

Acting-Intuition and Pathos in Nishida and Miki: For the Invisible of the Post-Hiroshima Age, or Irradiated Bodies and Power

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Kitaro Nishida was born in 1870, two years after the collapse of the feudal regime in Japan, and he passed away in 1945, the year World War II ended. Thus, Nishida belongs to the second generation of Japanese intellectuals who struggled to steer an autonomous course in the face of the overwhelming influx of Western thought and culture, and is generally regarded as the most significant philosopher of modern Japan.

James and Nishida on “pure experience”¹

However, what is to be noted first is the fact that it was in William James’s idea of “pure experience” that the young Nishida found a philosophical stand, one that was not only radical enough upon which to ground a new philosophical system, but also congenial to some of the core-features of traditional Buddhist thought.

The major tenets of the Jamesian philosophy of pure experience were the negation of the ontological dualism of subject-object, which entailed such consequential corollaries as the “functional” re-interpretation of the notion of consciousness, the discovery of the ambiguous body as the center for the field of lived experience, the thematization of the phenomenon of “fringes” or “horizon-structure” as essential to any type of experience, and the restitution of affective values as originally pre-given in the ambiguity of pure experience.

These ideas in phenomenology were propounded in James’s *Essays in Radical Empiricism* in such a clearly focused manner that Alfred N Whitehead once considered James’s work comparable to Descartes’ *Discourse on Method* in terms of the “inauguration of a new stage in philosophy.” Whitehead wrote in *Science and the Modern World*:

James clears the stage of the old paraphernalia; or rather he entirely alters its lighting.

(Whitehead 1925: 143)

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In view of Nishida's responses to James's philosophy of pure experience, moreover, we might extend Whitehead's metaphor even further: James transforms the very design of the entire theater of modern philosophy in such a way as to provide a stage fit to accommodate both the Western *and* the Eastern philosophical traditions.

Nishida wrote in a letter to one of his friends in 1910 as follows:

These days I have been reading the recently published articles of James. I find them interesting. They seem to bear a clear resemblance to Zen.

(Nishida 1955, vol. 18: 132).

Nishida was reading James's articles that were later to be included in *Essays in Radical Empiricism*. In brief, Nishida encountered the Jamesian philosophy of pure experience under Buddhist illumination.

Nishida's maiden work, *An Inquiry into the Good* (善の研究), published in 1911, a year after James's death, starts with a chapter simply entitled "Pure Experience (純粹経験)." And the collected works of Nishida, comprising 15 volumes of philosophical inquiry, are generally considered the products of his persistent and strenuous endeavors, spanning more than three decades, to transform and overcome what he considered the psychologistic shortcomings of the notion of pure experience by providing it with logical as well as socio-historical dimensions.

Metamorphoses of pure experience in Nishida

Logic of Place (場所の論理)

Thus, Nishida came to establish his stand of Place of Absolute Nothingness (絶対無の場所) in *From the Actor to the Seer* (働くものから見るものへ) in 1927. In the 1926 article simply entitled "Place (場所)," Nishida wrote:

The field of consciousness conceived psychologically is already something conceptualized: it is nothing but a kind of object. However, the field of consciousness that is conscious of such a field of consciousness cannot be transcended even at its limit. *Also for the field of consciousness we take to be real, there always lies something that transcends reality at the back of it.* (Nishida 1987: 70, my emphasis)

Judgment consists of the relation between a subject and a predicate. If it is to be established as judgmental knowledge at all, there must be predicative dimensions spreading at the back of it. Even concerning the so-called empirical knowledge, inasmuch as it is judgmental knowledge, there lie predicative universals at its bottom ... Ordinarily, the Self, like things, is considered to be a unity of the grammatical subject that has a variety of attributes, but *the Self must be the predicative unity instead of the (grammatical) subjective unity. It must be, not a point, but a circle: it must be, not a thing, but a place.* (Nishida 1987: 140–141, my emphasis)

Actually William James was one of those who first propounded the notion of "field of consciousness," which was nothing but a development of his notion of "fringes" or "horizon": James concluded in "Continuity of Experience" included in *A Pluralistic Universe*:

My present field of consciousness is a centre surrounded by a fringe that shades insensibly into a subconscious more ... What we conceptually identify ourselves with and say we are thinking of at any time is the centre; but our *full* self is the whole field, with all those indefinitely radiating subconscious

possibilities of increase that we can feel without conceiving, and can only feel without conceiving, and can hardly begin to analyze.

(James 1909: 288–289; original emphasis)

In the same essay James condenses his views about the ever-changing nature of reality in such laconic expressions as the perpetual “apparition of difference” in the present field of experience or the “fatally continuous infiltration of the other” in the stream of consciousness. One is gripped by the still fresh appeal of these Jamesian characterizations of the so-called stream of experience as immediately given.

As is well-known, in the later Merleau-Ponty the phenomenological notion of “horizon” came to coalesce with the initially linguistic notion of the “diacritical or differential signification” so as to form the unique notion of the “flesh of the world.” It is by dint of such a creative transformation of the notion of the “horizon” that Merleau-Ponty aims to carry out his critique of the notions of the subject and the object as framed within traditional logic.

We do not find in Nishida a corresponding resort to an emphatic use of the notion of “diacritical signification” which characterizes the later Merleau-Ponty’s thought. However, it is to be noted that Nishida resorted to James’s notion of “fringes” at some of the crucial junctures on his way toward the establishment of the “logic of place (場所の論理).” Nishida writes:

William James wrote of the “*fringes of consciousness*,” but the world of the present has in fact *infinite fringes*. Therein exists the world of pure, undetermined nothingness, and the world of what Heidegger called “*das Man* (one).” And therein lies the world of mere rumors as well. As long as it determines us in any sense, we feel infinite anxiety in the depths of such a world. (Nishida 1970:177, my emphasis)

Nishida appropriates the Jamesian notion of “fringes” in such a way as explicitly to link it with the Heideggerian theme of the being-in-the-world; but James’s own thought would grant legitimacy to such ontological move by Nishida. As a matter of fact, to interpret “horizons” as grounds of our being-in-the-world can be regarded as a natural and necessary unfolding of this notion’s most significant implication.

Acting-Intuition (行為的直観) and the historical body (歴史的身体)

However, a truly radical turn was still to be made in Nishida Philosophy. In 1933 Nishida began “The Stand of the Acting Self (行為的自己の立場)” with the following challenging statement: “It seems to me that philosophy has never truly been thought about from the standpoint of the acting self; therefore, it has not been thought about from the ground up, in terms of what the real world in which we act is like.” He went on to criticize the very fundamental frames for philosophical questioning presupposed in Western philosophical tradition, beginning with Aristotle and continuing through Kant, Hegel, and Marx, and on through Dilthey and Heidegger as well.² And it was from such a stand of acting-self situated in the historical world that Nishida was to advance such pivotal notions as “acting-intuition” and “historical body” in his later philosophy.

In one of his major essays, “Logic and Life (論理と生命),” written in 1936, Nishida propounds these notions as follows:

We see the world of forms to the extent that our body is formed. Therefore, we can maintain that, without the body, there would be no self. It holds true for animals, too. Therefore, the body is of the logos character.

(Nishida 1988: 233)

True intuition is not, as is usually understood, simply one's losing oneself, or things and the self becoming one. It means that the self becomes creative ... Therein our body becomes what sees as well as what works ... The world becomes the self's body."

(Nishida 1988: 246–247)

The very life of our selves, which are possessed of *historical bodies* and are acting-intuitional, is self-contradictory. Historical life itself is self-contradictory. It cannot be the case that what knows is what is known. Our self-awareness is self-contradictory. Our body is also a thing. Things are what is seen. *But our body is what sees at the same time that it is what works* ... One recognizes a self-contradiction solely in the thinking self because he starts with the thinking self, separating the bodily self from it. But even the thinking self cannot exist apart from our *historical body*. Things are expressive, and things have names. We intuit things acting-intuitionally as *bodily being*; our thinking self consists in intuiting things acting-intuitionally as names. Apart from the historical body that intuits actingly, there would be neither *self-contradiction* (自己矛盾) nor *self-awareness* (自覚). Therefore, there would not be a starting-point for the thinking self either.

(Nishida 1988: 264–266, my emphasis)

In the years that followed, Nishida expressed these seminal notions of “acting-intuition” and the “historical body” over and over, in a range of texts, using an array of different formulations.

The passage quoted above contains parallels to “Eye and Mind,” in which Merleau-Ponty wove a beautiful tapestry from a vision of the chiasmic texture of the bodily field – his “flesh of the world”:

The enigma is that my body simultaneously sees and is seen. That which looks at all things can also look at itself and recognize, in what it sees, the “other side” of its power of looking ... It is not a *self* through transparency, like thought, which only thinks its object by assimilating it, by constituting it, by transforming it into thought ... *This initial paradox* cannot but produce others. Visible and mobile, my body is a thing among things; it is caught in the fabric of the world, and its cohesion is that of a thing. But because it moves itself and sees, it holds things in a circle around itself. Things are an annex or prolongation of itself; they are incrustated into its *flesh*, they are part of its full definition; the world is made of the same stuff as the body. This way of turning things around, these *antinomies*, are different ways of saying that vision happens among, or caught in, things.

(Merleau-Ponty 1964: 162–163)

Despite many terminological differences between the two passages just quoted, they share the ontological notion of the bodily, expressive self as obtaining in and through a particular type of relationship between that bodily self and the world – “chiasmic” in Merleau-Ponty’s parlance, “self-contradictory” in Nishida’s. In other words, just as Nishida’s philosophy developed from one of “pure experience,” through a process of self-critique, into a new “dialectical” vision of the self, Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy followed a comparable evolution, developing from one of “ambiguity” into a new chiasmic vision of the self.

According to the view they shared, the ambiguous body is essential to considering our existence in the world; it is not so much that the body is ambiguous in the negative sense of forever oscillating indeterminately between the subjective and the objective poles, but rather that the ambiguous body is incessantly playing the pivotal role in the self-reflexive structuring of the bodily field of experience. Nishida struggled to express this vision – a struggle comparable to chiseling stone – and ultimately arrived at the notions of “acting intuition” and “the self-identity of the absolute

contradictories.” Merleau-Ponty struggled similarly – and in his case the result was the concept of “the flesh and the chiasm.”

More recently, we have witnessed the unfolding of similar lines of thought under the headings of “perception-action coupling,” “the enactive approach,” “the “embodied mind,” or “active vision.” (See Gibson 1979; Varela et al 1991; Lakoff and Johnson 1999; Findlay and Gilchrist 2003; Noë 2005.) It would be difficult to overstate the seminal significance of Nishida and Merleau-Ponty – the significance both of their shared vision as well as of each one’s particular expression of that vision – in setting the stage for these subsequent developments.

World of historical reality as pure experience?

Nishida’s inquiry into the “phenomenology of the world of historical reality” through the analyses of the body induced him to accomplish his own “return to the historical life-world.” And the historical life-world Nishida discovered was not confined to the world where individuals, who determine each other voluntarily, stand directly face to face with each other; it is also the world where innumerable independent individuals, who exist disjunctively and cannot be connected directly, determine each other expressively through *poiesis* (production of things). Or, from the perspective of Nishida’s philosophy of place, it is the way the world appears when the multi-layered relationships of expressive mutual determination between “innumerable individuals” is grasped afresh as the ultimate reality under the name of the “dialectical general–universal.” It is the vision of the dialectical world of “historical reality,” in which the independent “unique individuals, (唯一なる個物)” namely, the “unmediatables” which go on determining themselves individually, come to be mediated expressively. In Nishida’s terminology, it is the historical world formed by the dialectical process of “from-what-has-been-made to what- makes (作られたものから作るものへ)”; we are the “creative elements in the creative world (創造の世界に於ける創造的要素)” (Nishida 1988: 214). Thus, in the preface to the second edition of *An Inquiry into the Good* published in 1936, Nishida stated: “What I called in the present book the world of direct or pure experience I have now come to think of as the world of historical reality. The world of action-intuition – the world of *poiesis* – is none other than the world of pure experience” (Nishida 1992: xxxiii).

From “what-has-been-made” to “what-destroys”

However, when we regard the “world of historical reality” as the “world of pure experience” without reservation, we are likely to fail, as Keiji Nishitani (西谷啓治) has pointed out, in grasping adequately the fact that, as a conscious self, one takes “usually the viewpoint of ‘*hunbetsu* (分別)’ [ego-centered judgment based on dualistic discriminations] removed from real facts” and that “illusory falsity is one grave fact here” (Nishitani 1991: 185; translation adjusted). In other words, human beings seized with illusory falsities and driven by desires exert themselves in producing weapons and commodities; in consequence, the world can come to the brink of extinction – such inversion of falsity and reality is to be overlooked under a veil of philosophic idealistic vision.

Our own time is an age in which the concrete “possibility of the end of human history” weighs heavy. What the earth as a whole faces at present is, to paraphrase Nishida’s expression, a problematic situation where “what has been made” can become “what destroys” par excellence, for example nuclear weapons, or environmental hormones. In other words, we face a situation where a “decisive termination in discontinuity” can occur in an eschatological turn from “what-has-been-made” to “what-has-been-destroyed” instead of a dialectical “continuity of discontinuity (非連続の連続)” from “what-has-been-made to what-makes.” In a word, we can turn out “destructive

elements” in the creative world. Nay; our time is the “Post-Nanjing,” “Post-Auschwitz,” “Post-Minamata” age as well; consequently, its history is haunted by a host of invisible memories of “those who have been destroyed.” The implicit optimism Nishida seemed to harbor toward the dialectics of “from-what-has-been-made” to “what-makes” could be considered to derive ultimately from his trust or faith in the “place of absolute nothingness.” But it would be beyond question that such optimism is no longer warrantable today. It is not that there is little consideration of “crisis” in Nishida’s philosophical thinking. For example, Nishida emphasizes that the “world of everydayness” is the “world of misgivings” where, “in every act, we verge more or less on a crisis” because “in every *poiesis* it is not only the case that I change things, but also things change me” (Nishida 1965: 70). Nonetheless, it seems legitimate to talk about the “implicit optimism” lying at the bottom of Nishida’s logic of absolute nothingness.

Kiyoshi Miki and the 1930s: Toward constructing “co-existence spheres of pathos”

In the case of the Kyoto School philosophers, it was none other than Nishida’s “stand of acting-self” that was shared by most of them and became one of the main springboards for their own critical thinking. Notably it was the case for Kiyoshi Miki, one of the closest students of Nishida’s, who endeavored to overcome what he considered still lacking in his master’s “stand of acting self.”

Since his life and thought is much less known than those of Nishida, some biographical overview would be in order before considering some of his main philosophical ideas relevant to our concerns.³

Just having a brief overview of Miki’s career, it would be understood clearly how deeply the life and thought of Miki was entangled with the age in which he lived. Hiroshi Uchida summarizes the characteristics of Kiyoshi Miki the philosopher at the beginning of his comprehensive work on Miki’s life and thought (Uchida 2004). According to Uchida, firstly Miki was a “philosopher who endeavored to provide philosophy with *genjitsusei* (現実, reality/actuality), and he aimed at nothing but “to construct philosophy as a directive to criticize and reform life-reality.” Secondly, Miki consistently set philosophy of history at his thinking; it was a philosophy of history that aims at creative society to be made by *koseisha* [unique individuals] using their formative imagination (構想力) freely. Thirdly, Miki was “a pioneer in history of Western philosophy and history of thought,” and fourthly he was “an excellent journalist and an editor.” Further, Uchida points out that Miki’s philosophy constitutes “a world of encyclopedic philosophy, and Miki was “a philosopher with a world-historical perspective.”

In particular, it would be worth noting that Miki helped to invent the various forms of publication such as “*bunko* (文庫, paperback collection of classic works),” “*shinsho* (新書, paperback collection of introductory works on contemporary issues),” and “*kôza*” (講座, hardcover collection of academic works) through his editorial involvement at Iwanami Shoten and they were intended to construct an “intellectual public sphere” consisting of individuals with wide knowledge and autonomous judgment. However, it would be very questionable whether Miki’s philosophy succeeded to “gain, not a mere logical constitution of reality, but a contact with reality itself,” and to “discover the point from which he could drive a wedge into the living reality itself without contenting himself with the work of mere logical mediation.”

Logic of formative imagination (構想力の論理)

According to Uchida’s summary, “logic/logos” in Miki’s *logic of formative imagination* (構想力の論理) is, first of all, a mode developed from the bodily *jukusei* (受苦性, pathos) of human

beings; that is, “in order to liberate oneself from one’s sensibility that is sensing one’s mind/body’s *jukusei* (pathos), it is necessary first to look into its *jukusei* (pathos) transparently,” and its workings deriving from pathos need to “develop into workings of logos that look objectively at the sources of its *juku* (受苦, passions).” But, in order to become liberated from the sources of *juku* (passions), it would not be sufficient just to look at them objectively; we need the second logos, that is, “the ability to transcend the limits of the established reality, meta-logos to form a new image of life-world in its place.” Therefore, Miki’s “*logic of formative imagination*” is multi-layered, implying the following triple meaning: first, the logos consciousness that comes into being transcending the pathos consciousness in which it is rooted; also, as a result, the mode wherein the pathos consciousness and the logos consciousness are internally united; furthermore, the deepest human capacity of meta-logos that appears with such double aspect.

Dialectics of logos and pathos: Its implicit assumptions

These visions show Miki’s pioneering attempts to respond to the challenges posed by the then rising Marxist philosophy of history, and they exerted decisive influences, as pointed out by Toshiaki Kobayashi and others, on other philosophers of the Kyoto School including Nishida himself (see Kobayashi 2010). And yet, isn’t there an inherent danger lurking in the “logic of formative imagination” and the “dialectic of pathos and logos” – namely, the danger of ending up with “mere logical mediation” and failing to gain “contact with reality”? In particular, what are the boundaries of pathos?

While emphasizing the contemporary significance of Miki’s philosophy and our task to critically inherit it, Tsunehiro Akamatsu challenges Miki’s relation of subject to environment via technology – his “philosophy of technological-poietic act”:

Miki posits the opposition of the subject and its environment as an a priori premise, and, on such basis, defines technology as what mediates and harmonizes such opposition. But there is no “*sachlich*” (concrete reality-based) analysis about why there comes into being the opposition between the subject and its environment in the first place. We can find only the use of the speculative notion of “transcendence.” Looking back on the history of human species, can’t we recognize that it is rather technology itself that has been bringing about the opposition between the subject and its environment to a certain extent? It is one-sided to fall into sheer pessimism regarding technology, but the optimism of technology is one-sided, too. Miki’s theory of technology is optimistic, and it seems that at its back there lies a philosophy of harmony à la Nishida that envelops all.

(Akamatsu 1994: 237–238)

A similar type of problem would be pointed out also about the “dialectics of logos and pathos.” In a word, according to Miki’s “logic of formative imagination”, isn’t the conflict between pathos and logos treated in such a way as to be transcended, in a pre-established harmony-like way, by the “mere logical mediation” that Miki most wanted to avoid? One of its most consequential problems seems to lie in the fact that Miki considered the conflict between logos and pathos almost solely regarding the inside of individuals; Miki did not consider the problem as it appears in the concrete situations of the life-world which has, to use Hannah Arendt’s expression, “plurality” as its ontological condition. In other words, we feel that Miki did not look in the face, at least thematically, the problems concerning, not conflicts inside individuals, but “clashes of pathos and pathos” or “conflicts of logos and logos” between different, opposing individuals or groups. Akamatsu also analyzes the problem as follows:

In Miki's theory of culture, it is posited as a self-evident premise that human culture is formed among human beings who are endowed with the same essences (human nature). Even if there are others, they are not regarded as totally heterogeneous others who can evade from mutual understanding, but regarded as those who can understand each other because of the same essences; forms of culture are taken to be forms that are built through the interactions with others who share common essences.

(Akamatsu 1994: 331)

Truth as “responding to calls from others”

However, it is not the case that we cannot find in Miki's work no consideration focused on “gaps with others.” We often encounter highly intriguing, crystalline expressions of them. For example, in the chapter on “the problems regarding action” in his *Introduction to Philosophy* (哲学入門) Miki writes:

Moral truth is historical truth, and it occurs between a subject and a subject ... it is what occurs between a human being and a human being (人と人の間); therefore, it can be the case that it does not occur, and then falsity instead of truth appears ... What is human truth (人のまこと)? It means: I (我) become awakened from thou and respond to the call of thou (汝). My truth (まこと, sincerity) becomes disclosed in such responding, and truth occurs; that is, its truth is historical. It is the true reality (真相) of the being of morality. Calls are always concrete, and acts to respond to such calls are always concrete. In order to become awakened by thou, I must be pure and true/sincere (まこと). Moral truth that is historical and acting/practical in essence, does not lie solely in the truth (まこと) of I, and nor does it lie solely in the truth of thou; it lies in the between of I and thou (我と汝の間). (Miki 1940: 172–173)

“Moral truth is ... what occurs between a human being and a human being; therefore, it can be the case that it does not occur, and then falsity instead of truth appears” – when we make this recognition of reality thorough-going, which is simple but can be far-reaching in its implications, we have to call into question, not only the fundamental projects of Miki's philosophy, but also the truth in the “age of wars” in which we are living now.

It is said: “the first casualty of war is truth”; when a war is started, often facts are distorted and big lies are fabricated in order to justify the war. Furthermore, even after a war ends, truth continues to be sacrificed. Examples are innumerable. According to Uchida, the post-war history of thought in Japan started with Miki's death in prison. But we cannot help but say that the construction of the “co-existence sphere of pathos” which Miki could not achieve remains as an ever-daunting task for us to tackle.

Weapons as our technological bodies

Next, we would like to bring into light the issue of so-called “inhuman weapons” as what illustrates symbolically the critical problems Nishida and Miki failed to give adequate consideration; that is, the destructive capabilities of our “technological bodies” and the reality of the often invisible “pathos of others” in times of war.

One of the noticeable characteristics of the philosophical discourses unfolded by Nishida and Miki on the historical world, or for that matter by the Kyoto School thinkers in general, is the generally very positive evaluation of the technology-mediated modes of our historical existence. For example, Nishida writes:

Starting from our biological body, we possess things as instruments, and make things into our own body technologically: therein *our technological body* (技術的身体) is established. Thus, when the world

becomes one's own body starting from the biological body, it can be thought that the self loses its own body. And it can be thought as well that thence we enter the world of the merely namable, the world of intentional objects, the world of consciousness. But it is not that our body has become lost, but our body has become deepened to the speaking body. Actually, however, when we say that we possess instruments, it already implies that we are those who speak.

(Nishida 1988: 214, my emphasis)

However, neither the destructive capabilities of our “technological bodies” nor the damaging “passions” to be inflicted upon those who suffer their effects seem to have received their due consideration from the Kyoto School thinkers.

Perhaps this should not be surprising. Even today, when weapons as instruments are functioning as most powerful extensions of our biological bodies, and technological systems of modern high-tech weaponry can be regarded as our “collective military bodies,” most of us are not fully aware of them. Like Gregor Samsa, in Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, who wakes up one morning to discover that his body has turned into that of a big vermin and yet quickly becomes accustomed (at least partially) to its nightmarish reality, we are enveloped in, and more or less accustomed to, these high-tech weapons. The destructive capabilities of our “technological bodies” and the reality of the often invisible “pathos of others” – especially in times of war – are ultimately *ours* as well.

The DU (Depleted Uranium) problem as the “nuclear shadow”

Consequently, “disarmament” can be regarded as human endeavors to dis-arm our collective technological bodies. Though the nuclear weapons issue can grab political attention because of its undeniable gravity, there are other kinds of so-called “inhuman weapons” that need to be abolished if we are to restore “human” nature for our collective technological bodies as much as possible. Among such “inhuman weapons” are the so-called DU (Depleted Uranium) weapons; DU has been an object of very complicated controversies ever since it came to be suspected as one of the probable causes for Gulf War Syndrome in the early 1990s.⁴

I consider that the DU (Depleted Uranium) problem can be regarded as the “nuclear shadow” in the triple sense of the word as follows.

First, DU is a waste product generated in huge quantities in the process of enriching uranium to make nuclear weapons or nuclear energy. Beyond the problematic human-centric term “waste,” DU is the inevitable, colossal *shadow* brought about by the production of nuclear weapons and nuclear power. It is said that so far, a mind-boggling 1.5 million tons of DU have accumulated on earth. DU is the shadow of the nuclear age, which is so vast that it is difficult for us to see it since we ourselves are covered up by it.

Secondly, despite the continued warnings sounded about the toxicity of DU, particularly since the Gulf War, both the US and the UK continue to deny the danger. Even specialized UN organs, such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Atomic Energy Agency, continue to hold their views based on the so-called “lack of scientific evidence” of harmful effects, and contribute, as a consequence, to condoning and supporting the claims of the governments of the US and the UK. The DU problem, which stems from the risks posed by “low-level radiation,” has thus been thrust to the periphery of the international community's concern. The adjective “depleted” itself can be regarded as the shadow cast over reality to cover up the harmfulness of DU.

Thirdly, following the repeated use of DU weapons in recent conflicts, voices around the world are crying out about the harm inflicted; it is an on-going issue. But even in the disarmament community and among anti-nuclear activists, DU tends to be considered a low-priority issue. The

unparalleled *shadows* cast by nuclear weapons and other overwhelming global problems have hidden the gravity and the urgency of the DU scourge.

Thus, the DU problem can be regarded, not only as the “nuclear shadow” in the triple sense mentioned above, but also as an extremely critical problem that lies at the very core of the global “power” structure of the post-Hiroshima age where the issues involving military and political power and nuclear energy power intersect with each other.

The invisible of the post-Hiroshima age: irradiated body and power

The dropping of the A-bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki is one of the decisive historical events that have been functioning as a historical “pivot,” to use Merleau-Ponty’s term, for the Post-Hiroshima Age. However, this nuclear “pivot” has a double structure within itself; while the devastating, visible effects of “external radiation” caused by the instantaneous explosions are well-known and indeed work as a strong incentive to abolish nuclear weapons, the insidious low-level “internal radiation” caused by the intrusion of residual, radioactive materials into the human body has not been fully recognized till recently even in Japan; as a matter of fact, its danger has been largely suppressed globally as exemplified in the case of Chernobyl. This could be considered to be due mostly to the need to minimize its danger and keep it “invisible” in order to legitimize the so-called “peaceful” use of nuclear power. The “nuclear power” system seen from such a point of view can be regarded as the truly “invisible institution” of the Post-Hiroshima Age.

Thus, taking clues from the philosophical views on the body developed by Nishida and Merleau-Ponty, we can call into question anew the “nuclear power” system as the “invisible institution” conditioning our age not only militarily, but also politically and economically, in order to “re-institutionalize” it by re-considering the “safety-level” set by ICRP (the International Committee on Radiation Protection); it would mean bringing into light the relationship between “irradiated bodies” and power in the Post-Hiroshima Age. Then, the DU issue will be understood as a decisive pivot for the nuclear power institution.⁵

Conclusion: Facing the disintegration of experience and natality in peril

Nishida’s notions of “acting intuition” and “from ‘what-has-been-made’ to ‘what-makes’” can be regarded as sharing in the basic understanding, propounded by various philosophers, that “experience” is formed by the ever-circular and inseparable relationship between “action and passion” (or, for example, “doing and undergoing,” to use Dewey’s expression). However, what is aimed at in modern *military* action is, in a nutshell, to *separate* action from its effects as much as possible. In other words, the formation of “experience” in the full sense of the word is purposefully hindered in modern military action. In particular, the effects of military actions – that is, the effects that victims suffer – often tend to be ignored or underestimated by aggressors. The separation between the actions of modern military collective bodies and their effects epitomize the disintegration or one-sided dis-formation of experience in our age; this is what lies at the core of the problem of “*inhuman* weapons.”

Furthermore, as shown by the case of DU weapons, it is not only direct victims of military action who are forced to undergo indiscriminate, unjustifiable effects of actions; new-born babies and future generations are being endangered by them, too. Thus, with DU weapons, effects are separated from actions to yet a *further* remove. Hannah Arendt talked about “natality” in terms of freedom’s coming into the world, but what is being reported from the DU-affected areas such as southern Iraq is nothing but “natality in peril.”⁶

In order to fully unfold the seminal possibilities of the philosophy of “pure experience” as substantiated by Nishida in such terms as “acting intuition” and “continuity of discontinuity” and further developed by Miki in such terms as “dialectics of logos and pathos” and “logic of formative imagination,” we would first have to come face to face with the reality of the historical world we are living in today, specifically the nature of modern weapons and the reciprocal influence between those weapons and virtually every action of the modern military collective bodies that employ them.⁷

Notes

1. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my long-time friend, Joseph T. Scarry, for his editorial and stylistic suggestions for this paper.
2. Let us quote some rather long passages from this decisive article marking Nishida’s “historical turn” because they reveal, though in very broad strokes, the fundamental stance taken by Nishida with regard to some of the central figures in the history of Western philosophy.

In order to view the world of the acting self from the standpoint of the acting self there must be a logic of the acting self. Greek logic was a logic of the subject. Aristotle considered that which is a subject and cannot ever become a predicate to be a true substance. The world of the Greeks was not a world of action. It was a world, not of action, but objects of sight. The same can be said for Aristotle’s philosophy....

It [Kantian logic] was a logic of the world of working, yet it was not a logic of a world of acting beings, for it was not a logic of social and historical reality ...

That which exists in the world of action must be both subjective and objective. The world of action must be both subjective and objective. The world of action must include both subject and object. The subjectivity of such a world is not a mere unity of subject and object but is rather a dialectical self-determination. Dialectic can be called a logic of practice. Hegel must be cited as the originator of such logic.

But while logic of social and historical reality was first pioneered by Hegel, his dialectical logic was still a logic of the subject and of the noema. In short, it was still a variation of Greek philosophy. This is the reason why Marx’s materialistic dialectic emerged to turn Hegel’s dialectic on its head. However, to define dialectics materialistically, as do present-day Marxists, is ultimately to negate dialectics and to revert to physical science ...

Dilthey was the first to conceive of the world of historical life as a world of expression, a world of understanding. Therefore, he laid the foundation of modern *Lebensphilosophie*. Similarly, modern-day *Geisteswissenschaft* has been greatly influenced by Dilthey. However, Dilthey conceived of the historical world as an object of cognition rather than as what determines personal action. But the historical world is not simply the historical world of understanding, for it must also determine personal action. People are born and die in history. Even Heidegger’s *Existenz-philosophie*, which was influenced by Dilthey, does not refer to a world which determines human action, but rather a world of understanding. Even though we suffer infinite burdens in it and it is “pro-jected,” it is still not the world from which we are born. It is neither the world that determines the individual, nor the world that includes the I-Thou relation. It is not the world that determines us through its own self-determination. It still is a world seen from the outside and not the world in which people exist. (Nishida 1988:11–15)

3. Kiyoshi Miki was born in 1897 in a village, now part of Tatsuno City in western Japan. After graduating from junior high school he went on to the First High School in Tokyo. But because he was so deeply moved by Nishida’s Inquiry into the Good, he decided to enter Kyoto Imperial University; Miki writes in his essay, “My Adolescence”: “Around that time there was no one who went to the Humanities at Kyoto University; I was the first to do so.”

Writing a senior thesis entitled “Critical Philosophy and Philosophy of History,” he continues to work on philosophy of history. In 1922 when he was 25 years old, he went to Germany to study under Rickert at Heidelberg University. However, he moved to Marburg the next year to work under Heidegger and came to conceive the “ontology of life” as his own *problematique*. [Around this time it was not rare for Japanese aspiring scholars to be related to the Kyoto School to study under Heidegger as well as Husserl. Though

the case of Shuzō Kuki is quite well-known, Hajime Tanabe kept a long engagement with Heidegger's thought after his stay in Germany during 1922–24, and he contributed a critical article, "Ontology of Life or Dialectics of Death" to an anthology commemorating Heidegger's 70th birthday.]

Further, the following year he moved on to Paris and became absorbed by Pascal's *Pensées* which he came across by chance. Later on Miki writes: "When I was reading this book quietly late at night, tears often came out of my eyes of their own accord in the indescribable solitude and loneliness. While thinking about *Pensées*, I felt what I had learned from Prof. Heidegger to begin to take on a living significance."

Coming back to Japan in October 1926, he continued working on Pascal and, the next year, published his first book, *A Study of Human Beings in Pascal* (パスカルに於ける人間の研究). The following year, becoming a professor at Hōsei University in Tokyo, he started to engage in editorial works for Iwanami Shoten; the start of Iwanami Bunko, a well-known and still popular paperback collection of classic books, was one of his first contributions.

In May 1930 he was arrested on the charge of giving a donation to the Japanese Communist Party and detained at a prison till mid-November. While he was detained, criticism against Miki's philosophy began to emerge from the Proletariat Science group. Resigned from the University, Miki started writing *Philosophy of History* after he was released from detention. In 1932, the next year of the Manchuria Incident, he wrote the article, "Human Beings and State in Spinoza," and argued for international peace.

In May 1933 Miki announced, together with others, a public appeal against the Nazis' burning of books. In November he published "Heidegger and the Fate of Philosophy" to criticize Heidegger's commitment to Nazism. In 1936 Miki criticized Nishida's philosophy for not having overcome its "contemplative" stand. In May of the following year he started a series of articles under the title of *Logic of Formative Imagination*. Around this time he joined the Shōwa Kenkyūkai (昭和研究会), a study group organized by some officers of the Japanese Navy and some of the leading intellectuals of the day], and criticized the Soviet establishment in "Logic of Politics and Logic of Human Beings."

In November 1938, publication of the article, "Thought to Connect Japan and China"; in the same month, Iwanami Shinsho, a paperback collection of introductory works on contemporary issues in whose planning and editorial process Miki participated, was started with China-related books as its main features. [In the same month, the Konoe Cabinet announced the "East-Asia New Order" (東亜新秩序) statement.] In December Miki published "Grounds for East-Asia Thought." In January of the following year, 1938, Miki made public "Thought Principles for New Japan" as a statement of Shōwa Kenkyūkai; in February, publication of "Actuality of the East-Asia Collaborating Community."

In March 1940 *Introduction to Philosophy* was published and immediately turned out to be a bestseller, going beyond 100,000 copies. From March to April, an inspection trip to China at the request of Chūō-Kōronsha, a major publisher in Tokyo. [In November Shōwa Kenkyūkai was disbanded, and the Taisei-yokusan-kai (the trans-party militarist coalition) was formed. In November 1941, publication of *Philosophical Notes*. In December Miki criticized the Japan-centricist philosophy of Masaaki Kohsaka, one of Nishida's disciples, in a dialogue entitled "Philosophy of Minzoku (民族, People/Nation)."

In January 1942, going to Manila in the Philippines as a correspondent for the Army. In December, coming back from Manila, to find that the publication of *Dictionary of Contemporary Philosophy*, which Miki edited, was to be terminated according to an advisory counsel from the government. In March, resuming to publish, in *Shisō* (思想, Thought), Iwanami's monthly journal, a series of articles under the heading of "Logic of Formative Imagination," and completed it in July. In November 1944, defending, in the article, "Tasks of Contemporary Theories on Minzoku (People/Nation)," the national movements aiming to liberate themselves from the status of colonies. Writing the manuscripts for his last, incomplete work, *Shinran* (親鸞). [Shinran was one of the most important religious figures in medieval Japan.]

On March 28, 1945, arrested inside Iwanami Shoten on the charge of protecting a fugitive. On September 26, died at the age of 48 because of the harsh treatment at the Toyotama Prison. [These biographical notes are based on Miki 2007. See also: Mayeda 2006.]

4. The so-called "depleted uranium (DU)" is waste created in the process of enriching uranium for making nuclear weapons and generating nuclear power. In natural uranium there are three isotopes of uranium, U234, U235, and U238. It is only U235 that is "fissionable," but it accounts for a miniscule 0.72%; hence,

the need for an “enrichment” process to concentrate the useful U235 isotopes; the waste left behind is called “depleted uranium” and almost 99.8% U238. To date, DU accumulated worldwide amounts to over 1.5 million tons; U238 is a radioactive material that emits alpha rays as it decays.

In the 1950s, the US began research on methods of disposing of or making use of DU, and one proposal was to turn it into weapons. Because uranium is 2.5 times heavier than iron and 1.7 times heavier than lead, rounds with DU can penetrate far more deeply, travel further, and have higher precision, these properties make DU an “ideal” material to be used for “penetrators” of anti-tank rounds. Because DU rounds are 2.4 times more penetrative than steel rounds of the same size, the destructive power of DU weapons is considered “revolutionary”, and conventional vehicles have become simply helpless against them. Furthermore, because it is nuclear waste, it is available to the US munitions industry at virtually no charge.

When a DU penetrator strikes a tank and combusts, about 20-30% becomes aerosolized into tiny particles that disperse into the atmosphere. The highly toxic heavy metal is roughly 60% as radioactive as natural uranium and has a half-life of 4.5 billion years. [For comparison, human life began 4 billion years ago.] Alpha rays travel no more than a few centimeters and are blocked even by a thin piece of paper. Once they are absorbed into the body, however, they can penetrate various kinds of cells and irradiate cells within a radius of a few millimeters indefinitely. Furthermore, only 10% of DU rounds fired in war find their targets, while the others penetrate deeply into the earth, contaminating the soil as they decay. Thus, the damages caused by DU weapons are limited by neither time nor space; they should be regarded as “inhuman weapons” that can cause indiscriminate damages.

DU weapons were first used on a massive scale during the 1991 Gulf War. The US again used DU weapons in the Somalia conflict of 1992-93, and NATO used them in the Bosnia (1995) and Kosovo (1999) conflicts. The US and the UK are thought to have used more DU in the Iraq War than in the Gulf War – this time not only on the battlefield but also in residential areas. New evidence suggests that DU has been used in Afghanistan, too. In the areas where DU rounds were used, reports cite alarming increases in cancer, leukemia, and congenital defects among the local population as well as soldiers stationed in affected areas. Serious health problems that could stem from exposure to DU are plaguing innocent civilians, particularly children, as well as soldiers from various countries. Cf. Tashiro 2001.

5. If the problem of depleted uranium is obscured by the double and triple shadow outlined above, what we must do is clear: direct our attention to the cover-up and shed the degree of light warranted by the urgency and global scale of this problem. It is said that democracy hinges on attention. The most catastrophic and unjust problems are often the most deeply concealed. Therefore, the success of our democracy depends on whether we can direct our attention to the hidden problems.

In December 2007 a resolution regarding the DU problem was adopted for the first time at the UN General Assembly. However, this resolution does not call for a ban or moratorium on the use of DU weapons; it simply requests the UN member states and relevant international organizations like WHO, IAEA, and UNEP to present their views on the harmful effects of DU on human health and environment. Thus, the DU issue has just begun to draw the serious attention of the international community. In 2008 and 2010 similar resolutions were adopted at the UN General Assembly, and an international campaign to ban DU weapons has been promoted by ICBUW (The International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons), which was founded in October 2003. See Kazashi (2010), and for more information, visit ICBUW’s homepage at <http://www.bandepleteduranium.org/>.

6. The present author has visited Iraq twice; as a member of the citizens’ survey team in December 2002 and as an invited speaker for the 1st International Cancer Conference held in Basra in May 2009. Iraqi doctors told us: “These days, when a baby is born, mothers ask: “Is it alive and normal?” instead of “Is it a boy or a girl?” In addition, in the fall of 2010 it was reported that WHO had started a study into the rise in birth deformities in Fallujah, where the US forces threw in various weapons, probably including DU shells, in their fierce attacks in 2004.
7. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my long-time friend, Joseph T. Scarry, for his editorial and stylistic suggestions.

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