Chapter 3

Why and For What Do We Live?

> The Japanese language . . . possesses a very significant word; namely *ningen*. On the basis of the evolved meaning of this word, we Japanese have produced a distinctive conception of human being. According to it, *ningen* is the public and, at the same time, the individual human beings living within it. Therefore, it refers not merely to an individual "human being" nor merely to "society." What is recognizable here is a dialectical unity of those double characteristics that are inherent in a human being. Insofar as it is a human being, *ningen* as an individual differs completely from society. Because it does not refer to society, it must refer to individuals alone. . . . Nevertheless, insofar as *ningen* also refers to the public, it is also through and through that community which exists between person and person, thus signifying society as well, and not just isolated human beings. Precisely because of its not being human beings in isolation, it is *ningen*.[26]
>
> —Watsuji Tetsurō

Nishida Kitarō's *An Inquiry into the Good*, as the title suggests, sought to grasp the principles of practical ethics through the fundamental principles of philosophy—the great question of what we are in this world for and how we should behave. Part 3 of the book examines various theories of ethics, and divides them into two major categories—autonomous and heteronomous.

The simplest theory of ethics is that humans themselves know intuitively what is good and what is bad. The only problem is that in actual practice, it is not that simple.

As for the heteronomous theories of ethics that locate the authority of ethics outside us, the simplest is the authority theory. This is the theory that "morality derives from the commands of that which has absolute authority and power over us."[27] There are two kinds of authority theory, the monarchical authority theory where the sovereign is the origin of the authority, and the divine authority theory where God is the origin. Nishida

26 Watsuji 1996, p. 15.
27 Nishida 1990, p. 107.

groups these two together, but it seems rather strained to lump together on the same dimension the coercive authority of sovereign power with divine commandments of God. Coercion through sovereign power is secular, whereas divine commandments are on a dimension transcending the secular. Sovereign power can be expanded to include control through laws.

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Nishida declares that theories of ethics based on outside authority are inadequate. They "cannot explain why we must do the good."[28] In other words, they dictate that good is to be done not because it is intrinsically good but only because the authority commands it. We must follow an autonomous ethics, he argues, that seeks the good within the self. Autonomous ethics theories are of three types: intellectual (or rational) theory, which is based on reason; hedonic theory, based on emotions; and activity theory, based on the action of the will. According to the intellectual theory, the good is identified with truth that is learned through our powers of reason."[29] However, even if the truth is good, the matter of why we should follow it in practice is a separate matter, and remains unresolved.

Then what about the hedonic theory? This theory, too, can be divided into egoistic hedonism, which seeks the pleasure of the self, and universalist hedonism, which seeks social or public pleasure. The latter corresponds to utilitarianism, or the pursuit of the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people. This may seem plausible, but because human beings are not satisfied with pleasure alone, we cannot say that pleasure is always and ultimately good.

This leads us finally to the third type, or the activity theory. Nishida explains the theory by saying that "the good is the realization of our internal demands, our ideals; it is the development and completion of the will."[30] So, good is self developing and self fulfilling and brings happiness, good character, and harmony. In the final analysis, says Nishida, from the viewpoint of the theory of pure experience: "We reach the quintessence of good conduct only when subject and object merge, self and things forget each other, and all that exists is the activity of the sole reality of the universe."[31]

But is that ethics? If the "subject and object merge," can there be any such thing as ethics? Nishida writes, "While internally we discipline the self and attain to the true nature of the self, externally we give rise to love for our fellow humans and come to accord with the supremely good goal—good conduct that is perfect and true."[32] However,

28 Nishida 1990, p. 108.
29 Nishida 1990, p. 111.
30 Nishida 1990, p. 123.
31 Nishida 1990, p. 135.
32 Nishida 1990, p. 144.

one cannot help feeling that this is somewhat of a leap of logic and goes beyond what we normally think of as ethics. If the subject and object merge and there is no "other," how can there be any kind of ethics? We can understand self-realization, but ethics is concerned with what specifically we should do in our relations with others. There is nothing wrong with pursuing the ultimate in the good. In our day-to-day affairs and relations with others, however, we face countless difficulties and anxieties; we need ethics to enable us to deal with them.

Now let us shift our perspective a little, moving away from Nishida's perspective, and take a look at Western thinking about ethics. Among the theories of heteronomous ethics mentioned by Nishida, the notion of following the commandments of God carries great importance, not only in medieval times, but even today. Still, people are unlikely to simply accept that the divine is by definition good. Major debate has arisen in modern times over stories such as that of Abraham being commanded by God to sacrifice his own son Isaac or the various tests put to the righteous Job in the "Book of Job." The question is whether man can accept anything God demands, even if it is unreasonable.

Faced with the cruel slaughter in the concentration camps of so many of their fellow Jews, Jewish thinkers in particular were forced to confront the question of how to interpret what seemed to be such an unreasonable act of God. In the ethics of Emmanuel Lévinas (1906–1995), whose ideas are very influential today, the "face" of the Other as the weak one calls out "Thou shall not kill" reverberates with the voices of the dead who were mercilessly killed in the concentration camps. In Lévinas's thought we can sense his hidden questioning how God could allow such injustice.

There is not necessarily a major difference between what Nishida calls heteronomous ethics and autonomous ethics. As skepticism arose about the existence of God with the advent of the modern age, that which had formerly been external and other-reliant became internalized and transformed into self-reliance.

Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788) exerted great influence on modern philosophy, and what it did was to transform the commandments of an external God into the behest to follow the internal moral discipline of the self. Kant argued that true moral propositions could not be hypothetical. It was not acceptable to say that, "If you want to be happy . . . you should do such and such." [Ethics] should be presented in categorical imperatives: "You should do [such and such]." And he declared that one should "act in such a way that the maxim of your will could always hold at the same time as a principle of a universal legislation." However, what kind of acts can be considered to be categorical *and* universally appropriate? Kant's moral principles were so strict that they ended up becoming completely abstract.

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Both Kant and Nishida, when they seek the basic principles of ethics as arising from the internal will of the self, make them seem very rigorous, and yet they become abstract principles remote from daily life and lacking in specificity. That being the case, it is the hedonistic theories, particularly utilitarianism, that seem more concrete—despite Nishida's disdain for this way of thinking. Rather than the ethics of the individual, it is concerned with the problems of building a state or society that transcends the individual.

In medieval Europe, as relations between papal authority and secular sovereignty began to break down, people began to seek principles for the modern state and society. Social contract theory was the most radical assertion of such principles. Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) launched the modern debate on social contract theory with his idea that in their natural state, people are in constant struggle against each other and will kill each other to preserve their own lives. Since in such a condition, individuals' lives are constantly in danger, people accept a contract with society in which they give up some of their rights and freedoms, handing over the right of control to one or a number of persons in order to secure their mutual safety.

Hobbes's theory takes the form of an historical beginning of the social contract, but of course his is not a description of the facts of history, but a theoretical construct to explain the origin of political authority. Following Hobbes, social contract theory was expanded upon by many different thinkers, but basically it was a manifestation of the interests of the middle class, which was on the rise at the time. By forging a contract with society individuals sought to gain the greatest possible exercise of the natural rights they all equally held. This theory arose in resistance to the divine right of kings theory espoused by conservatives and later took concrete form in the American Declaration of Independence and the Declaration of the Rights of Man issued at the time of the French Revolution. Jeremy Bentham's notion of the "greatest happiness of the greatest number," Adam Smith's theory of the laissez-faire economy, and so on are all based on this principle of middle-class egalitarianism.

In other words, the basic premise of modern theories of ethics is the autonomous individual. They assume that the individual correctly perceives circumstances, makes appropriate, rational judgments, and acts rationally on the basis of such judgments. Daniel Defoe's character Robinson Crusoe is often cited as the model of this sort of modern man who struggles against the forces of nature using his wits and reason and creates a workable order of daily life on the uninhabited island where he is shipwrecked. The story is an expression of the modern conviction that human beings are endowed with all the necessary abilities to survive even if they do not cluster together in groups.

The idea of the autonomous individual is closely linked to the Cartesian view of humanity. The Cartesian "self" is autonomous—capable of self-evident existence without relying on others. This "self" possessed rational cognitive ability, and that cognition had universal validity. In that sense, the Cartesian "self" as the subject of cognition

corresponded completely with the individuals—as the subject of practice—who create modern society. Nevertheless, in the backdrop of the "self" as evolved by Descartes and other modern philosophers, we can glimpse the presence of "God," leaving us somewhat dubious as to whether that modern "self" is independently self-evident.

In any case, the modern "self"—that is the individual—is posited as autonomous, in and of itself, regardless of relations with others. The individual envisioned in this formulation is the adult individual—presumably male—who is endowed with at least the strength to prevent himself from being eliminated in "the war of all against all." It would be long, long after that the "human rights" of women and children, not to mention the elderly and the disabled, would be recognized.

In Japan, this notion of modern individualism was an easy target of criticism. It was castigated from one side by the Marxists and their successors as "democracy for the bourgeoisie," and attacked from the opposite flank in modernizing Japan by nationalist and totalitarian ideologues. The idea of equal human rights in a civic society was adopted as the basic principle by Japan's postwar Constitution, but until the end of World War II such a notion of equal human rights was not widely held. In fact, until then freedom, equality, and human rights had been suppressed as dangerous notions and the morality dictated by the Imperial Rescript on Education, based on Confucian teachings reorganized around the emperor-centered state, was loudly proclaimed. Many philosophers of the time worked from the assumption that the value of the state was superior to the individual. It was difficult for even Nishida Kitarō and Watsuji Tetsurō to avoid the impact of that ideological trend.

Relations Precede Existence

Having understood the constraints under which the early Japanese philosophers worked, what are the possibilities of reappraising modern Japanese ethical thought in the perspective of today? As a means of showing the potential for such a reappraisal, I would now like to take up the ethics of Watsuji Tetsurō (1889–1960). Watsuji was a multi-talented person. He began studying the works of Nietzsche and Kierkegaard in his youth, and then turned to research on Japanese culture. He taught ethics first at Kyoto Imperial University and then at Tokyo Imperial University, where he eventually established his own original school of ethics. Watsuji was thus well versed not only in Western philosophy and ethics but in the traditions of Japan and Asia, and he succeeded in incorporating these ideas into his thought. Even though some aspects of his work were restricted by the statist thought that prevailed in the prewar period, his work nevertheless is still relevant in broad perspective.

In his work *Ningen no gaku toshite no rinrigaku* (Ethics as the Study of *Ningen*/Humanity), Watsuji himself spoke of ethics as "ethics as the study of humanity." His masterpiece *Rinrigaku* (Ethics), which is based on the methodology of that work, presents

his system of ethics. What did he mean by the "study of *ningen*"? (The Japanese word *ningen* means both humanity or individual humans.) If ethics addresses how humans ought to be, it is naturally "the study of humans."

Ningen *[is]not just people as discrete individuals but the interrelationships that are essential to the human condition.*

When Watsuji speaks of *ningen*, however, he has in mind the definition hinted by the loanword from Chinese that is composed of two characters literally meaning "among people." So while he means the study of human beings as individuals, he includes from the outset the relations among people—not just people as discrete individuals but the interrelations that are essential to the human condition. The Japanese word *ningen* derives from the Chinese *renjian* 人間, which means "human society" or "secular society," so it incorporates the nuance of "among people." As Watsuji conjectures, it is likely that Japan's word *ningen* came to be used to refer to the individual person as a result of the use of the word in the Chinese translations of Buddhist scriptures when denoting the "path of humans" in the realms of reincarnation (*rinne*). Then, when the scriptures were brought into Japan, the word was adopted to refer to individual humans, the indigenous Japanese word for which is *hito*.

Watsuji noted this particular Japanese locution and sought to demonstrate that the word had a multilayered structure in which the idea of the person as an individual also denoted the interpersonal relations among people. He viewed the notion of the individual as a solitary, autonomous entity—as espoused in the social contract theory of the modern West—to be an impossibility. People were embedded from the outset into a web of relations with others. This is in contrast to the fundamental idea in social contract theory that individuals are isolated entities and that social ethics is created only when such individuals gather together. Watsuji's idea was also distinct from ethics arising out of relations with an absolute figure such as God.

Watsuji's *Ningen no gaku toshite no rinrigaku* tried to identify the tradition of this idea of an ethics oriented to the relations between people in the history of Western philosophy. However, such an idea did not appear, at least in the main lineages of traditional Western thought. Ethics oriented to interpersonal relations is, rather, typical of Chinese Confucianism. The principle prized above all others in the *Analects* is *ren* (Jp. *jin*) or benevolence. Confucius defined benevolence as "to love all people" (book of Yan Yuan[33]). People love each other, but perfect virtue is described in the *Analects* as the capacity "to subdue one's self and return to propriety," so what is expected is not spontaneous [natural] love but love for others based on the virtue of propriety (Ch. *li*; Jp. *rei*).

33 See *Analects*.

The *Analects* does not fully elaborate on relations between people; the subject is more concretely discussed in *Mencius*.[34] The sage Shun (an ancient ideal king) taught about human relationships, establishing the order of the "five virtues": "between father and son, there should be affection; between sovereign and minister, righteousness; between husband and wife, attention to their separate functions; between old and young, a proper order; and between friends, loyalty." *Mencius* teaches that people are endowed with "an empathetic heart," so that anyone who might see a child about to fall into a well would take pity on the child, and that response, it says, is the origin of *ren*—benevolence. In other words, all people are endowed with benevolence (*ren*), righteousness (*yi*), ritual propriety (*li*), wisdom (*zhi*), and sincerity (*xin*).

The teachings of *Mencius* are a classic example of the school of thinking whereby the principles of virtue lie within the self—typical autonomous ethics theory—but what is of particular interest here is that these principles are all ones involving relations with others. In other words, they are not commands from some transcendental being or principles for self-perfection unrelated to others. The main concern is how to relate to others. The emotion of "compassion" shows that relations with others are incorporated into the very basis of our existence.

The teachings of *Mencius* are effective in a society where the above-described relations between father and son, sovereign and minister, husband and wife, elder and younger, and between friends are fixed and the society is premised upon such relations. In contrast to these rather limited relations is the teaching of universal love in *Mozi*, and among Confucianists the teachings of Xunzi (312–230 B.C.) contrasted with those of *Mencius* in placing greater emphasis on external constraints. Later teachings on ethics in China, however, were to be established on the basis of the lineage of *Mencius*. That lineage eventually evolved into the ethical system that formed the foundation of feudal society and had a great impact on Japan.

Given these associations with exclusive relations and feudalism, the teachings of *Mencius* are often viewed negatively. I myself had long been among such critics and had not read it as carefully as I should have. When I later examined the work more closely, I realized that, from a perspective not focused on the prescribed interpersonal relations but on an ethical system based on relations among people, there is a great deal that can be learned from the ideas presented in *Mencius*. We can now understand why Watsuji's ethics draws on that tradition.

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34 *Mencius*.

In Chapter 2, I tried to show how the world in which we live is one of coexistence with others; that is the world into which we are born. To be "human," therefore, is to exist within a web of relations with others. The existentialists declared that "existence precedes essence" and we might also say in the same vein that "relations precede existence," or "relations precede being."

When we establish relations with other human beings, we need some sort of rules. We might consider this in terms of a very mundane example. The sport of baseball, for instance, has certain rules. A batter is out after three strikes. There are in fact more complicated rules about three strikes, including what constitutes a strike (and the scope of what constitutes a strike is strictly defined); a foul is counted as a strike, but if the third strike is a foul, it is not counted, and so forth. When we look at all the details, we can see that baseball rules form a very complex system, and when everyone follows the rules, the game proceeds smoothly.

Society at large creates the overall broad framework of such rules, and those that are written down are laws. Relations between people, however, are not formed from laws alone; relationships are established for all sorts of situations and occasions, and each is governed by certain rules. Schools have school rules, offices have office rules, jobs will have rules written down in contracts, and so on, but in many cases the rules are not written down. Especially in the case of close relations among people, such as in the family, between friends, or between lovers, rules tend not to be written down but to be tacit or understood among those involved. Since such unwritten rules might include the subtle gestures exchanged between lovers, it may be difficult to include all of this under the rubric of "ethics." In the general sense, however, these rules are what we call ethics.

For example, we might consider the issue of whether it is permissible to kill another human being. Ordinarily, killing another human being is prohibited. If there were no restrictions about killing, it would not be possible to make any rules at all, but under some conditions, exceptions may be allowed. The killing of people is permitted under law in some cases, such as in war or for capital punishment as approved by the authority of the time. In some cases such killing may even be praised or a killer may be seen as a hero. And of course there are cases when killing of others is absolutely not permitted under any conditions as well as, contrarily, situations that support the active provocation for war. Which of these options is adopted depends upon mutual power relations and situations, and there are no absolute criteria for which is chosen. What rules are to be adopted depends on the kind of relations that apply.

As I said, there are many cases when rules are not written down and even though they may not be written, they may be expressed in words of some sort and can be explained logically. There is the Zen story of the "voice calling for Shōgyoku." A young woman calls for her maid, named Shōgyoku, in the middle of the night, but it is not because she needs anything from her maid. The call is a signal to her lover that she is waiting. So

language may not be used for what it actually means. When the lover detects the message transmitted by the words expressed, he will recognize that the words actually mean "I am here," and he can translate the words to apply to his situation.

Sometimes the rules are ignored. If the challenge to rules comes not in the form of negotiation but violence, conflict abandoning all rules may erupt and those involved can only try to protect themselves. If one side suddenly attacks, brandishing a kitchen knife, the other side may be helpless to respond. Rules function because both sides agree to follow them; if either side tries to avoid them, the rules break down and then the rules of a broader scope, such as the laws of the society, will come into play. In baseball, if the batter has three strikes against him but refuses to leave the batter's box, saying he won't leave until he makes a hit, the game cannot go on.

Inasmuch as rules can be put into words, the role of language is important. Language itself has its own rules. Intention is transmitted only if people share the same vocabulary and grammatical rules. But of course it is not always the case that those rules are clearly visible when we look at the process of language acquisition.

Language is similar to ethics in that they both follow rules; science, too, falls into this category. Among the rules of science is one requiring that all results be tested by experiment. If that condition is fulfilled, the results will be verifiable and the truth will be accepted. Mathematical equations are the special language of the natural sciences. If someday people no longer were able to read those equations, the sciences would no longer be viable.

The Limits of Ethics

As I have shown, Watsuji's definition of ethics as the relationships among humans is quite persuasive. Watsuji himself does not talk about ethics as the "rules" prevailing among humans per se, but that is how we would apply what he argues. According to his view, both the individuals and the relations among them are fluid and should not be viewed as static and substantial. The rules that govern those relations, too, are not absolute, but subject to change according to the situation.

Isn't ethics of that sort likely to be rather situational and lacking in principle? That may very well be true. Today, when people harboring different values quite often confront each other, clinging to a particular position and absolutely refusing to consider anything else may cut off the possibility of mutual negotiation, leaving them with nothing but chaotic struggle. Today we are in need of an ethics that allows people who may have mutually differing values to come together in the same place, establish rules, engage in discussion, and find the most effective path for working together. We need a sort of "mediating ethic" that would promote coordination between the different systems of ethics of groups whose members share the same values.

We have moved a bit away from Watsuji, so let us go back and look at his work again. Watsuji denies the existence of any sort of whole that transcends the individual, saying, "something whole that precedes individuals and prescribes them as such, namely, such a thing as 'the great whole,' does not really exist. It is not justifiable for us to insist on the existence of a social group's independence."[35] Thus he is quite persuasive when he states, "the whole must be regarded as subsisting in its relationship with the independence of individuals. If this is so, then both individuals and the whole subsist not in themselves, but only in the relationship of each with the other."[36]

But when we try to follow through on that argument, we find it is in fact not so simple. He says, "The one whole, as the community of persons, must be that which results from many individual persons surpassing their individuality and manifesting nondiscriminateness."[37] He seeks wholeness in the "sublation (*aufheben*) of discrimination and the realization of nondiscriminateness,"[38] and calls it "absolute wholeness." "Absolute wholeness" is "nondiscriminateness which negates the distinction between discriminateness and nondiscriminateness. Hence, absolute wholeness is absolute negation and absolute emptiness."[39]

When we come across the word "absolute" in reading about philosophy, we have to be on guard, because "absolute" is often used when something reprehensible is being attempted and words are presented as non-negotiable. So here, too, as soon as Watsuji starts talking about "absolute," he no longer makes much sense. "An individual becomes an individual by negating emptiness (i.e., authentic emptiness) as the fundamental source of the self. This is the self-negation of absolute negativity. In addition to that, an individual must be subordinate to society through emptying the self, regardless of how emptying is performed."[40]

Doesn't that mean that the individual is inevitably subordinate to the whole? Isn't that just Watsuji describing wholeness by using a pompous term like "absolute negativity"? Even though he describes "a human being's fundamental structure" as the "self-returning movement of absolute negativity through its own negation,"[41] what that really means is: whole (absolute negativity) → individual (negativity) → whole (absolute negativity), which brings us back to nothing more than the dominance of the whole over the individual.

35 Watsuji 1996, p. 99.
36 Watsuji 1996, p. 101.
37 Watsuji 1996, p. 98.
38 Watsuji 1996, p. 98.
39 Watsuji 1996, p. 99.
40 Watsuji 1996, p. 117, slightly adapted.
41 Watsuji 1996, p. 117.

Watsuji says that this "returning to itself . . . occurs in the form of its subordination to the socio-ethical whole."[42] He says this socio-ethical whole can be family, friends, company, or the state, but in fact he has slipped in a clever ruse here. Communities other than the state possess a two-layered structure, for they "are made to exist by overcoming the 'individual' while being themselves private in nature."[43] We can grasp this idea if we think of the family.

According to Watsuji, only the state has completely transcended the "private." Thus "only when a state originates in the Absolute and the negative activity of absolute negativity renders individual obedience to the state possible can the state be justified in negating individuals."[44]

Countless critiques have been presented regarding Watsuji's doctrine of the superiority of the whole and the superiority of the state, and I do not intend here to add anything more to the debate. Suffice it to say that the constraints of the times notwithstanding, the way Watsuji and many other thinkers emphasized the importance of the state in the prewar period is regrettable in many respects. Because of the speed with which Japan's modernization proceeded, individuals were insecure and vulnerable, leading them to seek something to sustain them—something that would be "absolute" for them, and we can see how that need was funneled toward the state and the emperor.

The 1890 Imperial Rescript on Education, which formed the basis of the morality of the modern Japanese state, was a Confucianist morality centered on the family, stating "Ye, Our subjects, be filial to your parents, affectionate to your brothers and sisters; as husbands and wives be harmonious, as friends true," and directed loyalty toward the state and the emperor, stating "always respect the Constitution and observe the laws; should emergency arise, offer yourselves courageously to the State; and thus guard and maintain the prosperity of Our Imperial Throne coeval with heaven and earth."[45] The Rescript, therefore, was based on an ethics that presumed the state to be, not an entity built upon the basis of logic and reason, but something absolute that exists a priori.

Now, if we go back to the idea of ethics as rules among human beings, the question is: How complete are such rules? As already noted, the appearance of those who do not abide by the rules is an indication of weak places in the ethics. By excluding such people or punishing them, the rules can be maintained and the ethics can be restored.

Ethics, of course, are not unchanging. When maintaining the rules becomes difficult for many people, the rules will be changed. The procedure for changing the laws is provided for in the laws themselves, and the changes are deliberated in the Diet accordingly.

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42 Watsuji 1996, p. 121.

43 Watsuji 2010, vol. 3, p. 13. Unless otherwise cited, translations of quotes from *Rinrigaku* are original for this book.

44 Watsuji 1996, p. 123.

45 See Gauntlett 1949, p. 192.

For the changing of rules more closely associated with daily life, rules gradually shift according to mutual understanding among those involved. As long as rules evolve appropriately and flexibly, they can continue to apply in response to reality.

That being the case, ethics as rules is complete within itself, and since anything that deviates from it can be dealt with internally, there is no need to consider anything beyond it. Watsuji's ethics take that position. Problems that transcend ethics are not discussed; indeed, such problems are not supposed to occur.

But is everything resolved under the purview of ethics? Consider for example, the matter of love between a man and woman. In terms of the rules of civic society, the two might marry and become husband and wife. They then participate in the institution of marriage, forming the smallest unit of society. Watsuji discusses this in *Rinrigaku* under the subject of the two-member community.

What would happen, however, if one of the partners was already married and then fell in love with another? That would give rise to adultery and would be censured as unethical according to the rules of the society. There might be no legal sanction, but the party might be marginalized or even ostracized from society because of it. As far as the rules are concerned, such expulsion would solve the problem. Watsuji discusses this under the topic of "the participation of a third person."[46]

For the principals concerned, however, expulsion does not really solve the problem. Why does the person fall in love with that particular other? Why is the relationship not simply a dalliance but goes so far that the pair becomes subject to society's sanctions? These matters are not the kind that can be resolved by logic or reason. Lovers' passions are not ones that can be subsumed within the rules but escape into a realm that transgresses the rules. Outside the boundaries of ethics, and without protection of its tenets, they may come into conflict with the betrayed spouse; caught up in the love-hate relations of those involved, matters may spin out of control, resulting in chaos.

Adultery is not the only matter that falls outside of ethics. For example, should a person's greatest love die, the person is thrown willy-nilly into a relationship with the deceased. The bereaved person is filled with bitterness, grief, and regret. Nothing is more emotional than the relationship with the dead. And yet, one cannot simply toss the dead aside as something over and done with. The memories of the dead linger among the living. Such relationships with others, too, are among the issues not resolved by ethics. Relationships with others that do not fall within the realm of ethics is something we will look at further as an important task in this book.

46 Watsuji 2010, vol. 2, p. 115.