

現代における論理学の問題 — A. N. ホワイトヘッドと K. 西田の哲学を介して—
The Problem of Ethics – through the philosophy of A.N. Whitehead and K. Nishida –

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Ethics has been thought of as a philosophical region since Aristotle in ancient Greece, who enquired into how human beings could lead good lives. However neither Kantian ethics on an ideal ground on the one hand, in which an eternal, universal and absolute canon are enquired into, nor Lockeian or Marxian materialistic ethics on the historical, cultural or relative ground on the other hand, are enough to resolve the ethical problems in contemporary ethics.

Ethics, or moral philosophies in the contemporary world are required to enquire into the origin or oneness of the ideal, universal and absolute phase of the ethics and the empirical, historical and relative phase of it. The reason being that, in the contemporary world not only philosophy and culture, but also ethics seem to be go back to the origin of the phases mentioned above, in order to solve ethical problems in the contemporary world. Furthermore, only the one side of the ethics of feeling (Gesindeethik), as for example in Kant, which looks upon motive as of prime importance, or only the other side of, so to speak, utilitarian ethics (Erfolgsethik), as for example in Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), who considered the result as the most important, is not enough to resolve the ethical problems in the contemporary world.

In the contemporary ethical world we need to look into not only the good way of living for human beings, but also environmental ethics (eco-ethica), where the right of nature also is required, and the ethics of responsibility, which can include all nature in the cosmos.

As the new ethics, which is adequate for the change, as mentioned above, since the last half of the 20th century until now, I would like to enquire into the new ethics in A.N. Whitehead and Kitaro Nishida, in which new ethical possibilities are obtained.

The Problem of Ethics - through the philosophy of A.N. Whitehead and K. Nishida

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As the new ethics, adequate for the change from the last half of the 20th century until now, I would like to enquire into the ethics in Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) and Kitaro Nishida (1870-1945), in which new ethical possibilities are obtained.

I. Both aspects of ethics and their origin

Ethics can be classified into two kinds of ethics: the normative types of ethics, which assert their absoluteness, and the relative ethics, which cannot but be limited by experiences, historical and cultural situations in each time, place, state, country and so on. Moreover, ethics in the beginning of the 21st century are different from that of the first half of the 20th century. The ethics since the latter half of the 20th century must think over not only the ethics of the relationship between various people, various races, states, but also significant new problems caused by the transplantation of organs etc., after brain death, by that of a living body based on the development of life medical science, environmental problems such as global warming caused by carbon dioxide emissions, and the problems of information ethics caused by the development of information technology. In this meaning only the normative ethics are, on the one hand, not enough. However, only the relative ethics on the base of the relative, historical cultural situation on the other hand are not be reliable, because in the latter case not only the responsibility, but also the desire for the power combined with violence is hidden.

We would like therefore to make clearer the merit and the demerit of the normative ethics and the relative ethics. First, the merit of the normative ethics is that behind the normative hides almost always the absolute being like God or Buddha as the absolute, who commends the ethical law. Such ethics have a strong effectiveness for people who have faith in God or the absolute being. On

the contrary the demerit of the normative ethics is that it has no effective power on people who have no faith, like contemporary young people, in substantial God or the absolute being.

Secondly, the merit of the relative ethics limited by the experiences of each time, each country, each history or each tradition etc, is that the ethics which are suitable for each situation are possible. On the contrary the demerits of the relative ethics are that the whereabouts of the responsibility is not clear, that the right and security of life and of each person and each thing can not be protected and that the earth and all nature in it will go to ruin with the various desires and above all the desire for power with violence.

We must therefore enquire into the new ethics, which abandon the demerits of both kinds of ethics and which succeed the merits of them. Such ethics are the ethics which consist in the origin of these two kinds of ethics. We can find such ethics in the ethics of A.N. Whitehead and that of K. Nishida. In both philosophies and ethics there is no substantial absolute being like God as creator and creativity is looked upon as of the utmost importance.

Whitehead thinks that God is created by "creativity" as one of the three categories of the ultimate including 'many' and 'one'. In Nishida God is the absolute nothingness, which means the absolute negativity, and this absolute negates its own negativity and works with love as agape and compassion which spurt out from the double negation. God in Nishida is non-substantial. In Whitehead the ethics are based on the "creativity" and can be propelled with the adventures of ideas. Their cores are truth, beauty, adventures and peace. In Nishida the core of his ethics is "the good", the pivot of which is the personality of the true self, which is common to all nature. In Whitehead's ethics "truth is the conformation of appearance to Reality"(1), "beauty is the mutual adaptation of the several factors in an occasion of experience"(2), and in truth the harmony

between appearances as phenomena and reality is in beauty and the harmony between experiences and their factors are looked upon as most important. Peace in Whitehead means “harmony of Harmonies”(3), but neither impersonality nor tenderness according to Whitehead, because the former is too dead and the latter is too narrow, although both are very important.

Peace as harmony of harmonies in Whitehead is looked upon as that which completes the civilization as the origin of culture and civilization before him.

On the other hand, in Nishida’s ethics the good as true self consists absolutely contradictorily self-identical in oneness with the world, and this good is the following experience in “the field of absolute nothingness”, namely the experience of that “heaven and earth have a root and all nature are a body”(4). Moreover, both philosophers have the same way of thinking over religion: Whitehead thinks that religion is world-loyalty (5) and Nishida also thinks the ground of practical reason, namely of morality like in Kant as loyalty.(6) In the ground of ethics of Whitehead and Nishida lies loyalty, namely loyalty as the core of religion.

It should also be noted that Nietzsche (1844-1900) regarded loyalty as “the will to the power” of the “weak” race Israel and despised “loyalty” which Christians took for the highest virtue in Christianity. However, loyalty in Whitehead and Nishida is taken for the origin of religion in the different dimension with Nietzsche’s nihilistic standpoint of life, namely in the reiterated sense of this term “loyalty”.

II. The problem of motive and result in ethics

First, in the ethics of feelings (German: *Gesinnungsethik*) like in Kant (1724-1804) it is important to act according to moral law and the result of its act is not asked. The merit of such ethics is that,

for example, in Kant the pureness of the motive of the action of the autonomous personality (that each person acts according to the moral law that man should act in order that “the maxim of the action of each person can always and simultaneously be applied as the principle of the universal law is perfect”). However, the demerit of these ethics in these kinds of ethics is that they lack love as agape or compassion, humaneness or harmony of harmonies like in A. N. Whitehead. Moreover, the moral law as the absolute command has no power to be esteemed in the contemporary world, because people in this century have regrettably no faith in the absolute, even if it were substantial or non-substantial. They only believe in immanent objective things.

Secondly, the ethics like Bentham (Jeremy – 1748-1832), which regard the result of the act as important, has merits in which the responsibility for the act can be made much of by the doer on the one hand. However, in the shadow of the utilitarian principle like for example, “the greatest happiness of the greatest number”, the crisis of the pleasure, power or violence with power lies hidden, on the other hand, as the demerit of this ethics.

After we have understood the merits and demerits of ethics, which take either motive or result of action as important, we must now enquire into the new ethics in the origin of normative ethics like in Kant and utilitarian ethics like in Bentham. Such ethics suitable for the contemporary people, who respect not only feelings as heart and mind, but also the responsibility in the ethics, we can find in A.N. Whitehead and Nishida.

Almost all ethics until the first half of the 20th century was grounded on the base of the subject-object scheme, on which all nature was objectively observed as the object on the dimension of the third personal “I-it-relation”, like in M. Buber (1878-1965). On the contrary the ethics in Whitehead and Nishida are free from the subject-object-scheme, which has dominated the

European traditional mainstream of the philosophy as metaphysics since Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) until Hegel (1770-1831). In the new ethics in Whitehead and Nishida feeling and will are the basis, but not the intellect separated from feeling and will. Besides these merits of the new ethics in both philosophers the “loyalty” as the core of religion takes root in both ethics. Religion in both philosophers does not mean the existing accomplished religions. Religion in Whitehead means “the world-loyalty”(7), and that in Nishida is “the fact in the spirit”(8), the core of which is “the loyalty”(9), as stated above. In both ethics the logic is not subjective, but predicative, because in both philosophies there is no substantial absolute. God as non-substantial in the dimension of concrescence as process and God as an actual entity as reality in Whiteheadian philosophy, and God as oneness with phenomena as many in Nishida’s philosophy, are very similar, only leaving the differences that in Whitehead the field of absolute nothing is not yet opened, in that in Whiteheadian philosophy the eternal object as the idea which means the form of the field of absolute nothingness plays an important role in the concrescence in his philosophy and ethics.

In both the ethics of Whitehead and Nishida the loyalty as the basis of religion, which can become a non-substantial eradicate, but not become the substantial subject, is also the origin of the ethics. The contents of the new ethics, the origin of which is the religion as “loyalty” like in both ethics in Whitehead and Nishida, are always different according to the situation of each time, each country, each race, each state, each person and so on. Whitehead gives sincerity(10) as the first virtue in such an ethics, which Kierkegaard gives as “Ernst”. Nishida gives the earnest wish for others (Japanese: Higan (11)) as the basis of loyalty, which he characterizes as the fundamental difference between Eastern culture and Western culture.

III. Ethics and Society

In ethics we must always think of the relation between ethics and society, because ethics is firstly

needed in the society. In ethics in Whitehead and Nishida the problems of ethics and society are concerned with the problem of expression of experience. In Whitehead and Nishida the problem of society gives rise to the problem of “experience and its expression”. According to Whitehead “expression ... is the return from solitariness to society”(12). In Nishida “the problem of expression of experience” relates to the problem of society as “species”, because in him the problem of “expression of experience” relates to the culture as form (Greek; eidos) which concerns the species.

First, Whitehead thinks that the originality is the very element in the expression of peculiar original persons which remains unformalized(13) and suggests that to express the experience is creative.(14) In Whitehead to express the basic experience of loyalty in the case of change from philosophy to religion as basic of ethics is therefore the return to solitariness to society, as stated above.

In Nishida his “pure experience” as fundamental experience of the change from the ego to the true self, which is common to all nature, is the experience of the reality in the phenomenal world. However, in Nishida this fundamental experience of that “heaven and earth have the same root and all things are one body”, is always expressed as the world of logic of the truth as reality. To borrow the term in Hua-yen-tsung (Japanese: Kegon-shu), in Nishida the experience of the self-awareness of the world in which phenomena influence one another without hindrance” (Japanese: “jiji-muge-hokkai”) is always once more expressed as “the world in which phenomena are identified with noumena” (Japanese: “riji-muge-hokkai”). This can be understood from the fact that he always discusses the problem of expression and expressing action since he wrote his treatise “expressing action” (1925) before he advocates his “logic of the field of absolute nothingness”. We often hear the critique that the logic of the field of absolute nothingness in Nishida, lacks the logic of species or the consideration of society, although the oneness between

self and world is very deeply thought of. However, he seems to have thought always the problem of society with regards to the ethics in the problem of expression of fundamental experience.

As discussed above, the new ethics suitable for the 21st century are such that that they are grounded on the base of the religion as loyalty (as feeling and will), namely on the personality, the core of which is non-substantial sincerity and the earnest wish for others, but not in existing religions until now.

Notes:

(1) Alfred North Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, The Free Press, New York, 1933, p. 241.

(2) *Op. cit.*, p. 252.

(3) *Op. cit.* p. 285.

(4) *Nishida Kitaro's Complete Works*, vol. 1, Iwanami Press, 1965, p. 156.

(5) A. N. Whitehead, *Religion in the Making*, Fordham Press, New York, 2005, p. 60.

(6) *Nishida Kitaro's Complete Works*, vol. 11, p. 445.

(7) A. N. Whitehead, *Religion in the Making*, p. 60.

(8) *Nishida Kitaro's Complete Works*, vol. 11, p. 371.

(9) Cf. (6).

(10) A. N. Whitehead, *Religion in the Making*, p. 5.

(11) Cf. (6). Japanese "Higan" means "Vows resulting from the compassion of the Buddhas and bodhisattva." (*Japanese-English Buddhist Dictionary*, Daito Shuppan-press, 1979, p. 105).

(12) A. N. Whitehead, *Religion in the Making*, p. 137.

(13) *Op. cit.* p. 136.

(14) *Op. cit.* p. 132-133.