

FREEDOM AND NECESSITY

MATSUMARU Hisao

要 旨

現代における問題は自由の根柢をどこに求めたらよいのかが分らずに、全く自分勝手な快樂欲望を依り処にして、それが当然と考える自己中心的風潮が瀰漫している。しかし、その根柢を見れば、自己の存在の根柢が無に滲透されていることから自己を中心とすることへと目を転じなければ、自己の存在根柢そのものが危機に直面せざるを得ないことになるという恐れからの逃避がある。これが自己中心的な有り方に向う、目に見えない原因である。だからといって、この傾向を否定的に見ているだけではいけない。この存在の根柢の虚無を積極的に引き受け、これを自己の根柢そのものと自覚したとき、真の自己を実現できる。それは、自己存在の中心に巢食う無そのものを自覚的に自己の根柢とすることであり、このことにより個人的自己を脱中心化することによって、自己から出て自己へと戻る大回りの運動そのものを自己とすることができる。この根源的運動が小回りの自己中心から脱し、大回りの自己へと展開しつづける運動体が自己であると自覚するのが本来の自己であること、また真の意味で自由であることを西谷啓治の「空の立場」を手がかりに明らかにした。

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Today, so many people assert personal liberty, insist on inviolable rights of individuality, and lay claim to the rights of privacy. When abandoned home discipline, declining education in the school, offensive behaviors of youngsters in the street, or brutal delinquencies come up in conversation, long discussions of the personal liberty, individuality, or privacy, never fail to follow them. Those claims based on the individuality, more precisely, on personal liberty seem to be inevitable elements in order that the moderns may deal with how to live in the actual society of today.

When people discuss this sort of problems, however, we cannot avoid admitting that they apt to take their own *modus vivendi* (manner or mode of living) for the most important thing. At the same time, they count themselves as beings which should be valued most highly in the world. These views have taken many of modern people in their mind, probably since the end of the World War II. After having become disgusted with totalitarian results from the World War, people in the countries involved in the War have begun to take a sort of stance mainly based on the ideas as follows:

“As a matter of fact, you should look to the interests of your own country, of your own race, of your own family, of yourself. That is the most important thing in life.”

Here arises one question: Why do not people seem to be inclined to argue about the freedom of the world or the freedom of Nature, but simply the “individual” freedom? Why are they led to seek only for personal freedoms instead of claiming the liberty of the *terra nostra* as the total ground for the individual freedom?

We can find here some tokens of naked desires caused by assumptive ideas concerning Nature or the world. Many of the moderns in the so-called developed countries seem to take the pursuit of the personal interests for granted and consider that this belongs to the human rights.

CLAIMS TO PERSONAL FREEDOMS AND CRISIS OF INDIVIDUALITY

While we are living in cotton wool, enjoying seemingly comfortable everyday life with using devices produced by technology (we owe it to highly developed Natural Sciences), we have feelings that something unfathomable, uncanny and incomprehensible permeates through the ground of our everyday existence. We have a hunch that we are now imperceptibly confronted with something alarming and unidentifiable, something absurd and monstrous in the background of our everyday existence. So we intuitively sense something extraordinary in the ground of our own existence.

In sum, we feel ourselves driven to avert our eyes from that something uniden-

tifiable because of the scent of danger in our own ground of existence without clear awareness of the reality of the danger. Therefore, we are induced to confine the sphere of our concerns to personal matters and talk about “individuality”, “freedom”, or “liberty” in order to look to our own safety at least. Thus we lay loudly claim of the rights of individuality, feeling that we should get rid of the state of being caught in a trap, which will give rise to the collapse of our own ground of existence.

We get an inkling of something veiled, which secretly corrodes the ground of existence. The corrosion can be found, for example, in case that laws of Nature are mechanically applied to the feelings, emotions, mind and so on. This sort of application is practiced because a human being is regarded as a thing under the subjection of laws of Nature. This way of understanding of human nature might fail to recognize the essential mode of existence among human beings and endanger a human being “from his ground of existence up.”

It is an impending crisis of the ground of existence. Its influences, however, cannot be limited only to the level of the individual existence, because indispensable roles of the world and Nature as the essential ground for the existence in general are set out of sight, seem to become meaningless, and then are brought out of apparent sphere of remembrance finally. This happens very often when people begin to think about the problem of the freedom.

NATURE AS PLACE AND TIME

Nature as one of the forms of concretely realized “place” is a sort of *locus* (a concretized place) where all the beings come into the existence, meet together, go on existing, and come to end. Hence, place is merged into happenings and, time as process of events in Nature is mixed up in those happenings, and, in consequence, with the place, too. That is to say that time and place in Nature works at one with each other and it is realized in the midst of *eventuating* of things. Without these elements as place and time essential to their own existence, the existence of all the beings could not be found *in place and time* (it means “at the right place at the right time”), that is to say, concretized in their own reality. Simply expressed, it could not be properly realized in a certain place and time

where an *eventuating* comes to happen.

On the other hand, the world as an indispensable element for the existence of all the human beings lets them be as they are. That a being is as it is in a *locus* like in the world requires at the same time that it finds itself in a certain *tempus* (a concrete time). In this sense, the existence of human beings is *historical* because they find themselves in an *eventuating place and time*. Place and time are merged into each other as two elements of human existence, so that they are concretized and realized as *locus* and *tempus* through the eventuating of things in them. Therefore, the mence of place and time should be designated more adequately as “an *eventuating place and time*”. (Properly speaking, place and time are primordially not separated from each other. An eventuating event differentiates into place and time according to the intellectual understanding.) These things imply that the existence of human beings is not established on a firm ground, but the ground itself is moving, or swaying.

That people begin to feel something unfathomable in the deep ground of their existence and become insecure means that they are now aware that the traditionally given home-ground for the support of individual existence cannot be the last resort for both an individual existence and the world itself any more since the declaration of the death of God by NITZSCHE. It is to say that the world or Nature seems to be on the verge of a crisis because of becoming meaningless of the ground of existence.

As a consequence, the moderns, will try to support somehow or other their own individual existence at least by demanding loudly the freedoms of the will of the individual or the exercise of free will. In other words, people in the world of today surely scent the crisis of the world and the individual existence somewhere deep in the mind. Thus, they will try, without knowing it clearly, to defend the ground for their own existence against the breakdown of the existence in general, holding on to individualistic basis as their last resort. In short, the moderns suspect meaninglessness of their own existence in the existential ground of the world and human beings themselves. This feeling seems to produce an effect on viewpoints among the modern people and make them feel a premonition that they could not rely on a Transcendent Being any more.

THE ABYSS OF NIHILITY — NIHILISM

The absence of a Transcendent Being is a typical manifestation of “nihility” that erodes the ground of existence. The abyss of “nihility” opens its mouth from the bottom of all the existence in the form of the meaninglessness of our own existence. Most of us in the modern world, however, cannot but avert our eyes from the fact without awakening to the reality of nihility. In other words, the reason why we are carving for a solid ground of existence is because we are not aware of what happens in the innermost ground of our existence. Most of the moderns have been fumbling around for the possibilities of extrication from falling into the bottomless abyss of meaninglessness of their own existence. They do not seek it in any other place than in the personal liberty as freedom of the will as the last resort.

The meaninglessness as a token of “nihility” has already become a part of the existence of modern Ego. Under the circumstances, the Self as a focus of the activity of an eventuating event shows itself as the modern Ego when it takes shape through the permeation of self-centeredness. The self-centeredness comes thus into existence based on nihility since such a Transcendent Being like God was put out of the sphere of Nature and the world. To demand the personal liberty or the freedom of the will under such circumstances might be a vain attempt to seek a sanctuary, only within which an individual could feel secured under the illusion that he could get his freedom in hand and make his own individuality positive by himself. People are taken up with the idea that this is the only way to get rid of the nihilistic crisis of the individual existence. In this way, they keep themselves from being face to face with the abyss of “nihility” opened up in the ground of existence in general.

As I mentioned above, the reason why people are carving for the freedom of the individual is, in my opinion, because people are afraid of finding the absence of such a Transcendent Being as could give meanings to their existence. Indeed they are not clearly conscious of the origin of the meaninglessness of their own being and the world where they lead lives, but they have already noticed that something unusual is happening somewhere deeply in the bottom of mind and of existence. Demanding loudly the freedom of the will belongs to a token of mani-

festation of nihility. The nihility has been in essence permeating deeper and deeper the ground of the individual existence, the world and Nature from the beginning of our existence. We cannot possibly get rid of the permeation of nihility in the ground of existence, rather.

In the modern nihilism, people are brought into confrontation with the meaninglessness of their existence from its ground up. That is to say that all the beings seem to be deprived of the meaning of existence in the present world. It leads people in an existential extremity to doubt of the ground of their own existence and finally to an awakening to the erosion of their own existential ground with the meaninglessness. Thus, the moderns cannot rely on a sort of Transcendent Being such as God, which was believed to give an existential ground to all the beings in the world.

NIHILISM IN THE ORDINARY LIFE

Of late, however, such a supreme being like God is loosing and, probably, has already lost its position as the origin of the meaning for all the beings in the world since the establishment of the modern rationalistic Ego. In other words, the modern establishment of Ego has deprived a Transcendent Being of the role of the origin of all the meanings for all of beings. Instead of the self, which corresponded to the interaction among a human being, Nature and a Transcendent Being according to theories in the medieval alchemy, modern philosophies and sciences have set an observing subject in the central place of the world or Nature, and things in the world as objects to be observed. Under these circumstances, the most of modern people are apt to cast a veil over the fact of nihilism, because they have an anxiety that, even if he dared to seek for a secured ground for his own existence, he could not find the root of the existence nor could return to himself as before. They feel a premonition that nihility invades imperceptibly the ground and the meaninglessness of being would lead him to his own nihility, i. e. death.

This is one of the modes of being of the modern rationalistic Ego as a subject. It belongs to this type of nihilism that people abandon themselves to the pursuit of pleasure like gambling, indulging in dissipation, or even in sports. They adapt

themselves to a life of impetuous desires, standing on the meaningless ground of their existence through making themselves blind to the fact of nihilism.

SARTRE AND PROJECTION IN CLOSED CIRCUIT

Another type of nihilism can be found in the existentialism of Jean-Paul SARTRE. For Sartre, "existence" means that there is nothing to rely on either within the self or without it, and accordingly human existence is grounded on nothingness and is thrown (*se projeter*) from this nothingness into the actual situation. Thus, "existence" of human beings is intrinsically based on nothingness. In this sense, the existentialism of Sartre can be called "nihilistic". Because the human existence is based on nothingness, a human being is freed from the restraints, which are in themselves imaginary and are believed to be caused by some traditional image of God or a Transcendent Being, and he throws continuously himself toward the future. In this manner, he chooses and grasps his own mode of existence on the ground of nothingness from inside of the situation into which he is thrown. This is called by Sartre the "freedom of human existence". Sartre gives his existentialism the name of *humanism*, because the human being is the subject of his own existence.

Sartre sees through the once veiled fact of the modern nihilism that the ground of human existence is intrinsically permeated by nihility. We should place a high value on this insight.

According to Sartre, throwing himself beyond himself, a man chooses an existence for the self. This "throwing himself beyond himself" leads to such a mode of existence that a man finds himself constantly beyond himself. This is the meaning of "transcendence" to be acquired by human beings. Thus, a human being chooses the transcending self as an aim of existence beyond himself.¹ At the same time, it is not necessary now for him to bring an external ground of existence such as a Transcendent Being into his own ground of existence. In this sense, Sartre says, "... there is no other legislator than a man (or human being)

¹ Cf. J.-P. Sartre: *«L'existentialisme est un humanisme»*, p. 92, Edition Nagel, 1970.

himself.”²

Sartre's existentialism opts for nihilism as the ground of existence with consciousness and decisiveness. His existentialism as humanism comes about only within the sphere of human existence, even though he refers to transcendence. The notion of “transcendence” in his existentialism is nothing but a kind of a closed-circuit activity of the self – that means an action of throwing the self into a situation and gets itself back from that situation for choice -- this action was described as “throwing and choosing oneself beyond oneself”. Here is to notice a kind of a beyond-oneseif-back-to-oneseif-circulation within the sphere of his existential projection. This is just a self-closed circuit activity of the self. In this sense, Sartre's standpoint is based on a self-centeredness of human being.

NIHILISM IN NATURAL SCIENCE

Modern natural science takes on a character of self-centeredness, too. It bases the so-called scientific view of the world on the character. Though it does not seem appropriate for natural science to be counted for nihilism, its materialistic view of the world is closely bound up with such a point of view that being of a man does not hold an expressly significant position among material things and can be reduced to matter as something deficient in meaning (materialization of human being). Thus, natural science may be regarded as an extreme form of nihilism. As known, it insists on the strict objectivity of observing objects in Nature. It seems that natural scientists take it into their head firmly that the influence of an observing subject can be excluded through and through. Observation itself, however, would be impossible without the existence of an observing subject and an object to be observed at the same time at the same place.

Moreover, we could not derive any results from an observation, nor take them for significant for a theory or a hypothesis without influence from a part of the

² J.-P. Sartre: op. cit. p. 93-94 : 《Humanisme, parce que nous rappelons à l'homme qu'il n'y a d'autre législateur que lui-même, et que c'est dans le délaissement qu'il décidera de lui-même.》

subject on the place and time of observation. (There might be probably no observation without any purpose such as proving a theory or making assure a hypothesis.)

A theory or a hypothesis is a way of understanding Nature and the world as an object of an observing scientist, and there we can find a kind of bias through which we will be able to get recognition of an aspect of Nature or events in Nature. Through a bias of a theory made by an observing scientist we will meet such an aspect of Nature that is made to be focused into a certain area of human knowledge. Observation, therefore, has such a structure that, through throwing light on to Nature in the frame of man-made theory, an observing subject receives a reflex of the light returning from Nature. A sort of subjective operation cannot but be intermixed into the reflexive light of observation. Consequently, observation of natural science can never be objective in the sense of "being never influenced by an observing subject and therefore true".

For example, Werner K. HEISENBERG (1901 - 1976), a German physicist, says: "If we can speak about the picture of Nature in our age, it is not a matter of the picture of Nature itself, but of the picture of our relationship with Nature."³ In this case too, we can find a self-closed-circuit activity of the self such as a beyond-oneself-back-to-oneself circulation. It may be said that the world-view of natural science is constituted of this circulation of an observing human existence. That is to say, natural science is founded on the self-centeredness of the (probably "intrinsic") mode of existence of human being, too.

"SUBJECTIVE" FREEDOM

There is one point at which these three types of nihilistic thought meet on a common ground. That is a position as concerns the self-centeredness and, therefore, a self-centered viewpoint from which freedom can be taken into sight. That is to say, freedom is apprehended from the viewpoint of the human existence as a subject in the sense of natural science, that is, within the self-closed-circuit

³ Werner Heisenberg : "*Das Naturbild der heutigen Physik*" ; p. 21, Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, Hamburg; 1955.

activity of the self. Freedom comes to be met by a subject conditioned by its self-closed mode of being. Because this kind of freedom is freedom as far as it is met by the subject, the freedom itself is conditioned by its mode of being.

Accordingly, this kind of freedom is the freedom of choice among human activities, such as abandoning oneself to pleasure in case of nihilism without coming to awareness of its revelation. It leads in most cases to choice of a "transcendent self" through throwing oneself beyond oneself, like in the existentialism of Sartre. It also comes, in effect, to setting an object in Nature in front of an observing subject and treating the object as raw material which is so reorganized, reconstructed or reconstituted as the subject *will*. This is the nature of the freedom of the will after all.

In this manner, the freedom of the will is established on the mode of existence of the subject in the form of being conditioned by the self-closed activity of the self. In other words, it is based on the mode of existence conditioned by the self-centeredness. For that reason, we should say it is conditioned by the self-centeredness, too. It is not free from this condition. A human being can never attain to so-called "absolute freedom" (the absolute freedom means that a being in the state of "absolute freedom" is theoretically freed from every kind of restriction and can behave itself as it will) because it is set in the mode of existence conditioned by the self-centeredness. Where can we find then the real freedom or liberty?

NISHITANI'S "STANDPOINT OF *SUNYATA*"

In the philosophy of Keiji NISHITANI (1900 -1990), based on Zen Buddhism, the notion of the freedom in the ordinary sense is thrown away completely and he says: "the real freedom is beyond being free or not free"⁴. How can we understand this phase?

Nishitani finds in Sartre's early thoughts of existentialism one of the forms of

⁴ Keiji Nishitani "*Zen no tachiba* (The Standpoint of Zen Buddhism)", p. 74, published by *Sobun-sha*, Tokyo, 1986.

⁵ Keiji Nishitani: "*Religion and Nothingness*" (translated by Jan Van Bragt); pp: 95-96; University of California Press, 1982.

“subjectivization of nihility in modern atheism”⁵. It means, firstly, Sartre does not regard a Transcendent Being as necessary to the existence of human beings, but Nishitani does so. Secondly, the existential philosophy of Sartre holds that it is possible to deal with subjectivity only as an awareness of a nihility rising from the ground of human beings. Contrary to Sartre, Nishitani thinks that this ground for the awakening lies beyond the reach of human reason. Of the ground based on the nihility constitutes the very ground on which we stand. In this way, he tries to find out a positive point in the subjectivization of nihility in modern atheism, which is one of distinctive characters of thoughts in the contemporary world.

What makes a distinction between Nishitani’s thought and that of Sartre, however, is that the viewpoint of the Japanese philosopher lies beyond a scope conditioned by the self-centeredness. His way of thinking goes beyond an anthropocentric sphere. Nishitani elucidates the meaning of nihility that lies just under the ground of the existence of human beings.

In the philosophy of the standpoint of “*sumyata*”, the world is not interpreted as something opposed to a being – that is, not as absolute nothingness, but as a relative one – and as something that negates a being, and so makes a being meaningless. On the contrary, it is regarded as a working place of *sumyata* that breaks through the dimension of a nihility in opposition to a being (i.e. a relative nothingness) all at once and uncovers an infinite openness at the bottom of nihility. According to Nishitani, nihilism including existentialism views yet nihility from the bias of self-being and regards nihility as something opposed to a being and as something lying outside of a self-being. He explains the intrinsic character of nihility as follows:

“The nihility that one becomes aware of at the ground of the self and the world extends all the way to the locus of the divine. Nihilism here makes the claim that only by taking a stance on nihility man can truly attain to subjectivity and freedom. With this subjectivization of the abyss of nihility, a realm opened up at the ground of the self-existence of man beyond the pale of the divine order hitherto considered to be essentially in control of the self, a realm that allows nothing to preside over it, not even God. Here the autono-

my of man truly came into being for the first time. (Several passages are omitted) In spite of this, however, the representation of nothingness in nihilism still shows traces of the bias of objectification, of taking nothingness as some 'thing' called nothingness".⁶

For this reason, the subjectivity in nihilism has not attained to the subjectivity in the true form yet. In order that the subjectivity in the true picture may be realized, we must arrive in a place, which will be uncovered through becoming manifest of openness (that is another form of *sunyata*). This place comes to being only when we leave a standpoint on which we meet and recognize things on the basis of confrontation between being and nihility. The place is called "the field of *sunyata*". In the field of *sunyata*, the freedom in the true picture, namely to be truly free, is to be brought to fruition.

If that is the case, a question comes up as follows: How can the field of *sunyata* be brought into an actual situation, or realized? In response to it, Nishitani refers to emptiness in the following way:

"Emptiness in the sense of *sunyata* is emptiness only when it empties itself even of the standpoint that represents it as some 'thing' that is emptiness. It is, in its original Form, self-emptying. In this meaning, true emptiness is not to be posited as something outside of and other than 'being.' Rather, it is to be realized as something united to and self-identical with being."⁷

He continues to describe the emptiness further in connection with a notion of "absolute nothingness".

"When we say 'being-sive-nothingness,' or 'form is emptiness; emptiness is form,' we do not mean that what are initially conceived of as being on one side and nothingness on the other have later been joined together. In the context of Mahayana thought, the primary principle of which is to tran-

⁶ Keiji Nishitani: op. cit. pp: 95-96.

⁷ Keiji Nishitani: op. cit., pp. 96-97.

scend all duality emerging from logical analysis, the phrase ‘being-sive-nothingness’ requires that one take up the stance of the ‘sive’ and from there view being as being and nothingness as nothingness. (Several passages are omitted) It is here that emptiness, as a standpoint of absolute non-attachment liberated from this double confinement, comes to the fore.”⁸

EMPTIED SELF IN A DIALECTICAL MOTION

The coming-to-the-fore of emptiness is closely bound up with the mode of existence of the self, and, therefore, with the issue of the subjectivity in the true sense. The coming-to-the-fore of emptiness (*sunyata*) comes about through the realization of nihility and so through realizing the presence of nihility at the foundation of its existence. This realization of nihility is no other than the awareness, or rather awakening of man as a subject to the abyss of nihility. “This awareness implies more than merely looking contemplatively at death and nihility.”⁹ It is also necessary for the self as the subject of action to take nihility upon itself in order to be awoken to the fact that the self is empty. At the same time when the subject gets to this awakening, the field of *sunyata* opens up and it becomes “the field of ecstatic transcendence of the subject”.¹⁰

This is the first turn “from what we ordinarily call ‘self’ to the field of *sunyata*”¹¹. From here takes place the second turn to the standpoint of *sunyata*, not as the field of ecstatic transcendence of the subject any more, but as the field of turning back from the ecstatic transcendence to the actuality, that is, to the realities of life of the subject. This field of *sunyata* is called “the absolute near side”¹². Here happens the turnabout of the mode of existence of the subject from “the self is empty” to “emptiness is self”, too.

The above-mentioned logical evolution may be explained with using the dialectic terminology: the first turn lies in the direction to the absolute negation of

⁸ Keiji Nishitani: op. cit., p. 97.

⁹ Keiji Nishitani: op. cit., p. 16.

¹⁰ Keiji Nishitani: op. cit., p. 151.

¹¹ Keiji Nishitani: op. cit., p. 151

¹² Keiji Nishitani: op. cit., p. 151

existence, which negation goes beyond the standpoint of existence to transcendence, and furthermore to the negation of nihility itself, which leads to the negation of existence. In this direction comes to appear for the first time the "absolute negativity". Here, then, the subject comes to awakening to "the self is empty". It might be paraphrased in the following way: "the self is not self, but nothing".

The power of the absolute negation is too dynamic and rushing to stay on the phase of a static awakening to the self as emptiness. It negates even this awakening further and makes it turn to such an affirmation (as the result of through the negation of negation) that emptiness is the self. In other words, the power of absolute negativity brings the ordinary self back to the first awakening to "the self is empty, the self is nothing"¹³ once again. It was the phase in which the negation of the self was carried out. Then, it makes the self in the form of emptiness turn back to the self through negating the first awakening once more: this phase can be expressed that "emptiness (nothingness) is the self".

In this direction, the first negation of the self is negated once more through the activity of the absolute negation of emptiness and it becomes an absolute affirmation. In the direction of the absolute affirmation is met a rebirth of the self with since it lets the self take a sudden turn back to the self in the realities.

Here should be noted that the first negation does not come to happen apart from the second one in such a way that the second negation results from the first one. The absolute negation comes into play all at once, and that is realized on the field of *śūnyata*. There, on the field of emptiness, the field of the so-called self, the field of self-consciousness, which is, to be seen from the root of the existence, grounded on the self-centeredness, is broken through.

FREEDOM IN EMPTINESS

What does it mean, "emptiness is the self"? When the self is emptied out through the activity of emptiness in the direction of the absolute negation, the world as the field of the existence of the self is nullified. At the same time,

¹³ Keiji Nishitani: op. cit., p. 151.

because the existence of the world and that of things in the world are in unison with the existence of the self, Nishitani refers to the ground of our existence and freedom as follows:

“To say that a thing is not itself means that, while continuing to be itself, it is in the home-ground of everything else. Figuratively speaking, its roots reach across into the ground of all other things and helps to hold them up and keep them standing. It serves as a constitutive element of their being so that they can be what they are, and thus provides an ingredient of their being. That a thing is itself means that all other things, everything else is there too; that the roots of every other thing spread across into its home-ground. This way that everything has of being on the home-ground of everything else, without ceasing to be on its own home-ground, means that the being of each thing is held up, kept standing, and made to be what it is by means of the being of all other things; or, put the other way around, that each thing holds up the being of every other thing, keeps it standing, and makes it what it is. In a word, it means that all things ‘are’ in the ‘world.’”¹⁴

This relationship between the self and things in the world is called “the circuminsessional relationship” of things in the field of *sunyata*. (The self of human being also belongs as an individual person to “things” in the world.)

Emptiness (*sunyata*) is the field in which things become possible to come into such an existence as they truly are themselves. On the other hand, the world is opened up as it truly is (itself) by virtue of the opening up of the field of *sunyata*. In this sense, the field of *sunyata* is the home-ground of the self as it truly is, “the original self in itself” including the self of human beings, of the world, and of things in the world. Seeing from the standpoint of “the original self in itself”, the self of human beings is at one with that of the world and things. In other words, the self is at one with that of Nature or, to put it more shortly, the self is at one with Nature. Moreover, it may be said that this at-oneness of the self of individual human beings with Nature is a result from the activity of absolute

¹⁴ Keiji Nishitani: op. cit., p. 149.

negation that is concretised as an eventuating event.

At the same time, we should refer to the activity of absolute negation in the direction of the absolute affirmation concerning the self in itself. In the midst of the turning back to the self as “emptiness is the self”, the original self in itself, which comes to the fore as an eventuating place and time in unison with the world and things as the result from the absolute negation, is once more negated. Until this complete negation of incessant recurrence is set in motion, it will not be free from all the relationship with the world and things else. The thorough negation of unceasing recurrence makes it possible for the self as a certain temporary center of activity of negation to manifest itself as this individual self of “mine”. Here in the absolute affirmative turnabout, I can get to enjoying my own absolute autonomy, gain an absolute subjectivity, and occupy “the rank of master seated at the center of everything”.¹⁵ Thus says Nishitani:

“It may be said that all of us, as individual human beings, are also ‘things’ in the world and that our existence is an illusory appearance precisely as the truly real beings that they are. And we may then go on to say that where this being of ours ‘is’ at an elemental level at one with emptiness, the world and the totality of things become manifest from our own home-ground.”¹⁶

Nevertheless, one thing should be noted carefully: the self in this phase in the direction of the absolute affirmation is radically (from the ground up) different from the ordinary self because it has already gone through and is continuing to go through the absolute negation in the field of *sunyata*. It is cut off from the root of the adherence to the individuality, and so from the self-centeredness as the mode of existence of the ordinary self. The self is now absolutely free from the self-will as the root of the freedom of the will in the sense of arbitrariness, or of the freedom of choice.

Here should be remembered once again that the absolute negation and affir-

¹⁵ Keiji Nishitani: op. cit., p. 147.

¹⁶ Keiji Nishitani: op. cit., p. 152.

mation do not come about one after another, but the activity of the absolute negation on the field of *sunyata* gets simultaneously into action all at once. Therefore, the self in itself comes into play from and on the basis of the at-oneness of the self with Nature, that is, from and on the home-ground not without our existence, but within that of ours. From there, the world and the totality of things come out to manifest itself/themselves. It has the same meaning as the fact that Nature is at one with the original self in itself and puts itself in action on and from the same home-ground of our own. If I may permit myself to give the name to the “putting-itself-in-action of Nature” as the “will of Nature”, because this action can be regarded as a form of the will, then the manifestation of the self of our own is no other than the putting-itself-in-action of Nature. The will of Nature, therefore, does not differ from the will of our own. Here in this phase we can meet with the origin of “*Sollen*” in the accordance with the will of Nature.

SELF AND NATURE; FREEDOM AND NECESSITY

To obey the will of Nature is the same as obeying or accepting the necessity of Nature. Because this necessity of Nature comes into play on and from the home-ground where the self in itself is at one with the world, or with Nature, the necessity is not different from the will of the self of our own. On the one hand, something that comes into play without external help (of itself, or *mizukara* in Jap.) must be defined “free”. Consequently, necessity is one and the same as freedom in the field of *sunyata*. On the other hand, a free will as something goes into action without being forced to do so “is” such as it is, and so is of “nature”.¹⁷ Therefore, Nishitani pronounces “nature-sive-freedom” (in this case, it can be interpreted that Nature is nothing but freedom).¹⁸

In spite of it, to obey or accept the necessity of Nature may be regarded as “without will (non-will)”, because to come into play without help from outside (*of*

¹⁷ Here we try to give an English translation to a Japanese everyday expression “*onozukara*”. When we give a very simple and single term to the expression, “of itself” can be one possible translation.

¹⁸ Cf. “*Zen no tachiba*”, pp. 137-140.

itself) means to begin to work by itself or naturally, and we need not force ourselves to find there the action of the will of an individual being. Viewed from a different angle, however, obeying or accepting the necessity of Nature can be seen as the fact that the self on the home-ground of the self in itself, that is, on the at-oneness with Nature, goes into action without being forced. Accordingly, accepting the necessity of Nature has an aspect of obeying the will of Nature as one's own free will. Here we can find the exercise of one's own will, or the action of an individual will. Necessity and freedom are like two sides of the same coin.

What I mentioned above indicates that the field of *sunyata* is the innermost origin from where the will and the non-will, freedom and necessity arise, because the field of *sunyata* opens up the home-ground on which the world and the things, or Nature, become manifest and the self of our own attains to the original self in itself. In this sense says Nishitani: "the true freedom" which is that home-ground of the original self in itself "is beyond being free and not free."

CONCLUDING REMARKS

About ten years ago, just before I left Japan for the United States, I had heard by chance on a TV-news about a *judicial* decision from a high court on a case of carrying-in of salacious writings, briefly, of pornography. The import of the case is as follows: An editor of a magazine designed to carry in some pornographic magazines from the U.S.A. into Japan. He was checked at the Japanese Customhouse, they were confiscated by the Customs authorities, and, to go a step further, he was adjudged at the first instance "guilty" and punished with a fine of an amount of money. He appealed then against the decision of the lower court to a high court persisting in claiming his innocence. Then he was given a verdict of "not guilty" by the high court. The problem, however, does not lie in the procedures of the case, but the contents or the import of the text of the decision on the case, rather.

Roughly speaking, the text says: The judgment on whether a deed is obscene or not belongs to personal morals, in such a case that obscene goods are used personally, that is, they serve the purpose of personal (or individual) pleasure.

And a judicial court should not take part in this area, in personal morals, but only in a illegal act. Therefore, a judgment concerning the deed of the editor should not have been formed in light of the law.

The sentence seems to be very reasonable. It is quite proper that the court makes difference between the freedom of the individual and the freedom as far as the law permits. The notions of freedom in the sentence are almost equivalent to those of the freedom in the ordinary social lives. However, the author asks himself about the following question: From what ground should the difference be considered and acknowledged?

The individual is considered to have the independent consciousness and this consciousness is thought to be originally free from all the restrictions from outside, to be sure. But the freedom of the individual or the personal liberty finds acceptance under the condition that the employ of the personal liberty is restricted when it usurps on the freedoms of others, because the others are to be justly dealt with on an equal footing.

If everyone yields himself up to desires to make the limitless employ of the individual freedom or personal liberty, it will cause conflicts in the society as a gathering of the individual. Therefore, the employ of the personal liberty should be restricted in the name of the law, as long as it brings trouble to others (as well as oneself). Here we can find the double structure, so to speak, of the freedom; the freedom of the individual and that as far as the law permits. In short, it may be said that the individual, independent consciousness and the freedom on the base of the individual consciousness is the starting point of considering the freedom not only in the field of the law, but also in the ordinary lives.

However, after having closely examined the home-ground of freedom and necessity, we cannot find contentment in the above mentioned understanding of freedom. We can find the ground of freedom and necessity merely in the incessant activity from self to self through absolute negation. The negation will be carried out simply in the standpoint of emptiness, that is to say, absolute nothingness.

To believe that freedom is grounded on the individual consciousness, however, shows that such a kind of freedom is based on the self-centeredness of human being. The reason is that the ground of the personal liberty itself and that of the

individual consciousness rests on the same, self-centered basis in the following way: The incessant negation of the self on the standpoint of *sunyata* comes to a stop and the activity of absolute negation is set in a standstill. The standstill supplies the ground for the way of thinking that things are to be taken from the standpoint of a fixed self. Then both the personal liberty and the self-consciousness are regarded as something fixed and substantial. Here begins the self-centered perspective. The same thing can be applied to the social self such as the one emerged, for example, in the field of a judicial world.

On the contrary, the freedom on the ground of nihility or the home-ground from the standpoint of *sunyata* is freed from the self-centeredness, because the standpoint is consisted of the incessant negation of the self. More exactly, the self is nothing but the unceasing activity of negation of the absolute nothingness. Only in the midst of the continual activity of the self-negation of the absolute nothingness, our self/selves finds a *historical locus* in place and in time, at the right time at the right place, as the ground of existence.

Because the ground is based on the unceasing motion of absolute negation, our self/selves has possibilities of getting free from the adherence to the once established, therefore, fixed ground of existence. This ground based on the incessant activity of the absolute negation is, in author's view, the home-ground or the primordial form of the freedom. The ground for freedom, of course, including that for the personal liberty, cannot be attained until the self frees itself from the self-centered ground through setting itself in the midst of continual activity of the absolute negation on the standpoint of *sunyata*.