

Nishida Kitarō's Logic of Absolutely Contradictory Self-Identity and the Problem of Orthodoxy in the Zen Tradition

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This article examines the problem of orthodoxy in the Zen tradition from the point of view of Nishida Kitarō's (1870–1945) logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity (*zettai mujunteki jikodōitsu no ronri*). By “Zen orthodoxy” I mean a theoretical framework that is used during verification of Zen Enlightenment. Part I of this essay attempts to clarify the meaning of Nishida's philosophy of absolute nothingness and his logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity. It is a mistake, I argue, to analyze this philosophy of absolute nothingness from the point of view of formal logic or Hegel's dialectical logic, as seen, for example, in Tanabe Hajime's (1885–1962) critique of Nishida. Part II uses Nishida's concepts and theories as useful “tools” for analyzing Zen teaching. Statements on Zen are scattered through Nishida's writings, and one cannot find a consistent and systematic discourse on Zen tradition. However, he was convinced that his philosophy related closely to the vision of reality in the Zen tradition as revealed in experience of Enlightenment (*kenshō*). He makes clear his own definition of *kenshō*, explaining that “seeing one's nature” means to penetrate to the roots of one's own self, to the bottom of absolute contradictory self-identity. In Part III, I maintain that Nishida's logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity is the key to the inner structure of Zen teaching. His philosophy offers a coherent interpretation of the Zen tradition, answering questions about logic in the masters' teaching, polemics in the tradition, and the theoretical structure of orthodoxy. Previous studies have overlooked the firm logical structure of absolute contradictory self-identity in Zen. The analysis here leads me to conclude that the main function of the kōan is to describe the nature of reality as revealed in the experience of Enlightenment *in compliance with the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity*. Kōans are reflections on this experience, and as such they are direct or indirect paradoxical judgments. As “catalysts of Enlightenment,” kōans bring about a reaction that can be described as a shift from the formal logic perspective to the perspective of the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity.

Keywords: NISHIDA KITARŌ, ZEN, PHILOSOPHY, LOGIC, ABSOLUTELY CONTRADICTORY SELF-IDENTITY, ORTHODOXY, ENLIGHTENMENT, PARADOX, KŌAN

Anyone who studies the Zen tradition soon becomes aware of the common opinion that only Zen masters who have already attained Enlightenment are qualified to write about this experience. Even the great German Jesuit scholar Heinrich Dumoulin, instead of drawing his own conclusions, preferred to quote the reflections of contemporary Zen adepts.¹

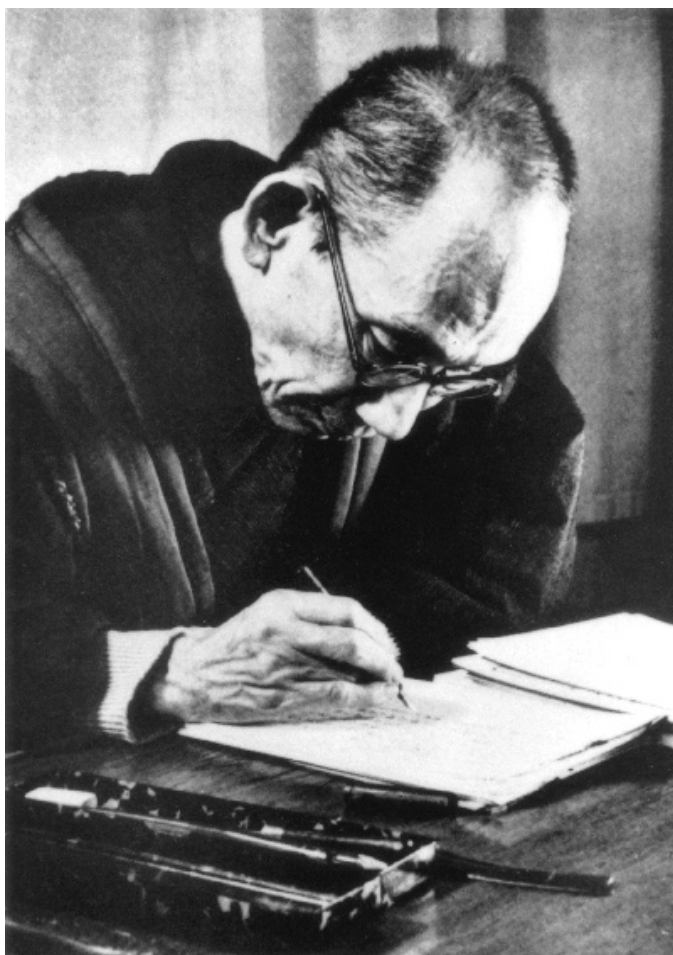
Is it possible to describe Zen Enlightenment in an “objective” (so-called “objective”), scientific way? An answer to this question is suggested by the Polish philosopher Leszek Kołakowski. In his book on seventeenth-century Christian mysticism, Kołakowski remarks on the critical stance taken by those who hold that “it is impossible for those who did not have any mystical experiences, to analyze mystical experiences—such people can be compared to deaf persons who try to be music critics.” Kołakowski takes exception with this stance, and stresses that the object of philosophical or historical studies is always human thought expressed in written or spoken language. There are two important assumptions in the statement that one who has no mystical experience cannot understand “mystical texts”: one, that texts are not adequate to explain the mystical experiences of their authors, and two, that mystical texts contain important content that cannot be communicated. “I am absolutely ready to accept both assumptions,” Kołakowski writes, “since it is a banal conclusion that even the simplest experience, elementary perceptions and feelings cannot be completely and adequately expressed in language. However, the object of our studies is only that content which is intercommunicative, i.e., that aspect of experience which can be expressed adequately in language. All mystics start with the statement that their experience is inexplicable and cannot be expressed in language, but nevertheless they continue with elaborate and very often quite long descriptions of their mystical experience. Judging from that fact, one can conclude that some kind of description is possible. If experiences are verbalized, they became ideas, which are to be studied and analyzed.”² In short, it is not necessary for a scholar who studies mysticism to be a mystic, but he must have enough knowledge to comprehend the ideas that are embedded in the verbalized aspect of mystical experience. If “mystical” terms and notions contain hidden content and their meaning is different from the meaning of the same word used in different contexts, such hidden “mystical” meaning may or may not be explainable in terms understood by all. If a “mystical” term can be explained, one need not be a mystic to understand it—a proper definition of the term will be enough. If a “mystical” term cannot be explained in words understandable to everybody *it ceases to be the object of studies*, since scholarly analysis deals not with experience itself, but with its verbal expression.³

With Kołakowski’s observations in mind, I would like to examine some important aspects of the thought of Nishida Kitarō 西田幾多郎 (1870–1945) as it relates to Zen. At the outset I wish to emphasize that my analysis of Zen philosophy takes Nishida’s standpoint, and is concerned with written accounts on Zen experience which were intended to be communicated to others.

Nishida, the only modern Japanese philosopher around whom a philosophical school (the Kyoto school, *Kyōtoha* 京都派) has been formed, is credited with having developed the “logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity” (*zettai mujunteki jikodōitsu no ronri* 絶対矛盾的自己同一の論理).⁴ “The logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity” is the founda-

tion of Nishida's philosophy of absolute nothingness (*zettai mu no tetsugaku* 絶対無の哲学), which he set forth in his late philosophical essays. In these late essays there are many "pitfalls" into which readers might fall. Nishida makes so many references to Western philosophers, for example, that the importance of Western inspiration in his philosophy can be easily overstressed. In many cases, Nishida "translates" his philosophical concepts into the Western way of thinking. That is why he quotes so many Western thinkers, treating them rather superficially. His method can be labeled "selective identification" or "hint-inspiration."⁵ He seems to take hints from a number of Western thinkers, and to use their concepts, while explaining some terms or theories of his own philosophy. His final conclusions, however, differ from the conclusions of the Western writers he cites. For instance, Nishida refers to Jane Harrison's analysis of "ritual" (which he glosses as *saishiki* 祭式) in primitive cultures, but his conclusions are entirely different—for Harrison the idea of "gods" was abstracted from primitive rituals and is the result of "formalization of human desires,"⁶ while for Nishida primitive rituals are the proof that the source of religious consciousness is the state of absolutely contradictory self-identity of immanence and transcendence (in primitive rituals "all people are gods").⁷ A similar hint-inspiration approach can be also seen in Nishida's earlier works. Obviously he found William James' notion of "pure experience" suggestive, although I believe that it is a misunderstanding to look for a coherent presentation of James' thought in Nishida's writings, as one scholar has done.⁸ Rather it is the case that Nishida simply took from James some hints that were useful for his own theory, and did not worry about incorporating the rest of James' thought.⁹

Another problem arises if one attempts to explain Nishida's logic and philosophy of absolutely contradictory self-identity by using theories and concepts that he himself presented in his earlier work. Late in his career, Nishida came to criticize most of his earlier theories as unsatisfactory. We should take his self-criticism seriously. Of course, all periods of Nishida philosophy are worth studying, regardless of his later expressions of doubt, and many interesting books focusing on one or another period of his work have been published. Robert Wargo's *The Logic of Nothingness: A Study of Nishida Kitarō*, for instance, traces the middle period of Nishida's work, centered on the years 1913–1930.¹⁰ During those years Nishida moved from his initial focus on pure experience to his later focus on the *basho* or place of absolute nothingness. Wargo's book represents a truly significant moment in the development of Nishida studies, and his chapter on Nishida's predecessors deserves special attention. However one should be aware that the final concepts of Nishida's philosophy, such as the logic of topos conceived as the logic of absolute contradictory self-identity, are explained in such essays as "Zettai mujunteki jikodōitsu" 絶対矛盾的自己同一 (Absolutely Contradictory Self-identity, 1939) and "Bashoteki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan" 場所の論理と宗教的世界観 (The Logic of Topos and Religious Worldview, 1944). Therefore linking Nishida's late concepts to his earlier works such as *Jikaku ni okeru chokkan to hansei* 自覚における直観と反省 (Intuition and Reflection in Self-Consciousness, 1917) may even distort their original meaning. For example, it is a mistake to discuss Nishida's view on mysticism without taking into consideration his essay "Keiken kagaku" 経験科学 (Experimental Science, 1939), in which he proves that active intuition, which is present in religious experience, is also the source of scientific thinking.¹¹



Nishida Kitarō (1870–1945). Photograph courtesy of Ishikawa-ken Nishida Kitarō Kinen Tetsugakukan, Kahoku, Ishikawa prefecture.

According to Nishida the logic of absolute contradictory self-identity is the structure of reality, conceived as “absolute nothingness.” I will try to prove that this structure has much in common with the reality experienced in Zen Enlightenment. The purpose of the present article is not to analyze Nishida’s Zen practice—that has been treated in some detail by Michiko Yusa in her fine book *Zen and Philosophy: An Intellectual Biography of Nishida Kitarō*¹²—but to examine the problem of orthodoxy in the Zen tradition from the point of view of Nishida’s logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity.¹³ By “Zen orthodoxy” I mean a theoretical framework which is used during verification of Zen Enlightenment. Here I will offer biographical aspects about Nishida only when they seem relevantly connected with his thinking concerning Zen.

Nishida started his practice of Zen in April 1896 at Senshin’an, a small meditation center at the foot of Utatsuyama in Kanazawa, under the guidance of Setsumon Genshō 雪門玄松 (1850–1915). Nishida was apparently encouraged by his friend, Suzuki Daisetz 鈴木大

拙 (Daisetsu, 1870–1966), who had attained awakening—“seeing one’s nature” (*kenshō* 見性)—at Engakuji 円覚寺 in Kamakura in 1895. It is possible that Nishida may have found some consolation in his Zen practice during times of personal crisis, as he endured a short separation from his wife and encountered difficulties in obtaining a new post after he lost his job in 1898 at the Fourth Higher School in Kanazawa. In 1901 Setsumon formally received him as a lay disciple (*koji* 居士) and gave him the name Sunshin 寸心 (Inch Mind). Subsequently, in Kyoto, Nishida took part in *sesshin* (an intensive Zen practice) under the guidance of master Kokan Sōhō 虎関宗補 (1839–1903) at Taizōin 退蔵院, one of the subtemples of Myōshinji 妙心寺.

Convinced that Zen should be explained in philosophical terms, Nishida never discarded his philosophical approach. Perhaps it is for this reason that he encountered so many difficulties in his kōan practice. Even in 1903 when master Kōjū Sōtaku 広州宗澤 (1840–1907)¹⁴ verified that Nishida had passed the kōan “Mu,” which indicated that he had experienced *kenshō*, Nishida remained unsatisfied. He wrote to Setsumon about his doubts, although his teacher in Kanazawa merely replied stressing that he should not doubt the validity of Zen training. In a letter to Suzuki Daisetsu, Nishida complained, “What good is it if the master considers that I have passed a kōan, and yet I am not satisfied? There are Zen practitioners who pass one kōan after another, thereby achieving seniority status. I am impressed by neither their behavior nor by what they say.”¹⁵ Years later, after Nishida’s death, Suzuki Daisetsu commented on this problem: “There are those cases, especially with a man like Nishida, who has a rational, logical mind. But Nishida must have grasped something. Otherwise, the kind of philosophy he developed would never be possible.”¹⁶

Although Nishida abandoned his formal Zen practice in 1904 and thereafter solely devoted himself to philosophy, in Suzuki Daisetsu’s view, it was in 1923 that Nishida’s final breakthrough in Zen took place, nearly twenty years after he had ceased his practice. Nishida said to Suzuki: “My thoughts have reached the point where they cannot be explained by the framework of conventional philosophical language.”¹⁷

His philosophy began a new phase at around the same time. He proposed a philosophy of “absolute nothingness” (*zettaimu* 絶対無) and a logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity. Even if one doubts that the new phase of his philosophy was connected with his “final breakthrough,” it is evident that Nishida linked his logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity to the Zen tradition. Nishida’s philosophical approach to Zen was expressed in a letter he wrote to Nishitani Keiji 西谷啓治 (1900–1990) in 1943. “It is true that my philosophy is related to Zen experience. Most people do not know what Zen is. I believe that the essence of Zen is grasping the reality itself (*genjitsu haaku* 現実把握). I always wanted to translate Zen experience into the language of philosophy, although I may not have succeeded in my attempt. But to do so was my most important ambition from the time I reached thirty.”¹⁸

In the first part of this article I would like to clarify the meaning of Nishida’s philosophy of absolute nothingness and his logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity. I will argue that it is a mistake to analyze Nishida’s philosophy of absolute nothingness from the point of view of formal logic or Hegel’s dialectical logic as seen in Tanabe Hajime’s 田辺元 (1885–1962) criticism of Nishida.

In the second part I will use Nishida’s concepts and theories as useful ‘tools’ for analyzing

Zen teaching. One cannot find a consistent and systematic discourse on Zen tradition in his writings. His statements on Zen are rather scattered. His philosophy is not Zen philosophy, since he continued the dialogue with Western philosophy all his life and also tried to resolve many problems that were not discussed by Zen masters, such as the problem of philosophy of science as seen for instance in *Keiken kagaku* 経験科学 (Experimental Science, 1939). However, Nishida was convinced that his philosophy is closely related to the vision of reality in the Zen tradition as revealed in experience of Enlightenment (*kenshō*). In his essay *Bashoteki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan* 場所の論理と宗教の世界観 (Logic of Topos and Religious Worldview) Nishida makes clear his own definition of *kenshō*. According to him, “seeing one’s nature” means to penetrate to the roots of one’s own self, to the bottom of absolute contradictory self-identity.¹⁹ I am convinced that Nishida’s logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity is the key to the inner structure of Zen teaching. Yet for the purpose of this article it is not necessary to answer the question “Was Nishida Kitarō really enlightened?” I would like to argue that Nishida’s philosophy offers a coherent interpretation of the Zen tradition that provides answers to the following questions: Is there any logic in Zen masters’ teaching? What are polemics in the Zen tradition about? Is there any theoretical structure, which can be regarded as “Zen orthodoxy” and used in verification of Enlightenment?

I. NISHIDA’S LOGIC OF CONTRADICTORY SELF-IDENTITY

1. Rationality and the Logic of Absolutely Contradictory Self-Identity

According to Nishida, only the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity is “concrete logic” (*gutaiteki ronri* 具体的論理), in the sense that it is “the form of self-expression of reality.”²⁰ “Concrete logic” is not empty and formal, since it is not just a set of rules that govern human thinking not related directly to an experience of the reality.

It should be noted that Nishida distinguished three types of discrimination:

1. irrational discrimination (*higōriteki mufunbetsu* 非合理的無分別),²¹ which is not logical. In the case of irrational discrimination we cannot judge irrational statements to be true or false, since such statements are chaotic and have no logical rules to govern them, so we simply reject them without analyzing them.
2. rational discrimination (*gōriteki funbetsu* 合理的分別), which is in compliance with the principle of non-contradiction (“A” is not “non-A”)—formal logic. It should be noted that to designate formal logic Nishida uses also such terms as “abstract logic” (*chūshōteki ronri* 抽象的論理), “objectifying logic” (*taishōteki ronri* 対象的論理). In the case of formal logic we regard as true judgment affirmation or negation, so we can call it “two-value” logic (affirmation or negation).
3. “discrimination without discrimination” (*mufunbetsu no funbetsu* 無分別の分別),²² which is in compliance with the principle of self-contradiction—the truth is both affirmation and negation at the same time and in the same respect, so it is a “one-value” logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity.

The principle of non-contradiction of formal logic (“A” is not “non-A”) is only one as-

pect of the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity (“A” is not “non-A” and “A” is “non-A”). That is why “rationality” of formal logic is included in such logic as one of its aspects. The logic of absolute contradictory self-identity is not in opposition to “formal logic rationality” since it includes such rationality (a mode of thinking that complies with the principle of non-contradiction). Nishida stresses that formal logic is not a total mistake, since it complies to one aspect of self-determination of the reality. Delusions arise if one becomes attached to “objectifying logic (formal logic)”²³ and thereby becomes unable to grasp the whole structure of absolutely contradictory self-identity.

The truth in the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity is both affirmation and negation at the same time and in the same respect, which is “standpoint without standpoint” (*tachiba naki tachiba* 立場なき立場).²⁴ Therefore Nishida wrote that his logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity is the logic of paradox/paralogism (*hairi no ri* 背理の理).²⁵ The meaning of the word “paradox,” which in Greek means “a judgment opposed to the prevailing opinion” (*gyakusetsu* 逆説) is connected with the problem of self-contradiction. Since the principle of non-contradiction is the demarcation line of formal logic, paradoxes are thought to be absurd, as they are considered to be caused merely by erroneous reasoning. In this meaning, “paradox” is paralogism. Therefore much effort has been given to “solving” such paradoxes in philosophy and science. However, Nishida’s “absolutely contradictory self-identity” is a paradox which cannot be solved by proving that paradoxical self-contradiction is only superficial and can be explained in terms of formal logic. In this article the word “paradox” is defined as “one dimensional self-contradictory judgment,” and “one dimensional” means that self-contradiction belongs to the same temporal and spatial aspect. Nishida’s “absolutely contradictory self-identity” is thus a synonym for “paradox.”

If we admit that the logic of paradox is logic that complies with *the principle of self-contradiction*, Nishida’s logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity can be regarded as the most complete expression of the logic of paradox, since the principle of self-contradiction is used in a consistent way. This cannot be said of Hegel’s dialectical logic, which can be only regarded as an “undeveloped form” of the logic of paradox, since its principle of self-contradiction is used in the framework of formal logic.²⁶ Hegel’s dialectical logic is a one-sided, incomplete form of the logic of paradox because the aspect of movement/development prevails over the aspect of stillness/simultaneousness. In Nishida’s vision of reality, the “contradictory self-identical process of the self-formation (of the world) is an infinite progress in its temporal aspect, but on the other hand it has its foundation in the simultaneous existence (of all elements in the world).”²⁷ To Nishida, true reality in its temporal aspect is timeless, yet there is an infinite movement from past to future.²⁸ Only the logic of absolute contradictory self-identity can be called “true dialectical logic” (*shin no benshōhō* 真の弁証法).²⁹ Such true dialectical logic can be found not in Hegel’s philosophy but in philosophy of Supreme Wisdom Sūtras (*Hannya no shisō* 般若思想).³⁰

There are many examples of the logic of paradox, in the sense that there are many philosophical concepts which comply with the principle of self-contradiction. Kierkegaard’s reflections on paradox might be mentioned. I am proposing that Nishida’s logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity is the most complete expression of the logic of paradox. To prove this, it is necessary to analyze his logic in the wider context of attempts to overcome the logical principle of non-contradiction in the history of philosophy both in the West and the East.

I have discussed this problem elsewhere.³¹

It should be noted that the Buddhist notion of “form is emptiness and emptiness is form” (*shiki soku ze kū* 色即是空; *kū soku ze shiki* 空即是色) complies with the principle of self-contradiction. Form (A) is emptiness (not-A) and yet emptiness (not-A) is form (A). Nishida explained the notion of “emptiness is form and form is emptiness” as absolutely contradictory self-identity of affirmation and negation.³² He also emphasizes that “to grasp *kenshō* (Enlightenment as “seeing one’s nature”) is to grasp fully the logic of paradox.”³³ “Zen speaks of seeing into one’s own nature and attaining Enlightenment. But this Zen phrase must not be misunderstood. Seeing here does not mean to see anything externally as an object; nor does it mean to see an internal self through introspection. The self cannot see itself, just as an eye cannot see itself. And yet this does not mean that we can see the Buddha-nature transcendently either. If it were seen in that way it would be a hallucination.”³⁴ For Nishida, to grasp *kenshō* is not to grasp any object, separated from the subject, but to grasp the reality as absolutely contradictory self-identity.

2. Typology of Paradoxical Judgments and Paradoxical Concepts Used in Kōans

It is important to take into consideration the usage of direct and indirect paradoxical judgments and concepts in Nishida’s philosophy. First we must distinguish between paradoxical concepts and formal concepts. (These are my terms, not Nishida’s, but they are very useful in explaining how logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity is actually used both in Nishida’s texts and in the Zen tradition.)

Formal concepts are concepts in which neither “name” nor definition is self-contradictory. (For instance: a table defined as “a piece of furniture that consists of a flat top supported by legs.”) **Paradoxical concepts** are either direct or indirect. **Direct paradoxical concepts** are concepts in which both “name” and definition are self-contradictory. For instance, “immanent transcendence” (*naizaiteki chōetsu* 內在的超越) in Nishida’s philosophy or the title of *Mumonkan* 無門関 (Gateless Gate), a collection of Zen kōans. **Indirect paradoxical concepts** are those in which “name” is not self-contradictory but the definition is self-contradictory. For instance, Nishida’s concept of “absolute nothingness” does not seem to be self-contradictory, since there is no contradiction in its “name.” However, it is defined as nothingness identical with being (*u soku mu* 有即無),³⁵ which is self-contradictory. The Buddhist concept of ‘emptiness’ (*kū* 空) can also be regarded as an indirect paradoxical concept, because it is defined “emptiness is form.”

The idea of concepts that only “point” to some reality but do not directly denote that reality can be found in Shidō Bunan’s (Shidō Bunan 至道無難, 1603–1676) teaching:

There are names,
Such as Buddha, God and Heavenly Way;
But they all point to the mind,
Which is nothingness.³⁶

Nishida often uses direct paradoxical concepts such as “discrimination without discrimination” (*mufunbetsu no funbetsu* 無分別の分別). In his philosophy reality is regarded as “continuation without continuation” (*hirenzoku no renzoku* 非連続の連続),³⁷ and “inner unity of the self” as “unity without unity” (*mutōitsu no tōitsu* 無統一の統一).³⁸ However,

direct paradoxical judgment and concepts alone may not be sufficient to communicate to others the vision of reality as absolutely contradictory self-identity. Nishida had to explain that his approach is not “irrational” or at its best “mystical” (in the sense that mysticism has nothing to do with logic). That is why he used indirect paradoxical concepts and judgments to link the so-called common-sense vision of reality (which complies with formal logic) to his vision of reality as absolutely contradictory self-identity. Indirect paradoxical concepts explain various aspects of absolutely contradictory self-identity.

Let us consider the notion of “absolute nothingness” as an indirect paradoxical concept. It is not a direct paradoxical concept because the “name” of this concept itself is not self-contradictory—there is no self-contradiction in the name of “absolute nothingness,” as there is in the case of “immanent transcendence.” “Absolute nothingness” is defined as nothingness identical with being, and that is why its meaning is paradoxical. Misunderstanding can result from the fact that “absolute nothingness” (an indirect paradoxical concept) can be mistakenly treated as “non-being” (a formal concept, the opposite of “being”). “Absolute nothingness” is another name for “absolutely contradictory self-identity,” which cannot be grasped as “being” and yet is not separable from “being.”

Nishida used “absolute nothingness” as a synonym of “absolutely contradictory self-identity” (a direct paradoxical concept) in order to present a new interpretation of the concept of “nothingness”/“emptiness,” which has an especially long philosophical tradition in the East. Absolutely contradictory self-identity is “absolute nothingness” for a subject of cognition, since it cannot be grasped as an object of cognition within the framework of formal logic. It cannot be grasped because it is both affirmation and negation at the same time and in the same respect.

3. The Ultimate Topos/Topos of Absolute Nothingness—The Spatial Aspect of Absolutely Contradictory Self-Identity

Nishida used many terms to designate various aspects of absolutely contradictory self-identity. All these terms must be analyzed within the framework of his logic of paradox. “Absolute nothingness” is the term pointing to fact that absolutely contradictory self-identity cannot be treated as an object separated from the subject of cognition. Nishida calls the temporal aspect of absolute contradictory self-identity “the eternal now” (*eien no ima* 永遠の今) or “absolute present” (*zettai genzai* 絶対現在). He also speaks of “topological logic” (*bashoteki ronri* 場所的論理) when referring to the spatial aspect of absolute contradictory self-identity, which is “ultimate topos” (*kyūkyokuteki basho* 窮極的場所). “Ultimate topos” is the final place, which has no determined place—if it had its place, it would not be the ultimate topos. The spatial aspect of absolutely contradictory self-identity/“ultimate place” is also called “topos of absolute nothingness” (*zettaimu no basho* 絶対無の場所). “The topos of absolute nothingness” is the absolutely contradictory self-identity of “one” (*ichi* 一) and “many” (*ta* 多). “One” stands for identity—reality in one of its aspects is oneness, and no separate element can be distinguished. “Many” stands for contradiction, conceived in its wide sense as “non-identity.” In this case the many individual entities are not identical—some of them constitute the opposites, while others are just different, that is, not identical. Such a multitude of individual entities does not constitute “one” simply by being put together, as we may happen to put many different balls into the same basket. Also, they are not “one” because

they constitute an organic “one,” like different parts of the body constitute one body.³⁹ Nishida emphasized that the relation of “one” and “many” is a relation of absolutely contradictory self-identity: “many” remain “many” and at the same time are “one”; “one” remains “one” and yet “one” is “many.”⁴⁰ “One” cannot be regarded as the “foundation” of “many,” since in such case the relation of “one” and “many” could not be “absolutely contradictory self-identity” in which no element is regarded as more important than the others. The world of absolutely contradictory self-identity in its spatial/topological aspect is “groundless ground” (*mukiteiteki kitei* 無基底の基底)⁴¹ since no element can be regarded as its foundation. Nishida believed, it should be noted, that the Buddhist expression “because there is no place in which it abides, the Mind arises” should be understood as implying the “topos of absolute nothingness.”⁴²

Nishida states that the world of absolutely contradictory self-identity of “one” and “many” means that “innumerable things always contradict one another and at the same time are “one.”⁴³ “Topos of absolute nothingness” is the paradoxical state, in which all individual entities are unique and separated, and yet they are “one,” which means that they are mutually unhindered and interfused—a state which cannot be grasped as an object separated from the subject of cognition. The topos of absolute nothingness embraces everything in itself. Nishida warns that such a state can be thought of from the standpoint of subject-object dualism.⁴⁴ He compares such a paradoxical state to an infinite sphere, which has no circumference and no fixed center (its center can be found everywhere). Such an infinite sphere is groundless and reflects itself within itself.⁴⁵

This vision of reality as an infinite sphere with the center at any point is reminiscent of the notion of “the mode of existence in which all phenomenal things are mutually unhindered and interfused” (*jijimuge* 事事無礙) of the Kegon school. In fact Nishida’s absolutely contradictory self-identity of one and many should be regarded as exactly such a paradoxical state in which all individual entities are unique and separated and yet are mutually unhindered and interfused, and that is why they are “one.” In such a vision of reality there is no single element which is more real than others and can be regarded as lying beyond or behind the interdependence of all individual entities. In Kegon thought, the state of all phenomenal things being mutually unhindered and interfused was compared to “Indra’s Net,” a net of jewels in which each jewel reflects all other jewels. It is easy to imagine that one jewel reflects the jewels which are close to it, but it cannot be imagined that it reflects all jewels, no matter how far they are from it. Nishida expresses the same idea of unhinderedness in the world of absolutely contradictory self-identity, quoting Zen master Panshan Baoji 盤山寶積 (Banzan Hōshaku, 720–814): “It is like waving a sword in the air. It does not leave any trace as it cleaves the air. The blade is also untouched. The individual self and the world, individual entity and totality, are in a relation of absolutely contradictory self-identity.”⁴⁶ Nishida’s vision of absolutely contradictory self-identity of “one” and “many” has much in common with Kegon dictum: “all is one and one is all” (*issai soku ichi, ichi soku issai* 一切即一、一即一切).

If we admit that reality is the state in which “one is all and all is one,” and that this reality complies with the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity, we must also admit that a person who experiences such a state is able to “co-feel” with all, because he/she is in unity with all. A man can love others/all, because a man is absolutely contradictorily self-identical with others/all. This is the foundation of the Buddhist notion of “great compassion” or “great mercy” (*daihi* 大悲), which means total acceptance. By applying Nishida’s philosophy of

absolutely contradictory self-identity to the Buddhist concept of “great compassion,” we can explain why the experience of Enlightenment have not only an epistemological aspect—the concept of “supreme wisdom” (*hannya* 般若), but also an ethical aspect—the concept of “great compassion.”⁴⁷

In the same manner as Buddhist cosmology does not discuss the problem of a beginning of the universe, Nishida does not directly explain *how* absolutely contradictory self-identity appeared for the first time. Although it might be safer to say that he simply describes the reality of absolute contradictory self-identity and does not explain its origin, I think that in his vision of reality there is no place for something out of which absolutely contradictory self-identity/absolute nothingness could emerge. He declared, “The reality of absolute contradictory self-identity is the only eternal reality. Kant’s ‘thing in itself’ is a self-forming contradictory self-identity—there is no other transcendent world.”⁴⁸

To pursue the problem as to *why* Nishida regarded reality as absolutely contradictory self-identity would take us beyond the scope of this article. For our purposes here it is enough to say that since his paradoxical vision of reality was so different from philosophical systems prevailing in academic circles of his time, he had no other choice but try to prove that his logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity could explain dilemmas not only of modern philosophy but also of science. This is why he wrote so many articles on the physical world and the possibility of objective knowledge, within which he also referred to Einstein’s theory of relativity and quantum mechanics.⁴⁹ Nishida agreed with Percy Bridgman’s theory of operationalism (which was influenced by Einstein), according to which formal logic (regarded as the foundation of rationalism) is only “a tool” (*dōgu* 道具) invented by human beings to explain experienced reality.⁵⁰ Indeed, all human concepts and theories are such “tools.” Only experience can prove whether such tools are useful. Moreover, while a certain tool may be useful in explaining one kind of experience, it can be useless in the case of another experience. Nishida emphasized that all scientific or philosophical theories, concepts, and logical principles are such tools, and “that is why they are not perfect.”⁵¹ As the paradigm shifts in the history of science demonstrate, only those concepts that provide the best explanation survive. For Nishida, the charges of his opponents that his philosophy was “irrational” (i.e., it does not comply with formal logic) were meaningless from the operational point of view, which he regarded as the only truly scientific perspective. He stated that truth is not something that depends on formal logic —“only experience can verify the truth.”⁵² “Truth” does not simply mean to comply with the law of identity, non-contradiction and excluded middle of formal logic.⁵³ Nishida was convinced that his logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity should become the new paradigm. He believed that it explains more than formal logic and Hegel’s dialectical logic, both of which are incorporated within the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity as “partial truths.”

4. Tanabe Hajime’s Criticism of Nishida Philosophy from the Point of View of Formal Logic and Hegel’s Dialectical Logic

Nishida’s vision of reality as “absolutely contradictory self-identity” is so at odds with our common-sense perception that we are tempted to reject it as an absurdity. It is also tempting to try to recast his philosophy in terms of Western philosophical systems that seem to be similar to it. Yielding to these temptations is a mistake, I believe. Before returning to Nishida’s

view on Zen, let me show how the original meaning of Nishida's philosophical terms can be distorted by transferring them into a different context.

In his last essay, *Watakushi no ronri ni tsuite* 私の論理について (Concerning My Logic), left unfinished at his death in 1945, Nishida complained that his logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity had not been understood by the academic world. "One may say that it hasn't been given the slightest serious consideration. Not that there hasn't been criticism. But the criticism it has received has distorted my meaning." According to Nishida such distortion of the meaning of his logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity was due to the mistaken standpoint of his critics—the standpoint of "abstract conscious self" (*chūshōteki ishikiteki jiko* 抽象的意識の自己) and "objectifying logic" (*taishōteki ronri* 対象的論理), i.e., formal logic.⁵⁴

Tanabe Hajime was the severest critic of Nishida's philosophy, charging that it took an "irrational approach." Tanabe's fundamental criticism was that Nishida "confounded" religious intuition with the ultimate philosophical perspective. Tanabe argued that philosophy cannot be used to systemize religious awareness, which holds that to lose oneself is actually to find oneself. He also claimed that "making religion out of philosophy" contradicts the original mission of philosophy. Nishida regretted that Tanabe did not fully comprehend the standpoint and fundamentals of his thought, and attributed this to Tanabe's being "stuck in Kantian epistemology," which rendered him unable to understand the structure of concrete historical reality.⁵⁵ According to Kant, in an act of cognition, abstract logical categories of understanding give form to a sensuous immediacy. For Nishida this meant that Kant's view was still bound by the tacit presupposition of the subject-object dichotomy.⁵⁶

The key concept of Nishida's philosophy of absolutely contradictory self-identity which was criticized by Tanabe is "absolute nothingness." Nishida claimed that "absolute nothingness" should not be understood as a "relative nothingness" (*sōtaiteki mu* 相対的無), which is the opposite of "being."⁵⁷ "Relative nothingness" is non-being; it is the lack of being. Let us compare Tanabe's critical statement about this term with the possible interpretation from the "pure" standpoint of the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity.

As I hope will be evident in view of my analysis of Nishida's understanding of the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity in the previous section of this article, it is crucial to bear in mind that when Nishida speaks about "absolute nothingness" he is speaking of absolutely contradictory self-identity. If this context is forgotten, the true meaning of "absolute nothingness" as an indirect paradoxical concept is lost. One such mistake of reading Nishida out of context is to treat the relation of "being" and "absolute nothingness" as the relation of "that which was emanated" and "that which emanates." Kosaka Kunitsugu 小坂国継 discusses the problem of "being as emanation of absolute nothingness" in his book *Nishida Kitarō o meguru tetsugakusha gunzō* (Japanese Philosophers Concerned with Nishida Kitarō). Kosaka apparently supports Tanabe's criticism that Nishida's "dialectical method" (*benshōhō* 弁証法) is the logic of absolute mediator (*zettai baikai* 絶対媒介) and that is why existence of something direct must be admitted.⁵⁸ This is a distortion of Nishida's philosophy—although Nishida does sometimes call his logic "dialectical," by this he always means "true dialectics," which is "absolutely contradictory self-identity," i.e., "pure paradox" in which there is no mediator at all.

The problem here is the development in the world of absolutely contradictory self-identity and relation of "being" and "absolute nothingness." For Kosaka "absolute nothing-

ness" understood as the topos of absolute nothingness (*zettai mu no basho* 絶対無の場所) becomes a direct thesis (*teiritsu* 定律) at the foundation of the system (*taikei* 体系). Therefore it must be regarded as a kind of being, not as "simply nothingness." Kosaka is aware that Nishida defines "absolute nothingness" as nothingness which cannot be thought of as being. However, Nishida treats nothingness as a topos in which all things and all acts exist, and from this Kosaka erroneously concludes that "absolute nothingness" becomes something existing directly (*chokusetsu aru mono ni shite* 直接あるものにして) and loses its meaning as something that does not exist (*nai mono de aru to iu imi o ushinatte shimau* 無いものであるという意味を失ってしまう).⁵⁹ Kosaka tries to solve the paradox of "absolute nothingness" (which is not "being" and yet is not separated from "being") within the framework of formal logic. He defines "absolute nothingness" as a kind of "supreme being," which emanates being. Both Tanabe and Kosaka regarded Nishida's theory of self-determination of "absolute nothingness" as a "theory of emanation" (*hasshutsuron* 発出論)⁶⁰ according to which "absolute nothingness" is a kind of being that produces all forms. They ignored or failed to understand Nishida's statement that the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity meant that in the background of the dialectical process there is not anything substantial (*jittaiteki* 実態的) and direct (*chokusetsuteki* 直接的) that can be negated. They were incapable of escaping Hegel's understanding of dialectical logic, and could not see that Nishida's logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity is "a pure paradox" which does not require any mediator at all.

"Self-negation" in Nishida's philosophy does not mean the process of change from "absolute nothingness" in the beginning of this process to "being" at the end. In terms of the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity there is no developmental point of departure that can be objectified. In the world of absolute contradictory self-identity, "the act of creation (*sōzō sayō* 創造作用) does not mean that being arises from nothingness."⁶¹ Creation in the world of absolutely contradictory self-identity is not the result of emanation, because it is the structure of such a world (the structure of absolutely contradictory self-identity) itself that is the source of activity. "The act of creation means that the world of absolutely contradictory self-identity of "one" and "many" expresses itself internally and forms itself infinitely without any foundation (*mukiteiteki ni* 無基底的に) in the movement from that which is created to that which creates (*tsukurareta mono kara tsukuru mono e* 作られたものから作るものへ).⁶² There is no beginning and no end in this vision. "Absolutely contradictory self-identity is the world of mutual determination of individual entities."⁶³ The result of such mutual determination is endless change and creation. "Each of the multitude of individuals is an absolute event that determinates itself and as such is the beginning of the world."⁶⁴ The world of absolutely contradictory self-identity is born and dies infinitely—each moment means the creation of a new world.⁶⁵ Each individual element changes endlessly and at the same time changes the world, since it is absolutely contradictory self-identical with the world. Each moment means the creation of new configuration within the structure of absolute contradictory self-identity, which is the only unchangeable framework.

The structure of absolute contradictory self-identity itself is the source of both movement (dialectical development of all individual elements, a mode of "many") and stillness (identity of all individual elements, a mode of "one"). Nishida's dictum that "in self-conscious self-determination of 'absolute nothingness' dialectical movement is both included and transcended"⁶⁶ should be understood in this context. Determination in the world of absolutely contradictory self-identity is "determination without that which determinates" (*gentei suru*

mono naki gentei 限定するものなき限定),⁶⁷ since there is no separated subject of determination.

“Absolute nothingness” is not a subject causing “being” (for instance, an individual self) to appear. “Absolute nothingness” is an indirect paradoxical concept which points to the fact that absolute contradictory self-identity cannot be objectified,⁶⁸ i.e., it cannot be an object of cognition, separated from the subject. “Absolute nothingness” cannot be treated as a subject of any action since it is the absolutely contradictory self-identity of all subjects and all objects. To interpret “absolute nothingness” as a subject of emanation is to apply formal logic to the indirect paradoxical judgment (namely, “absolute nothingness”) and therefore to fail to comprehend its paradoxical definition.

Tanabe also claimed that “self-consciousness as a philosophical principle and the absolute in the world of religion cannot be united in the concept of self-consciousness of absolute nothingness.”⁶⁹ Here he applies the formal logic of subject-object dichotomy to another indirect paradoxical concept, namely to “an individual self.” Nishida’s definition of “an individual self” is also self-contradictory. “At the bottom of the individual self there is something that transcends the conscious self and yet is the source of the conscious self. By this I do not mean an unconsciousness or primitive instinct—if someone thinks so, he makes this mistake by complying with formal logic.”⁷⁰ An individual self is not a separate entity since it is self-contradictory—it includes a transcendental dimension. “Immanent transcendence” (absolute contradictory self-identity of immanence and transcendence) is to be found at the bottom of the individual self. Determination of individual self-consciousness means that the topos of “absolute nothingness” (spatial aspect of absolutely contradictory self-identity) determines itself. Self-determination of the topos of nothingness is “seeing without that which sees” (*miru mono nakushite miru koto* 見るものなくして見ること),⁷¹ since there is absolute contradictory self-identity of “a seer” (subject) and “the seen” (object). Subject and object are two aspects of absolutely contradictory self-identity—in the direction of self-affirmation of such self-determination (of “absolute nothingness”) we find the object, and in the direction of its self-negation we find the subject.⁷² Self-consciousness is not the self-consciousness of subject separated from objects. Individual self-consciousness is one aspect of absolutely contradictory self-identity (one aspect of self-consciousness of “absolute nothingness”). Tanabe did not grasp Nishida’s definition of the absolute in the world of religion, either. According to Nishida the true absolute in both philosophical and religious contexts is self-contradictory, and it is not the opposite of the relative⁷³. “The absolute includes absolute self-negation in itself.”⁷⁴ Therefore the true absolute is absolutely contradictory self-identity. Individual self, the true absolute in the world of religion, individual consciousness and consciousness of “absolute nothingness”—all these concepts are various aspects of absolutely contradictory self-identity.

Tanabe also criticized Nishida’s concept of “active intuition”. For Tanabe intuition was one of the acts of subjective consciousness which is separated from the object of cognition. Nishida, on the other hand, regarded “active intuition” as “discrimination without discrimination,”⁷⁵ i.e., as the act of seeing by becoming the objects of cognition.⁷⁶ “Active intuition” is therefore an indirect paradoxical concept designating an epistemological aspect of absolutely contradictory self-identity. Nishida rejected the traditional philosophical notion of intuition as a passive state of mind or a kind of ecstasy.⁷⁷ In his view, true intuition is not passive but it

is active as absolute contradictory self-identity of seeing and acting.⁷⁸ Active intuition is possible because an object becomes a subject and a subject becomes an object. He wrote, "I have often used the formula: we think by becoming things and act by becoming things. I (subject) and things (objects) are contradictory in compliance with the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity."⁷⁹ Active intuition is not an act which is prior to seeing (seeing understood as the result of this act). The individual self and the world are in a relation of absolutely contradictory self-identity, and so the aspect of identity stands for intuition—we know the world because "we are the world." Acting is not prior to seeing, because "seeing" is the mode of existing in the world of absolute contradictory self-identity. To see (to be conscious of the world) is to become the world. There is "no subject separated from object."⁸⁰ The eye sees objects but cannot see itself; we think about objects, but cannot think about "thinking itself" in an objectifying way.⁸¹ "Active intuition" is "thinking in itself."

There is also "contradiction" in the world of absolutely contradictory self-identity, which stands for subject-object dualism. Discursive thinking can never be separated from "active intuition." The problem is that the individual self is attached to subject-object dualism as the only true perspective and is not aware of true perception. Nishida stressed that when there is no reflexive, objective subject, true perception is present.⁸² "Only when the self stops seeing itself, does it see the true self."⁸³

The above analysis reveals where Tanabe's criticism of Nishida philosophy is mistaken: Tanabe did not understand Nishida's logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity. He analyzed Nishida's concepts by transferring them into a different philosophical context and a different logical framework. No wonder that they seemed "irrational" or "mystical" to him. This is the reason why Nishida lamented that his logic of absolute contradictory self-identity had not been given the slightest *serious* consideration. Obviously Tanabe distorted the original meaning of his philosophy. Nishida's philosophy of "absolute nothingness" should not be analyzed in the framework of formal logic or Hegel's dialectical logic. The same can be said about Zen—the logic and structure of absolute contradictory self-identity inhere in, and should be elicited from, the Zen teaching.

II. THE LOGIC OF CONTRADICTORY SELF-IDENTITY IN ZEN CONCEPTS

I think that Nishida's logic of absolute contradictory self-identity is crucial for understanding the Zen kōans. The reality of the Zen Enlightenment is the world of absolutely contradictory self-identity of "one" and "many." However the vision of reality in the Zen tradition is focused on the fundamental unity of all different and opposite elements. We cannot find in the Zen traditions the idea of development in the world of absolutely contradictory self-identity, which is so important for Nishida, although the idea of constant change is included in Buddhist term of "impermanence" (Sk. *anitya*, Jp. *mujō* 無常). I discussed this problem in detail in my book *Filozofia nicości Nishidy Kitarō* (Nishida Kitarō's Philosophy of Nothingness).⁸⁴ In this part of this article I will concentrate on Nishida's opinions on Zen, in an effort to elucidate the meaning of his rather scattered quotations. Some conclusions on Zen philosophy in this section are mine, not Nishida's, but all of them were inspired by Nishida's philosophy of absolutely contradictory self-identity.

1. Kōan as a paradoxical judgment

Nishida stated that the words of Zen masters should be understood in terms of the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity.⁸⁵ This conclusion was very important for me, since it was the answer to the question that had bothered me for a long time: If the Zen masters' teaching should not be analyzed rationally, what is the difference between Zen masters' sayings and a saying of a man who suffers from some mental disease? Is there any rule that governs kōans?⁸⁶

Before I present my typology of direct paradoxical judgments in kōans, I must explain the difference between two types of formal concepts (i.e., concepts which both "name" and definition is not self-contradictory). I label these polar and non-polar.

- a. **Polar formal concepts** have only ONE opposite meaning, when negated. For example, "the relative" and "the absolute" or "the changeable" and "the unchangeable."
- b. **Non-polar formal concepts** do not have ONE opposite meaning, when negated. For example, "you" and its negation "not-you" (the infinite class of concepts which are not "you"), or "you" and one element of the infinite class of concepts, which are not "you" (such as, for example, "you" and "a table").

The above distinction of polar formal concepts and non-polar formal concepts is very important to an understanding of the structure of paradoxical judgment in these kōans, in which polar and non-polar formal concepts are identified.

In keeping with this distinction, Zen kōans should be divided into two groups: kōans as polar paradoxical judgments and kōans as non-polar paradoxical judgments. Those that are polar paradoxical judgments fall into three subtypes:

- a. kōans that indicate the identity of affirmation and negation (A is not- A), for instance, "*No-gate is the gate of emancipation.*"⁸⁷
- b. kōans that indicate falseness of either exclusive negation or exclusive affirmation (neither only A , nor only not- $A \rightarrow$ truth is both A and not- A), for instance, "If you meet a man of Dao on the way, great him neither with words, nor with silence."⁸⁸
- c. kōans that include the same answer for the opposite questions ($X=A$ and $X=\text{not-}A \rightarrow A$ is not- A), an example of which is this story about Zhaozhou Congshen 趙州從諗 (Jōshū Jūshin, 778–897). Asked by a monk, "Has a dog the Buddha-Nature?" Zhaozhou Congshen answered "Mu" (no) on one occasion, while at another time he answered "Yes" to the same question.⁸⁹ This kōan can be also interpreted as a voice in discussion about the meaning of "buddha nature" in Buddhist tradition. Zen masters were aware that the true meaning of this concept can be easily misunderstood and "buddha nature" can be defined as a new wonderful feature "added" to human nature during the experience of Enlightenment. Therefore Zen masters used the concept of "no-buddha nature" (*mubusshō* 無仏性) to explain that "buddha nature" is not a feature at all. A man who gained "buddha nature" as a new wonderful feature could be compared to a rabbit that one day all of a sud-

den noticed a horn on his head. That is why Zen masters admonished their disciples not to “seek for horns on the head of a rabbit.”⁹⁰

Kōans that are non-polar paradoxical judgments fall into two subtypes, direct and indirect. The first of these, direct non-polar paradoxical judgments/kōans indicating contradictory self-identity of non-polar formal concepts, is exemplified by the saying “Every form is Buddha-form.”⁹¹ This is another expression of the Kegon teaching: one is all and all is one (*ichi soku issai, issai soku ichi* 一即一切、一切即一). The second subtype, indirect non-polar paradoxical judgments, i.e., kōans that indicate exchangeable characteristics of non-polar formal concepts, is exemplified by the saying “When a man crosses the bridge, the bridge flows and the water does not flow.”⁹² “Bridge” and “water” are non-polar formal concepts (concepts which both “name” and definition is not self-contradictory and which do not have ONE opposite meaning, when negated). “Water” is one element of an infinite class of concepts which are not bridge (“not-bridge”), and “bridge” is one element of an infinite class of concepts which are not water (“not-water”). If we admit that such non-polar formal concepts are absolutely contradictorily self-identical, i.e., that they are the same and at the same time not the same (“a bridge” is “water” and at the same time “a bridge” is not “water”), we must also admit that in the aspect of their sameness “a bridge” has the same characteristics as “water.” It leads to the conclusion that all characteristics of “water” can be also applied to “a bridge.” “Water” flows, so “a bridge” also flows. The opposite is correct, too. All characteristics of “a bridge” can be applied to “water.” “A bridge” does not flow, so “water” does not flow either. The statement that “the bridge flows and water does not flow” is a concrete description of reality conceived as absolutely contradictory self-identity.

The same hidden paradoxical structure we can find in another *kōan*:

Empty handed, yet holding a hoe;
Walking, yet riding a water buffalo.⁹³

The self-contradictory meaning of the kōan can be direct or indirect/hidden. An example of kōan as hidden paradoxical judgment is Hakuin's famous question “What is the sound of single hand?”⁹⁴ The hidden paradoxical meaning is “What is the sound of something that cannot make a sound?”

Kōans have many levels of meaning. We can find direct allusions to other Zen masters' sayings, to Buddhist sūtras, proverbs, poetry or literature. However, there can be no true kōan without a direct or indirect self-contradictory meaning, that is, without the logic of paradox. Sometimes that logic of paradox may be hidden, as can be seen in the following kōan examples.

Rice in the bowl, water in the bucket.⁹⁵

The willows are green, the flowers are red.⁹⁶

The above statements can be regarded as kōans because their context is paradoxical. They are not judgments from the perspective of subject-object dichotomy, but they are expressions of Buddhist truth: “form is emptiness and emptiness is form.” They point to the partial truth that “emptiness is form,” and therefore they express affirmation of all forms. Forms are not the illusions/hallucinations that disappear during the experience of Enlightenment. The En-

lightened One must see not only that form is emptiness, but also that emptiness is form.

Not all sayings of Zen masters are kōans, defined as direct, indirect or hidden one-dimensional paradoxical judgments. Some sayings are examples of severe criticism of disciples who could not break through subject-object dualism; an instance is “Though the frog leaps, it can’t get out of the bushel.”⁹⁷ Further, if a statement of a certain Zen master complies with formal logic (to the principle of non-contradiction) it is not a kōan. For example, the statement “We often meet men who slash their boats” looks like a puzzle, but it has clear meaning: “We often meet ignorant/stupid men.” The one who “slashes the boat” recalls the ancient story of an ignorant official who accidentally dropped his sword over the side of a moving boat and, thinking to return later, notched a mark on the railing of the boat to mark the spot.⁹⁸

We come to the conclusion that Zen kōans are mainly descriptive—they are paradoxical judgments which describe reality conceived as absolutely contradictory self-identity. In this sense some of Nishida’s own words are kōans, for example, “[T]he world of absolutely contradictory self-identity is self-identical in itself and at the same time is not self-identical in itself”⁹⁹ or “the world of absolutely contradictory self-identity is always determined and at the same time it is always changing.”¹⁰⁰

Nishida pointed out that a Zen kōan works as a “tool” or “mean” (*shudan* 手段) that helps in grasping the paradoxical structure of reality. He quoted the following kōan to explain his point of view: “One day Shoushan Shengnian 首山省念 (Jp. Shuzan Shōnen, 926–993), taking up a bamboo stick, said: ‘When you call this a bamboo stick, you are wrong; and when you don’t call it a bamboo stick, you are also wrong. What, then, do you call it?’”¹⁰¹ Shoushan’s words can be taken as expressing the direct paradoxical judgment: “Calling a bamboo stick a bamboo stick is wrong and it is not wrong at the same time and in the same respect.” Nishida meant that kōans also have functional meaning—they are a kind of shocking therapy, which helps to transcend the subject-object dualism and see the reality of absolute contradictory self-identity. In their functional meaning kōans should be labeled “the catalysts of Enlightenment”.

In *Filozofia zen*, I analyzed in detail the verification process of Enlightenment. Here let me just state the most important conclusion: only a person who has experienced reality as absolutely contradictory self-identity can describe reality in spontaneous way, giving endless, concrete examples of its paradoxical structure. The disciple who only imitates “enlightened words” sooner or later is silenced by his master—it is enough for the master to notice that his disciple hesitates or elaborates his answer. Such a disciple has no confidence to defend himself and prove that his experience of Enlightenment is genuine, since he does not see that “emptiness is form and form is emptiness.” One should not forget that there is an abyss between “knowing” the structure of absolutely self-identity (as a theoretical model) and “seeing/experiencing” the reality of absolutely contradictory self-identity. Enlightenment is not possible without the experience of a shift in human perception that results in a new perspective in which subject-object dualism is transcended and yet included at the same time. The goal of Zen masters is to lead people to the experience of such a shift (the experience of Enlightenment). Therefore they argue that attachment to reasoning (reasoning by a subject about an object, i.e., a process that presumes the subject-object dichotomy) must be abandoned. My goal is humbler—it is to understand Zen masters’ verbal expression of such an experience. I am aware that an analytical, “scientific” approach to Zen has its limits, but these limits should be accepted from the beginning. Once again I think reference to Kołakowski, who

brilliantly analyzed mystical experiences, is instructive. Although he acquired great knowledge of mystical visions, it did not make him experience them himself. The same can be said about Zen—one does not become a Zen master simply because one can grasp the theoretical model of reality experienced in Zen Enlightenment.

2. Relation of “Mind” and “Buddha” as Absolute Contradictory Self-identity

Nishida stated that the religious absolute can be experienced by all human beings as “spiritual fact” (*shinreijō no jijitsu* 心靈上の事実)¹⁰². Sometimes he uses such expressions as “God-father” or “Buddha-mother” as indirect paradoxical concepts to designate the religious aspect of “absolute contradictory self-identity.”¹⁰³

Many passages in Nishida's essay *Bashoteki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan* (Topological Logic and Religious Worldview) express his conviction that the relation of “Mind” and “Buddha” in the Buddhist tradition must be understood in terms of the logic of paradox. He writes, for example, “Whole Mind is Buddha” (*zenshin soku butsu* 全心即仏), “Whole Buddha is man” (*zenbutsu soku jin* 全仏即人), and “no difference between Buddha and man” (*jinbutsu mui* 人仏無異).¹⁰⁴ “Mind in itself is Buddha, Buddha in itself is Mind,” he says, yet this “does not mean that Buddha and Mind are identical from the point of view of objectifying logic/formal logic.”¹⁰⁵

Mind is Buddha and a man is Buddha—these statements contain an important clue to understanding Nishida's interpretation of the Buddhist term *shin* 心 (Jp. *shin*; Sk. *citta*; Ch. *xin*). The Sanskrit equivalent *citta* means “thought.”¹⁰⁶ In Zen tradition *shin* is often translated also as “heart, spirit, consciousness, soul, mind, outlook, sense, interiority.”¹⁰⁷ How can *shin* mean both heart (emotions) and thought (discursive thinking)? The explanation is that this term applies to the mode of our discriminative consciousness: we discriminate not only concepts and ideas but also emotions. That is why the meaning of *shin* includes the idea of discriminating mind, which discriminates itself as the mind of individual self, separated from objects of cognition. *Shin* should be distinguished from *bodaishin*, i.e., Enlightened mind, the absolute mind. Nishida wrote that there is “no difference between Buddha and man.” This means that for him *shin* is not just one aspect of human consciousness, but the whole consciousness of discriminating self.

“Mind is Buddha”—such a statement is contradictory since discriminating Mind is the relative and Buddha is the absolute. Zen masters often referred to the notion “Mind is Buddha.” It should be noted that one of the kōans from the collection *The Gateless Gate* (*Mumonkan* 無門関) directly expresses this truth: “Mind is Buddha” (*sokushin sokubutsu* 即心即仏).¹⁰⁸ Mazu Daoyi 馬祖道一 (Baso Dōitsu, 709–788) also stressed that “Outside mind there is no Buddha, outside Buddha there is no mind.”¹⁰⁹ The same truth was expressed by the Japanese Zen Master Shinchi Kakushin 心地覺心 (1207–1298), whose words Dumoulin rendered in verse:

Mind is the Buddha.
The Buddha is mind.
Mind and Buddha, such as they are,
Are the same in the past and the future.¹¹⁰

If the sentence “Mind is Buddha” were to be interpreted from the point of view of formal logic, the conclusion would be that no religious practice is required. “Mind” and “Buddha”

would be synonyms, and not different from each other at all. However, all Zen masters claim that people must follow religious practice to realize their “buddha-nature.” Hakuin Ekaku 白隠慧鶴 (1685–1765) wrote: “Yet sentient beings do not know how close it [Buddha] is, and search for it far away. How sad!”¹¹¹ How could it be that, as Ikkyū Sōjun 一休宗純 (1394–1481) stated, “we have one moon [Buddha nature], clear and unclouded, yet are lost in darkness.”¹¹²

Nishida maintained that the identity of the discriminating mind and Buddha should not be understood in terms of formal logic, since it makes sense only from the point of view of logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity. From the point of view of formal logic the statement “Mind is Buddha” means that two elements are identical; they are only different names for the same thing ($A=A$). From the point of view of logic of contradictory self-identity, however, “identity” is always contradictory—mind (discriminating mind) *is* Buddha and *is not* Buddha at the same time and in the same respect. “Mind is Buddha, Buddha is Mind”—this true statement does not mean that the world is an emanation of the Mind. Mind (*shin* 心) is not mind (*hishin* 非心), and that is why it is mind (*shin*). The relation of Buddha and human beings must be understood as “contradictory self-identity” in compliance with “is’ and ‘is not’ logic” (the so-called *sokuhi* 即非 logic, *soku no ronri* 即の論理) characteristic of *The Perfection of Wisdom Sutras* (Sk. *Prajñāpāramitā sūtra*, Jp. *Hannya haramita kyō* 般若波羅蜜多經).¹¹³ The *sokuhi* logic of *The Perfection of Wisdom Sutras* expresses the truth that the true “absolute” must be absolutely contradictory self-identity.¹¹⁴

Nishida took the words of the famous Japanese Zen master Shūhō Myōchō 宗峰妙超 (1282–1338) to be the best expression of the paradoxical relation between the relative discriminating mind and Buddha: “Separated by a billion eons (kalpas), and yet not separated even for a moment. Always face to face, yet never met.”¹¹⁵

The logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity neither nullifies the self nor merely signifies that the self becomes Buddha or comes closer to Buddha. It indicates rather that the relation of the self and “the absolute” are always “reverse correspondence” (*gyaku taiō* 逆対応).¹¹⁶ One becomes the other through self-negation. Dōgen’s (Dōgen Kigen 道元希玄, 1200–1253) saying “to study the way of Buddha is to study the self, to study the self is to forget the self” should be understood in this context.¹¹⁷ The logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity can also be seen in such Buddhist concepts as “passions are Enlightenment” (*bonnō soku bodai* 煩惱即菩提 or “samsara is nirvana”) (*shōji soku nehan* 生死即涅槃).

If it is admitted that the reality experienced in Enlightenment is absolutely contradictory self-identity, it must also be admitted that only judgments complying with logic of paradox are adequate to such reality. This is not the problem of finding or not finding sufficient expressions to describe the experience of Enlightenment. It is the problem of shifting from formal logic to logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity. Nishida calls such a “shift” “the overturning of the self” (*jiko no tenkan* 自己の転換).¹¹⁸ What is the difference between attaining “buddha-nature” by “transformation” (*sabutsu* 作仏) and attaining “buddha-nature” by “shift” (*jōbutsu* 成仏)? Let us compare this difference to a visual change in the perception of geometrical figures. If one sees a square and then after sees a triangle in the same place, that means either the square was replaced by a triangle or by some transformation a square was changed into a triangle. However, if one sees a square from that point which is the crosscut of diagonals and later changes one’s point of view even a little bit, one will see a cube, although

no transformation took place. In such case the change from a square to a cube will be due to a shift in point of view.

3. "Mind" as the "Ordinary Mind" (*byōjōshin*)

Nishida emphasized that Buddhist doctrine should not be regarded as pantheism¹¹⁹, since "the special characteristic of Buddhism lies in its immanent transcendence."¹²⁰ He deplored that even Buddhist scholars themselves have not always clarified Mahayana logic. "That the individual self returns to the absolute by discovering its own bottomless depth does not mean that it departs from historical reality—just the opposite is true—the self grasps completely historical reality."¹²¹ From the point of view of logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity our ordinary, common sense perspective of perception (which complies with formal logic) is not to be lost so that true insight into reality could be achieved. This is another expression of Nishida's conviction that concrete logic (the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity) includes formal logic. Nishida uses another indirect paradoxical concept: "the depth of ordinary perspective" (*byōjōtei* 平常底). According to Nishida "the depth of ordinary perspective" is another name for "active intuition" which is also "the foundation of all sciences"¹²², i.e., the source of discursive thinking. He wrote, "Those who criticize my philosophy as mystical think of it in terms of objectifying logic (formal logic). However in my topological logic the absolute negation is identical with the depth of everyday perspective (*zettaihitei soku byōjōtei* 絶対否定即平常底)."¹²³

There is no sphere of profanity which could be distinguished from sacrality. That is why many Zen masters, such as Linji Yixuan 臨濟義玄 (Rinzai Gigen, ?-867) celebrated the extremely "ordinary and everyday standpoint."¹²⁴ According to Nishida, Zen master Nanquan Puyuan 南泉普願 (Nansen Fugan, 748-834) expressed this truth fully when he stated that "the ordinary mind is the Way."¹²⁵ "The true Way cannot exist apart from Ordinary Mind even for an instant—the ordinary mind is the Way."¹²⁶ The most important proof that the concept "Mind is Buddha" should be interpreted from the point of view of the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity is the so-called "Ordinary Mind" theory in Zen. If we say that "Ordinary Mind is Buddha" the paradoxical meaning of this sentence becomes more evident. "Ordinary mind" discriminates, makes ethical judgments, and is aware of its separation from all objects of perception. "Ordinary mind" is always a subject, which is not an object—each act of its perception establishes dualism of subject and object, which complies with the principle of non-contradiction (formal logic).

A conversation between Nanquan Puyuan and his disciple Zhaozhou Congshen can be seen as confirming the validity of Nishida's interpretation of this kōan in terms of the logic of paradox. Hearing that "Ordinary mind is the Way (Dao)" (*byōjō kore dō* 平常是道), Zhaozhou asked, "Should I try to direct myself toward it?" Nanquan responded, "If you try to direct yourself toward it, you betray your own practice." "How can I know the Way, if I do not direct myself toward it?" Zhaozhou inquired. "The Way is not subject to knowing and not knowing. Knowing is delusion; not knowing is blankness. If you truly reach the genuine Way, you will find it as vast and boundless as outer space. How can this be discussed at the level of affirmation and negation?" Nanquan answered, deliberately using direct paradoxical statements.¹²⁷ Nanquan emphasized that the truth "cannot be discussed at the level of affirmation and negation." It should be noted that the level of affirmation and negation is the level of

formal logic. The way is “boundless” and that is why it cannot be treated as an object which always has its “bounds.” The same idea of “knowing,” which is not knowing, can be found in the teaching of Bodhidharma (Ch. Putidamo 菩提達磨, Jp. Bodaidaruma, 440–528) who taught: “The absence of both understanding and not understanding is the true understanding.”¹²⁸ As Abe Masao indicates, the term “ordinary mind” does not indicate “a superficial affirmation of the everyday mind because the Way as the ordinary mind does not belong to knowing or not-knowing, and only by rejecting both trying and not-trying, may one awaken to the great void so vast and boundless.”¹²⁹ From the point of view of “common-sense” formal logic, only one of the two opposite judgments can be regarded as true—knowing or not-knowing. However “in the higher form of knowing” (thinking according to the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity) “the knower and the known are entirely one and yet their distinction is clear.”¹³⁰ From the point of view of the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity, in the act of Enlightenment the ordinary mind is not changed at all, and yet it is absolutely negated. Such a conclusion is regarded as absurd from the point of view of formal logic. However we can compare such state to discovering another bottom of ordinary mind.

Nishida quotes Linji Yixuan, “The Buddha Dharma does not have a special place to apply effort; it is ordinary and everyday—relieving oneself, donning clothes, eating rice, lying down when tired. The fool laughs at us but the wise understand.”¹³¹ Nishida comments that “it would be a great mistake to understand this shrewd saying as referring to a condition of detachment and indifference.”¹³²

4. “No-Thinking” (*munen*) and “Discrimination without Discrimination” (*mufunbetsu no funbetsu*)

Another argument that the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity constitutes the structure of reality revealed in the experience of Enlightenment is the Zen term *munen* 無念 (non-thinking). Both Nishida and Suzuki Daisetz argued that the true insight into reality is possible only as “discrimination without discrimination” (*mufunbetsu no funbetsu*)—a notion which is a paradox itself. It should be noted that the term “no-thought” (*munen*), is interpreted by the Sixth Patriarch, Huineng 慧能 (Jp. Enō, 638–713) as “thinking while not thinking,”¹³³ which is exactly the meaning of Nishida’s concept of “discrimination without discrimination.” Huineng taught: “This Dharma-door of mine, from the past onwards, from the beginning has been established with no-thought as its doctrine, no-mark as its substance, no-dwelling as its basis. *No-thought means to be without thought while in the midst of thought.* No-mark means to be apart from marks while in midst of marks. No-dwelling is the basic nature of human beings.”¹³⁴

The same logic of paradox can be seen in the Zen term “no-mind” (*mushin* 無心). Dahui Zonggao 大慧宗果 (Daie Sōkō, 1089–1163) said: “The so-called No-Mind is not like clay, wood, or stone, that is, utterly devoid of consciousness; nor does the term imply that the mind stands still without any reaction when it contacts objects or circumstances in the world. It does not adhere to anything, but is natural and spontaneous at all times and under all circumstances. There is nothing impure within it; neither does it remain in a state of purity.”¹³⁵ As Abe Masao points out: “Zen is grounded in non-thinking which is not shackled by either thinking or not-thinking and yet freely uses both of them.”¹³⁶

Thinking while not thinking is possible only within the structure of absolutely contradictory self-identity in which subject is subject (and thinks) and at the same the subject

is identical with the object (there is no subjective thinking). The notion of *munen* can be regarded as interpretation of Buddhist theory of non-self (Sk. *anātman*; Ch. *wuwo*; Jp. *Muga* 無我) from the point of view of logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity.

III. LOGIC OF ABSOLUTELY CONTRADICTIONARY SELF-IDENTITY AND DISPUTES OVER ZEN PRACTICE

Many have contended that Zen has no orthodox doctrine, but no one denies that there were polemics in the Zen tradition. What were the Zen masters arguing about, if there is no “truth” of Zen that can be defined? In my opinion, Nishida's logic of contradictory self-identity can be seen as providing a key to the interpretation of some polemics in the Zen tradition. His logic, that is, offers an alternative to the assumption—remarked on by Thomas Cleary,¹³⁷ for example—that the history of Buddhism can best be understood in terms of sectarian rivalry.

Cleary has observed that many treatments of Buddhist history take for granted that a great deal is explained by sectarian rivalry. Particular Buddhist doctrines (including teachings of Zen masters) are thus seen as tools devised for polemical purposes, or ideological statements tailored to attract patronage and popularity. However, in Cleary's opinion, what is more important is the fact that “Buddhism is naturally and properly multiform, there is no fixed doctrine.”¹³⁸ While Buddhist teachers built up conceptual structures marking out the path for students, they did not always aim for static structures, but rather they sought to design subtly moving semantic devices that could interact with and modify the students' conceptual and motivational patterns.¹³⁹ Such an interpretation does not explain the reason why there are so many polemics in the Zen tradition—should we believe that Zen masters did not fight for truth and cared only for patronage and popularity? What is the purpose of designing “subtly moving semantic devices that could interact with and modify the students' conceptual and motivational patterns”? If there was no fixed doctrine, there would be no need to use the term “heterodox Zen” (*jazen* 邪禪), as Zen Master Dahui Zonggao did.¹⁴⁰ One can find many instances of invective against the heterodox teaching of false Zen masters.

The Fourth Patriarch, Daoxin 道心 (Dōshin, 560–651) stated, for example, “They [false masters] are people who teach living beings for the sake of fame and profit, without comprehending the characteristics of the ultimate Dharma. . . . They give their seal of approval to everyone, to people who seem enlightened but are otherwise.”¹⁴¹ Dōkyō Etan 道鏡慧端 (1642–1721) remarked that “the Zen school declined in the Song dynasty (960–1278) and died out in the Ming dynasty (1368–1644).”¹⁴² Hakuin, a disciple of Dōkyō, agreed with his master that “although some residual efficacy of Zen was transmitted to Japan, it is as faint as stars in daytime. The state of affairs is truly lamentable.”¹⁴³

Many Zen practitioners doubted the Enlightenment of their masters. When Bankei Yōtaku 盤珪永琢 (1622–1693) met the Ōbaku monk Yinyuan Longqi 隱元隆琦 (Ingen Ryūki, 1592–1673), he commented, “The moment he stepped ashore from the boat, I realized that he was not a man of the Unborn [Enlightened (author's gloss)], and that's why I never studied with him.”¹⁴⁴ Bankei did not find any Zen master who could confirm his Enlightenment. (The transmission of Enlightenment was usually verified by the teacher's “seal of approval” (*inka*), the written sanction of the student's Enlightenment experience.)

Some disputes in the Zen tradition are connected with names of individuals on both sides, for example, Huineng versus Shenxiu 神秀 (Jinshū, 605–706), Dahui Zonggao ver-

sus Hongzhi Zhengyue 宏智正覺 (Wanshi Shōgaku, 1091–1157), Minnan Eisai 明庵榮西 (1141–1215) versus Dainichi Nōnin 大日能忍 (twelfth century–thirteenth century), and Hakuin Ekaku versus Bankei Yōtaku. Most polemics are admonishments starting with words to the effect that “Those who teach so and so are mistaken.” These reveal that there were Zen teachers whose doctrine and method of religious practice was criticized by other masters.

If not in order to attract patronage and popularity, then what is the purpose of polemics in Zen? As I indicated, I believe Nishida’s logic of contradictory self-identity contains a clue to understanding of these polemics. One can distinguish two sides of the conflicts, one side being a defense of a formal logic interpretation of some theory or concept, and the other side supporting the logic of paradox (logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity). To explore the usefulness of Nishida’s logic further, let us examine three polemics in Zen history:

1. The Practices of “Purification of Mind” (Mind as a “Dirty Mirror”).
2. “Silent Illumination Zen” (*mokushō zen* 默照禪).
3. “Expectation of Enlightenment Zen” (*taigo zen* 待悟禪).

1. The Practice of “Purification of Mind” (Mind as a “Dirty Mirror”)

The metaphor of Mind as a dirty mirror is the interpretation of the relations of Mind and Buddha from the point of view of formal logic. The dirty mirror—ordinary mind, which discriminates and is full of desires, and thus is impure—is not Buddha. Since only a clean mirror can reflect the Buddha, the dust must be removed before one can attain Enlightenment. However, if we think that “dirt” refers to discriminative thinking or desires, we come to the conclusion that a Mind which is deprived of thoughts or desires is not an “Ordinary Mind,” but rather is a “Modified Mind.” It appears that there was a modification, rather than a transformation, in the process of cleaning the mirror—although it should be pointed out that there is a stark difference between the “Ordinary Mind,” which discriminates, and the “Modified Mind” that does not discriminate and is free from desires.

From the point of view of the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity, only a shift of perspective is necessary, so there is no need to purify the Mind. Moreover, any act of purification must be conducted by a subject, who tries to change/modify its own characteristic features. Such an attempt establishes subject-object dualism, which should be overcome in the experience of Enlightenment. Another problem is that “purification of Mind” contradicts the Buddhist notion of “no-self”—Enlightenment is to experience the state of “no-self,” not to purify the self.

Let us have a look at the famous dispute between Huineng and Shenxiu over Mind as a “dirty mirror” from the point of view of the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity. The Fifth Patriarch Hongren 弘忍 (Gunin, 601–674) decided that he would pass his robe and Dharma to one who could write verses expressing true Enlightenment. One of his disciples, Shenxiu, wrote:

The body is the Bodhi tree
The mind is like a clear mirror
At all times we must strive to brush it clean,
And must not let the dust collect.

There is no doubt that Shenxiu, who was renowned for his eloquence and knowledge of Buddhist doctrine, was an adherent of a “common-sense” interpretation of the relation of “Mind”

and “Buddha.” “Mind” is Buddha only after it is cleansed—at least from passions (*bonnō* 煩惱) or from all discrimination (*shikibetsu* 識別). However, according to the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch* (Ch. *Liuzu Huineng dashi tanjing*; Jp. *Rokuso Enō daishi dangyō* 六祖慧能大師壇經), Hongren was not satisfied with this verse. “You have not seen your nature,” he told Shenxiu, and enjoined him to write another verse of Enlightenment. Shenxiu was unable to do it. Huineng is said to have been an illiterate boy who experienced his breakthrough at a busy market, upon hearing a verse from the Diamond Sutra: “Because there is no place in which it abides, the Mind arises.” Huineng knew at once that Shenxiu’s verses were not a true expression of Enlightenment. He asked another monk to write this verse on the wall:

Originally there is no tree of Enlightenment,
Nor there is a stand with a clear mirror,
From the beginning not one thing exists;
Where, then, is a grain of dust to cling.¹⁴⁵

Huineng apparently refers to the notion of “no-self,” which is an expression of the theory that all dharmas are empty (“emptiness of self-nature” (*jisōkū* 自相空). As Ikkyū Sōjun put it, “One-self and the original face of heaven and earth and all the world are equally empty.”¹⁴⁶

From the point of view of the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity, Huineng’s rejection of Shenxiu’s verse constitutes a refutation of the formal logical interpretation of “Mind is Buddha.” The identity of “Mind” and “Buddha” is not that of a potential state and the realization. Nishida’s logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity, which includes formal logic, leads to the conclusion that any form of Zen practice that requires elimination of discriminative thinking must be rejected. The shift of perspective means that discriminative thinking is transcended and yet included in compliance with the logic of paradox.

2. “Silent Illumination Zen” (*mokushō zen* 默照禪)

The polemic concerning “Silent Illumination Zen” has typically been described in terms of sectarian conflict, in this case between the Rinzai 臨濟 (Ch. Linji) and Sōtō 曹洞 (Ch. Caodong) lines of Zen, in which representatives of the Rinzai line criticize the central Sōtō practice of sitting meditation (*zazen* 座禪), labeling it “Silent Illumination Zen.” Even if sectarian rivalry existed, however, at the core of the dispute is a difference in understanding of the meaning of the term “emptiness” (Sk. *śūnyātā*; Ch. *kong*; Jp. *kū* 空) within the Buddhist tradition.

Huineng, the Sixth Patriarch, taught: “If you sit still with an empty mind you will become attached to *undifferentiated emptiness*.”¹⁴⁷ One should not try to “extinguish” one’s consciousness, but must reach True Emptiness, which Huineng defined as a paradoxical state of non-thinking (Jp. *munen*) which is “thinking without thinking.”

“Undifferentiated emptiness,” another name for “one-sided emptiness” (*henkū* 偏空) can be defined as “non-being,” or a “lack of being” (the antithesis of being as a negative vacuity). Nishida used the name of “relative nothingness” (*sōtaiteki mu* 相對的無) to designate nothingness as a lack of being. “One-sided emptiness” is not “true emptiness” (*shinkū* 真空), which is absolute negation—it negates both being and non-being but the result of such negation is contradictory self-identity of being and non-being (“form is emptiness and emptiness is form”). “True emptiness” is called “absolute nothingness” (*zettaitteki mu* 絕對的無)

in Nishida philosophy.

Logically speaking, “one-sided emptiness” as “non-being” is conditioned by “being.” We cannot think of “non-being” without its relation to “being,” therefore we may say that notions of “being” and “non-being” are mutually conditioned. The true emptiness conceived as contradictory self-identity of being and non-being cannot be conditioned by any concept. Emptiness as contradictory self-identity of both being and non-being is a new interpretation of the traditional Buddhist term “Emptiness.”¹⁴⁸ Masao Abe emphasizes that Nothingness as negation of both “being” and “non-being” can already be found in Nāgārjuna’s teaching, which is unique in the history of philosophy. Nāgārjuna’s idea of the Middle Path does not indicate a midpoint between the two extremes, but it refers to the transcendence of every possible duality including that of being and non-being. Nāgārjuna criticized the Abhidharma Buddhists for following the ascetic path of turning the body to ashes and annihilating the consciousness, which they took as the salvific ideal, i.e., nirvana.¹⁴⁹

The Fourth Patriarch, Daoxin said, “When beginning students see emptiness, this seeing emptiness is not the real emptiness. Those who attain real emptiness see neither emptiness nor non-emptiness.”¹⁵⁰ Emptiness which means negation of both affirmation and negation is also called “the emptiness of emptiness” (*kūkū* 空空), the last of four kinds of emptiness—“inner emptiness” (*naikū* 内空), “outer emptiness” (*gekū* 外空), “inner and outer emptiness” (*naigekū* 内外空), and “emptiness of emptiness” (*kūkū* 空空). Ikkyū Sōjun refers to this term:

No beginning,
No end.
Our mind
Is born and dies:
The emptiness of emptiness!¹⁵¹

Many Zen masters used rather shocking methods to help their disciples realize that not only is form emptiness, but also emptiness is form.

A Zen master asked one of his accomplished monks: “Can you take hold of emptiness?” “Yes”—he replied. “Show me how you do it.” The monk stretched his arms and clutched at empty space. Master asked: “Is that the way? But after all you have not got anything.” “What then”—asked the monk—“is your way?” The master straightway took hold of the monk’s nose and gave it a hard pull. Which made the latter exclaim: “Oh, how hard you pull at my nose! You are hurting me terribly!” “That’s the way to have a good hold of emptiness”—said the master.¹⁵²

Since “emptiness is form,” a nose also is emptiness. We can interpret the following words of Dōgen Kigen in a similar manner: “When one sees mountains and rivers, he sees Buddha-nature; when one sees Buddha-nature, he sees the cheeks of a donkey and the mouth of a horse.”¹⁵³

What is the problem with sitting meditation from the point of view of “true emptiness” conceived as absolutely contradictory self-identity?

Huineng taught: “To say that sitting unmoving is correct is to be like Śāriputra who sat quietly in the forest but was scolded by Vimalakirti.”¹⁵⁴ He was referring to the passage

in the *Vimalakirti Sutra* (Sk. *Vimalakīrti nirdeśa sūtra*; Ch. *Weimajing*, Jp. *Yuimagyō* 維摩經), in which Vimalakīrti said to Gautama's disciple, Śāriputra: "Śāriputra, meditation is not necessarily in the form of sitting. For meditation means . . . not straying from the Truth while attending to worldly affairs; the mind abiding neither within nor without, . . . and not wiping out earthly desires (*bonnō* 煩惱) . . . while entering the state of nirvana. If you can thus sit in meditation you will win the Buddha seal."¹⁵⁵ Sitting meditation should not mean annihilating the consciousness so that discrimination can be eliminated, because in such a case only "one-sided emptiness" can be attained.

We can recall that sitting motionless in meditation was criticized by Linji: "[There are monks who] sit against the wall of the meditation hall, and their tongues support their upper jaws. They sit upright and motionless, and take it as the patriarch's gate to the Buddha's way. This is a gross error."¹⁵⁶ Dahui Zongao was perhaps the most famous Rinzai master who criticized the passivity of "Silent Illumination Zen" as a mistaken form of practice. Dahui emphasized that Zen practitioners should not pass their days in the lifelessness of silent meditation, like "cold ashes or a withered tree,"¹⁵⁷ but should "lay down the mind that rejoices in stillness and turns from disturbance."¹⁵⁸ He was especially critical of the attitude of Hongzhi Zhengjue, who stated, "To one who forgets the words in silence, reality is clearly revealed."¹⁵⁹ The following quotation can be interpreted as expressing Hongzhi's belief that silence and serenity are indispensable conditions for Enlightenment:

In silence and serenity one forgets all words . . .
Disharmony will arise,
If in reflection there is no serenity;
All will become wasteful and secondary.
If in serenity there is no reflection.
The Truth of serene reflection
Is perfect and complete.
The hundred rivers flow
In tumbling torrents
To the great ocean.¹⁶⁰

Nishida's logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity provides arguments against Silent Illumination Zen. There is absolutely contradictory self-identity of all opposites (including the opposition of motion and stillness). If Enlightenment is the experience of absolutely contradictory self-identity of motion and stillness, stillness alone cannot lead to such experience. Nishida's logic does not require that sitting meditation itself should not be practiced at all. The position itself is not the most important thing; what is important is the practitioner's mind. Negation of stillness and the choice of motion is not the solution, because one is trapped again in having chosen one of the two opposites instead of grasping the absolutely contradictory self-identity of all opposites.

Dōgen defended sitting meditation, claiming that "true meditation" is not Silent Illumination Zen. There is no "killing of consciousness" in Dōgen's meditation, since he stressed that the practitioner should be aware of both thinking and not-thinking and yet cling to neither. Dōgen explains the words of Zen Master Yueshan Weiyān 藥山惟儼 (Yakusan Igen, 751–834), who said that "while sitting one thinks (*shiryō* 思慮) of not-thinking (*fushiryō*

不思慮)。” When his disciple asked, “How does one think about not-thinking?” Yueshan replied, “Without thinking” (*bishiryo* 非思慮).¹⁶¹ “Thinking of not thinking” during sitting meditation can be interpreted as Huineng’s no-thought (*munen*), that is, “to be without thought while in the midst of thought.” This complies with the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity.

3. Enlightenment as an Object of Knowledge: “Expectation of Enlightenment” Zen

Zen as “Expectation of Enlightenment” (*taigo zen*) is a term with heterodoxical connotations. By the lights of their critics, those who were said to have engaged in this type of Zen made the grave mistake of having regarded concrete religious practice as a means to a future Enlightenment.¹⁶² Such an attitude obviously does not comply with our commonsense understanding of religious practice. What is wrong with the expectation that diligent religious practice will ultimately be rewarded with Enlightenment? The problem of Zen as “Expectation of Enlightenment” is related to the theory of “Original Enlightenment” (*hongaku* 本覺). Adherents of this theory rebuked the theory of “gained Enlightenment” (*shikaku* 始覺), claiming that there is no need to gain anything, since all sentient beings have “buddha nature” and are originally Enlightened.

However, the theory of “Original Enlightenment” can be interpreted both from the point of view of formal logic and from the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity. On the one hand, the example of interpretation from the point of view of formal logic entails a comparison of “buddha nature” with “seed”—“buddha nature” is only a potential feature. It can only be realized through diligent practice, just as a plant grows from a seed only if enough water and light is provided. If the conditions are unfavorable, no plant will grow from the seed. The same can be said of “buddha nature,” which in many cases remains only a potentiality. On the other hand, from the point of view of logic of contradictory self-identity, Enlightenment cannot be compared to a seed. Since Mind and Buddha are absolutely contradictory self-identity, there is nothing new to gain or develop—only the shift of the perspective is required in order to *realize* that Mind and Buddha are absolutely contradictory self-identical.

If we think that “buddha nature” is not a potential feature, but just a feature that we “have” but are not aware of, “buddha nature” is still treated as something separate from human nature. Zen masters used the term “no-buddha nature” (Ch. *wufuoxing*; Jp. *mubussō* 無仏性) to express the truth that “buddha nature” is true emptiness and should not be regarded as something substantial. Nanquan Puyuan explained the meaning of “no-buddha nature,” as the term appears in the above context, thus: “To say ‘no mind,’ ‘no buddha nature’ is to say that rabbits and horses have no horns.”¹⁶³

By the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity, the overcoming of subject-object dualism refers to the state of absolutely contradictory self-identity of subject and object. That is why a subject cannot be separated from an object and vice versa. “Expectation of Enlightenment” signifies the expectation that a subject will be able to gain Enlightenment as an object of knowledge. If one thinks that sooner or later Enlightenment appears as a result of diligent practice, this means that one treats Enlightenment as an objectified goal achievable by objectified means. Such an attitude is proof that no shift from the perspective of formal logic to the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity took place and that the dualism of

subject-object was not overcome.

No matter how long one practices, without the shift in consciousness he never experience the state of absolutely contradictory self-identity of subject and object. The Third Patriarch, Sengcan 僧璨 (Sōsan, ?-606) taught:

The Object is an object for the subject,
 The subject is a subject for the object:
 Know the relativity of the two
 Rests ultimately on the oneness of void. . . .
 In the higher realm of True Suchness
 There is neither "other" nor "self":
 When a direct identification is asked for,
 We can only say, "Not two" (no dualism).¹⁶⁴

If a "subject" observes the "object" from outside, the realization of absolutely contradictory self-identity of subject and object is impossible. In this context one should interpret the already quoted words of Nanquan Puyuan: "If you try to direct yourself toward the Way, you go away from it."¹⁶⁵

Many Zen masters emphasized that the reality of Enlightenment cannot be objectified, since it is a paradox: "You cannot take hold of it, nor can you get rid of it."¹⁶⁶ Huangbo Xiyan 黄檗希運 (Ōbaku Kiun, ?-850) taught:

The nature of Mind when understood,
 No human speech can encompass or disclose.
 Enlightenment is not to be attained,
 And he that gains it does not say he knows."¹⁶⁷

Daitō Kokushi 大灯国師 (Shūhō Myōchō 宗峰妙超, 1282–1338) clearly links his criticism of "Expectation of Enlightenment Zen" with the lack of paradoxical structure: "The Way transcends any aspect of going and coming, movement or quiescence, so one cannot realize Enlightenment by *expecting* Enlightenment (*taigo*)."¹⁶⁸

Anything that is perceived as an object has nothing to do with Enlightenment. Bodhidharma's words that follow perhaps appear shocking, but they must be understood in the context of an Enlightenment that cannot be objectified. He taught: "Everything that has form is an illusion. . . . Even if Buddha or a bodhisattva should suddenly appear before you, there is no need for reverence. . . . All appearances are illusion. . . . Don't cling to appearances and you will be one mind with the Buddha"¹⁶⁹ Similarly, Linji's famous words "When you meet the Buddha, kill him"¹⁷⁰ must be interpreted as a rejection of religious experiences in which an object of knowledge is conceived as separate from a subject. "If you seek the Buddha you will be the slaves of a demon-Buddha"—in other words, you will be a slave of subject-object dualism.

The above analysis of Zen teaching leads to the conclusion that Nishida's logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity provides a coherent interpretation of Zen philosophy. What are the other possible interpretations of Zen philosophy? Let me mention just a few that I regard as representative.

Hsueh-li Cheng, probably influenced by the “negative method” of the Madhyamika school of Buddhism, claims that Zen masters had no vision of reality. To Cheng, the essence of Zen philosophy is not an explanation of the nature of reality but rather a critical attitude, intellectual liberty, creativeness and practicality. Such “critical philosophy” liberates a human being from prejudices, dogmatic tendencies, and illusions.¹⁷¹ His analysis of this practical aspect of Zen has led him to a rather controversial comparison of Zen and Confucianism. He does not explain the difference between chaotic and arbitrary choices and the “openness of Zen philosophy” that he postulates. He does not determine the criterion of Truth, which is crucial to Zen, since Enlightenment must be verified.¹⁷² Cheng’s conclusion reminds one of Thomas Cleary’s interpretations of Zen as non-ideological and as a “practical psychology of liberation.”¹⁷³

Suzuki Daisetz always emphasized that although Enlightenment liberates a man from all conditional determinations, at the same time truly realized Zen masters “have a certain firm basis of truth obtained from a deep personal experience.”¹⁷⁴ Zen teaching may look chaotic but in fact there is one clear current in Zen masters’ teaching. Suzuki has of course been treated as a great authority by many authors of Western-language books on Zen, such as Alan Watts or Robert Linssen, who have claimed that treating Zen as a philosophy is a grave mistake.¹⁷⁵ These writers frequently cite with approval Suzuki’s assertion that “[t]o understand Zen one must abandon all he has acquired by way of conceptual knowledge and strip off every bit of knowledge that he has painfully accumulated around him.”¹⁷⁶ Suzuki warned that any philosophy of Zen “will be nothing more than a castle in the sand.” This statement, however, appears to be contradicted by what Suzuki himself said in his article “The Philosophy of Zen.”¹⁷⁷ The problem lies in the meaning of the phrase “to understand Zen.” When Suzuki rejects rational thinking, he means that it is an obstacle on the way to the experience of Enlightenment. Of course, he is right to claim that rational discourse is not the path to the Enlightenment experience—all true Zen masters, past and present, would agree with this conclusion. Yet as Zen is also a form of human expression, it is meant to be communicated and articulated in concepts and notions that belong to the so-called “rational sphere.” Suzuki was aware of the unavoidability of a philosophical aspect in Zen, as these words of his demonstrate: “Zen is not to be conceptualized, let me repeat, if it is to be experientially grasped; but inasmuch as we are human in the sense that we cannot remain dumb, but have to express ourselves in one way or another, indeed, we cannot have an experience if we cease to give expression to it. Zen would not be Zen if deprived of all means of communication. . . . The conceptualization of Zen is inevitable: Zen must have its philosophy. The only caution is not to identify Zen with a system of philosophy, for Zen is infinitely more than that.”¹⁷⁸

Suzuki Daisetz’s interpretation of Zen is not different from that of his friend Nishida. But in contrast with Nishida, Suzuki avoids a philosophical approach in most of his writings. Although he calls the philosophy of Zen “the philosophy of emptiness,” Suzuki is not a philosopher—first and foremost, he is a Zen scholar concerned with leading people to the experience of Enlightenment itself. He is engaged in something other (more) than clarifying philosophical aspects of Zen doctrine. Suzuki encourages everybody to experience the emptiness for themselves, not merely to understand its philosophical implications. Only by emerging in emptiness (Jp. *kū*, Sk. *śūnyatā*), he believes, can one experience emptiness. “The proper way to study *śūnyatā* is to become aware of it, which is the only way *śūnyatā* can be

approached. That is to say, the philosopher has to purge every residue of what the mind has accumulated by assiduously applying himself to the work. . . . There is no other way than that of casting away this intellectual weapon and in all nakedness plunging right into *śūnyatā* itself."¹⁷⁹ In Nishida's writings, unlike Suzuki's, one cannot find any encouragement of Zen practice. Nishida was first of all a philosopher. What concerned him most was the logical structure of the reality, and he argues his thesis by linking his conclusions not only to dilemmas of Western philosophy or to religious experience, but also to modern physics (as seen for instance in *Keiken kagaku*).

Abe Masao continues Suzuki Daisetz's mission of explaining the essence of Zen to foreigners by comparing Zen philosophy with such Western philosophers as Nietzsche, Whitehead, or Tillich. However, Abe does not characterize the philosophy of Zen in any systematic way. In his comparative studies he admits similarities but mainly emphasizes differences in pointing out what is not Zen philosophy.

In my judgment, Nishida's logical approach to Zen—that is, his logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity—provides a coherent explanation of the logical structure of Zen *kōans*. The scope of this article is not broad enough to analyze (although elsewhere I have touched on some problems of) how Nishida's logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity is useful in explaining the meaning of "faith" in Buddhism¹⁸⁰ and Eastern art influenced by Buddhism,¹⁸¹ or other problems in the Zen tradition such as Zen metaphors, Zen ethics, or relations of Zen and doctrine of other Buddhist schools.¹⁸²

From the point of view of the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity, the orthodoxy of Zen is not any "formal logic doctrine" but the structure of contradictory self-identity itself. Only those Zen statements which comply with the logic of contradictory self-identity indirectly (as a "skillful means," *hōben* 方便) or directly can be labeled "orthodox." Each thesis alone and each antithesis alone is only a "partial truth." The truth of Zen itself is absolutely contradictory self-identity of any thesis and its antithesis.

Many previous studies have overlooked the firm logical structure of paradox in Zen. Bernard Faure in his *Chan Insight and Oversights: An Epistemological Critique of the Chan Tradition*, for example, stresses the importance of historical analysis and gives attention to the particulars that inform the ritualistic character of Zen teaching.¹⁸³ "Chan texts are necessarily rhetorical," he states, "in the sense that they imply a departure from an ontological conception of truth toward a more reformative and dialogical conception."¹⁸⁴ His deconstructive approach to the Zen tradition is innovative and deeply interesting, but it neglects the logical aspect of Zen and also its philosophical aspect. Consequently, in my view, some of his conclusions oversimplify the problem. He suggests, for instance, that the enigmatic structure of *kōans* is not the expression of the unique "will to truth" but rather of a "will to power."¹⁸⁵ This interpretation is justified only in some marginal aspects of Zen *kōans*, such as, for instance, their usage during funeral rituals in medieval Japan.

The analysis I have presented in this article leads to the conclusion that the main function of *kōans* is to describe the nature of reality as revealed in the experience of Enlightenment in compliance with the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity. *Kōans* are reflections on this experience, and as such they are direct or indirect paradoxical judgments. As a method of Zen religious practice, *kōans* play the part of "catalysts of Enlightenment"; they "catalyze" a reaction that can be described as a shift from the formal logic perspective to the perspective

of the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity. Zen kōans are expressions of a “will to truth,” and only by distortion of their original meaning and purpose could they become the expression of “will to power.” To overlook the paradoxical structure of indirect paradoxical concepts and judgments in the Zen tradition and Nishida’s philosophy is to forget that “the finger pointing at the moon remains a finger and under no circumstances can be changed into the moon itself.”¹⁸⁶

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NOTES

- 1 Dumoulin 1979, p. 125.
- 2 Kołakowski 1977, p. 34.
- 3 Kołakowski 1997, pp. 34–35.
- 4 Nishida sometimes uses the term “contradictory self-identity” when he speaks of contradictory self-identities of two elements, such as “one” and “many” and “the absolutely contradictory self-identity” as a whole (the world of absolute contradictory self identity). There is no fundamental difference between “absolute contradictory self-identity” and “contradictory self-identity”—both terms mean contradiction and identity at the same time and in the same respect.
- 5 Kozyra 2000, p. 165.
- 6 *Rekishiteki keisei sayō to shite no geijutsuteki sōsaku*, NKZ, vol.10, p. 205
- 7 *Ibid.*, p.224.
- 8 Cf. James Heisig’s review of Ueda Shizuteru’s work on Nishida. Heisig states that “[t]he idea of pure experience as we find it in James’ essay on *The Stream of Consciousness*, when compared with Nishida

treatment in *A Study of Good*, seems to oblige the conclusion that either Nishida never finished reading James or that he did not really get what James was saying." Heisig 1997, p. 201.

9 Kozyra 2000, p. 165.

10 Wargo 2005.

11 See Kozyra 2006a, pp. 108–118.

12 Yusa 2002.

13 See the first part of my book on Zen philosophy, especially the chapter titled "Paradoxes in Zen Theory and Practice" (Kozyra 2003).

14 When Nishida met him, Kōjū Sōtaku was at Kohōan, a subtemple of Daitokuji.

15 Yusa, p. 75.

16 Ibid., p. 73.

17 Ibid. p. 190.

18 Muramoto 1997, p. 91.

19 *Bashoteiki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan*, NKZ, vol. 11, pp. 445–446.

20 *Ronri to sūri*, NKZ, vol.11, p. 60.

21 *Keiken kagaku*, NKZ, vol. 9, p. 277.

22 *Bashoteiki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan*, NKZ, vol. 11, p. 438.

23 Ibid., p.411.

24 *Kōiteki chokkan*, NKZ, vol. 8, p. 570.

25 Ibid., p. 446.

26 *Bashoteiki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan*, NKZ, vol. 11, p. 399.

27 *Keiken kagaku*, NKZ, vol. 9, p. 291.

28 *Eien no ima no jikogentei*, NKZ, vol. 6, p. 189.

29 *Bashoteiki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan*, NKZ, vol. 11, p. 399.

30 Ibid., p. 399.

31 See Kozyra 2006a.

32 *Butsuri no sekai*, NKZ, vol. 11, p. 18.

33 *Bashoteiki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan*, NKZ, vol. 11, p. 446.

34 Ibid., pp. 424–425.

35 *Zettaimujunteki jikodōitsu*, NKZ, vol.9, p. 148.

36 Dumoulin 1990, p.330.

37 *Eien no ima no jikogentei*, NKZ, vol. 6, p. 217.

38 Ibid., p. 219.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid., p. 170.

41 *Butsuri no sekai*, NKZ, vol. 11, p. 18.

42 *Bashoteiki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan*, NKZ, vol. 11, p. 415.

43 *Butsuri no sekai*, NKZ, vol. 11, p. 5.

44 *Eien no ima no jikogentei*, NKZ, vol. 6, p. 185.

45 *Bashoteiki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan*, NKZ, vol. 11, p. 406.

46 Ibid., p. 430.

47 For more about paradoxical ethics in Zen tradition, see Kozyra 2004, pp. 259–276.

48 *Kōiteki chokkan*, NKZ, vol. 8, p. 565.

49 I analyzed Nishida's views on philosophy of science (especially philosophy of physics) in Kozyra 2006a, in the chapter titled "Zettaimujunteki jikodōitsu (paradokkusu) no ronri to gendai butsurigaku" 絶対矛盾の自己同一 (パラドックス) の論理と現代物理学, pp. 108–118, and in Kozyra 2007a, pp. 101–122.

- 50 *Keiken kagaku*, NKZ, vol. 9, p. 233.
- 51 Ibid.
- 52 Ibid.
- 53 *Ronri to sūri*, NKZ, vol. 11, p. 63.
- 54 *Watakushi no ronri ni suite*, NKZ, vol. 12, p. 265.
- 55 Yusa, p. 287.
- 56 Ibid, p.207.
- 57 *Zettai mujunteki jikodōitsu*, NKZ, vol. 9, p. 218.
- 58 Kosaka 1997, in the chapter titled “Zettai mu no shosō: Nishida tetsugaku to Tanabe tetsugaku” 絶対無の諸相：西田哲学と田辺哲学 (Various Aspects of Absolute Nothingness: The Philosophy of Nishida and the Philosophy of Tanabe), p. 111.
- 59 Ibid., pp. 111–112.
- 60 Ibid., p. 112.
- 61 *Bashoteki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan*, NKZ, vol. 11, p. 400.
- 62 Ibid.
- 63 *Zettai mujunteki jikodōitsu*, NKZ, vol. 9, p. 147.
- 64 *Butsuri no sekai*, NKZ, vol. 11, p. 10.
- 65 Ibid.
- 66 *Basho no jikogentei to shite ishiki sayō*, NKZ vo. 6, p. 94.
- 67 *Zettai mujunteki jikodōitsu*, NKZ, vol. 9, p. 215.
- 68 *Kōiteki chokkan*, NKZ, vol. 8, p. 570.
- 69 Yusa 2002, p. 231.
- 70 *Bashoteki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan*, NKZ, vol. 11, pp. 416–417.
- 71 *Basho no jikogentei to shite ishiki sayō*, NKZ, vol. 6, p. 94.
- 72 Ibid., p. 221.
- 73 *Bashoteki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan*, NKZ, vol. 11, p. 397.
- 74 Ibid.
- 75 Ibid., p. 438.
- 76 Ibid.
- 77 *Kōiteki chokkan*, NKZ, vol. 8, p. 541.
- 78 Ibid., p. 550.
- 79 *Bashoteki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan*, NKZ, vol. 11, p. 381.
- 80 Ibid., p. 557.
- 81 Ibid., p. 424.
- 82 *Basho no jikogentei to shite ishiki sayō*, NKZ vo. 6, p. 95.
- 83 Ibid., p. 100.
- 84 Kozyra 2007a. This book includes my Polish translation of these essays by Nishida: “Zettai mujunteki jikodōitsu,” “Kōiteki chokkan,” “Basho no jikogentei to shite no ishiki sayō,” and “Keiken kagaku,” with notes and comment of Krzysztof Stefański, professor of physics, Mikołaj Kopernik University, Toruń). See also my other translations of Nishida’s essays into Polish: “Keijijōgakuteki tachiba kara mita tōzai kodai bunka no keitai” 形而上学的立場から見た東西古代文化の形態 (Ancient Cultural Forms as Seen from the Perspective of Metaphysics), *Japonica* 10 (1999) and “Bashoteki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan,” *Japonica* 11 (1999) and 13 (2000).
- 85 Ibid., pp. 430–431.
- 86 In 1995 I began to create a database of Zen masters’ sayings (most of them in English translation), dividing them into thematical groups such as “sitting meditation,” “faith,” “kōan practice,” “emptiness”/ “nothingness,” and “disciple-master relationship.” I also traced polemics in Zen tradition, paying atten-

tion to “critical statements” in Zen tradition. Then I tried to apply Nishida’s logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity to my data in a wider context of Buddhist doctrine. When I started making this database, I regarded it as a rather eccentric hobby—in the beginning not for a scholarly purpose—since my main project at that time was translating Nishida’s late philosophical essays into Polish. I found the results of my analysis very interesting, however, and decided to publish them. See Kozyra 2003.

87 Dumoulin 1988, p. 251.

88 Ibid., p. 247.

89 Furuta 1970, p. 126.

90 Miura and Sasaki 1965, p. 113.

91 Ibid., p. 103.

92 Yampolsky 1971, p. 60.

93 Miura and Sasaki 1965, p. 49.

94 Dumoulin 1990, p. 383.

95 Miura and Sasaki 1965, p. 97.

96 Miura and Sasaki 1965, p. 86.

97 Miura and Sasaki 1965, p. 90.

98 Hori 1999, p. 55.

99 *Keiken kagaku*, NKZ, vol. 9, p. 278.

100 Ibid., p. 301.

101 *Bashoteki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan*, NKZ, vol. 11, p. 446.

102 Ibid., p. 372.

103 Ibid., p. 407.

104 Ibid., p. 430.

105 Ibid., p. 423.

106 Edgerton 1985, p. 229.

107 Shambala Dictionary 1991, p. 118.

108 Nishimura 1996, p. 135 (Kōan No. 33).

109 Dumoulin 1979, p. 57.

110 Dumoulin 1990, p. 30.

111 Stevens 1993, p. 7.

112 Ikkyū, “Skeletons,” in Franck 1982, p. 79.

113 *Bashoteki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan*, NKZ, vol. 11, p. 446.

114 Ibid., p. 405.

115 Ibid., p. 399.

116 Ibid., p. 415.

117 Ibid., p. 411.

118 Ibid., p. 425.

119 Ibid., p. 428.

120 Ibid., p. 434.

121 Ibid., p. 423.

122 *Keiken kagaku*, NKZ, vol. 9, p. 303.

123 Ibid., p. 450.

124 Ibid., p. 446.

125 Ibid., p. 424.

126 Ibid., p. 454.

127 Nishimura 1996, p. 87 (Kōan No. 19).

128 Red Pine 1998, p. 55.

- 129 Abe 1997a, p. 31.
- 130 Ibid.
- 131 *Bashōteki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan*, NKZ, vol. 11, p. 424.
- 132 Ibid.
- 133 Yampolsky 1967, p. 138.
- 134 Ibid., p. 162.
- 135 Chang 1959, p. 71.
- 136 Abe 1997b, p. 119.
- 137 Cleary 1991.
- 138 Ibid., pp. 5–6.
- 139 Ibid., p. 7.
- 140 Dumoulin 1988, p. 257.
- 141 Cleary 1991, p. 55.
- 142 Cleary 1993, p. 38.
- 143 Ibid.
- 144 Haskel 1984, p. 9.
- 145 Dumoulin 1988, pp. 132–133.
- 146 Ikkyū, “Skeletons,” p. 77.
- 147 Yampolsky 1967, p. 137.
- 148 Verdu 1974, p. 3.
- 149 Abe 1997b, p. 101.
- 150 Cleary 1986, p. 19.
- 151 Stevens 1993, p. 43.
- 152 Abe 1997b, p. 22.
- 153 Dumoulin 1979, p. 106.
- 154 Yampolsky 1967, p. 137.
- 155 Luk 1972, p. 20.
- 156 Iriya 1996, p. 76.
- 157 Dumoulin 1988, p. 257.
- 158 Buswell 1997, p. 349.
- 159 Dumoulin 1988, p. 256.
- 160 Chang 1957, p. 58.
- 161 Dumoulin 1990, p. 77.
- 162 Dumoulin 1988, p. 79.
- 163 Furuta 1970, p. 121.
- 164 Suzuki 1962, p. 125.
- 165 See again Nishimura 1996, p. 87 (Kōan No. 19).
- 166 Abe 1997a, p. 69.
- 167 Ross 1960, p. 72.
- 168 Kraft 1992, p. 118.
- 169 Red Pine 1998, p. 25.
- 170 Iriya 1996, p. 96.
- 171 Cheng 1991, pp. 29–30.
- 172 Ibid., p. 30.
- 173 Cleary 1989, p. vii.
- 174 Suzuki 1969, p. 54.
- 175 Watts 1960, p. 17; Linssen 1960, p. 46.
- 176 Suzuki 1956, p. 349.

177 Suzuki 1951.

178 Ibid., p. 4.

179 Ibid., p. 5.

180 Kozyra 2006b, pp. 157–165. Nishida's understanding of religious faith has much in common with Christian thinker, Uchimura Kanzō (1861–1930). See Kozyra 2001, p. 177.

181 See Kozyra 2007b.

182 See Kozyra 2003.

183 Faure 1993, pp. 212, 225.

184 Ibid., p. 242.

185 Ibid., p. 215.

186 Suzuki 1969, p. 78.

要旨

西田幾多郎の絶対矛盾的自己同一論理と 禅の伝統における正教の問題

アグネシカ・コズィラ

本稿の目的は、西田幾多郎（1870–1945）の絶対矛盾的自己同一の論理の立場から、禅における「正教」の問題を分析することである。ここでいう禅の「正教」とは、禅の悟りを検証するための論理的構造を意味している。本稿の第一節では西田幾多郎の絶対無哲学と絶対矛盾的自己同一論理の要点をあげて、形式論理やヘーゲルの弁証法の立場から西田の絶対無の哲学を解釈するのは誤りであると論ずる。第二節では、西田の哲学的概念と理論を、禅の教えを説明するための便利な「道具」として検証する。禅に関する西田の意見は彼の色々な晩年の哲学的論文集に見られるが、徹底的な分析は行っていない。しかし、「矛盾的自己同一の根底に徹することを、見性と云ふのである。そこには、深く背理の理と云ふものが把握せられなければならない」という西田の言葉にみられるように、西田の絶対無の哲学と禅の「見性」の経験における現実観には密接な関係がある。西田の絶対矛盾的論理は禅の教えへの一種の「鍵」であり、西田の絶対無の哲学に言及することによって、禅師の教えは論理的であるのかどうか、禅の伝統における議論の対象とは何か、どうやって禅の悟りを検証することができるのか、その論理的構造とは何なのか、といった重要な問いに答えることができる。従来の禅に関する研究においては絶対矛盾的自己同一の論理はほとんど問題とされてこなかった。本論文の分析からうかがいあがる公案の主な機能は、絶対矛盾的自己同一の論理に従う悟りによって体験された「現実の本質」の記述である。公案とはこのように現実の本質に関する感想であり、よって直接的パラドックス的判断または間接的パラドックス的判断である

とも言える。また禅の宗教的修業の方法としての公案は、悟りへの「触媒」の役割を担う。すなわち公案は、形式論理の視点から絶対矛盾的自己同一の論理の視点への「転換」を触媒するといえよう。「力への意志」の表現としての公案は、「真理への意志」という公案の本来の意味を歪曲することになるだろう。