race” has entered into Japan in a completely subjective form, that is where they have become subjectively Japanese, the small concept of “race” that has up until now been thought of as something fixed seems to have fused into a large notion. In some sense the Yamato race and the Korean race can be said to have become one race. Moreover, certain elements from southern races—as with the Takasago who have been educated as Japanese—have been added in. Is this not the way it will go?

In any case, at present we are being called, both in Japan and Korea, to think of race in large terms....

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Nishitani: Kōsaka has said that race shapes nations. In my own writings, I also have said something along those lines, but at present it is not only nations that race shapes but a Co-Prosperity Sphere.

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Nishitani: When one speak of race today, one thinks mainly of races with a clearly defined racial consciousness as in the races of modern Europe. But in the races in the East, the meaning of race is different. Even at present, many of the races of the East lack a European style of racial consciousness. For the construction of the Greater Eastern Co-Prosperity Sphere, this has probably been a blessing. From

the standpoint of Japan, in to shape these various races into the races of a Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere ...

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Nishitani: The idea of racial self-determination from Anglo-American democracy has seeped in rather deeply ....

Kōsaka: It has seeped in. And not only in China.

Nishitani: We need to replace it with different, more advanced ideas.

Kōsaka: To be sure. Ideas proper to the a East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere.

### THE IDEAL OF EAST ASIA AND THE VIEW OF HISTORY [344–8]

### THE CONTRADICTION OF BRITISH AND AMERICAN FREEDOM [348–58]

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Nishitani: England and America seem to be thinking that the races of the lands they have colonized are at a stage where they cannot yet become independent, so in the meantime, until are ready for independence, they themselves will take them in hand and take care of them. But even so, they cannot stop from exploiting the races of their colonies. This is the contradiction in their position and at the same time a deceit in their in their way of thinking. I mean, this is clear as soon as you compare their standpoint with that of Japan, which has largely been placed on it by historical necessity. From the standpoint of Japan, the call to open the eyes of the various races of Greater Eastern Asia, to elevate them up to something befitting the races of a Co-Prosperity Sphere—in this sense, to lead them positively—has been a matter of necessity. But Anglo-American democracy and racial self-determinism do not in the least embody this kind of leadership. Theirs is rather a standpoint that would put them in trouble in people were to wake up. Under the cloak of democracy they claim to be taking care of people until they can become independent. But at the same time, they must engaged in a continual covert strategy to keep them from becoming independent in order that they can go on exploiting them. Here lies the hypocrisy of Anglo-American democracy. And this hypocrisy, even if it is not intentional, is a matter of historical necessity.

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Nishitani: This is because one way or the other modern democratic standpoints bend over backwards to affirm the arbitrary freedom of the individual. But however much they talk about contracts or mutual recognition of equality, theirs is a standpoint that negates arbitrary will and ambition, but merely individuals restricting one another from displaying unrestricted arbitrariness and ambition. From the outset the freedom and equality of individuals here contains a contradiction. This standpoint is then enlarged to include relationship among nations or races, and this gives rise to modern democracy. Thus on the one hand, the nations that preach democracy talk about each race its freedom, while on the other they pursue their own prosperity and satisfaction. This is the contradiction.

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Nishitani: They talk about freedom and equality, but behind it all everything is tied into ambition. A freedom and equality from the standpoint of ambition ...

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Nishitani: In the end, it is a matter of one not invading the freedom of the other, of each acknowledging the other's equality as "human," of each recognizing the other's right to self-determination as a "race." This makes possible the idea of a genuine order in which there is a mutual acknowledgement of freedom. This does not entail a negation of the freedom of arbitrary will and ambition for either the individual or the nation, but rather a mutual guarantee of freedom based on an order that limits the freedom of ambition. However, mutual recognition of each other's freedom is only the freedom of an empty and abstract "human" or "race." Equality means only that one "human" is equal to another. As a result, the order based on freedom and equality is merely formal. Turn this freedom and equality over and you see that the underside is infested with unrestricted ambition under the underhanded rule of survival of the fittest. This is the world domination of Anglo-Saxon economics and exploitation of other races at work. In raising high banner of a superficial order of freedom and equality, they shut the mouths of those who try to resist the injustice of economic dominion. If resistance were made with real, untrammelled force, it would be treated as a foreign invasion. In a word, they turn the order of freedom and equality into a most agreeable tool for continuing domination of the world's economy. The best of example of this is the way the League of Nations has become the puppet of England. In this fashion, formal equality is able to coexist with a substantial inequality, and inequality is able to serve as a weapon to safeguard inequality. This is what I meant before by the hypocrisy of democracy.

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#### THE CONCEPTS OF CO-PROSPERITY AND MORAL JUSTICE [358–62]

Nishitani: From this viewpoint, the word *prosperity* in the phrase "Co-Prosperity Sphere" needs clear definition.

Kōyama: I understand it to mean "upholding moral honor together."

Nishitani: "Honor"?

Kōyama: Yes, in the sense of self-esteem, a moral pride, or even glory, if you will.

Nishitani: I see. The English translate it with terms like "co-prosperity," but to water down the character 榮 this way is to reduce it to the kind of "prosperity" one find in the American value system. There is an especially strong danger that the economic aspect is given great weight. Economic power is playing an extremely important role in the present war, and the economic development of the Co-Prosperity Sphere is also a matter of great weight. Yet we must think beyond American values. For this is an ethical dimension ...

Kōyama: This is what I had in mind by "upholding moral honor together."

Nishitani: Since Huizinga's name has already come up, I am reminded of how in his *Im Schatten von Morgen* he describes the corrupt or crisis side of European culture at the time (his book was published in 1931). In the concluding chapter he argues that the only way to save it is through a new asceticism which in turn will effect a re-purification of the spirit. A purified culture, he argues, can only be carried out by an internally purified human being. A new asceticism, in contrast to the old, world-negating asceticism, is oriented to overcoming the self, and for this he says one must see the things of life as clearly linked to death. As these are ideas that I had had myself already, I found what he had to say interesting, and I feel that a new asceticism and purification of the spirit is a particularly vital problem for today.

Even at the most ordinary level, the waging of war today has brought controls to all sorts of aspects of life. Faced with such a situation, liberalism can only provoke feelings of being constricted. It is the same with the negation of the pursuit of profit. Even though such things are accepted as unavoidable, we must seek a positive meaning in them and go still further to radicalize them, so that a new transformation of values can take place. Awareness of higher values is born of a negation of utility and enjoyment, and this is a self-awareness that must take place in the people at large. In this way the standpoint of a new human, of what may be called a "purified spirit," comes to light. Without it, all sorts of constrictions from regulations end up as a mere minus and for a long period the final result is a shriveling of the mind and heart. It is to rely on a half-hearted policy compensated for by entertainment. This inversion of various of the negative aspects of life in time of war in order to make a new standpoint of the human is fundamental for erecting from within war a standpoint of life that, as I said at the outset, transcends the distinction between war time and peace time.

In fact, the spirit of Huizinga's binding together of life and death is actually appearing in contemporary Japan. We see it in the resurrection of the chivalry and samurai spirit of Hagure and the like. From there a strong and vital spirit is budding, though perhaps not yet in along the lines of Huizinga's idea of a great cultural spirit. In my view this spirit must be developed into something strong enough and great enough to continue throughout war and peace. And if my suspicions are not mistaken, already in Japan's past this kind of spirit had developed into a great cultural spirit. We see it in the way the spirit of samurai chivalry in the Tokugawa period turned into a spirit of "arms and letters—a single path" that informed life and culture. Again, in the midst of the unrest of the Meiji restoration we find the interesting phenomenon of this one path of letters and arms becoming particularly alive and strong in consciousness as the standpoint of the true human.

The spirit of arms is within letters, and the spirit of letters within arms. This conflation of letters and arms in the spirit has now to be secured anew. That is to say, a vital spirit that runs throughout war and peace alike, a new cultural spirit. It would be good even to develop something along the lines of the spirituality of death of the Hagure. To bring that spirit to bear on the everyday life of "peace" without forfeiting any of its extraordinary passion and fever, to make arms one with letters and the extraordinary spirit one with the ordinary mind—this is what we need to aim for.

Only then will it be possible to plant a new spirit capable of uprooting Anglo-

Saxon ideas of democracy and views of human prosperity.

Kōyama: I am in full agreement.

#### THE WORLD-HISTORICAL GROUNDS FOR A NATIONAL DEFENSE STATE [363–71]

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Nishitani: In fact, it is in consciousness of a condition in which the distinction between war and peace disappear, in which even in time of peace war begins, that the attitude of a national defense state has emerged ...

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Kōyama: For all-out war to become an all-out war of co-prosperity, I think the real core of a national defense state lies in the construction of a co-prosperity nation. National defense state, all-out war, co-prosperity sphere—these three are one, a kind of trinity.

Nishitani: The name is bit much, at least for me.

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Nishitani: Can the kind of totalitarian democratic state of which Dawson speaks can really come about on a clear intellectual standpoint?

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Nishitani: Such a syncretizing of the totalitarian and the democratic makes it impossible to imagine what the new state that is being called for now and into the future might look like. What is truly new is always essentially—that is to say spiritually—new. Without the appearance of something with a unique spirit, something that is neither democracy nor totalitarianism nor a syncretism of the two, but a *tertium quid*, it cannot be called now. I see the standpoint or spirit of a new nation appearing in Japan. What Suzuki is calling a national defense state is in some sense a universal phenomenon, but the standpoint of manifests a step beyond what is what is in general common ...

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Nishitani: This seems to be the case with the form that is actually appearing. For example, totalitarianism is a standpoint that remains centered on a single nation. Because it grows out of the resolution of problems internal to one country it does not contain the principle of a new world order. As long as communism is class-centered, it will never have room theoretically for such a principle. The subject that moves history is the nation, as in the case of Russia which is joined to the dynamic of history only as a nation. So without leaving the standpoint of the nation as a subject within history, and without turning to totalitarianism, the third possibility that is being called for at present is the ideal of a nation directly connected with “world,” and this it seems to me what is appearing in Japan.

## THE HISTORICAL NECESSITY OF A CO-PROSPERITY SPHERE [372–8]

### JAPAN'S SUBJECTIVITY AND LEADERSHIP [378–96]

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Nishitani: The other side of the coin is that from within Japan itself there has arisen the self-awareness of a new world standpoint. Japan has become the point of self-awareness for a new world.

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Nishitani: That is to say, the demand for a new world order and the principle that has risen to self-awareness from within Japan have come together. This is the subjectivity of Japan within the world of today.

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Nishitani: Agreed. A fundamental part of the picture is that Japan has had a modern age in a world sense. At the same time, behind this modern age Japan possesses an “antiquity” and this is one more fundamental element. Paradoxically, the fact that Japan was able to have a modern age is due to its having had an antiquity.

Suzuki: In what sense does that ...

Nishitani: I mean, the reason Japan was able to have a modern age, as Kōyama said earlier, it is that in carrying out the Meiji restoration, Japan was able to protect itself from being colonized. And the reason it was able to protect itself is that the restoration enabled it to make the transition quickly from a feudal nation to a nation state. As I wrote in a magazine (*Bungakkai*) article, this was the strength of Japan's moral energy. After the restoration this strength took the form on the economic and the military front of a “rich country with a strong army,” and by taking in the culture of Europe Japan has been able to modernize. China was not able to do this because it languished under China-consciousness. This China-consciousness lacked the flexibility of Japan. And why was such a subjectivity within this flexibility possible for the country of Japan? In contrast to the rigidity of the China-consciousness, Japan's individuality has been alive and well since the start of the country's history. In restoring the reins of government to the emperor, this strength emerged out a respect for the emperor that was tied to the repulsion of barbarians. I think that already in the restoration of government to the emperor we can see the fundamental spirit Japan's the system of all-out war that has become our question at present.

The national polity of Japan is of course something that belongs to Japan, but it includes something ancient or even what we may call pre-ancient. In other countries this spirit was lost in the middle ages or in modern times, but as is often said, Japan way, in the middle ages as well as in the modern age, has always been to refine its spirit of antiquity of pre-antiquity. Hence the so-called founding spirit has passed through history as the strength of digest all sorts of things. There is an unmovable and at the same time flexible quality here. Kōyama said something earlier to the effect that in ancient times all war was all-out war. This spirit of all-out war has been working consistently throughout Japan's history from the start. This was the case in the Mongolian invasions as well as in the restoration of gov-

ernment to the emperor. As noted earlier, the Japanese nation was founded on the principle of the household, and this too comes into the picture.

In short, because things ancient and pre-ancient are still working right up to the present, Japan has been able to modernize. This is something special and not found in other countries. In the last analysis, it is a matter of the great strength of the Japanese spirit.

In this sense, we might say that the standpoint of the democratic nation ultimately rests on the individual. In Hegelian terms, the subjective spirit is the cornerstone. In contrast, the standpoint of the totalitarian state belongs to objective spirit. It is a state that embodies the objective spirit. Even communism, insofar as class belongs to *Gesellschaft*, belongs in the broad sense to the standpoint of objective spirit. For Japan, however, the state is not merely objective spirit, but is objective spirit as the expression of an absolute spirit. The standpoint of absolute spirit has been there from the beginning. And this standpoint of absolute spirit is at the roots of the call for a new world order. It is a voice whose cry echoes from the ground of contemporary world history. This is what I meant when I said before that Japan's standpoint stands out above that of the other nations of the world. At the present moment, world history is crying out to Japan; it calls to her. This is how I understand "everything under one roof."

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#### SUBJECTIVITY AND HISTORICITY [396–402]

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Nishitani: This is how I express it. [turning to Kōyama] To use your words, Japan is bearing a burden of something true, ... of the truth. Truth is there from the start. And because it is, Japan should not boast that it is without equal in the world. This would be not to shoulder the real meaning. What we are bearing has always to be borne anew at each time and place, and it is here that I think subjectivity lies. To grasp truth is to bear responsibility. To bear that responsibility is subjectivity.

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Nishitani: Put the other way around, it is as if there is no world outside of Japan ...

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#### WAR POWER [403–23]

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Nishitani: The logicity here is for me not logicity in the normal sense, but rather something permeated with subjectivity. One may call it a unity of logic and ethics, of subjectivity and objectivity. Earlier I stressed the objective organization of the system of all-out war and the creativity that comes from it, and this is what I had in mind.... Even if one looks at it only from within the nation if one considers the

nation, as I said earlier, in terms of the three strata of economy, politics, and ethics, one of the key points of all-out war is that economic power, the power of production, must take a leap to a grander scale, which is being called for at present. For this reason political power and political leadership must penetrate deep into the economic element. Without it, the leap to expansion in productive power would not be desirable. For politics to have such power the national ideal of Japan as a principle of world renewal in the sense I mentioned earlier needs to seep into political power as an ethical principle and politics needs to assume a standpoint of a strong self-awareness of and resignation to its responsibility. As noted in the previous round-table, as the principle of a new world order and as a subjective principle, this moral energy as we may call it moves politics from within. And this political power in turn moves economic power from within. In this way, the combined strata of economic power, political power, and spiritual power becomes one, as it were. The expression that was used earlier, “things and mind are one,” is a good one, for the foundation of all-out war seems to me to lie in a nation that is able to make things and mind work as one. Only then can the expansion of productive power, the tenacity of political leadership, and moral confidence all work vitally together.

Nowadays one often hears talk of the moral element in economics, but with the proviso that the pursuit of profit remains in tact in the economic sphere. If there is anything moral left by way of compensation (for example, the self-restraint of businessmen or of the people) it scarcely has any effect. And because there is no effect, the result is that the people are made to think of morality as a kind of temporary measure. The people think of the moral spirit as something conceptual that is not of much use, which impedes self-awareness from becoming a great and deep force that can move the nation and the world. This depreciation of the moral spirit, as we may call it, is fatal for the nation. It robs the state of its heroic spirit, of its soul. Political officials should note this well.

Because it does not further the pursuit of profit, talk of morals is ultimately no more than a display of the impotence of political power and is not being able to break into the economic sphere. The national spirit does not become objectively concrete enough and is not converted into a true objective spirit. Of course, self-restraint is important, but because the true strength of the nation can emerge only when the power of economics and the power of political leadership and then the moral power of the spirit are made to work as one, only when things and mind are one, true self-restraint is born at the point that this power appears.

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Nishitani: That is, ethical strength is a subjective strength, and this is fundamental, but true objectification is equally important. Such ethical strength expresses this fact completely and possesses a structure or system that suits it perfectly. This objective aspect is what Kōsaka calls the aspect of logic Internal leadership. The aspect of internal leadership and the aspect of the subjectivity of the state only become possible through a unity of subject and object, of things and mind perfectly suited to the leaders. If objectification only goes halfway, ordering worked to possess a working spirit—which in itself is quite all right—will not take radical effect.

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Nishitani: The no-self you just mentioned is what I spoke of before as a new ascesis, though I myself have also spoken of the subjectivity of no-self.... That individual at their place of work have to abandon the ego and carry out their responsibility follows as a matter of course. But along with such an orientation, I would like to bring the aspect of objectivity and objective organization into the picture. This is the greatest effect that all-out war requires; all-out war comes into being in the creativity it manifests. This is the aspect of the nation's objectivity. It means that what is important is an organization that can truly effect an activity of nullifying the self in the work place.

From the standpoint of the nation as a whole, it is not enough to tell people to work hard in their various occupations. The important thing is that a national systematization or organization of work coordinate and unify all realms of work from the standpoint of the nation, and form the spirits of all individuals into a truly vital organization. Without that, all talk of work as public service ends up as no more than a negative protecting of one's own interests or doing what is expected without fail. No work is able to rise above the level of the *durschnittlich*—the average. No great strength issues from such a situation. Thus only when the subjective and objective aspects penetrate each other thoroughly can the effect of all-out war emerge.

In particular, it is important for those in positions of leadership to carry out their own responsibilities thoroughly. More than anything else, this element of what was called earlier responsible subjectivity takes a form that makes the objective system clear. The darkness, as Kōyama said, is within us. The term “the dark” is ordinary—in the sense of the dark dealings of the black market. On this matter of the dark, I remember reading in a newspaper that today darkness has become organized. If that is so, then we need an organized “light” to overcome that organized darkness.

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Nishitani: Nietzsche one noted that people ordinarily think that a good cause makes a war holy. That is, if the aims of a war or its motivations are good, then it is a holy war. But in fact it is a good war that makes a cause good. I found this interesting ...

For example, the usual way of thinking would say that in the present war it is the the setting up of what we spoke of earlier as a new world order or the construction of a Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere that makes the war holy. The assumption is an aim gives value to an activity. But it is also possible to look at things more subjectively. On this view, the goodness of an activity would manifest as it were the goodness of the aim. It seems to me that this latter way of thinking better grasps the meaning of the present war.... For even in the construction of a Greater East Asia, it is not just a matter of looking at this as simply one of the goals. To do so would make the “conceptualization” of the construction primary and run the danger of foundering in the “conceptual.” In every case the starting point is to ask, on the basis of war being waged or the actual act of warfare, how good is the spirit that is emerging from this activity. It is not just a matter of a good cause, but of the goodness that shines forth from those who shoulder that cause actively and embody it in their own persons. This is where the

real good cause lies .... Well, that's the idea, because otherwise the subjective essence of war does not really come to the fore. So the question is not about a good cause but about becoming a nation of people that strives to actualize the cause. For example, the political leadership of that nation is something great, it takes a stand based on clear insight into the direction that world history ought to take, it burns with moral spirit, and from there leads the people. The people in turn act in consort with the nation's leadership by incarnating this same spirit. War waged by such a nation and its people is what Nietzsche called a "good war." For the subjects themselves that wage war are good and so is their standpoint. Thus when this nation or people tries to actualize itself in war, it is a nation that infused new vitality and new spirit into world history. Only from this lofty standpoint can the waging of war be a "good cause." If a nation or people does not have such a lofty standpoint and just claims to have a great cause, this is no more than arrogance. Somehow the fundamental thing is that the standpoint of the nation be high and deep and broad. In these sense I find the idea interesting that a good war sanctifies its intended cause. Particularly in the case of the present all-out war, where not merely the economic aspect but the spiritual aspect also has a very large role to play, this idea bears attention all the more.

#### SCHOLARSHIP AND WAR POWER [425–31]

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Nishitani: I see. If it goes no further than emotion, when it is expressed in words it is immediately turned into a symbol or concept. Ideas may originally come from living things, but by becoming someone's "concept" they block vital development and deepening of thinking and feelings by imposing a "pattern" on things. When this happens, there is danger.

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#### THE ARTS AND WAR POWER [431–4]

Nishitani: I agree. Nietzsche talks of feeling the whole history of humanity as one's own history. Since the subject of art was brought up, I would recall the proscription in the arts against being imprisoned by "concepts" in the sense we just referred to. But the main point is to touch the hearts of people and touch them to the core. For instance, the poem of Ishikawa Takuboku:

Speechless before the mountains of my home town,  
How grateful am I that there are mountains!

These words show a love of one's native place. Sentiments aroused by this poem, if they touch the situation, can inspire feelings of gratitude towards the country and can work in the form of love of family. Or Akahiko's words:

It is still cold as the ice on the lake is melting,  
For three days the shadow of the moon reflects on the waves.

There is a sharp, radiant splendor here, or in any case a feeling that somehow reaches all the way down. If the scholar feels it in the academic mind, if the soldier feels it in the soldier's spirit, even if there is no direct reference to such things ... in such things lies the true meaning of art, for truly art is simply a deep cultivation of the sentiments of a people, something that heightens the refinement. Through it one can truly cultivate spiritual power in all-out war.

Music, also—as in the case of Beethoven, which is a favorite among the young today—is a very good thing, but I don't know whether it cultivates genuine human pathos. On the contrary, it makes conceptual and vain things felt that do not really rise up from the bottom of the heart and only appear to be gallant.

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Nishitani: There has been a lot of noise about symbols and concepts, but in considering the magnitude of the impact that music and the like have on the human mind, these things may have to be taken more seriously. In his *Republic* Plato treats music as something of importance, and Confucius speaks of "ritual music" which puts music on a par with ritual. The inner workings of the relationship of politics to music seem to have been given deep consideration by the ancients.

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#### THE CONCENTRATION OF WAR STRENGTH [434–43]

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Nishitani: No, if everyone shared that view, I suppose I'd be very happy. It is the same thing I was stressing before about creativity or *élan* being the root of all-out war, and I am surprised that in general this has been overlooked. In the transition to war various aspects appear, but the ability to centralize so many important things quickly in response means that all-out war has to be considered at a dynamic standpoint. For me, this is why it is said that the system of all-out war, and in particular the network of leadership must be concise and straightforward. Nothing would be more fatal to the nation at present than a schism in the structure of leadership. It would go against the essence of the present nation itself. Because each branch of study has its own standpoint, and because there are such things as tradition, long-standing custom, and face, if each branch does not take the standpoint of the nation as a whole and clear those things away, the true soul of all-out war cannot arise. Otherwise we are stuck sitting on the fence. This is why I expressed the hope several times that a small number of people from three or four very important fields with the ability to think about things from the grand standpoint of the nation as a whole might come forth, and that there might be a mechanism for these people to talk to one another. The nation as a whole with all its people are in a state of desperation. As the present is caught up in one grave moment after another, the only position I see is that "the way will show itself from out of desperation." This is a dynamic position, one that makes it possible for creativity and *élan* to emerge. This is how I understand what Suzuki meant by creative spirit. Faced with such a period, nothing can begin as long as we are stuck on the fence of indecision because of custom and face and individual interests. If

we go on like this, as long as things are going a bit well, we get self-complacent and lax, but as soon as things start going a little bad, the mood of having lost the war will take over.

Nowadays people talk of “making the impossible possible.” As I said earlier, this is the root of the creative. To take as one’s basis only what has been received from the past and to think only with inherited ideas is to narrowly constrict the sphere of the possible and make all sorts of things impossible. The possibility of taking a leap disappears from the scene. The posture of “letting go” is absolutely necessary to make the impossible possible. Since ancient times this posture of letting go has conquered great enemies, as the Greeks did the Persians, and made the impossible possible. The example I gave earlier of Nobunaga is classic here. The war in the seas of Hawaii has reawakened this spirit. Even if called all-out war, it exhausts itself in embracing the spirit of the nation in every field.