



## Intuiting and Speaking “Truth”

### Nakai Masakazu and the Encounter with Beauty and Order

In his *Introduction to Aesthetics*, Nakai Masakazu discussed three kinds of beauty: the beauty of nature, the beauty of technology, and the beauty of art. For Nakai, we experience beauty when encountering “truth” and “order.” However, this experience of beauty and order is often hindered and rendered difficult to realize by “falsehoods” that alienate us from the truth of beauty. To overcome these barriers that separate us from the truth, we must correct our errors through technology based on the order and functionality of nature, or the order of machines. However, this direction “standardizes” (標準) humans by forcing them into non-human orders such as nature or machines, which carries with it the danger of establishing a totalitarian order like the one that ruled wartime Japan. At the heart of these issues is the problem of how we intuit and express truth. Nakai maintained that we could learn about the truth and order of nature and human beings from books in libraries, intuit the absolute truth, and acquire the ability to express it. Following the example of artists, we can discover our true selves and resist falsehood, alienation, and totalitarianism.

KEYWORDS: truth—beauty—order—aesthetics—library—art

The philosophy of Nakai Masakazu was a lifelong quest to establish an order that combines truth, goodness, and beauty. As an aesthete, his primary subject of study was always beauty. Nakai had little to do with the antisocial aesthetic movements of mass culture that were popular in Japan in the late 1920s and early 1930s, such as the “*erotic grotesque nonsense*” movement. He was not interested in an “aesthetic beauty” that opposed truth and goodness. For Nakai, such a conception of aesthetic beauty would have been a contradiction in terms. As this paper will show, “beauty” for Nakai is the experience of intuiting the “truth” (ほんとう) or what means the same, “order.” For Nakai, something is beautiful because it is true and good; beauty is the expression and experience of a harmonious order. He not only thematized the experience of beauty and harmonious order but also sought to create it in the production of films and the creation of mechanisms of social transformation. In other words, Nakai’s thinking is situated at the crossroads of philosophy, ethics, and aesthetics. For this reason, his philosophy cannot be called an “aesthetics” in the strict academic sense of the term. In Japanese, aesthetics (美学) is literally “the study (学) of beauty (美),” and this is what philosophy and life are for Nakai: the study of beauty. At the beginning of *Introduction to Aesthetics* (1951), Nakai sets out three types of beauty: the “beauty of nature,” the “beauty of technology,” and the “beauty of art” as the order of the world.

#### WHAT IS BEAUTY?

The beauty of nature is the experience of the order of the universe. Nakai describes the experience of natural beauty as follows:

At this moment, we are enveloped by the order of the universe, drawn into it, and although we are not consciously aware of it, our physical bodies immediately and *directly* resonate with it. Is this not the feeling of being struck by beauty? Being seized and embraced by the great order of nature, we surrender even our bodies to it, allowing them to be as they are. Moreover, this does not happen by force, but only when we have clearly understood what we were seeking: “Ah, so that’s how it is.” In this sentiment, we feel a sense of peace, and our heart-mind (*ki* 気) is open. At such times, we refer to this as a beautiful heart or an awareness of beauty.<sup>1</sup>

To resonate with the order of the universe through the mediation of the body, which is the inner nature within oneself, is to experience the beauty of nature. It is an experience of willingly entrusting oneself, to forget and abandon oneself, to the external universe, and in doing so, Nakai believes we can restore our true nature, regain peace of mind, and feel freer.

The beauty of technology is an objective beauty, beyond the subjective viewpoint, that is revealed in the new order created by humans through technology.

The fact that humans discovered language was an even more fundamental event than freeing their hands and standing on two feet. From this fact, humans began to recognize that there seemed to be order and laws in the universe, and they confirmed this. Even though the universe knows nothing, humans became capable of reflecting [うつしとる] the order of the universe within themselves. Although we are insignificant, with an ephemeral existence that lasts less than a hundred years from birth to death, we have created ourselves as beings who seek to explore even the smallest fragment of the universe’s order. Furthermore, we have realized that laws do not exist only within things, but that there seems to be an order between humans and things, and between humans and humans, which we are constantly seeking.

The efforts and attempts to build a nation, social relations, morality, law, economics, politics, and so on, are all nothing but this endeavor.

Broadly speaking, human technology is nothing more than this fleeting endeavor. Compared to the vast cosmos, it is a small order, but it is an order that cannot exist anywhere else in the universe, one that is always in the process of being created.

Since it is a created thing, it is not like the orbit of natural stars, which is

1. NMZ 3: 5–6.

free from any deviation or errors. Rather, it is always changing, and being aware of its errors is the only way to reach the truth.<sup>2</sup>

Of the various endeavors by human beings to create technological order, Nakai focuses on the creation and use of language. Language is essential to our understanding of the universe and ourselves, but it is also, at the same time, the source of the subjective falsehoods we hold about the objective world. Before creating the beauty of technology, we must discover the beauty of nature. Based on our experience of the beauty of the order of nature, human technology aims to discover and develop the objective order that exists between the things of nature and human beings. Nakai was fascinated by the functional beauty of practical technology. He described it as “the effort and attempt to build a nation.” At that time, he served as the deputy director of the National Diet Library and was involved in Japan’s reconstruction following World War II. In a country that had collapsed after entering a war based on many falsehoods, he worked tirelessly to build a new democratic library by adopting library technologies from the United States. Nature never makes errors, but human beings always do. The ideal dynamic image of human beings is to strive for absolute truth while constantly correcting their errors.

The beauty of art, like the beauty of technology, is reflected in the order created by human beings. The beauty of technology is found in functional tools, but the beauty of art is found in a new order created purely by the pursuit of beauty, unrelated to its role as a tool. It is free from the limitations of the use of tools for subjective ends. However, Nakai believes that this free beauty is not easily found.

This freedom to search and the feeling of fulfillment that comes with finding what one is looking for are what artists strive for, and they are born from their struggle for freedom. It is a struggle for freedom to find one’s true self.

This state of mind is the suffering involved in the pursuit of beauty in art. People see and hear art, and what moves the artist is conveyed to them, causing them to be moved by the art.

That is why, whether Noh artists or other artists, they must first struggle with their bodies and nerves. And once they have achieved that state of mind, they know they can just let themselves go and perform. However, the

2. NMZ 3: 10–11.

true self is not always easy to find, like something you take out of a bag in front of people. Sometimes, it is impossible to capture yourself within yourself, and you lose sight of who you are.

It is only through repeated practice and training that one can finally encounter one's true self in the universe. Many people die without ever encountering their true selves. Only artists, and only true artists who are not half-hearted, can be said to encounter their true selves and die, no matter how poor they may be.<sup>3</sup>

Artists actualize the beauty of art when they undergo rigorous training and gain the freedom to encounter their true selves. When they reach that state, they can freely create artistic beauty, but it is not easy to find. Sometimes, they cannot capture themselves within themselves and lose sight of who they are. Most people never reach this state, and even if they do, it does not necessarily lead to social success. True artists often spend their lives in poverty without gaining fame in society.

In this way, Nakai intuitively perceives the order of truth, goodness, and beauty in the form of nature, technology, and art, and seeks to create it. Initially, there is nature, or the order of the universe; this precedes all other orders and serves as a model. Humans create a new human order using technology and functional tools while respecting the natural order. Falsehood arises here in the tools and systems that align with the purpose of humans living together in society. Art is an order free from its utilitarian nature and supported by the "true self." This is a free order based solely on the "truth" of the artist. Nakai divides beauty and order into three categories, but he says they are all one and the same: "encountering one's true self, one's ideal self, and the self hidden deep within the world."<sup>4</sup> In other words, beauty is the encounter with the "truth" of something: in the beauty of nature we encounter the truth of nature, in the beauty of technology the truth of human beings, and in the beauty of art the deeper truth of human beings.

However, again, encountering this truth is not an easy task. While human beings often intuitively understand the order of nature, they often misread that order. Central to Nakai's philosophy is the project of becoming aware of these "falsehoods," our "posturing," and the illusory "appearances" that

3. NMZ 3: 15–16.

4. NMZ 3: 17.

separate people from the “real” and undermine the function of technology. On the one hand, we must correct our errors by following the natural order and functionality, or the objective order revealed through machines (such as the lens of a camera, a telescope, or a microscope). On the other hand, we must be careful not to reduce humans to non-humans, thus transforming them into objects of nature or cogs in a machine. We must also be vigilant against “the spirit of standardization (標準化の精神),”<sup>5</sup> which dominates commodity capitalism, and which gives rise to totalitarianism, as exemplified by the one that drove Japan into war. To avoid falling prey to the spirit of standardization and the totalitarianism it engenders, people must, like the artist, intuitively understand their “true self” through self-critique and express this true self through the medium of language, thereby actualizing a democratic society through dialogue and the logic of the committee as a cooperative project of collective self-determination. In other words, we must use language to convey truth and construct order, while being cognisant that language always contains subjective falsehoods.<sup>6</sup>

Two challenges must be overcome to actualize Nakai’s ideal of beauty and order. The first is that human beings are prone to falsehood and alienate themselves through technology. The second is that blind obedience to the natural order and the order of technology brings about the standardization of human life and runs the risk of totalitarianism. At the heart of these is the problem of how to intuit and express truth. Although this is a difficult task, Nakai believed that everyone was capable of intuiting and speaking the truth through self-critique, and thus, participating in constructing a democratic and orderly society. Nakai was critical of the idea of an “intelligencia” who, as technical specialists of critical thinking, would lead a revolution and liberate the masses. Immediately after the war, Nakai worked tirelessly to promote social education in Hiroshima Prefecture, devoting himself to dis-

5. NMZ 1: 192: “The spirit of standardization [標準化の精神] raises profound questions in the domains of tools and human technology, but it is easy to see that it has no relation with the natural domain.”

6. See GOTÔ 2018. Gotô argues that Nakai recognizes a positive need for falsehood in language: without them we would not be able to communicate with others. Nevertheless, it is clear in both “The Logic of the Committee” and *Introduction to Aesthetics* that for Nakai we must constantly take up anew the impossible quest of seeking the truth beyond the falsehoods. The positing of “falsehood” is negation that transcends the illusory truth.

seminating knowledge and the arts. Understanding the truths of the universe is the key to participating in the collective construction of social order. This is a dialogical and even dialectical process, whose logic is outlined in “The Logic of the Committee” (1936). It is a process by which one’s subjective falsehoods are collectively unmasked in the collective project of constructing a social-political order. To clarify the nature of this “ideal society” for Nakai, we will focus on the second half of “The Logic of the Committee.” However, as we will see, “The Logic of the Committee” was incomplete and left several important issues unresolved, issues Nakai sought to address in his concept of the library and his theory of art in his final years.

### OVERCOMING FALSEHOOD AND ASSERTING CONVICTION

In his late twenties, Nakai began working on a theory of language. His early paper, “Language” (1927–1928), set out the framework that would later develop into a theory of logos and history in “The Logic of the Committee.” His linguistic theory focused on the interplay between internal thought and external communication. Nakai addresses two types of “separation”: the separation between one’s internal thoughts and their external expression and the separation between the self and others. The former is the inability to express what we “truly” think in language; the latter is the inability to make ourselves understood by others. Falsehoods arise from the separations between the sense of language and existence as attempts to bridge this gap to render thought and communication possible. The difference between what is said and what is thought engenders a double separation between oneself and others, as well as between what we “truly” think and what we say, and because we are not always cognisant of this, there is a separation within us that alienates us from our true self.

In “The Logic of the Committee,” Nakai distinguishes between “the logic of thought” and “the logic of debate.” He adopts Adolf Reiner’s concepts of “conviction” (*Überzeugung*), “assertion” (*Behauptung*), “affirmation by consent” (*Zustimmungsanerkennung*), and “affirmation by judgment” (*Urteilende Anerkennung*) to argue a similar point but from another perspective.<sup>7</sup> “Conviction” refers to holding an opinion internally, while “asser-

7. For a comparative study of Nakai’s and Reinach’s respective arguments, see MONBE 2024.

tion” is expressing that opinion to others. “Judgmental approval” is the affirmation of this “conviction” that signifies a deeper conviction of one’s own opinion. An “affirmation by consent” involves the listener’s affirmation of the asserted “judgmental approval”; that is, one’s “assertion” being recognized in a public way. “Conviction” indicates a depth within the self, while “assertion” indicates a breadth outside the self. Nakai has communication in society in mind here. He cites answering a test question as an example of “judgmental approval” of conviction, while exam grading, voting in elections, and book sales serve as examples of consensual affirmation. This illustrates the process and logic of “thought” in “The Logic of the Committee.” Although the repetition of “conviction” and “assertion” aims to disseminate one’s opinions publicly, “falsehood” hinders this process. People sometimes lie to obtain “affirmation by consent” from others. For example, individuals may consciously or unconsciously convey falsehoods during a job interview.<sup>8</sup> He argues that such falsehoods are caused by the economic foundations of society, such as “slavery,” “feudalism,” and “capitalism.” The structural distortions inherent in the social foundation compel individuals to speak untruths. Nakai’s example of falsehoods in a job interview reflects the intense competition imposed by capitalism. Through these falsehoods, people misrepresent themselves to others, and as these misrepresentations accumulate, they lose sight of their “true” thoughts.

Next, referring to the arguments of Wilhelm Windelband and others, Nakai examines negation and describes how speculation is subjected to “questioning.” Let us consider the example of judging that “S is not P.” When confronted with a positive judgment, “S is P,” we can ask, “Is S P?” This opens the possibility of a counter conclusion, “S is not P.” At this point, reflection or criticism is directed at the thought, causing our “conviction” to waver. Nakai refers to the state of “questioning” that arises between affirmative and negative judgments as “a point of critical indifference,” a term borrowed from Windelband. The listener, who must evaluate an “assertion,” exists in this state of “critical indifference.” Since the “assertion” is always evaluated by others, Nakai concludes with an assertion in the form of a question:

8. NMZ 1: 72; NAKAI 2024, 323.



“Is it not the case that *every assertion is a question?*”<sup>9</sup> The “logic of debate” transforms assertions into questions subjected to reflection or criticism.

To overcome obstructions caused by “falsehoods” rooted in social contexts, one asserts one’s “conviction” to others, poses a “question” to the group, and engages in discussion. This encapsulates the essence of “thought” and “debate” collectively in the logic of the committee. The “logic of thought” and the “logic of debate” can be summarized as “deliberative.” In other words, it is the process of proposing and making a decision on a practice within a group. This decision becomes a plan, which is then delegated and executed. The underlying logic is the “logic of technology” and the “logic of production.”

#### OVERCOMING ALIENATION AND TECHNOLOGICAL PRODUCTION

The “logic of technology” and the “logic of production” are concerned with work and production, respectively. According to Nakai, human beings must form a new and purposeful order that is in harmony with nature by following the natural order and continuing to develop the human order. “Labor” is human action directed toward nature for this purpose, and it consists of three elements: “labor power,” the “object on which the labor works,” and the “means used by labor power to work on something.”<sup>10</sup> Together, these form “the structure of human productivity.”<sup>11</sup> The “logic of technology” mediates labor power and the means of labor. Technology is the mechanism that interconnects the “sequential order of nature” and “human sequential order” through labor.<sup>12</sup>

In opposition to the logic of nature, which generally aims to determine the diverse existential opposition between possibility and impossibility, contingency and necessity, actuality and non-actuality, the logic of technology is a conceptual composition that blends the one into the other, the other into the one, in the direction of human purpose, such that the existence of “noth-

9. NMZ 1: 79; NAKAI 2024, 329.

10. NMZ 1: 93; NAKAI 2024, 339.

11. NMZ 1: 84; NAKAI 2024, 333.

12. NMZ 1: 85; NAKAI 2024, 333.

ingness” in the logic of nature is strained toward “being,” and the existence of “being” is strained toward “nothingness”; it is a logic with an orientation that bends the natural movement of cause and effect into a human order. Thus, the genesis of the new necessary order of natural progression and the technical object is the meaning of the tension between the natural sequential order and the human sequential order and the logicity of technology as a dynamic mediator, and not the other way around.<sup>13</sup>

Technology functions as a creative point of transition and transformation from one order to another. For example, the construction of dams and hydroelectric power plants on rivers combines human technology with the natural sequential order of the river to create a new human sequential order for power generation. This “power generation” exemplifies the “logic of production.”

Labor is necessary to create the things we need to live, but it is distorted by economic conditions, leading to alienation. Using the sale of cement as an example, Nakai argues that in a capitalist society that pursues only profit, everything is treated as a “commodity,” and only as a “commodity” does something attain the condition of existence. In a capitalist society, things for which there is no demand neither exist (that is, are in stock) nor do they not exist (that is, are out of stock); they are simply non-existent, a nothingness in a capitalist context. In a consumer economy, the masses are fixated on whether something is a commodity or not, losing sight of the true nature of what exists. One of Nakai’s central preoccupations was the commodification of art and the human. The non-existence of the commodity engenders the non-existence of a human being that is neither a consumer nor a producer, neither desiring a product nor the product of desire. For Nakai, in consumer capitalism, “I buy, therefore I am,” and this is the historical form of alienation within capitalism. The mechanism of commercial transactions, the value of money, forms the “boundary” between existence and non-existence, and within this existence, transforms human beings into producers or consumers, into the rich or the poor.<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, the advancement of technology contributes to further alienation. Products created by experts using advanced technology are often

13. NMZ 1: 92–3; NAKAI 2024, 339.

14. NMZ 1: 96; NAKAI 2024, 341.

extremely complex, making them challenging for the general public to comprehend. People can only use the products they are given without question. In this way, the public is alienated, as they can only use products they can afford and whose principles they do not understand. Furthermore, with the division of labor in industries, producers are unaware of anything outside their specialized departments of expertise. While cooperation could be mutually beneficial, an overly competitive society promotes secrecy, leading to a lack of cooperation within the group and the institutionalization of alienation.

In a capitalist society, the "logic of technology" and the "logic of production" are distorted, further alienating the masses. Nakai proposes two ways to overcome these issues. The first is to ensure critical thinking by combining the "logic of thought" and the "logic of debate" to ensure deliberativeness. The second is to establish "representativeness" by integrating the "logic of technology" and the "logic of production" to ensure cooperation. "Proposals" and "decision," which constitute the foundation for "deliberation," are transformed into "delegation" and "execution," which make up the "representativeness," through the mediation of the "plan." The outcomes of "execution" are then "reported" and "criticized," thereby deepening subjectivity. These results are then "reflected" and transformed into new "proposals," and the dialectical process of collective praxis begins anew. Praxis is deepened through this repetition. This is how the "logic of the committee" is established and evolves into the "logic of practice."

However, there seems to be a significant *lacuna* in Nakai's argument. While he warns of the dangers of alienation stemming from the capitalist system's pursuit of profit, particularly within the "logic of production," he overlooks its positive aspects. He advocates for establishing "representativeness" to address the alienation caused by technological advancement, yet this appears to be little more than an idealistic notion that experts should be accountable for their work. These problems can be solved if experts can achieve self-awareness as representatives of the masses and communicate effectively, so that technology does not cause alienation, and if consumers can examine the true nature of things without being preoccupied with the value of commodities. However, since the problems we face are caused by structural issues inherent in the capitalist system, responding with a spirit of responsibility is unrealistic. The problems of alienation caused by the capi-

talist economy and advanced information technology are serious issues in contemporary society, but there are no clear solutions in sight.

While Nakai acknowledges that the ideal is to eliminate falsehoods and misrepresentations through “proposal” and “decision,” which constitute “deliberation,” the reality of the world often diverges from this ideal.<sup>15</sup> It would be ideal if proposals were refined through meetings, but they are often ruined. Although Nakai recognizes this, he offers no solutions to this issue, merely stating, “There are limits to and divisions within the committee.”<sup>16</sup>

In this way, Nakai presented a conceptual diagram of a situation in which the beauty of technology is actualized through ideal collective praxis, but he only briefly pointed out the various issues caused by falsehoods and alienation in actual praxis. In other words, in “The Logic of the Committee,” Nakai fails to present proactive solutions to overcome the obstacles that prevent the realization of the “beauty” he envisions. At the time, Nakai had already experienced various forms of collective praxis, so he was likely aware of this point without its having to be explicitly stated for him. If so, how did Nakai think about this issue?

#### DEFENDING TECHNOLOGY AND FREEDOM THROUGH THE LIBRARY AND ART

Thus, the “The Logic of the Committee” as a theory of practice consists of the endless cycle of “proposal,” “decision,” “plan,” “delegation,” “execution,” “report,” and “critique,” which are based on the “logic of thought,” the “logic of debate,” the “logic of technology,” and the “logic of production.” This represents the ideal of collective praxis. However, in practice, many cases see “falsehood” intervening between the “proposal” and the “decision,” resulting in a flawed plan. “Delegation” and “executions” can diffuse alienation through technology and capitalism. These issues cause suffering among people. Nakai’s response to these problems would have been to “rediscover the cosmic order.” At the beginning of his 1950 work, “Library,” Nakai stated the following:

15. NMZ 1: 104; NAKAI 2024, 347.

16. NMZ 1: 104; NAKAI 2024, 347.

Before shaping the era we call history, humankind had been engaged in a long struggle. It had undergone extensive training, including learning words and freeing its hands. This is the great path of humankind, which has taken dozens of times longer than our history.

During that time, the most remarkable thing that human beings have created is something that no other existence in the universe has ever achieved: the emergence of cosmic order, which is the realization that there appear to be laws governing the universe. A new universe was born in the universe. The existence of laws in the universe is a natural phenomenon. However, knowing that there are laws in the universe is a new cosmic creation, and we now call this “culture.” Bringing the world of culture out of the natural world is nothing less than the culmination of humanity’s long struggle to discover language and gain freedom of the hands.

Since the beginning of what we call history, people have recognized the need for laws governing human interactions and have established a social order for themselves. However, the human world, unlike the stars that obey the laws of the universe, cannot be free from error. A single error leads to other errors, which in turn lead to even greater errors, flowing in an unpredictable direction. At such times, it becomes necessary for human beings to observe the order of nature, reflect on the order that once existed among humans, and correct the errors of the present. For this reason, people feel the need to gather and preserve words and their records close at hand. And, just as in ancient Greece and ancient Japan, where storytellers passed down the history of the past, stories such as Homer’s poems were passed down in verse so that they could be remembered. In the distant past, many stories in this poetic form can be said to have played the role of libraries today.<sup>17</sup>

Some of these quotes overlap with the discussion of the beauty of technology in *Introduction to Aesthetics*, which was introduced at the beginning of this paper. However, this is not an explanation of “beauty” but an introduction to a functionalist theory of the library. The mission of the library, for Nakai, was “to contribute to the democratization of Japan and world peace.”<sup>18</sup>

Reflecting on prehistoric times, Nakai considers the discovery of cosmic laws by our ancestors, who had gained the ability to use their hands freely

17. NMZ 4: 321–2.

18. NMZ 4: 209. Nakai was moved by Hani Gorō’s words, “I want to lie under the foundation of the National Diet Library to contribute to the democratization of Japan.”

and communicate through language, as one of humanity's greatest achievements. He believes that this cosmic action or creation generates a new cosmos within the existing one, resulting in what we call "culture." The distinctness of humanity lies in its ability to derive culture from nature. After the advent of history, humans recognized the necessity of laws governing their interactions and sought to establish a social order based on these principles. The ideal form of this is the social structure described in "The Logic of the Committee." However, unlike stars that move in a circular motion at regular intervals, human beings are errant, and it is not always possible to build such an ideal social order. Errors led to a chain of further errors, which in turn led to even bigger errors. Therefore, human beings must reflect on the order of nature and the order created by past generations and correct their errors. To do so, language and the records of language are essential. In the past, poets such as Homer would sing their poems to preserve them, but now they must be written down and preserved in libraries. Hence, if we are to engage in self-criticism to overcome our errors, we must have access to the knowledge and wisdom found in books.

From his early works, Nakai thematized the harmony between nature and humans through the mechanisms of technology. In his 1930 essay, "The Aesthetic Elements of Sports," he argues that when one practices until exhaustion, there is a moment when the external substance and the internal muscles become one with nature through technique.<sup>19</sup> However, the harmony seen here only occurs for a very short time, in the moment of extreme exhaustion during sports practice. In his theory of sports, the truth, goodness, and beauty inherent in the objective order of the universe are manifested in humans only at special moments. For most of their lives, however, human beings are separated from the truth, goodness, and beauty of the universe. This is because ordinary human beings are often trapped in posturing and the illusory appearances due to the structural burdens of capitalist society, and as a result, they are unable to speak the truth. As already mentioned, this is the difficulty that Nakai faced. He believed that the masses could intuitively understand the truth, goodness, and beauty inherent in the objective order of the universe and build a beautiful, orderly society, but recognized that this was no easy task. In collective praxis that

19. NMZ I: 419–20.

leverages technology to produce the necessities of life, it is impossible to constantly push people to the point of exhaustion. A safe working environment is essential. So, how can we intuit and share the order of the universe and manifest a beautiful, orderly society in the workplace? We must build a system of collective labor through open discussion, using language that is truthful and free from falsehoods. However, as “The Logic of the Committee” makes clear, this is a difficult, if not impossible, task. However, Nakai appears to have found an answer to this question in his later work. We learn the objective truth from excellent books. He invites us to the library and encourages us to learn from the books that record the truth and order of nature and humanity.

The libraries Nakai had in mind were not simply repositories for books, but information centers. He asserted that we must create a system in which everyone can access the books they need when they need them by creating a network between libraries and compiling a comprehensive catalog of the books held by all libraries. He dreamed of a mechanism in which all information would be organized in an orderly manner and distributed mechanically.<sup>20</sup> This has been actualized in Japanese libraries today. Currently, it is possible to check which books are held in which libraries online and, if available, have them delivered to the nearest library.

In his later years, Nakai worked to establish a mechanism for quickly delivering necessary information to all citizens by collecting all books at the National Diet Library as a national information center and establishing a library network throughout Japan centered on it. He believed that misconceptions would be corrected if the public had access to libraries to obtain accurate information. Nakai believed that people, armed with accurate knowledge, could discern falsehoods, comprehend advanced technology, and perceive the true nature of things without being influenced by commercial or commodity value. This is why Nakai was so enthusiastic about social education in Hiroshima immediately after the war. He believed that education was the key to overcoming the lacuna in “the logic of the committee.” Nakai encouraged people to observe nature with the power of knowledge gained through reading and education, to reflect on their behavior critically, and to engage in new creation step by step while correcting themselves.

20. NMZ 4: 325–7.

In 1952, the year Nakai died, one could argue that his ideas were remarkably prescient. However, we are now confronted with the Internet, a global information network far more expansive than Japan's library network. The new specialist committees of the Internet include tech companies such as GAFA (Google, Apple, Facebook (now Meta), and Amazon), which are the winners of the race to develop information technology and the capitalist system, and accumulators of global wealth.

With the popularization of the Internet and the devices used to access it, we now have instant access to vast amounts of information. The volume of information we consume daily is probably many times greater than Nakai had access to. However, this has not resulted in the ideal collective practices depicted in "The Logic of the Committee." It is crucial to approach information on the Internet with skepticism—a reminder everyone must heed. This sophisticated technology is incomprehensible to most people. How many people truly understand the mechanisms of smartphones and the applications that run on them? We simply use the devices and services provided by giant tech companies. Advanced technology is increasingly alienating people. It is also widely acknowledged that the gap between the rich and the poor is widening with the development of global capitalism. Social classes are becoming increasingly divided, making it more difficult for people from different social backgrounds and with diverse beliefs to communicate with one another. The founders of tech companies have amassed enormous wealth while exploiting the masses worldwide. And just as movies were once used for fascist propaganda, information networks have become a medium for authoritarian politics and disinformation. Information centers and networks, such as libraries, have been established, but information networks that extend beyond them have also been developed, further highlighting the limitations of the "logic of thought," the "logic of debate," the "logic of technology," and the "logic of production."

It is possible to conclude that Nakai's ideas were interesting but limited, but that would be to overlook his greatest quality. He foresaw the future of the information society. He anticipated the problems we face today. Throughout his life, Nakai faced numerous challenges and opposition. When he was arrested for violating the Public Order Maintenance Law, he was tortured and forced to renounce his beliefs. In the Hiroshima Prefectural Governor election, he faced various obstacles, and in his role as Deputy



Director of the National Diet Library, he endured numerous injustices. He lived his life witnessing the darker side of humanity. Nevertheless, his true greatness lies in his belief in the potential power of people and his unwavering pursuit of ideals for the future.

The purpose of the beauty of art presented in *Introduction to Aesthetics* was likely to suggest how to realize the latent potential of the masses. Encountering one's true self through rigorous practice and expressing it is the greatest resistance against totalitarianism. The greatest support for democracy is for the masses to follow the natural order and the social order while maintaining their freedoms and expressing themselves. Had Nakai lived longer and rewritten “The Logic of the Committee,” he might have added the “logic of art” after the “logic of production.” The “logic of art,” free and liberated from functionality, would ensure a more democratic and active discussion.

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