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The Rise of Japanese Phenomenology

The philosophy of Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, was introduced to Japan in the 1910s. Since the epistemology of psychologism was widely supported in Japan during this period, the critique of psychologism in the first volume of Husserl's *Logical Investigations* attracted particular attention. The phenomenology presented in the second volume was introduced at the same time but mostly drew criticism. It was Nishida Kitarō who was the first to give a positive evaluation of Husserl's phenomenology in this period. However, Nishida judged that phenomenology could not describe reality itself and moved away from it. Tanabe Hajime, who inherited Nishida's understanding of phenomenology, evaluated it as a complement to neo-Kantian philosophy. However, he did not provide his own phenomenological analysis. Tsuchida Kyōson initially adopted a humanist position, but after studying philosophy under Nishida, he tried to use phenomenology to justify a Buddhist worldview. Thus, Tsuchida, under the influence of Nishida, gave birth to the first original phenomenological analysis in Japan.

KEYWORDS: Nishida Kitarō—Tanabe Hajime—Tsuchida Kyōson—Edmund Husserl—phenomenology

Phenomenology has had a major influence on Japanese philosophy. Nishida Kitarō (1870–1945), the founder of the so-called Kyoto School, examined Husserl's phenomenology in his monograph *Intuition and Reflection in Self-Awareness*, published in 1917. In the 1920s, so many Japanese studied Husserl's and Heidegger's phenomenology in Freiburg that the term "Freiburg Pilgrimage" (フライブルク詣)[1] was devised through a play on words associating the German word *Mode*, meaning fashionable, with the Japanese word *mōde* 詣, meaning a pilgrimage or a visit to a shrine. Among the Japanese thinkers who undertook the Freiburg pilgrimage were Tanabe Hajime (1885–1962) and Kuki Shūzō (1888–1941), who developed their own original philosophies and formed the second generation of the Kyoto School.

After World War II, Miyake Gōichi (1895–1982), Kida Gen (1928–2014), Watanabe Jirō (1931–2008) and others continued to do research into phenomenology, and Nitta Yoshihiro (1929–2020), Sakabe Megumi (1936–2009), Washida Kiyokazu (1949–), and others invented original phenomenological approaches. The Kyoto School philosophers of religion, including Nishitani Keiji (1900–1990) and Ueda Shizuteru (1926–2019) referred to phenomenology as an important source for their thought. Thus, even during the postwar period when postmodern thought and Anglo-American analytic philosophy were imported and widely accepted in Japan, phenomenology remained an important part of Japanese philosophy.

However, research on Japanese phenomenology is remarkably limited. There are only a few studies on Japanese phenomenologists[2] other than

1. As far as I can tell, the term "Freiburg Pilgrimage" first appears in Takahashi 1929, 196. See Takahashi 1973a, 147.

2. One of the few exceptions that discusses the history of Japanese phenomenology is Hamauzu 2022.

Kyoto School philosophers.[3] In order to fill this gap in the scholarship, this paper focuses on the 1910s and provides a chronology from the time of the reception of phenomenology in Japan to the birth of the first Japanese phenomenology.

The first section discusses the introduction of psychologistic epistemology into Japan in the 1900s. This is followed by an overview of evaluations of Husserl's philosophy at the time of its reception in the 1910s. The next section reveals that in the 1910s, Nishida not only changed his position after learning of the critique of psychologism by Husserl and others, but also showed an appreciation for Husserl's phenomenology. Next I attempt to show that Tanabe, following Nishida's lead, attempted to supplement the neo-Kantian position with Husserl's phenomenology. Finally, I discuss Tsuchida Kyōson's *Philosophy of Symbols* as the first work written from a phenomenological standpoint in Japan. These discussions reveal that it was Nishida who was the first to show an appreciation for phenomenology in Japan, and that his influence led to Tsuchida Kyōson's creation of the first work in Japanese written from a phenomenological standpoint.[4]

3. For example, Nitta 1998 discusses the significance of Nishida's philosophy from the standpoint of Husserl's phenomenology. Mine 2002 is a representative work that reveals the influence of Heidegger on Japanese philosophers. Akitomi 2022 discusses the philosophy of Nishida Kitarō, Tsujimura Kōichi, Nishitani Keiji, and Ueda Shizuteru in relation to Heidegger.

4. Currently, there is a debate regarding whether or not Nishida is a phenomenologist (See Cheung 2019, 44–50). I have avoided this debate here for reasons of space.I would only note that I agree with Cheung's view that "Nishida's philosophy is phenomenological in the sense that it shares the basic position of phenomenology: they are both anti-reductionist and anti-dualist" (Cheung 2019, 45). In addition, I think it is also phenomenological based on Spiegelberg's methodological criterion. Spiegelberg held that phenomenology involves the adoption of two methods: "(a) direct intuition… as the source and final test of all knowledge… and (b) insight into essential structures as a genuine possibility and a need of philosophical knowledge" (Spiegelberg 1965, 6). However, I cannot ignore Nishida's statement that it is impossible to describe relations in the world of direct flux with Husserl's method (nkz 1: 291). Nishida falls outside Spiegelberg's criterion that states that a member of the phenomenological movement must adhere consciously to phenomenology (ibid.).

Epistemology in Japan before the introduction of Husserl's philosophy

In late nineteenth-century Japan, early modern philosophy up to Kant was often discussed in terms of its epistemology. Its content was explained by the following schema: idealism vs. realism, empiricism vs. rationalism, and then transcendental philosophy.

For example, Ernest Fenollosa, who became a professor in 1878 at the University of Tokyo,[5] which had been founded in 1877 as the first university in Japan, used Schwegler's *History of Philosophy in Outline* as a textbook. This work explains that Kant unified the previously one-sided positions of idealism and realism.[6] Miyake Setsurei's 1889 work *A Drop of Philosophy*, one of the first overviews of philosophy written in Japanese, states that after Hume fell into skepticism as a result of the development of empiricism and rationalism, Kant "contemplated the theories of various schools and created an exceptionally complete philosophy."[7] In Inoue Enryō's *An Evening's Talk on Philosophy*, Part III (1887), the earliest Japanese work to show an original epistemology, Enryō argued that the differences between the realist and idealist positions, as well as those between the empiricist and rationalist positions, would disappear if we understand that, externally and internally, things and minds are interdependent.[8] Enryō's presentation of his own views, thus, was in response to the prevailing schema regarding early modern philosophy.

Around 1900, psychologism began to be introduced as a new epistemological position. Its representative work was Ladd's *Philosophy of Knowledge*, which was translated by Nakajima Rikizō and published in 1898 as the first Japanese work that was solely focused on the subject of epistemology. This work makes the psychologistic claim that the starting point of epistemology must be psychology.[9]

5. The present-day University of Tokyo changed its name several times. When it was founded in 1877, it was referred to as the "University of Tokyo." However, its name was changed to "Imperial University" in 1886, and then to "Tokyo Imperial University" in 1897, the year when Kyoto Imperial University was founded, before reverting back to "University of Tokyo" in 1947.

6. University of Tokyo 1879, 67–8.

7. Miyake 1889, 143.

8. Inoue 1987, 81–3.

9. Ladd 1898, 9–10.

In the same year, Kuwaki introduced Volkelt's work *Experience and Thinking*, which criticizes positivism as a position that attempted to base philosophy solely on pure experience as knowledge of one's own conscious processes, and criticizes psychologism as a position similar to positivism. Kuwaki, however, argued instead that psychology is necessary as a ground of epistemology[10] and refuted Volkelt, insisting that experience contains rational elements that order it.[11]

In 1907, Nishida adopted a position similar to Kuwaki's in his article "On Reality," which later became part of *An Inquiry into the Good*. Here Nishida took a psychologistic position, arguing that all knowledge must be built on the basis of pure experience as knowledge about phenomena of consciousness.[12] This was followed in 1910 by Tanabe's "On Thetic Judgment," in which he justified a position that took the division of pure experience as the starting point of epistemology.[13] Thus, psychologism was gaining widespread support in Japan around 1900.

Initial reception and evaluation of husserl's philosophy

Husserl's name appears in several Japanese articles around 1900. In 1892 and 1893, Husserl's *Philosophy of Arithmetic* appeared in lists of new books in the *Journal of Philosophy*.[14] Kuwaki, studying in Germany, wrote about Husserl's lecture on "Old and New Logic" in Göttingen in 1908[15]. In 1910, he also mentioned Husserl as one of the most prominent German philosophers.[16] However, these articles merely mention Husserl and his writings by name.

The reception of Husserl's philosophy began in 1911. This year saw the publication of a book review by Tanabe of Jerusalem's work *Critical Idealism*

10. Kuwaki 1900, 141–145.

11. Kuwaki 1904, 22.

12. NKZ 1: 41. On the psychologism of the philosophy of *An Inquiry into the Good*, see Mitsuhara 2018 and 2023.

13. THZ 1: 3–4, 10.

14. Anon. 1892, 567; 1893, 1070.

15. Anon. 1908, 1336.

16. Kuwaki 1910, 7.

and Pure Logic criticizing Husserl's philosophy, and of an academic article by Nishida entitled "On the Argument of Pure Logicism in Epistemology," in which Husserl was introduced as a supporter of pure logicism. From this point on, introductions to Husserl's philosophy and activities involving Husserl began to increase. For example, in 1912 Husserl collaborated in the publication of the journal *Logos*,[17] and in 1914 the *Yearbook for Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* was published.[18] In 1915, Itō published a translation of Husserl's "Philosophy as Rigorous Science" and Nishida gave a lecture on Husserl's philosophy at Kyoto Imperial University.[19] In 1917, Tokunō Bun 得能文 also gave a lecture on Husserl's philosophy at Tokyo Imperial University.[20]

Among these articles in the 1910s, there is one that mentions Husserl as a philosopher whose thought is based on psychology,[21] and another that presents Husserl's phenomenology as idealistic.[22] However, most articles introduce Husserl as a philosopher of anti-psychologism, focusing on the first volume of his *Logical Investigations*. For example, in Tanabe's review of Jerusalem's work mentioned above, Husserl is described as a philosopher who, along with Cohen, rejects psychologistic logic and tries to build an a priori logic.[23] In Nishida's "On the Argument of Pure Logicism in Epistemology," Husserl, along with neo-Kantians such as Windelband and Rickert, is introduced as a philosopher who argues that it is erroneous to try to explain the nature of cognition by discussing the psychological nature of the act of cognizing.[24] Thus, in general, Husserl's philosophy was introduced to Japan as an opponent of the already prevailing psychologistic epistemology.

The phenomenological analysis that Husserl carried out in the second volume of his Logical Investigations also began to be mentioned at the same

17. Anon. 1912, 699.

18. Anon. 1914, 93.

19. NKZ 24: 321.

20. Anon. 1917, 77.

21. Inage 1914, 4.

22. Eucken 1914, 27–28.

23. THZ 14: 23–25.

24. NKZ 1:169–172. The other articles introducing Husserl's philosophy as something opposed to psychologism are Kihira 1912, 259; Takahashi 1973b, 24; Ueno 1915, 510; Tomonaga 1915, 212.

time, but it was often the subject of criticism. Already in Tanabe's review of Jerusalem's work, it was said that phenomenology was only a part of psychology and an incomplete descriptive psychology at that.[25] In his "Two Ways of Epistemology," which was translated by Nakagawa Tokuryū and reviewed by Miyamoto Wakichi in 1916, Rickert criticizes Husserl's pure logic for not being clearly distinct from psychology.[26] "The Recent World of German Philosophy," written by Takahashi Satomi and based on an article by Oscar Ewald, states that Husserl sharply distinguished phenomenology and psychology but comments that the criticism of Husserl from the perspective of logicism has a point, since the distinction between psychology and logic is not clear in his phenomenology.[27]

Nishida Kitarō's Evaluation of Husserl's Phenomenology in the 1910s

Under these circumstances, Nishida was the first person in Japan to provide a positive evaluation of phenomenology.

As mentioned above, in the article "On the Arguments of Pure Logicism in Epistemology," in which Nishida mentions Husserl for the first time, Nishida classifies Husserl as a proponent of "pure logicism." For Nishida, this term applies to philosophers who emphasize that "truth has nothing to do with the intellectual act of knowing" and who criticize psychologistic attempts to "explain the nature of truth from the facts of mental phenomena, that is, to discuss ideal norms based on empirical facts."[28] To represent the position of the school of pure logicism, Nishida introduces Rickert's argument that truth is transcendent, independent of mental acts, and always remains the same, unlike the act of thinking, which differs from person to person and arises and disappears in time.[29] Since Husserl also rejects psychologistic attempts to derive all knowledge from experiences based on the ideas that the propositions of arithmetic and the laws of logic are ideal, while the mental act is real, and that the laws derived by induction from

25. THZ 14: 25.
26. Rickert 1916a, 879; 1916b, 488.
27. Takahashi 1915, 98–100; 1973b, 35.
28. NKZ 1: 172.
29. Rickert 1909, 171, 196–7, 200.

experience are only accidental and probable,[30] Nishida considers him to belong to the school of pure logicism.

In *An Inquiry into the Good*, Nishida argues that since the knowledge of our phenomena of consciousness, or the facts of pure experience, cannot be doubted, all our knowledge should be built on the basis of pure experience.[31] This is clearly a psychologistic claim from Husserl's point of view. Nevertheless, in a letter to Tanabe in 1915, Nishida wrote, "I find Husserl's *Logical Investigations* a very valuable book.... Husserl's really elaborate study is very useful,"[32] and "I highly recommend studying Husserl's philosophy."[33] Furthermore, he began lecturing on Husserl's philosophy beginning in September of that same year.

In "On the Arguments of Pure Logicism in Epistemology," Nishida admits that there are problems with psychologism,[34] but he does not entirely agree with the position of Rickert and others. This is because, in Nishida's view, if we accept their view that ideal norms such as truth and the meaning of propositions are independent of empirical facts, then we will not be able to understand why our consciousness can relate to them and how we can know those ideal norms.[35] Nishida attempted to solve this problem in a series of essays titled "Intuition and Reflection in Self-Awareness" from September 1913 to 1917. Based on the understanding that our consciousness is infinitely self-developing through taking our own acts as objects and reflecting on them, he argued in these essays that this dynamic consciousness is considered to be truth and meaning when it is seen in a static aspect, while it is considered to be act when it is seen in a developmental aspect. He insists that truth and meaning and act are merely different aspects of the one reality of consciousness.[36]

In *Intuition and Reflection in Self-Awareness*, Husserl is featured as a philosopher who makes a similar argument to that of Nishida. In Husserl's view, we can identify and relate to the object to which the act is directed

30. H 18: 72–76, 173–177.
31. NKZ 1: 41.
32. NKZ 19: 259.
33. NKZ 19: 260.
34. NKZ 1: 182.
35. NKZ 1: 176, 252
36. NKZ 2: 13, 54.

by grasping the given sensation as something through meaning.[37] Husserl regards meaning as an essential component of consciousness as act. In light of Husserl's understanding that "meaning cannot be considered apart from the experience of the act of consciousness,"[38] Nishida wrote in Chapter 22, published in 1915, that "the most direct concrete reality is what Husserl called intentional experience."[39] Nishida here evaluates Husserl's philosophy as one that could capture "the most direct concrete reality."

Nishida showed an appreciation for Husserl's phenomenology for other reasons in "Philosophy in Our Time" (1916) and "Philosophy of Idealism in Our Time" (1917), which may have been written based on his 1915 lectures. In *An Inquiry into the Good*, Nishida engages in Cartesian skepticism and explains that philosophy should start from pure experience that can no longer be doubted.[40] Husserl also follows Cartesian skepticism in carrying out the phenomenological reduction in his *Ideas 1*. Thereby the positing of the existence of things in space is excluded on the grounds that they are always given in only one aspect and the judgment that the things are actually there is suspended, while the certainty of the existence of my experience remains secure because it is unreasonable to doubt the existence of my experience which is always given in its entirety.[41] Husserl calls the experience that remains after this phenomenological reduction pure consciousness and makes it the object of analysis.

Nishida, who regards this phenomenological reduction as the exclusion of particular positions from which we capture direct experience in order to describe pure consciousness as it is,[42] states that "the world of phenomenology is the world of pure experience."[43] On the other hand, Nishida criticizes Husserl, saying that "it is impossible to express relations in the world of direct flux"[44] through phenomenology. The reason for this may be that while Nishida sees pure experience as activity in the form of self-develop-

37. H 19/1: 429.
38. NKZ 2: 109.
39. NKZ 2: 108.
40. NKZ 1: 40.
41. H 3/1: 62–66, 84–91, 96–98.
42. NKZ 12: 64–65.
43. NKZ 12: 65.
44. NKZ 1: 291.

ment, as of 1916, Husserl had discussed phenomenological time only in sections 81–83 of *Ideas I*. Husserl does not describe pure consciousness as being active in this way in *Logical Investigations* and *Ideas I*.

Nevertheless, Nishida still holds Husserl in highest esteem among the philosophers of the time. According to Nishida, philosophy at that time was largely divided between the German philosophy of cognition and the philosophy of intuition of Bergson. The former was further divided into the neo-Kantian school, which followed Kant in studying the act of cognizing, and the neo-Bolzano school, which started from meaning without considering the act of cognizing.[45]

However, Rickert, a neo-Kantian, points out in his "Two Ways of Epistemology" that the Kantian method of transcendental psychology is problematic. With this method we can find that the object of cognition is the ought because it demands that the subject of cognition agree with itself. We can also find that it is transcendent, independent of the act of cognizing, because it is necessary and unconditionally valid. However, we cannot clarify the transcendent object. Therefore, Rickert claims that, apart from transcendental psychology, we need transcendental logic, which analyzes the meaning of propositions without taking the mental act into consideration.[46]

Husserl, on the other hand, states in the first volume of his *Logical Investigations* that the ideal is independent of the real in the sense that the former cannot be derived form the latter.[47] This claim is a logicism similar to Bolzano's. Husserl, however, not only provides a phenomenological analysis of consciousness as intentional experience in the second volume of the same book, but also begins to define phenomenology as transcendental, distinct from empirical psychology, in his next major work, *Ideas I*.[48]

Noting the change in their positions, Nishida states that "the epistemology of the Southwest School came remarkably close to and joined Bolzano's pure logicism,"[49] and that "Husserl, based on Bolzano… came to adopt

45. NKZ 1: 288–290.
46. Rickert 1909, 184–7, 192–3, 201.
47. H 18: 72–80.
48. H 3/1: 4–6.
49. NKZ 1: 278.

a method similar to Kant's transcendental psychology."[50] He explains that the neo-Kantians and neo-Bolzanians originally had different positions, but says that they were moving toward a synthesis.

Nishida insists that these philosophies that discuss the problem of cognition, which had come close to integration, should be further integrated with philosophies that discuss the problem of reality. However, Bergson, who had the best view of reality, had only "very crude and childish"[51] ideas about the problem of cognition. Conversely, Rickert, an eminent philosopher on the problem of cognition, claimed there was nothing that we could say about pure experience.[52] Unlike them, Husserl was not only an excellent epistemologist, but also an analyst of pure consciousness, which could be identified with pure experience. Therefore, even though it was "impossible to express relations in the world of direct flux"[53] through phenomenology, Husserl was the philosopher who came closest to integrating the philosophy of cognition and the philosophy of reality. This was another reason for Nishida's high regard for Husserl.

Nevertheless, Nishida wrote to Tanabe, "We should not be satisfied with Husserl's phenomenology."[54] Having judged that phenomenology could not grasp reality as it is, Nishida sought to integrate the philosophy of cognition and the philosophy of reality in his own philosophy, rather than in phenomenology.

Tanabe Hajime's Understanding and Evaluation of Husserl's Phenomenology in the 1910s

Another philosopher who had a similar evaluation of Husserl to that of Nishida is Tanabe Hajime (1885–1962). Tanabe, who defended the psychologistic epistemology that takes pure experience as its starting point in his first article "On Thetic Judgment" in 1910, published a book review entitled "Mr. Jerusalem's *Critical Idealism and Pure Logic*" in 1911. Tanabe was the first to introduce the contents of Husserl's philosophy to

50. NKZ 1: 288.
51. NKZ 1: 291.
52. Rickert 1909, 223–4.
53. NKZ 1: 291.
54. NKZ 19: 265.

Japan through Jerusalem, who rejects Husserl's anti-psychologistic view as stated in the first volume of his *Logical Investigations* and who condemns the phenomenology of cognition discussed in the second volume as merely a descriptive analysis of psychological phenomena.[55] However, there is no indication that Tanabe ever paid any attention to Jerusalem's description.

Tanabe began to express his views on Husserl's phenomenology after Nishida sent a letter to Tanabe in July 1915, in which he recommended that he study Husserl's philosophy.[56] For example, in the Preface to *Recent Natural Science*, written in October 1915, Tanabe writes as follows:

> The incomplete theory described in this book adopts the view of remodeling and developing Kant's transcendentalism, which I believe to be the only legitimate standpoint for philosophy of knowledge, by means of phenomenology, giving logicism a basis in intuition and experience, and discovering a basis of reality for the mere idealism of value.[57]

Phenomenology is understood here as giving the Neo-Kantian position of logicism a foundation in intuition, experience, and reality.

In his article "On Thetic Judgment" in 1910, Tanabe defended a psychologistic epistemology similar to that of Nishida. However, after Nishida argued that his position was closer to Kant than to psychologism in "On the Argument of Pure Logicism in Epistemology" in 1911, Tanabe followed Nishida in "The Limits of Pure Logicism in Epistemology" in 1914, stating that neo-Kantian logicism was more correct than empiricism and psychologism. At the same time, however, Tanabe also argued that logicism had its limits and that direct experience should not be excluded from epistemology.[58]

Cohen, a leading Neo-Kantian philosopher of logicism, argues that sensation as a manifold of intuition is not given but rather is produced by the act of thinking. The object is established when the act of thinking itself further synthesizes and unifies the content produced by the act. Since the thinking is an infinitely developing process, the work of establishing the object never ends. As a result, the object has the character of an infinite problem.

55. THZ 14: 25.
56. NKZ 19: 260.
57. THZ 2: 5.
58. THZ 1: 29.

In response to Cohen's view, Tanabe argues that the act of thinking does not begin to work spontaneously at all. Since the act begins to work only after the sensation as an infinite problem demands a solution, the sensation must be latent as direct experience before the act begins to work. In this sense, the sensation is the root of the act of thinking. From Tanabe's point of view, this sensation as direct experience, which is both the object and the root of the act of thinking, must not be excluded from epistemology. However, from the standpoint of logicism, since sensation is not defined by the act of thinking, it cannot be included in epistemology. Tanabe argues that this is the limit of Cohen's logicism.[59]

Rickert, another representative of the neo-Kantian philosophy of logicism, claims that the act of thinking works through the category of the given. This is because, for Rickert, individual facts must be considered to have been given as their contents in order to establish judgments. Therefore he rejects the idea that content is given before the working of the act of thinking. Tanabe refutes Rickert's view, stating that the act of thinking can constitute the empirical world through categories only together with content. However, from the standpoint of Rickert, this content cannot be included in the system of epistemology before it is defined by the act of thinking. According to Tanabe, the limit of Rickert's logicism lies here.[60]

Furthermore, Rickert explains that the subject of cognition is consciousness in general, whose object is all the contents of consciousness. For Rickert, consciousness in general is a limit concept that cannot be objectified. Therefore it is impossible to specify what the subject of cognition is and it is also impossible to elucidate the process of cognition of the subject. In opposition, Tanabe argues that even if this subject of cognition cannot be the object of the act of thinking or judging, it can be experienced directly. Therefore we can grasp the nature of the subject and of the process of cognition through direct experience. However, Rickert cannot adopt views such as Tanabe's because what cannot be defined conceptually is nothingness for him. Tanabe points out that here, too, is a limitation of logicism.[61]

Because he thought that the limit of logicism lies in this inability to

59. THZ 1: 30–40.
60. THZ 1: 46–7.
61. THZ 1: 48–53.

recognize the existence of direct experience prior to the work of the act of thinking as discussed above, Tanabe asserts in "The Limits of Logicism in Epistemology" that "empirical psychologism… has the capacity to supplement logicism outside its limits without contradicting it."[62] In the following year, however, encouraged by Nishida to study Husserl's phenomenology through a letter, Tanabe revised this claim and states in the introduction to *Recent Natural Science* that phenomenology can complement logicism by "discovering a basis for reality"[63] and "giving logicism a basis for intuition and experience."[64]

However, no concrete explanation is given as to why phenomenology can do such a thing in this work. There is no further explanation on this point even in articles written during this period that refer to Husserl's philosophy, such as "On Universals" (1916) and "Theory of Time" (1917). Tanabe's understanding of phenomenology during this period can be seen in his *Introduction to Science* in 1918.

Tanabe states in this work, as he does in *Recent Natural Science*, that he "attempted to give transcendental constructivism a realist foundation based on intuition, while adopting its inheritance of the epistemological tradition of Kant."[65] The critical philosophy of the neo-Kantian school aims to clarify the grounds for the humanities, which embody values such as truth, goodness, and beauty, but it does not consider metaphysics a discipline which aims to recognize reality. According to Tanabe, however, while it is indeed difficult to know about the reality behind the phenomena that science recognizes, the reality at work in us can be recognized through direct experience and intuition. Moreover, since the condition of the possibility of the cognition on which the neo-Kantians stand belongs to the reality at work in us, a metaphysics studying this reality is not only possible but necessary.[66]

Based on this understanding, Tanabe states the following:

> The criticism of cognition, no, the criticism of value in general is founded on the cognition of reality in metaphysics, which is obtained only from intui-

62. THZ 1: 29.
63. THZ 2: 5.
64. THZ 2: 5.
65. THZ 2: 157.
66. THZ 2: 165–6.

> tive experience. Therefore, as a mediator between the two or as a preliminary to metaphysics, there must be phenomenology, which reveals the essences in intuitive experience and transcendental psychology, which seeks to know how these essences can be identified and how they are combined to form consciousness.[67]

Here, Tanabe positions phenomenology as a mediator between epistemology and metaphysics, a mediator that reveals the essences in intuitive experience.

In Chapter 1 of *Introduction to Science*, entitled "Phenomenological Overview of Consciousness," Tanabe claims that it is necessary to look back concretely at the internal relations of intuition as the background of cognition by excluding various particular standpoints from which these relations are recognized. Tanabe himself, however, does not attempt to clarify these internal relations, but only gives a few examples, such as the interrelationship of individual red colors with red colors in general.[68] Although Tanabe emphasizes the need for phenomenology in this way, he does not analyze consciousness from a phenomenological standpoint.

Tanabe's understanding of and evaluation of phenomenology were strongly influenced by Nishida. Tanabe himself states, "I owe most of the philosophical ideas described in this book to the inspiration of Nishida Kitarō.[69] Tanabe's view that phenomenology mediates between epistemology and metaphysics clearly inherits Nishida's interpretation that Husserl was the closest philosopher to the integration of the problem of cognition and that of reality. Tanabe's claim that we can elucidate the internal relations of intuition by excluding various standpoints in order to grasp the content of intuition was also influenced by Nishida, who regards this phenomenological reduction as the exclusion of particular positions from which we capture direct experience. However, Tanabe does not develop Nishida's view on phenomenology or attempt to perform any phenomenological analysis, even in the chapter entitled "Phenomenological Overview of Consciousness." As for his understanding and evaluation of phenomenology, he was almost completely a faithful follower of Nishida.

67. THZ 2: 176.
68. THZ 2: 182–183.
69. THZ 2: 158.

Tsuchida kyōson's phenomenology

From Humanism to Phenomenology

Another philosopher who approached phenomenology under the influence of Nishida in the 1910s was Tsuchida Kyōson (whose real name was Tsuchida Tsutomu 1891–1934).

Tsuchida had already begun to publish his views in intellectual and political magazines in 1910 while a student at Niigata Prefectural Normal School. He published *Civilized Thought and New Philosophy* in 1914, entered the philosophy department of the Faculty of Letters at Kyoto Imperial University where Nishida was a professor, and then published *An Open Letter to the Literary World* in 1915. Furthermore, he published *Philosophy of Symbols* in 1919 based on his graduation thesis, and this was the first work in Japan employing the phenomenological method.

The phenomenological work *Philosophy of Symbols* differs from *An Open Letter to the Literary World* both in terms of their interests and in terms of the positionality of their thought. The subject matter of *An Open Letter to the Literary World* consists in the question: "Does art exist for art's sake or for life's sake?"[70] On the grounds that there is no art without life, Tsuchida first analyzes life in two aspects. One is that of an assertion of individuality, an endless outburst of creative demand, and an insatiable pursuit of the desire for assimilation. The other aspect is that of the use of concepts and adaptation to the environment to limit this creativity and this desire. The latter aspect, while useful to us, cannot bring us to a state of ecstasy. Therefore Tsuchida argues that the inspiration and enjoyment of art derive from the former aspect, that is to say, from pure experience unbound by concepts.[71]

However, Tsuchida did not regard art as unrelated to concepts. According to him, we can improve on outdated concepts by using art as a source of new concepts, and through this improvement of concepts, we can adapt ourselves better to our environment, enrich the content of our lives, and advance our lives. Because Tsuchida recognizes the value of art in this regard, he takes the position that art exists for the sake of life in this work.[72]

70. Tsuchida 1915, 1.

71. Tsuchida 1915, 1, 20–4, 32–4.

72. Tsuchida 1915, 27–9, 45–7.

Soon after the publication of this book, Tsuchida changed his position. This can be seen from the following statement: "My current path is completely opposed to my recent book, *An Open Letter to the Literary World,* in some respects, and it goes in a deeper and more fundamental direction in other respects."[73] Tsuchida began to condemn his position in this previous work, which he called humanism. For Tsuchida, humanism holds that art exists for a better or more useful life. Tsuchida condemns humanism because this idea critiques art from the perspective of a moral standard, which leads to the corruption of art. It is also wrong, in Tsuchida's view, to think that art exists for the sake of utility, because art does not contribute to the preservation of the individual and the species, and it is not an object of instinctive, impulsive desire like food or alcohol. So, instead, with Windelband and Rickert, who criticize psychologism and claim that value transcends that which is mental, Tsuchida begins to argue that the value of beauty transcends mental processes such as the satisfaction of desire and should be understood as an end in itself, not as a means to achieve other ends.[74]

While Tsuchida thus distances himself from humanism, he does not abandon the idea that art derives from pure experience divorced from concepts. Instead, he says he "deepened"[75] this idea, inspired by an experience of an "awakening" in 1915. That is, he began to argue that neo-Kantian philosophy cannot explain the core of beauty because it is the taste of experience itself, which cannot be recognized through concepts, and can only be expressed through symbols.[76] From this new position, which he named "mystic symbolism"[77] or "symbolic mysticism,"[78] "adopting the method of Husserl's phenomenology,"[79] Tsuchida analyzes experience in order to answer the question of what symbols are[80] in his *Philosophy of Symbols*.

73. Tsuchida 1916, 45.
74. Tsuchida 1917a, 41–2.
75. Tsuchida 1917a, 41.
76. Tsuchida 1917b, 40–3.
77. Tsuchida 1917b, 40.
78. Tsuchida 1917c, 40.
79. Tsuchida 1919, 17.
80. Tsuchida 1919, 16.

Tsuchida Kyōson's Phenomenology in Philosophy of Symbols

At the beginning of *Philosophy of Symbols*, Tsuchida examines what he believes the starting point of philosophy should be. According to Tsuchida, when we try to advance our inquiry from apodictic pure experience, we are forced to make leaps from it. For example, we allow for the existence of objects of experience independent of their subject. Moreover, as Husserl says, the study of the experience of consciousness as it arises in time can only be a study of facts and existence and therefore cannot provide the basis for a philosophy that deals with normative principles.[81]

Windelband and Rickert argue that normal consciousness, or the value of truth as the object of consciousness, is an inescapable premise of philosophy. However, it is not possible to derive value from normal consciousness or vice versa. This is because value is non-temporal and therefore transcendent whereas normal consciousness is temporal. In fact, Rickert states that transcendental psychology, which analyzes the act of cognition, cannot account for transcendent value or meaning, and that transcendental logic, which starts from true propositions, cannot elucidate how we can know transcendent value or meaning. Since there is an insurmountable gap between the two, whichever one Windelband and Rickert start from, they immediately have to make a leap and presuppose the other.[82]

Therefore Tsuchida rejects the claim that pure experience, truth, or normal consciousness should be the starting point of philosophy. Instead, he chooses language as the starting point of philosophy because he believes that it is essential for thinking and discussion. When we analyze language, we can distinguish between the physical aspect, such as pronunciation and letters, and the mental aspect, the conscious experience that arises in us when we see and hear these things. The latter conscious experience is of course different for each individual, but it refers to the same thing through the same word-meaning. In other words, this intentional experience of consciousness, which has the property of referring to something, has both individual and universal aspects. Tsuchida proceeds to investigate the essential character

81. Tsuchida 1919, 27–9, 40–1.
82. Tsuchida 1919, 29–30, 65–6.

of the intentional experience of consciousness, focusing on its universal aspects.[83]

We can interpret Tsuchida as choosing language as his starting point under the influence of Husserl's *Logical Investigations*. In the first investigation of this work, after defining expression as a meaningful sign, Husserl introduces the usual understanding of expression, in which expression can be broken down into physical aspects such as sound and letters and the mental experiences that give meaning to them. Based on this understanding, Husserl claims that the meaning of expressions is understood by other people because the latter aspect (the mental experience) is conveyed through the former aspect (the sounds and letters). In addition, he points out that there is a difference between the meaning-conferring experience, which is real in the sense that it exists in the "here and now," and the meaning it refers to, which is ideal in the sense that it is always the same and identical.[84]

The subject of the fifth investigation of Husserl's work is something called intentional experience. This subject is the same subject as that of *Ideas I*, in which Husserl defines phenomenology in contrast to empirical psychology. According to *Ideas I*, unlike empirical psychology, which is a study of individual and accidental facts, phenomenology deals with universal and inevitable essences as its object of study. Additionally, empirical psychology deals with empirical consciousness as a reality that occupies a specific position in time and space. However, phenomenology suspends the judgment that things in space-time are actually there because only one aspect of them is given, and takes as its object of analysis only transcendental pure consciousness, which is always given in its totality. Since this pure consciousness has the characteristic of being intentionally related to its object, Husserl calls it intentional experience. Husserl defines phenomenology as the study of the universal, necessary, or *a priori* of transcendental pure consciousness as intentional experience.[85]

Based on the above understanding of Husserl, Tsuchida sees phenomenology as a science of essences about intentional experience. Phenomenology can serve as the basis for philosophy because it is not the study of the

83. Tsuchida 1919, 32–45.

84. H 19: 37–40, 48–50.

85. H 3/1: 6, 12–13, 64–6, 73–5, 96–8.

experience of consciousness as it arises in time, but the study of the universal essence of conscious experience. Moreover, phenomenology does not have to make any of the leaps Windelband and Rickert needed to make, because it grasps the act of cognition as intentional and therefore correlative with meaning. Therefore Tsuchida adopts phenomenology as his own method based on this definition of phenomenology by Husserl.[86]

In addition, we can point out the influence of Nishida as another reason for Tsuchida's change of position from humanism to phenomenology. Tsuchida laments the fact that the philosophies of Windelband and Rickert, which urged his separation from humanism, are not discussed in the literary world at all.[87] Therefore, it is difficult to judge that he learned about them through the literary world. We can thus advance the claim that he first learned about them through Nishida. Tsuchida began to criticize humanism after entering the philosophy department of Kyoto Imperial University, and he did not conceal his respect for Nishida at all.[88]

As mentioned earlier, Nishida criticized the neo-Kantians in his article "Philosophy of Our Time," which was probably written based on a lecture he gave at Kyoto Imperial University in 1915. Here Nishida claims that Rickert was excellent in epistemology but extremely crude in his discussion of experience. Nishida further criticizes Bergson's philosophy of intuition, admitting that it has the best position on experience but is extremely childish on epistemology. In contrast to Rickert and Bergson, Nishida appreciates Husserl as being the closest to a synthesis of the philosophy of knowledge and the philosophy of intuition. Tsuchida's view that phenomenology, rather than neo-Kantian philosophy, is appropriate to explain the core of experience is consistent with Nishida's argument.

Furthermore, Tsuchida shares with Nishida an understanding of phenomenology as something that overcomes the difficulties of Rickert's philosophy. As mentioned earlier, for Nishida, Rickert's philosophy was problematic because it could not explain how our consciousness could relate to truth and meaning. To solve this problem, Nishida argues in *Intuition and Reflection in Self-Awareness* that truth and meaning and act are just dif-

86. Tsuchida 1919, 62–5, 70.
87. Tsuchida 1917a, 44.
88. Tsuchida 1918, 118.

ferent aspects of one consciousness, and appreciates the fact that Husserl shows a similar understanding in his concept of intentional experience. Tsuchida also adopted phenomenology on similar grounds. For Tsuchida, phenomenology, in which act and meaning are correlated and are understood as the different aspects of the same experience of consciousness, is superior to Rickert's philosophy, which could not overcome the gap between the mental act and meaning. We can thus make the claims that Tsuchida learned about phenomenology as well as Neo-Kantianism through Nishida and turned to phenomenology under Nishida's influence.

Tsuchida's phenomenology in *Philosophy of Symbols* has a number of unique characteristics. One of them is that he admits the existence of an act of demanding (要求作用) that is directed from the object to the ego, apart from the act of intention (指示作用) that is directed from the ego to its object. Nishida states in *Intuition and Reflection in Self-Awareness* that "all truths have power in themselves to move our consciousness.... For example, when we think that 2×2=4, it is an undeniable fact that is actually demanded."[89] In other words, Nishida says that truth demands that we think of the truth itself and thus moves our consciousness. The act of demanding that Tsuchida refers to is an act in which the object demands that the ego obey it.

Tsuchida explains that the act of intention can relate to the transcendent object only through a correlate that is called "meaning" or "content." This correlate is the representative of the object. Similarly, the act of demanding can relate to the ego only through a correlate that is called the "construct" (所構),[90] which has the character of the representative of the ego. According to Tsuchida, the construct, like the content, is identical to meaning. However, it is viewed from a different perspective. The meaning, as a representative of the object and of the ego at the same time, mediates and combines two completely different things, the ego and the object.[91]

Another unique characteristic of Tsuchida's philosophy is his argument that intentional experience is a mystical symbol. Based on the view that the

89. NKZ 2: 21.

90. Tsuchida uses the word 所構 as a translation of the German word *Gebilde*. See TSUCHIDA 1919, 213.

91. TSUCHIDA 1919, 47–8, 211–14.

object and the ego, two mutually contradictory things, are unified in meaning, Tsuchida calls intentional experience that includes meaning a mystery. Furthermore, on the grounds that two things that have no rational relationship are connected in symbol, as in the case of the red rose symbolizing love, he claims that intentional experience is the ultimate symbol.[92]

Another characteristic of Tsuchida's phenomenology is his insistence—based on the triadic structure of act-meaning-object—that there are stages between acts with different qualities. Husserl points out that we present the same content when we assert "there are intelligent beings on Mars" and when we wish "there are intelligent beings on Mars," and distinguishes between the two by referring to the content as "matter" and referring to the assertion or wish as "quality."[93] Tsuchida focuses on this concept of the quality of the act and uses it for his own philosophy in a different way than Husserl used it.

According to Tsuchida, an object is first intuited through intuitive meaning. For example, we see a white flower in front of us through the intuitive mental image of "this white flower." Next, this image becomes the object of the act of representation (表象作用) whose correlate is representative meaning. That is, it is represented through the representation "this white flower," Then, the act of judging (判断作用) works on this representation, which establishes a judgment with the meaning "this flower is white." Finally, Tsuchida explains, the correlate of the act of judgment, the judgmental meaning, which refers to a state of affairs, becomes the object of the act of emotion (情意作用). This is when value judgments are generated, such as "It is true that this flower is white," in which the meaning consists in a statement of value.[94]

Tsuchida understands the transition from the act of intuition (直観作用) to the act of emotion as a process in which the material is formalized into the ego as formal subject. Conversely, he regards the ego's transition from the act of emotion to the act of intuition as a process in which form is materialized and content is fulfilled to reach experience as pure material. Furthermore, he classifies this process of formalization or material-

92. Tsuchida 1919, 232–9.
93. H 19/1, 425–6.
94. Tsuchida 1919, 93–4, 206.

ization into countless stages, explaining that there are countless meanings intervening between the ego and experience. Tsuchida argues that, to be precise, the intentional experience does not have a triadic structure of act-meaning-object, but a structure of (ego)-(emotional meaning)-(judgmental meaning)-(representative meaning)-(intuitive meaning)-(experience), or most accurately, (ego)-(countless meanings)-(experience).[95]

If we capture the structure of intentional experience as act-meaning-object, then meaning is understood as something mediating and combining the ego and the object. If, on the other hand, we regard it as (ego)-(countless meanings)-(experience), then every meaning not only combines the ego with the experience, but also joins the ego with every other meaning, the experience and every other meaning, and every meaning with each other. Furthermore, since the same meaning can refer to different experiences, those experiences are also combined with each other through this meaning, and with yet other experiences through other meanings which are combined with the initial meaning. In this way, every meaning combines everything.[96]

Tsuchida's mystical symbolism is a position which holds that all things have symbolic relationships with each other through countless meanings as mystery. He cites Kegon Buddhism as a concrete example of this position.[97] Consequently, Japan's first original phenomenological work, *Philosophy of Symbols*, can be understood as an attempt to justify the worldview of Kegon Buddhism through an analysis of the essential structure of intentional experience.

Conclusion

Nishida, Tanabe, and Tsuchida initially adopted psychologistic positions against the background of widespread support for positivist and psychologistic epistemology in Japan around the turn of the twentieth century. Husserl's philosophy was first introduced to Japan as a logicist philosophy criticizing psychologism, starting with Tanabe Hajime's book review

95. Tsuchida 1919, 205–7, 231–2, 241.
96. Tsuchida 1919, 241–9.
97. Tsuchida 1919, 248–57.

"Jerusalem's *Critical Idealism and Pure Logic*" and Nishida Kitarō's paper "On the Arguments of Pure Logicism in Epistemology" in 1911.

In Japan in the 1910s, when many articles criticized Husserl, it was Nishida who first offered a positive evaluation of Husserl's phenomenology. He recognized the shortcomings of psychologism as pointed out by the neo-Kantians, but did not agree with neo-Kantian philosophy. For him, phenomenology was a philosophy that should be appreciated for its understanding that mental acts and meaning are inseparable in intentional experience, its attempt to describe pure consciousness through the phenomenological reduction, and its near-success in integrating the problem of perception with the problem of reality. Since Nishida judged, however, that Husserl's phenomenology could not grasp the world in flux, Nishida became dissatisfied with phenomenology and moved away from it.

Tanabe, who also recognized the errors of psychologism, inherited Nishida's evaluation of phenomenology and saw it as a complement to neo-Kantian philosophy. Although he described the essence of consciousness or experience in a chapter of his own work that included the word "phenomenological" in its title, Tanabe's understanding of phenomenology here merely followed Nishida's, and he did not provide his own phenomenological analysis.

Tsuchida was the first in Japan to consciously adopt phenomenology as his own method. Initially, he adopted a humanist position, but after studying philosophy under Nishida, he realized the errors of its psychological character. Therefore he changed his position to one called mystical symbolism, which supports a Buddhist worldview in which all things are related to each other as symbols and in which everything is a symbol of everything else. He tried to justify this mystical symbolism through phenomenological analysis about the essential structure of intentional experience. Influenced by Nishida's positive evaluation of phenomenology, Tsuchida gave birth to Japan's first original phenomenology.

As far as I can tell, there is no one who has served as a successor to Tsuchida's phenomenology. In the 1920s, however, phenomenological studies became so popular that many Japanese philosophers studied abroad at the University of Freiburg, where Husserl was a professor, and phenomenology

came to be increasingly accepted in Japan.[98] The detailed circumstances of this period will be discussed in another paper.

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Abbreviations

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THZ 『田辺元全集』[*Complete Works of Tanabe Hajime*] (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1963–1964), 15 vols.

H *Husserliana* (Den Haag, 1950–).

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98. In 1910s Japan, Geiger's phenomenological aesthetics was also introduced by Ōnishi Yoshinori (see *Ōnishi* 1917). It was not until the 1920s that other phenomenologists like Scheler and Heidegger were introduced to Japan.

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