

JAPANESE PHILOSOPHY AS THE RESULT OF HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL TRADITION

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This article explores the essence of Japanese philosophy, which has evolved through the convergence of various intellectual traditions including Shintoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism. These spiritual foundations have deeply influenced Japanese self-perception, societal relations, and governance structures. Employing a dialectical method combined with the principle of complementarity, this study examines the development of Japanese philosophy, particularly during the Meiji (1868-1912) and Taisho (1912-1925) periods, highlighting the integration of Western philosophical ideas. Key contributions from thinkers, such as Nishida Kitaro, who sought to merge Western concepts with Eastern traditions, are discussed. This study also emphasizes the importance of traditional Japanese art and bodily synthesis in shaping philosophical thought. The unique ability of Japanese philosophy to adapt and transform diverse intellectual traditions is a central theme that illustrates its capacity to generate new meanings and approaches. The continuous influence of medieval categories and modern developments showcases a holistic approach that integrates both the old and new perspectives. This adaptability is crucial in addressing contemporary issues such as the interaction between information culture and historical spiritual traditions. The study concludes that the flexibility and integrative nature of Japanese philosophy, exemplified by figures such as Nishida Kitaro and Imamichi Tomonobu, remains vital for contemporary philosophical discourse.

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Public Interest Statement

This article explores Japanese philosophy formed at the intersection of Shintoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism. For centuries, this unique fusion has shaped Japanese self-perception, worldviews, interpersonal relations, family subordination, and state dynamics. At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Japanese philosophy evolved as a science, generating new meanings and original approaches through an intellectual dialogue between the East and West.



Introduction

The land of the rising sun has attracted the attention of foreigners since the time of the famous Venetian traveler Marco Polo (1254-1324), who learned about it in China, where he visited in the XIII century, and called it "the beautiful country of Zipangu." The assertion that the land of the rising sun, or Japan, has intrigued foreigners since Marco Polo's era, is substantiated by historical accounts. In his travelogue, Marco Polo described regions of Asia, including Japan, which he learned during his stay in China (Polo, 2010). Although Polo himself did not visit Japan, his reports contributed to the European imagination of the East, fostering fascination that persisted in the modern period (Loomba & Burton, 2007). Interestingly, although Polo's accounts were influential, they were not without skepticism. Some scholars have questioned the veracity of Polo's travels, although they acknowledge the impact his writings had on the perception of Eastern wealth and the subsequent drive to establish trade routes (Loomba & Burton, 2007). Additionally, the cultural exchange between Japan and other nations has been a subject of interest, as seen in the 1982 Italian TV series that explored the Sino-Italian relationship through the lens of Marco Polo's travel (Lepri, 2023).

The British traveler Isabella Bird's experiences in Japan further illustrate the allure Japan held for foreigners, as she sought to discover the "real" Japan beyond the "fabulous" image known in Europe (Malchikova, 2020). In summary, fascination with Japan among foreigners can be traced back to the accounts of Marco Polo, despite not having visited the country. His descriptions contributed to a lasting interest in Japan, which was further explored by subsequent travelers and cultural productions. This historical engagement with Japan underscores its enduring appeal as a subject of foreign curiosity and cultural exchange (Lepri, 2023; Loomba & Burton, 2007; Malchikova, 2020; Polo, 2010). Naturally, people of Western culture interested in establishing trade and economic ties with inhabitants of newly discovered lands were extremely interested in their mentality, and it was necessary to comprehend the spiritual foundations of their lives. Meanwhile, these foundations were conditioned by the formativeness and inclusiveness of the categorical complex, which was formed in Japan based on Shintoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism. For centuries, this peculiar religious and worldview fusion has determined the self-perception of every Japanese person, his attitude toward the world, the nature of relations between people, and subordination in the family and the state.

I emphasize that the above-mentioned teachings had a "non-personal coloring"; their goal was to rid a person of his external secondary self in the name of revealing the original nature. Chinese teachings called for overcoming the personal in the name of all commoners. In Buddhism, the idea of *nirvana*, symbolizing liberation from suffering, is closely related to the idea of freeing an individual from his personal self. Shintoism is a set of magical rituals and mythical legends that reflect the lives of Japan's ancestral society. This essentially pantheistic worldview led the Japanese to adopt a spiritualizing view of the universe. "In archaic Shinto consciousness, the world was boundless and merged with humans. Everything that possessed extraordinary power, beauty, or form was the object of worship of deities-kami. The list of *kami* is endless: an awe-inspiring mountain, a rock of bizarre shape, a rushing mountain stream, a century-old tree' (Dale-Saunders 1977:4). The Shinto picture of the creation of the world lacks a description of humans' creation. In my opinion, this circumstance illustrates the fundamentally non-anthropocentric character of Japanese national spiritual tradition. The feeling of indissoluble unity with the outside world, which persists among the Japanese until today, largely determines their relatively fearless attitude to death (as another form of dissolution in nature) and the cultivation of traits of "non-personality." Nowadays, the Japanese perceive Shintoism as belonging only to the Japanese world, forming an inseparable part of their natural environment - the environment in which they live and act. Through Shinto representations, throughout the history of Japanese civilization, special and unique features of the culture of the Land of the Rising Sun were formed.

The concept of *Kami* in Shinto encompasses a vast array of spirits associated with natural phenomena and objects, as indicated by a quote from Dale Saunders. *Kami* are revered as sacred entities that inhabit or manifest in elements of the natural world such as mountains, rocks, trees, and streams (Takeshi & Goodwin, 1993). This animistic belief system recognizes spiritual essence in various aspects of nature, attributing them to divine qualities. Interestingly, while *Kami* worship retains its animistic core, it has historically interacted with other religious practices, such as Buddhism. The medieval period saw the integration of *kami* with Buddhist deities and the influence of Esoteric Buddhism on *Kami* worship (Andreeva, 2010). Moreover, the performance of kagura, a Shinto folk art, serves as a communicative ritual with *Kami* (Sakurai & Association, 2014), and esoteric *Kami* initiations have played a role in shaping Shinto practice (Rambelli, 2002). The reverence of *Kami* also contributes to Japanese environmental ethics, emphasizing a moral responsibility towards nature (Ikeke, 2014; Kagawa-Fox, 2017). In summary, the reverence of *kami* in Shinto is deeply rooted in the Japanese cultural and religious landscape, with natural phenomena and objects seen as embodiments of the divine. This belief system not only shaped religious practices and rituals but also influenced ethical attitudes towards the environment. Indeed, the list of *Kami* appears endless, reflecting the diversity of natural elements that can be imbued with spiritual significance (Ikeke, 2014; Kagawa-Fox, 2017; Takeshi & Goodwin, 1993).

However, this culture cannot be understood without taking into account the influence of Buddhism on it, figuratively called by the famous religious scholar O. O. Rosenberg "the key to the Eastern soul." The spread of Buddhism in Japan was facilitated by the characteristic Japanese tendency to combine various ideas. Through the prism of Buddhism, Confucianism was also interpreted as a system of social and family relations, and Shintoism was also transformed into a full-fledged religion ("the way of the gods-*kami*" by analogy with the "way of the Buddha's"). The Buddhist concepts of the unity of the individual and the universal and the Shinto understanding of the omnipotence of the surrounding world, especially in the mystical interpretation of both, merged with the Taoist ideal of living in the bosom of nature and the characteristic Taoist desire for the supernatural. Taoism was not developed by the Japanese as an independent and integral doctrine, but the ideas of its Chinese apologists were constantly present in the syncretic worldview of Middle-century Japan and were reflected in religious Buddhist practice.

Buddhism, Shintoism, and Taoism, either individually or in combination, could serve as the universal ideological basis of the state system as important components of (Tsutida Kyoson 1927:86). Since the beginning of Japanese statehood,

such a function has been performed by Confucianism, which has best contributed to strengthening the non-personal nature of the Japanese spiritual tradition, orienting each individual to perform, first of all, life tasks that are necessary not for him personally, but to maintain the normal functioning of public order. The strength of Confucianism is the removal of the fear of death, as each individual feels his or her belonging to this generally immortal organism.

For two centuries, Japan was practically cut off from the outside world (Skvortsova 1985: 118-134). On one hand, this hindered economic development, but on the other, it contributed to the preservation of national identity. Throughout this period, a rigid class division of a feudal society with clearly fixed ideological attitudes continued to exist in Japan and the ideals and patterns of socially approved behavior formed within this framework were increasingly strengthened (Skvortsova 1980: 3-9). The ideological attitudes of Buddhism and Confucianism correspond to the interests of the Japanese feudal lords. They reflected the actual trends in the formation of national Japanese ideology and organically fit the real historical situation. It is important that the ideological concepts that developed in feudal Japan did not remain externally imposed rules and abstract norms but were deeply rooted in the consciousness of every Japanese person as practical regulators of his daily behavior. This explains the relative independence of Japan's spiritual life and its apparent independence from socioeconomic changes.

The Buddhist-Confucian tradition dominated the spiritual lives of Japanese society until the end of the nineteenth century. New ideological trends emerged after the Constitution of 1889 and capitalist relations began to develop rapidly. In just 60 years, Japan transformed from a country with an archaic manufacturing base to a modern industrial state. As a result, not only have traditional economic and social ties radically changed, there have also been some changes in the spiritual life of the country. The assimilation of Western cultural values plays a key role in this process. "Civilization, enlightenment – this was the password that symbolized the new ideas of the initial period of the Meiji era," notes the Japanese scientist Tosaka Jun (1982:213).

Methods

The formation of Western philosophical knowledge in Japan is a contradictory and ambiguous process associated with the emergence of mutually negative trends. In particular, the end of XIX – beginning of the twentieth century marked the ideological conflict between the traditional view of the Far Eastern civilization on the essence of man and the worldview systems of the West. This conflict has become an essential factor in a country's social and spiritual life. In this situation, Japanese intellectuals called upon philosophy to play the role of mediator in the difficult ideological situation of the Meiji era (1868-1912). Therefore, along with the system-structural method, which identifies elements and connections in the complex organism of twentieth-century Japanese philosophy, the dialectical method in combination with the principle of complementarity is used.

During the Meiji (1868-1912) and Taisho (1912-1925) periods, Western thinkers' ideas were actively studied in Japan and a large number of translated works were published. This translation process represents a special stage in the development of scientific knowledge in Japan. As L. B. Karelova notes, "the paradigm of borrowing knowledge necessary for the development of the country from the outside was developed by the Japanese back in the ninth century and was expressed in the famous slogan "Japanese spirit – Chinese skills" (*wakon-kansai*) attributed to the politician and poet Sugawara Michizane (845-903). In the second half of the nineteenth century, when it became necessary to modernize the country as soon as possible, impossible without assimilating the achievements of Western European civilization, this slogan was reformulated in a new way: "the Japanese spirit – Western skills" (*wakon-yosai*). In both cases, borrowed knowledge acted as something technically necessary, but not replacing one's own spiritual tradition" (Karelova 2018:11). Theoretical concepts were not formulated in the pre-Buddhist era, and the Japanese were satisfied with the Buddhist-Confucian ideas that formed the basis of their worldview. These representations were framed in the hieroglyphic writing, were very specific, and were not intended to express abstractions. The Japanese have used different methods to interpret Western terminology.

For example, "homonymous," when hieroglyphs that are worn out and purely phonetically coincide with the sound of the corresponding translated word were selected. One of the first Japanese sociologists, Kato Hiroyuki (1836-1916), used the consonant term *kiristo-kyo* (Kiri-sto–Christo) to denote, say, Christianity. Meanwhile, the word *kiristo-kyo* consists of three hieroglyphs meaning "foundation," "to supervise" and "church."

But there were also "semantic" translations. Therefore, another famous scientist of that time, educator Nishi Amane (1829-1897) (Skvortsova, Lutsky 2018:176-186), to translate the term "philosophy" used a word from two hieroglyphs: *tetsu* – "wisdom" and *gaku* – "teaching." Hieroglyphic writing, with its diversity, has left its mark on the development of philosophical thought in Japan, including sociological knowledge. Hieroglyphics did not contain abstractions similar to those in Western languages. Hieroglyphic abstractions were represented by numbers. An example is the famous "Book of Changes," "I Ching," with its divination system expressed in a different graphical way. Simultaneously, attempts were made to convey the abstract in concrete terms. Thus, the book of conversations of the

"*Lun Yu*" contains descriptions of human behavior in the family and society, and on the basis of these specific descriptions, quite abstract concepts of "humanism," "justice," "human love." In the Confucian classical work "*Chun-quin*" ("Spring and Autumn"), there are often descriptions of events that convey sensory impressions, called "protocol sentences" in the language of neo-positivism.

On the other hand, Confucian teaching itself gave rise to philosophical and sociological commentary. Universal norms of behavior were derived from the description of the behavior of a particular person in a particular situation. At the same time, there were different interpretations of public order, equality, inequality, etc. Analyzing the written sources of Confucianism, it can be concluded that the Chinese, and subsequently the Japanese, found a way out of the situation of dependence on hieroglyphic writing. The concepts necessary for the development and ordering of the philosophical worldview are expressed through concreteness and numbers. It was the method of concreteness that influenced the process of assimilation and reinterpretation of Western theories in Japan (Aruga Nagao 1977; 1957-1959).

Results and Discussion

During the Meiji and Taisho periods, many philosophical societies and circles appeared in which the works of one or another Western thinker were studied. The country was flooded with translations of the works by Kant and G.V. F. Hegel, A. Schopenhauer and F. Nietzsche, A. Bergson and N. Hartmann, etc. Western aesthetic teachings have penetrated the Land of the Rising Sun as part of Western philosophical concepts. The tradition of translating fundamental works on Western philosophy into Japanese began in the Meiji period. First, the works of classics such as Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, and Augustine were translated. Russian aesthetic thought also came to the attention of the Japanese: the famous writer Ftabatei Simei (1864-1909) translated "The Idea of Art" and "The Division of Poetry into generals and species" by V. G. Belinsky. According to T. P. Grigorieva, Ftabatei faced "great difficulties in translating philosophical terms: there were no abstract concepts in the Japanese language, and European terminology has not yet been mastered. It took him a lot of work to find an equivalent to such concepts as aesthetics, truth, essence, empirical cognition, ideal, dialectical, subjective, objective" (Grigorieva 1979: 315-316).

At that time, other Japanese researchers faced similar difficulties in trying to find appropriate linguistic analogs to Western philosophy. Thanks to their efforts, the Japanese humanities gradually accumulated material on philosophical issues. The activities of famous theorist Nishida Kitaro (1870-1945), the founder of Kyoto University's so-called academic philosophy, should be noted in particular. Marked by the strong influence of neo-Kantianism, this philosophy became widespread in the 20s of the 20th centuries. Nishida's contemporary historian Tsuchida Kyoson calls him "the first to show that Japanese philosophy is the most fundamental form of thought" (Tsuchida Kyoson 1927:74).

Nishida Kitaro's work is marked by attempts to combine the attitudes of the national spiritual tradition with elements of European philosophical thought, in fact, he is the founder of modern philosophy in Japan. His ideas are still being developed by prominent Japanese scientists and philosophers. Before considering Nishida's views, we will briefly focus on his biography and general philosophical evolution. He was born in 1870 in a small village on the coast of the Sea of Japan near Kanazawa (Ishikawa Prefecture) to the family of a schoolteacher. After graduating from higher secondary school, the capable young man entered the Philological Faculty of the University of Tokyo and, after receiving his diploma, returned to his homeland in Kanazawa, where he taught first at school and then at college. At that time (1899), he became seriously interested in Zen Buddhism and spent several hours practicing meditation. Traditional upbringing and education (his father was a connoisseur of Confucian classics and a skilled calligrapher, his mother was a zealous Buddhist, and a fan of the famous thinker Shinran, whose work she read aloud to her son) played an important role in the formation of Nishida's personality. Having been strongly influenced by European philosophy, he nevertheless devoted his life to explaining the deep essence of Eastern spiritual tradition. It is difficult to say whether he thought that time would come when his works were translated into Western languages. However, he wanted to use the "run-in" by the beginning of the twentieth century in Japan, "Western" terminology to provide a philosophical justification for the main ideas of Buddhism, and above all, the idea of the illusory personality. From 1910 until the end of his career, Nishida Kitaro taught philosophy and ethics first at Kyoto Imperial University and then in Tokyo. After Kamakura retired in 1928, he continued his active research activities, as reflected in numerous works on a number of philosophical disciplines.

Nishida's friend and classmate, famous buddha researcher Suzuki Daisetsu Teitaro, wrote in the obituary for the death of an outstanding scientist, in particular, the following: "It is a fact that the West does not know the West, and the West does not know the East. That is why conflicts occur" (Yusa, 2002:1). These words were uttered just before the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which put a black cross on relations between the East and the West. Suzuki, who lived in the United States for ten years, was Nishida's eye and ear, who never left the Japanese Islands. Both scientists saw their task as not only to preserve the classical cultural heritage of Japan, not only to correlate it

with the heritage of the West by translating it into the generally accepted language of Western philosophy, but also to lay the foundation for a national school of philosophy, to identify the "intellectual background" of the Japanese spiritual tradition and to familiarize the Western reader with the wonderful culture of his country.

The main stages of Nishida Kitaro's creative evolution, the philosophical views of which have changed throughout his life, are marked by four major works. The first cornerstone in Nishida's work was the "Comprehension of Goodness" (*Zen no kenkyu*, 1911). This work and all the works adjacent to it are based on the concept of pure experience introduced by Nishida. Clearly borrowed from Mach and W. According to James, the pure experience of the Kyoto philosopher is claimed to be the basis, which exists in all opposites (including the opposite of feeling and reason) from which all the limitations and definitions that follow the distinction between ego and object, subject, and object grow. In the "undifferentiated reality" of pure experience, consciousness, sensation, and will be merged.

The introduction of the concept of pure experience by Nishida Kitaro testified to the diminution of intelligence, and therefore also of scientific knowledge and rationalistic trends in philosophy in the field of the so-called creative activity of the individual, combining in a pristine, "refined" form the objective qualities of the object and its "subjective experience" by a person. At the same time, pure experience acted not only as an epistemological, but also as an ontological category denoting a finite, "true reality" close to the Buddhist "universe." Nishida's next landmark work was "Intuition and Reflection in Self-awareness" (*Jikaku-ni okeru tekkan to hansei*, 1917). In it, the philosopher set out to derive ontology from the unity of self-consciousness, "complementing and expanding" I. Kant, for whom absolute reality has always remained an incomprehensible "thing in itself". Paying tribute to the genius of the Konigsberg thinker, Nishida Kitaro nevertheless preferred I. G. Fichte to him in this case and followed the path of the Fichtean definition of reality through the primary identity of self-consciousness "I am I". Nishida views the "I" as a "contradictory identity."

The third important link in the chain of Nishida's works was the "Self-conscious system of the common" (*Ippansha no jikakuteki taikei*, 1929). Here, for the first time, the concept of "field-nothing" was formulated, which does not bear traces of the influence of both Buddhism and Plato's "Ti-me." They point to the genetic relationship of the "field of nothingness" primarily with the concepts of Buddhist teaching, where "nothing" 'nothing' has the status of a finite ontological principle. Because Nishida, like Buddhists, defined true reality as "nothingness," he is seen as a follower of Eastern thought tradition. Without disputing this in general, however, we believe that it is not necessary to attribute the introduction of the "field of nothing" solely to the influence of Buddhism. It was at that time that Nishida went through a period of fascination with the plateau, in which non-existence and nothingness were also considered ontologically as potency actualized when interacting with eidos (ideas).

At the final stage of his activity, Nishida Kitaro in the Philosophical Essays (1935-1945) concretizes the concept of "fields of nothingness". The latter receives positive characteristics, the opposite poles of which, as well as the "type of tension" and the interactions between which determine the belonging of a phenomenon to one of three worlds: the physical, or "world of mechanical causality", biological, or the "world of life", and the historical –world of man". In the last and highest of the world, as a result of the interaction of all poles, the identities of all opposites are revealed. Art, morality, and science are ideal forms in the historical world, and the activity of a scientist or artist is a manifestation of human formative activity. The historical world as the "sphere of absolute nothingness" is the final point of self-reflection of "Nothingness", where reality realizes the identity of its opposition through human activity.

Throughout history, the West has developed a culture of intellectual syntheses. Comprehension of the foundations of the world proceeded through the separation and connection of the concepts. The concepts and laws of their combinations serve as organs for true knowledge. The arts (*artes liberales*) were initially equated with knowledge; music, for example, was included in the list of arts because pitch intervals have a mathematical basis. The same can be said about painting, sculpture, theater, architecture, and landscape art, which were later included in the list of Renaissance art. In the Far East, the traditional art of *geido* is based primarily on bodily synthesis, a type of intelligence-generalized synesthesia. It was the development of sensory synthesis, bodily synthetic experience, and attention to various nuances of somatic sensations, that is, their rational tracking, which lay at the heart of the Far Eastern arts. Of course, the center of these studies becomes the person himself/herself with his/her neuromuscular organization, whose attention is directed to the smallest changes in both the world around himself/herself and his/her condition. Therefore, art in the Far East was understood as the maximum development and refinement of bodily sensations and penetration into the field of subtle, almost intuitive, human-to-human or human-to-world relationships.

The rationalistically oriented thought of the West sought to achieve truth and universal validity of its concepts. The "feeling thought" of the Far East was guided by the "somatic mind" and aspired to "Nothingness" as the true basis of all that exists. Zen Buddhism (Chan), which was practiced in Zen monasteries, became a concentrated expression of the Far Eastern path to truth. In them (as in the houses of traditional art, but more rigidly), physical and practical

education of novice students was conducted. First, it is in the form of a drill, which is exactly the same for all students regardless of their mental and other abilities. The drill is a treasure trove of experience and the first stage of a person's spiritual growth, provided that he intensely focuses on his condition.

If we compare the upbringing of a Zen individual with the formation of a dwarf bonsai tree, then the drill will be, so to speak, "primary pruning," when the most prominent branches are ruthlessly removed and a certain primary shape is given to the plant, which should determine the appearance of the grown tree. Choral performance of sutras with special throat singing also leads to a state of semi-oblivion and self-forgetfulness, to immersion in a common action, to a sense of not being separated from the general flow, when "co-creators"-performers understand each other without words, anticipate the slightest mental movements and, creating a reality of beauty, skillfully synchronize creative wills in a single rhythmic flow (Gerasimova 2002:140).

The great importance of the ritual is one of the main characteristics of Far Eastern culture. Indeed, if you think about it, the normal stable life of society is possible only if each person performs the roles assigned to him/her, that is, to act uniformly and in accordance with the established system of the distribution of roles. What is common in a person living in a collective is much more important than his personal characteristics, which may become undesirable in current society. Confucian tradition firmly stood on the immutability of the five main relationships in the team: 1) superior to subordinate, 2) father to son, 3) husband to wife, 4) older brother to younger, and 5) between comrades. This means that each person had to play roles strictly defined by his/her position correctly. Thus, the stability of society was fixed both "vertically" (boss - subordinate, father - son, husband - wife, older brother - younger brother) and "horizontally" (boss - boss, subordinate - subordinate, friend - friend). At the same time, we note that purely personal characteristics in the performance of these roles are secondary.

The Taoist-Buddhist tradition has consolidated such a preference for the general over the personal. The practice of Zen monasteries is initially aimed at "pruning" too outstanding personal qualities and ambitions. Strict discipline, physical punishments, hearings, hard physical labor, meager food, and daily hours of meditation are all means to diminish the bodily and mental "I" and achieve a state of "dispassion - not-I" (*mushin-muga*). To this is the special mental practice of koans, aimed at nullifying the generalizing and logically ordering possibilities of language. Ultimately, monks achieve a state of satori, complete detachment from the "self," a state of "not-self" the utmost transparent openness for the penetration of Tao's streams into them. Monks gain greater freedom without losing the possibility of improving such a state. To this end, monks often went on wanderings, "throwing themselves" into the natural universe, undergoing enormous difficulties and hardships in order to transform their consciousness to the cosmic level, to feel the cosmos as themselves. The formless mobile Tao is a source of images - disembodied "matrices" formed when interacting with the smallest almost disembodied particles of *qi* (*japiki*). They permeate everything, and everyone like an invisible network. At the intersections of the cells of this network are people, animals, plants, and inanimate objects.

The founders of Taoism characterized the imperceptible, amorphous origin as "nothing", a "formless form", "the sound of the soundless." Buddhists identified Tao-nothing with Dharma-kaya, the cosmic body of the Buddha, which was also called "Nothing." The Taoist-Buddhist Nothingness resembles Plato's One and is also the extreme limit of forms - that is, "formless," which nevertheless contains the germs of form ideas. (True, there is also an essential difference between One and Nothingness. In the Far Eastern tradition, Tao is a mobile substance, while for Plato, movement meant the loss of the integrity of the One, since different parts are needed for movement.) Nevertheless, the Far Eastern "Nothing" is not an abstraction, not a contradiction to "being" and not a Toricellian void, but on the contrary, a receptacle, the fullness of all possible images and forms, their inexhaustible source, from where they arise and where they always return.

Nothingness, or "Emptiness," in the Far Eastern tradition had another dimension - it was the relations between people and the relationship between man and space, nature, which were not perceptible by rude human feelings and not comprehended by no less rude reason. Indeed, what are "by touch love, loyalty, mutual help, valor, duty, and admiration? Although these forms of relationships are physically imperceptible and formless ("empty"), they are no less significant than the human and natural world itself, which is quite tangible and has definite forms. Such relationships are an integral dimension of Tao of Purity that permeates everything and everyone. This is a type of force field that maintains the universe in order. The actions of an individual should not destroy this field or violate Tao's original harmony. It is no coincidence that Nishida Kitaro, who formulated the concept of "fields of nothingness," gave priority to the study not of the actual human being but of the subtle, imperceptible field of relations between people. The "field is nothingness" and the way of existence and interaction in it prompted Nishida to formulate the concept of intuition of practical action (*koiteki tyokkan*). By formulating the concept of practical action, Nishida faced the problem of transferring its essence to the theoretical form accepted in the West. After all, the bodily,

practical action experienced "here and now can only be reflected in the language of art, and then only despair. As soon as Nishida begins to compare the intuition of practical action and the "pure experience" of Mach, which is a purely abstract concept, it inevitably intellectualizes.

Nishida's rather extensive work "Art and Morality" ("Geijutsu to dotoku," Geijutsu to Dotoku, 1925) is devoted to aesthetic and ethical problems. It examines the two main categories of ethics and aesthetics – goodness (Zen) and beauty—and their relationship with the category of truth *shin*. It is significant that the Japanese philosopher derived all the content of the categories of aesthetics from individual consciousness and that the transcendental pathos of his work contradicted the rationalistic form of philosophy and attempted a systematic approach to aesthetic problems.

Although Nishida Kitaro was strongly influenced by classical German philosophy, he remained a national thinker of Eastern persuasion. According to the Japanese researcher Miyakawa Hideki, "the position of Nishida, although focused on logical style and purity, turns out to be the position of Eastern ontology" (Miyakawa Hideki 1980:194). In order to make his judgments generally meaningful, "philosophical" in the Western understanding of the word, Nishida tried to clothe them in a rationalistic, systematic form. However, the content of his main category, the Buddhist "field of nothing," contradicts his logical, systemic, and rational approaches. Nishida used the philosophical systematicity that arose in Europe and peaked within the framework of classical German philosophy. However, they are also used as a form of speech. According to the content, his concept was transcendental and imbued with Buddhist reminiscence. In the first decades of the twentieth century, classical German philosophy became popular in Japan. This is explained by the position of the authorities, who took the structure of the German state as a model and encouraged interest in German ideology. Second, it was connected with the general mindset of the era: the Japanese, inspired by the example of the West and their first successes in the economy, which were attributed to the spread of the spirit of rationalism and entrepreneurship, put forward the slogan "Rationalism!". Of course, they could not help but turn to the writings of the luminaries of worldly rationalistic thought, the works of classical German philosophers. The tone was set by the Hegelian ideal of a rational, orderly person acting as part of the whole (state) and subordinated to the interests and tasks of this whole (Saigusa Hiroto 1969: 264-287). However, most visionary thinkers in Japan foreshadowed the inevitable disappointment in the samples of Western spiritual tradition, blindly adopted.

Concluding my short study, let us join the conclusion of the modern researcher of Japanese thought L. B. Karelova that "Japanese philosophy, which developed at the intersection of many intellectual traditions of different peoples, is unique in terms of the number of sources and resources it has, and is distinguished by its ability to adapt and transform them, generating new meanings and original approaches in the process of intellectual intercultural dialogue" (Karelova 2018: 21).

Despite the undeniable fact that the systematization of philosophical heritage became possible only as a result of the emergence of Western-type philosophy, we do not believe that Japanese philosophy is just an artificial construct of the XIX-XX centuries. The first attempt to conceptualize the "knowledge-state" and build a scientific and philosophical picture of the world on its basis was made by Kyoto philosopher Nishida Kitaro (1870-1945). In his understanding, man is a creative monad of Being, "the identity of absolute contradictions" (*zettaiteki mujun no doitsu*), creating the historical world and being created by this world in a state of "poesies." Nishida formulated two positions of the mind in relation to the world continuum: the position of an "observer" ("subject") who perceives the world: first as an independent "object" and second the position of a "participant" involved in the dynamic process of co-creation with the world in the mode of "eternal now" (*eien no genzai*). Thus, Nishida's human life is similar to artistic creation; as a result, neither culture nor art is structurally isolated from the life stream. However, the formulation of the dual position of reason is of great merit to Japanese thinkers.

A Tokyo school philosopher Onishi Yoshinori (1888-1959), as a result of a detailed analysis of the texts of classical Japanese literature, poetics and art theory, under the influence of German classical philosophy, formulated a triad of categories: *mono-no aware* – *yugen* – *sabi*, reflecting a consistent change in philosophical tastes and moods of educated social strata of Japanese society, respectively, the Heian (794-1192), Kamakura- Muromachi (1192-1573) and Edo-Tokugawa (1603-1867) periods of Japanese history.

The ambivalence of the position of Japanese philosophers on traditional forms of art, on the one hand, as "quasi-art" (*jungeijutsu*), and on the other - as "hyper-art," righteous art (*gudo geijutsu*) is a natural result of understanding art as directed only to the visual and auditory analyzers of man. Meanwhile, some types of traditional synthetic art (tea ceremonies) address the integral bodily and mental nature of man, where all five senses are equal in terms of an extra-textual "knowledge state."

Conclusion

Japan's philosophical thought in the second half of the twentieth century organically includes both medieval categories and concepts from the arsenal of Nishida Kitaro, demonstrating the flexibility of a holistic approach, the principle of combining old and new, and the unity of different cultural approaches. Japanese traditionalist philosophers (Nitta Hiroe, Nakamura Yujiro, Imamichi Tomonobu) critically approach the "omnipotence" of computer technology in the field of art from the standpoint of an analog, bodily approach to artistic creation. When analyzing the works of these Japanese philosophers, one should consider the fact that one of the most fundamental problems of modern civilizational development is the problem of interaction between information culture and historically established spiritual tradition. The logical conclusion of Japanese philosophy of the twentieth century was obtained in the works of Imamichi Tomonobu (1922-2012), who created calonology, the science of transcendent formless beauty that permeates all levels of Being (natural, technical, ethical, and artistic). Calonology encompasses three aspects of human relations with the world within the framework of three divisions: nature (eco-ethics), technical world (metatechnics), and world of the modern metropolis (urbanism). It is a calonology that has been recognized by some major scientists of the world as the main philosophical discipline of the XXI century.

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