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Phänomenologie
der Praxis im
Dialog zwischen
Japan und
dem Westen

Königshausen & Neumann

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Wiederum „Zu den Sachen selbst!“
From Phenomenology to Taoistic Philosophy?

While we recognize our indebtedness to the invaluable „positive contributions“ of the so-called Phenomenological Movements to the formation of our own philosophical problems, today we are drawn, too, by our own inner needs to an attempt to expose to ourselves the limits of those phenomenological approaches. Inspired by the Eastern philosophical tradition, we will seek a new road, a third alternative to those traditions of the East and the West, to our questioning search in which the world reveals itself as it really is. To commemorate the first International Phenomenological Conference in Japan to be held in Niigata, we would like to take advantage of having inherited both the traditions of the East and the West to synthesize a way of philosophizing on the basis of a radical, critical appraisal of both approaches. The history of philosophy, both in the East and the West, reveals that historically philosophy has evolved not by accepting what our predecessors have said, but rather by pursuing their questions and problems and thereby discovering a new horizon in which they may be more satisfactorily raised and solved.

In the first part — an overview — we will be concerned with how European Reason has developed and retained its throne not only in the history of philosophy but also in common sense and scientific and technological development. We shall hopefully reveal how, throughout the development of European culture, discrepancies have been created between the world views conceived by Reason and reality as it actually is.

The second part will examine other kinds of attempts at comprehending the world which have been made, and how and why these attempts have been pursued in the East so that we are able to go back to the ultimate root of our intrinsic need to grasp the world as such.

Lastly, we will propose the possibility that in the authentic spirit of the Phenomenological Movements we can, with *the „Beginner's Mind“*, once again „see“ the world as it really is by critically re-evaluating the power of European Reason and its overwhelming dominance.

It may be appropriate here to remind ourselves that inasmuch as we are using modern European languages, our thinking has been molded by the Aristotelian „subject-predicate“, „substance-properties“ metaphysical frame of reference, and so we must exercise extreme caution. Conversely, we do not allow ourselves to take the road of *furyu monji* (no use of language) as in Zen Buddhism. At the same time, however, unlike Parmenides, we „keep our distance“ from *logos* and yet our way is by no means to be confused with the extremely skillful and original approach of Jacques Derrida.

Part I

When Thales wondered how the world (*ho kosmos*) really is, according to Aristotle, he searched for its causes or principles rather than the origin, although the Greek word *hé arché* purports both the origin and the principle. Aristotle saw this departure to the questioning search for the principles, away from the understanding of the origin, as the beginning of philosophical inquiry in the history of Western civilization. Moreover, this Aristotelian interpretation already had presupposed that the world can and should be known through so-called „Reason“. In this standard interpretation, the emphasis of philosophical cognition is on the causes of the world rather than on how the world, that is, reality, really is. Furthermore, it is presupposed that Reason is not only the ability to know reality by means of discovering its causes but also can and must reduce the variety of actual and potential phenomena of the universe that we experience to as few elements as possible, whereby the causes are considered to be unchanging, universal and self-identical, while the multitude of phenomena are changing, particular and *other than* themselves. These two presuppositions have no philosophical justifications *in themselves*, but are motivated by and implicitly based upon our practical, pragmatic way of thinking which enables us to live better in the mundane world.

The former assumption was first questioned within the framework of modern physics by Heisenberg and others; the latter was made explicit in the process of developments in the philosophy of science with respect to the simplicity of theory formation. Thales, being skillful in measuring the height of a pyramid or the distance from shore of a ship, so the story goes, may have been also interested in applied knowledge put to practical use (a fundamental feature of scientific knowledge even today). Therefore, those

assumptions may be remarkably well suited to his inquiry. Still, we may ask ourselves what knowledge he was ultimately seeking when he „wondered“. It could very well be that Thales wanted to know, instead of its causes or principles alone, the world as such which consists of beautiful blue skies, white clouds, oceans and beaches, and the citizens, their *polis* and behavior. We wonder if he searchingly questioned what it is that makes his life worth living and why he should act this way rather than the other, but all these elements just mentioned were completely abstracted by Aristotle from Thales' comprehension of the world, and his philosophy was reduced to a rational account for the cause or principle of the natural world.

Among the three presumably migrant philosophers — Xenophanes, Heraclitus and Pythagoras — who indicate that they were more concerned about comprehending the world as it really is, Heraclitus seems to be the most fiercely misconstrued by this rationalistic view. The main significance of Heraclitus has been reduced merely to his philosophical conceptions being put in opposition to Parmenides' philosophy, another advance in the direction of the „Way of Reason“. Even in the case of Parmenides, his concept of being (*to eon*) could very well have meant something other than „thing“, which was further developed into the atomists' „material substance“. At any rate, Parmenides' first contribution to the development of European Reason may be said to consist in the discovery and establishment of the logical principles of identity and of contradiction. Furthermore, „seeing“ (*to noein*) is finally construed as Reason, whose ability is nothing other than to intuitively grasp „reality“ (*to eon*) in distinction from „appearance“. Also, through Zeno's dialectical argument, „reality“ is shown as being capable of being grasped by Reason only and, therefore, is other than the concrete, lived world as it really is. Here we see the partial completion of the world view as seen through the eye of European Reason such that the concrete, actually lived world is other than the „reality“ which can be grasped by Reason alone. The former is merely reserved, therefore, for the senses and, in consequence, for mundane common sense. In contrast, the latter as the object of Reason is self-identical, unchanging and universal.

This „abstraction“ of reality as the sole object of knowledge was the first significant basis for the molding and development of European Reason as one of our human choices, which appears somewhat „arbitrary“ to the eye of the non-Western philosopher. When we interpret Plato's philosophy from his later dialogues, in particular from *Timaeus*, *The Sophist*, *Parmenides*

and *The Law*, we see a consistent development of his philosophy, an attempt to return to the more comprehensive, primordial world; this is quite unlike the so-called standard interpretation of Plato's philosophy, which we shall not go into here. It was Aristotle, however, who successfully attempted to give a philosophical basis for our European common-sense world view by bringing back the abstracted „reality“, that is, the object of reason, to our concrete field of practical, pragmatic experience, and he called this „substance and predicate“. Now Reason is in the position of being able to grasp only that which is universal, self-identical and unchanging and also being able to analyze and abstract as well as discern and identify various properties (predicates) which necessarily belong to substance. Because of this ontological structure with the capacities endowed to Reason, it was possible for Aristotle to establish the so-called formal logic. (In addition to this contribution by Aristotle to European Reason and philosophy, the atomists made a further contribution by providing the basis for materialism in metaphysics.) In other words, Reason, in metaphysics, is the underlying principle for unchanging, universal, self-identical things and the very same Reason is conceived as the sole, noble ability to recognize these special kinds of things and their properties in epistemology. As you can see from the above this is only one step away from Descartes' modern world view and his conception of Reason, the further development of which becomes what Husserl called *The Crisis*.

If we dare to oversimplify the situation, we could say that the development of medieval philosophy, and in particular scholasticism, had radicalized the dichotomy between human beings and the rest of the universe, and the distinction between moral and natural philosophy prepared the way for contemporary development of the „mechanistic-materialistic“ world view (as Whitehead called it) as well as the correlative development of Reason. The Cartesian grand scheme of dualism, in terms of *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, perfected the unbridgeable split and the irreconcilable opposition between human beings and the rest of the universe. As a result, until the end of the 19th century in Europe, the philosophies may be more or less classified either as a modified Cartesian dualism or as a variety of monism. Some of the latter, called „materialism“, attempted to „reduce“ *res cogitans* to *res extensa*; the other, „idealism“ or „spiritualism“, purported to „deduce“ *res extensa* from *res cogitans*. With the exception of the anti-rational philosophies in France influenced by Pascal and „Romantic“ philosophies such as Schelling's later philosophy, Reason

nevertheless played a dominant role. It is also important not to forget that there were some philosophers of Reason who showed, in peculiar manner, special sensitivities to non-rational elements in reality (for example, Pascal, Leibniz, Kant and Hegel) and we could say that Hegel's philosophy is the culmination of this endeavor.

In 20th century Europe, Reason's overwhelming success and dominance has proved itself through its achievements in science and technology, while the first explicit revolt against European Reason was attempted by Friedrich Nietzsche and later developed by Jacques Derrida into his philosophy of deconstruction, although the latter was consciously attempted and inescapably contrived within the domain and tradition of European Reason. It is extremely important to note that Derrida, a European, is fully aware that he cannot escape from the cunning power of European Reason, as anyone who speaks European languages cannot free himself from comprehending reality by means of the Aristotelian metaphysical schemes of „substance-properties“ and „subject-predicate“. It is impossible to free oneself from the principle of identities and contradictions (even in such a case as Hegel's overextended manner of accommodating non-rational aspects of reality). Two-valued extensional logic, or for that matter even many valued logic, is no exception. When Husserl said, „*Zu den Sachen selbst zurückkehren!*“, his intent must have been to bracket this dominance of European Reason and the historical development of European philosophy. Yet when he spoke of „*den Gegenstand*“ or „*transzendentes X*“, not only was he not free from what he wanted to bracket, but he even presupposed them and then considered the final outcome of his philosophy to be the teleological completion of European Reason (*Die Krisis*).

The same may be said of Max Scheler when he talked about „*Güter*“, Heidegger of „*Seiendes*“ or more specifically „*Zubandes*“, the latter of which Heidegger explicitly tried to characterize as the object of our mundane, practical, pragmatic activities. Other phenomenological philosophers such as Sartre and Merleau-Ponty are no exceptions.

Is it not possible then to have a new perspective which is free from the tyranny of European Reason, other than the attempt of Derrida's „deconstruction“? The answer is in fact „yes!“ It may be important for us to remind ourselves that the way in which the tradition of European Reason has been conceived and molded is, indeed, *a deliberate choice* that the European philosophers have successively made. This is not to say that we deny the validity and usefulness of Reason within limits; it simply means

that, without prejudice, we must open our eyes to the fact that there is another philosophical perspective in which the world may be grasped as it really is. Our pursuit will give the spirit of Phenomenology and the Phenomenological Movements a new expression of the leading motto „Returning to fact itself“!

To prepare for a better understanding of our attempt, next we shall introduce the tradition of philosophical approaches in the East.

Part II

In philosophy, whether it is in the East or the West, the pursuit of knowledge, that is the quest for truth, is based upon radical criticism. Whether Thales *wondered* how the universe really is, or Descartes exercised his *universal doubt* on the philosophical inheritances of his day, criticism is exercised on what we are accustomed to, have been taking for granted and believe that we already know. In the Western tradition, this ability to critically appraise is considered to be a part of the capability of Reason. However, unless the pursuit of knowledge is explicitly identified as the activity of Reason, it seems rather awkward to consider this ability of the questioning search as a part of Reason. Since the time of ancient Greece, according to Aristotle, the primary nature of Greek philosophy and, therefore, that of European philosophy, should consist in pure contemplation (*hé theoria*), in the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, not for a particular purpose, benefit or efficiency; practical philosophy as it is applied to a specific purpose or usefulness for something else is considered to be secondary. Therefore, philosophical contemplation, like pure children's games, has its purpose in this contemplation itself and should be autonomous and self-sufficient. However, due to the nature of *logos*, which essentially has two meanings — distinguishing and enumerating — philosophical inquiry has led to analyses, that is, articulating, distinguishing, and assigning priorities and significance. Through careful examination we find that this is based upon unspoken and previously unnoticed presuppositions that the search for knowledge by analysis is ultimately motivated by volition and action in the widest sense, that is by our concern about how to live concretely (this may be why Plato saw the idea of Good as the highest and most fundamental of all ideals which are standards of articulation). If philosophy claims truth as genuine knowledge, the results of

analyses — the distinctions — are not to be regarded as merely conceptual, but they obtain the status of facticity. Therefore, not only those distinctions of fact and essence, actuality and potentiality and the one and the many are viewed as and even made absolute, real distinctions, but also those of good and evil, right and wrong, beauty and ugliness, precious and dispised, and other distinctions Reason has to „manipulate“ reality in this way because the Western mind „perceives“ reality and the world primarily as *chaotic and hostile to humans*, which has resulted from *mistrust and hatred of the world* (what Max Scheler called *den Welthass*) in the Western view. Furthermore, the Western mind has been compelled to aggressively impose distinctions upon the world and endeavors to control reality for the sake of practical efficiency. So the Western mind has had to take recourse to Reason and has endowed absolute authority and power to Reason in order to organize this chaos and impose distinctions and order on the world. The history of modern science and technology is but a natural and yet gigantic step further and, needless to say, it is the development of European Reason that exercises control in the world so completely on the basis of this mechanistic-materialism such that we are today facing crises everywhere in human existence, society and environment, which Husserl as well as Heidegger and Jaspers had already anticipated in the 1920s and 1930s.

In contrast to the historical development of philosophical inquiry in the West, *philosophically* we find in the East a diametrically opposing orientation in perspective and method. (Needless to say, throughout history in the East the conditions of life in the mundane world have been very similar to those in the West in that selfishness and greed, war and strife, poverty and famine, disease and death have been overwhelmingly common phenomena.) We may trace the Eastern approach to the questioning search back to Lao Tzu's and Chuang Tzu's Taoistic Philosophy in China (as distinguished from the Taoism in religion) and the development of Mahayana Buddhism (philosophical thoughts mediated by Nagarjuna in particular) in China, Korea and Japan (exemplified by Zen Buddhism and Jodoshinshu). The acceptance, selection and adaptation of Mahayana Buddhism into Chinese culture were accomplished by means of Taoistic philosophy and as a consequence the similarities in their basic view of reality became greater. We will for the sake of brevity concentrate here on the philosophies of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu.

Contrary to the West, there has been in the East an exceedingly strong ontological sense of *affinity with and trust in the world as Nature*. Negatively

understood, this could mean a passive resignation and surrender to Nature, i.e., the power of fate (in the Western view of Eastern thought, too much emphasis has been placed here and it is erroneous and misleading). In the East the universe has never been considered to be an opposing foe to human beings, but rather it is the Primal Mother in whose arms human beings are tenderly and safely embraced.

Lao Tzu was also aware of the limits of use and faults of language to the utmost extremity in that, in our mundane use, language distinguishes, articulates, prioritizes and organizes objects of the world for the practicality and efficiency of our everyday life. Contrary to Lao Tzu's insight, this is generally considered to be a positive function of language. On the other hand, by means of these words (what Lao Tzu called „names“) we experience the world as consisting of a distinguished „ten thousand things“ and by virtue of the language, these distinguished „ten thousand things“ are taken for independent, individual existences in accordance with the words, which in turn become the names of those distinguished entities. To assert that there exist independently those distinguished, innumerable entities, for which the words are the names, is far beyond the proper limits of the use of language, about which Lao Tzu warns us. He says, „The name is the mother of the ten thousand things“ (*Tao Te Ching*, Chapter 1). In the domain of *Zuhandensein* (our practical, pragmatic way of life), Lao Tzu points out that by means of „words“ we are effective in dealing with the world; and yet words should not be allowed to reify metaphysically as entities those distinguished „ten thousand things“. Lao Tzu contends, „How far apart are yes and no? How far apart are good and evil?“, yet we assign such absolute significance to those distinctions. The same insight is advanced by Chuang Tzu, which will be elaborated upon later. A strikingly similar thought is expressed by Nagarjuna as well. The world as it really is, according to Lao Tzu, is therefore both the many and the one and yet it is authentically the one; further, it is nameless, for naming (use of language) is nothing but analyzing and distinguishing. In order to talk about this authentic one, Lao Tzu chooses the word Tao (The Way), with qualification.

Moreover, Lao Tzu believes that there is an inseparable connection between our desiring and distinguishing (naming); we desire „good“ because „good“ is distinguished from „bad“; through distinction of „good“ from „bad“, we desire „good“. Therefore it is ego that articulates „here“ from „there“, „this“ from „that“, „the acceptable“ from „the unacceptable“.

This ego is not, of course, the „I“ in the epistemological sense of transcendental subjectivity, but is the „concrete I“ who feels, judges, decides, and acts in the concrete, practical, mundane world. For the sake of efficiency and practicality this I „perceives“ the world as the distinguished in themselves. For this, we pursue and acquire knowledge of the distinguished. Through this distinction the I prefers, desires, is attached to, and expects „this“ rather than „that“.

It is clear from the above that ego's knowledge through distinguishing is the source of our *desire*, *attachment* and, further, of our *greed*. The more we pursue and accumulate this knowledge through analysis, the more artificially intensified our desire, attachment and greed. As objects of our desire, attachment and greed, the distinguished are more solidly reified and we totally lose sight of the fact that the distinctions are an artificial invention of our ego and are not „real“ in themselves. Chuang Tzu's famous metaphor „Three in the Morning“ illustrates the point:

„When the monkey trainer was handing out acorns, he said, ‚You get three in the morning and four in the evening‘. This made all the monkeys furious. ‚Well, then‘, he said, ‚you get four in the morning and three in the evening‘. The monkeys were all delighted. There was nothing different in the reality referred to by the words, and yet the monkeys responded with joy and anger“. (Book 2)

This knowledge by distinctions is so widely pursued, though primarily restricted for the purpose of efficiency and practicality and furthermore it is powerfully influenced by our desire, attachment and greed so that we experience the world *not* in the way in which it really is, but we only see the world in a gravely one-sided, abstracted, distorted and even erroneous manner. Therefore, Lao Tzu says, „the five colors blind the eye, the five tones deafen the ear, five flavors dull the taste, racing and hunting madden the mind, precious things lead one astray“ (Chapter 12). According to Lao Tzu, what is considered valuable in mundane common sense is, in facticity, the opposite. For example, in terms of „*use of non-use*“, „thirty spokes share the wheel's hub; it is the center hole that makes it useful. Shape clay into a vessel; it is the space within that makes it useful. Cut doors and windows for a room; it is the space which makes it useful“ (Chapter 11).

In another place Lao Tzu says, „When the great Tao is forgotten, kindness and morality arise. When wisdom and intelligence are born, the great pretense begins. When there is no peace within the family, filial piety and devotion arise. When the country is confused and in chaos, royal ministers appear“ (Chapter 18). This is why in Chapter 20 Lao Tzu

advocates the „bracketing“ of „learning“ in the sense of this knowledge through distinction (called „small knowledge“ by Chuang Tzu in distinction from „great knowledge“). In order to have us see the world as it really is, Lao Tzu points out the shallowness, distortion and perversion and tries to have us see that all the values preferred in that narrow knowledge through distinction are in fact opposites. In Lao Tzu's words, he goes even further to advocate that one may have to give up all knowledge through distinction, *empty oneself* of everything as well as denounce (artificial) actions, and he thus strongly insists on „non-action“. This non-action does not purport doing nothing, but doing nothing *artificial* which will further stir in us desire, attachment and greed. „Give up sainthood, renounce wisdom, and it will be a hundred times better for everyone. Give up kindness, renounce morality, and men will rediscover authentic filial piety and love. Give up ingenuity, renounce profit, and the bandits and the thieves will disappear“ (Chapter 19).

Chuang Tzu even contends that the reality of those „ten thousand things“, that is, the world of our mundane, practical experience, be more radically „bracketed“: „Once Chuang Chou dreamed that he was a butterfly, flying around, happy with himself and moving as freely as he pleased. He did not know that he was Chou. Suddenly awakening, he realized that he was Chou. Then he did not know whether he was Chou who had dreamed he was a butterfly or a butterfly dreaming he was Chou“ (Book II).

Once we are able to bracket our immersion in our everyday way of experiencing the mundane world through distinctions, we neutralize the validity of all those distinctions as real, suspend those artificialities in action such as morality, kindness, intelligence, and ingenuity, and even suspend the general theses of the existence of the world of our mundane experience (this Chuang Tzu calls „fasting the mind“). Then we are able to be brought back to a primary attitude (*Einstellung*) of our authentic existence where these „ten thousand things“ in the world are not in themselves worthy of distinction; they lose their absolute validity of distinction and *become one and the same*. This is what Chuang Tzu called „making all things one and the same“.

Let's take for example one of the most fundamental distinctions we believe we have in reality, that is, life and death. We not only desire to live but also we desire to live well and better. Furthermore, we want to live longer as much as we hate death. We are firmly attached to our own life, we

want to enrich our life possibly with material wealth as well as artistic and intellectual activities. We want to avoid suffering and illness. We do everything possible to prolong our life. This attachment to life and our often insatiable greed to make our life better blinds us to the fact that, as Heidegger points out, as being towards death our being is in fact nothing. Although we want to believe and do everything possible to convince ourselves that not only we but also all the so-called „ten thousand things“ have a solid being and exist forever, this conviction of ours is revealed as unfounded through our experience of anxiety, as Heidegger well elucidates, and in reality it becomes apparent that all entities, including ourselves, are lofty and vulnerable by being held in nothingness. Thus, it becomes evident that what we considered the absolute distinction between life and death together with the other distinctions is relative to our ego, its desire and attachment. Therefore, according to Lao Tzu, „ten thousand things rise and fall“. While Tao is the principle of being for all these „ten thousand things“, being by itself, unable to be an entity, is understood as *nothingness*. Philosophical insight into this state of affairs makes it possible for us to be one with what Chuang Tzu called „the great understanding“, in which ultimately the world as it really is reveals itself *as it is* in an authentic manner.

Part III

As apparent from the elucidation of the philosophies of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, one may see clearly where we come from in the pursuit of radicalizing „phenomenological philosophy“. However, just as any post-Nietzschean Western philosopher has to wrestle with his own European tradition and with the overwhelming dominance of Reason in which, this being self-evident, he has been immersed and thereby easily blinded to other alternatives, we must exercise a more careful and attentive critique upon the philosophical traditions in which we were born and brought up. Now it is our task to thematically appraise the Eastern tradition in philosophy.

In contrast to Confucianism, which is often called „The Doctrine of Name“ due to its emphasis on distinction by language and the importance of name, Taoistic philosophy often has been construed as denying the significance of language and the importance of the worldly life. Since the beginning of the Han Dynasty when Confucianism was adopted as the

national moral philosophy and religion (just as in other ancient civilizations, Eastern religion and politics are deeply intertwined and inseparable), one's external existence in society in the Far East has been governed by Confucianistic principles.

Many a philosophical mind, being rather dissatisfied with Confucianism and in order to deal with the question of one's inner being, that is the authentic meaning of existence, has resorted to the teachings of Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu as well as Mahayana Buddhism, interpreted by means of the Taoistic philosophical perspective. In this way, both Confucianism and Taoistic philosophy rather remarkably co-existed in the same mind, something which may be difficult for the Western mind to comprehend.

Due to this spiritual situation in the East, there has been a strong tendency to deny the value of language, the significance of analysis, the importance of practical efficiency and, in short, to reject the import of the social and political domains of human existence. Concerning the question of one's inner being, that is, what makes one's life worth living or what the most important things in one's life are, one may radicalize one's own ultimate concern and make an often unavoidable leap into religious devotion. Therefore, it is easy for us to see such a situation as a complete retreat from family and society into the solitary life deep in the mountains, and renunciation of language, worldly distinction and mundane concerns for the sake of authentic (religious) existence. These radical directions to the eccentric and esoteric life are matters of faith and are by no means philosophical. In this attitude, the questioning search and obtaining insight are regarded only as instrumental to the „enlightened“ way of life. Against this religious overtone we must guard ourselves. This is a sort of methodical escapism in order to eliminate desire, attachment and greed by changing the environment to a more conducive one. On the contrary, we recognize the significance of keeping ourselves *in the problems themselves* and even *becoming the problems themselves* rather than escaping from them or confronting them.

Philosophically, the questioning search and the knowledge obtained by insight itself is intrinsically authentic human existence and not merely instrumental. Being finite, we will never be in a position to detach ourselves completely from distinction, desire, attachment, no matter what *satori* experience (elighenment) we might have. We continue to be attached and are detached in our attachment. Being in the questioning search and

obtaining insight itself is freedom in the authentic sense, namely, authentically liberating ourselves to our own primordial being.

Correlatively, in this attitude (*Einstellung*) the world reveals itself both as distinguished and the same, the one and the many, being and nothing, and is at the same time these opposites. We must, however give credit to Reason for its contribution to efficacy and practicality so that we have no difficulty „in seeing“ and „living in“ the world as both rational and nonrational, finite and infinite, and the chaotic and ordered as well.

From our mundane attitude of everydayness, in which the world does not reveal itself as it really is but through *the filter* of operative latency, distortion, concealment and prejudices, we are able to liberate ourselves and shift ourselves to the above-mentioned attitude, in which our free, compassionate and active devotion to the world, as it really is, is possible. This process, as you can now see, may be called *phenomenological reduction in the broadest and deepest sense*. Unlike the case of Husserl's phenomenological *epochés*, this transition or metamorphosis of ourselves is not artificial but *natural* in the sense that we are returning to our inborn, original nature from the condition of our alienation from ourself. In Zen Buddhism, this same original nature is sometimes called the „Buddha nature“. In the process of returning to this primordial nature of ours with the „Beginner's Mind“, the world begins to reveal itself as it really is.

The last question that we have to ask ourselves is, how is it possible for us to *describe* this philosophical pursuit without the distortion and misconception of the ontological frame of reference as developed by European Reason?

Kitaro Nishida endeavored to describe philosophically what he termed „pure experience“, and yet, due to the great influence on him of European philosophies, his attempt was limited. The ultimate theme of his philosophizing is „nothingness“ while Shuzo Kuki pursued his philosophical inquiry into „contingency“ and Goichi Miyake, on the question of „infinite“. Among contemporary Japanese philosophers, Tokuryu Yamanouchi envisioned a new logic on the basis of Nagarjuna's Doctrine of Middle in his last opus *Logos and Lemma*. Here we hopefully see a clue to a developing philosophical method of description, but we will not elaborate further at this time. What we are concerned with here is to point out that all of these Japanese philosophers were strongly influenced by phenomenology and phenomenological philosophies and made specific attempts to philosophize within the perspective of their native culture, although their approaches may

appear to have been inconclusive due to their rather heavy dependence on the language and method of Western philosophy.

In our philosophical inquiry, we no longer allow ourselves to follow the road of an eclectic and easy synthesis between East and West. Through our phenomenological reductions, we will not only bracket the inheritances and uncover latent as well as presupposed foundations for the hitherto developed philosophical knowledge, but we will „detach“ (*ausser-Kraft-setzen*) ourselves from desire, attachment and greed and recover our strong confidence in our inborn nature and the long-forgotten trust and affinity with the world.

In order to meet the open world revealing itself as it really is and at the same time to return to our own primordial authentic self, we must have the courage to take a risk in our questioning search; besides accepting „the ten thousand things“ as they are, we must also „see the invisible, listen to the inaudible and grasp the intangible“ (Chapter 14) that are joined in one as the nothingness on which the „ten thousand things cast their shadows in their rise and fall“. Thus, through the radicalized phenomenological reductions, we are returning anew to fact itself.