

God and Nature in Metamorphosis: From Martin Luther through Cobb, Takizawa, and Nishida to Whitehead

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Introduction:

To begin with, it may be a good way for me to speak of the theme of the present essay, “God and Nature in Metamorphosis,” by way of presenting two tankas of mine with special emphases upon two words, justification and transmutation, which are significantly used in Martin Luther’s *Lectures on Romans*⁽¹⁾ and in Whitehead’s *Adventures of Ideas*⁽²⁾ respectively.

Rutaa tsugu
Yorokobite ware
Kaishun su
Nare waga uchini
Gi to saren tame

Luther confesses:
Let me repent joyfully
In order for you
To be justified in me
A sinner who praises

Ho shi ronzu
Uchuu no ginin
Arite koso
Jitsuzai henyou
Igi aru beshi to

Whitehead argues:
The universe justified
Goes hand in hand with
The transmutation of
The Reality as such

Let me refer, next, to the basic texts of our research. In this essay, I will be in search of the clarification of our theme, “God and Nature in Metamorphosis,” in between these texts. I am interested in exploring how it is theoretically possible for us to see Luther’s revealed theology as giving rise to the cultivation of natural theology as it is espoused by Whitehead in terms of what he calls “The New Reformation.” I will be in pursuit of my project by learning a lot anew from John Cobb’s *A Christian Natural Theology: Based on the Thought of Alfred North Whitehead*, from Katsumi Takizawa’s *An Introduction to Pure The-Anthropology*, and from Kitaro Nishida’s metaphysics of “reversion.” These three thinkers’ works have much to contribute to the cultivation of natural theology in our times; and the vision of a Whiteheadian theory of “God and nature in metamorphosis” which I put forward in this essay is very much benefited by them. I aim at cherishing this vision as a holistic one.

Now, let me quote two crucial passages from Luther and Whitehead which will be of illuminative importance as guide to my thinking:

[A] In as much as every created being gives such testimony, it cannot happen that one who is full of his own righteousness can be filled with the righteousness of God. He fills only those who hunger and thirst. Whoever, therefore, is satisfied with his own truth and wisdom is incapable of comprehending the truth and wisdom of God, for they can be received only in emptiness and a vacuum. Let us, therefore, say to God: Oh, that we might willingly be emptied that we might be filled with thee; Oh, that I might willingly be weak that thy strength may dwell in me; gladly a sinner that thou mayest be justified in me [libenter peccator ut tu iustificeris in me], gladly a fool that thou mayest be my wisdom, gladly unrighteous that thou mayest be my righteousness! (LR, 70-71)

[B] In this Supreme Adventure, the Reality which the Adventure transmutes into its Unity of Appearance, requires the real occasions of the advancing world each claiming its due share of attention. This Appearance, thus enjoyed, is the final Beauty with which the Universe achieves its justification. (AI, 295)

It is a basic idea in Whiteheadian process thought that God and nature are

not immutable. In *Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition*, co-authored with John B. Cobb, Jr., David R. Griffin singles out five of the common connotations of the word “God” in advance for rejection: 1. God as Cosmic Moralist; 2. God as the Unchanging and Passionless Absolute; 3. God as Controlling Power; 4. God as Sanctioner of the Status Quo; and 5. God as Male. He delivers an explanation, for instance, with respect to the second case as in the following manner:

2. *God as the Unchanging and Passionless Absolute.* This concept derives from the Greeks, who maintained that “perfection” entailed complete “immutability,” or lack of change. The notion of “impassibility” stressed that deity must be completely unaffected by any other reality and must lack all passion or emotional response. The notion that deity is the “Absolute” has meant that God is not really related to the world. The world is really related to God, in that the relation to God is constitutive of the world—an adequate description of the world requires reference to its dependence on God—but even the fact that there is a world is not constitutive of the reality of God. God is wholly independent of the world: the God-world relation is purely external to God. These three terms—unchangeable, passionless, and absolute—finally say the same thing, that the world contributes nothing to God, and that God’s influence upon the world is in no way conditioned by divine responsiveness to unforeseen, self-determining activities of us worldly beings. Process theology denies the existence of this God.⁽³⁾

The denial of an immutable God in process theology implies the affirmation of the metamorphosis of God. Since the world’s relation to God is constitutive of the world, the God in metamorphosis is constitutive of the world in metamorphosis. It must also be the case, reversely, that the world in metamorphosis is actually beseeching the God in metamorphosis to come to appear afresh responsively each and every moment.

As mentioned earlier, I am concerned with exploring, as much as I can, whether the two Lutheran ideas of “justification” and “metanoia” or “transmutation” are giving rise to Whitehead’s interest in having these to be significantly inherent in his natural theology as it comes to the fore in the final

pages of *Adventures of Ideas*, and if so, how.

In the process of this search, I will examine and elucidate in my own way what is crucially meaningful in Cobb's Christian natural theology, in Takizawa's pure the-anthropology, and in Nishida's metaphysics of "reversion." I would be very happy if I could thereby acquire step by step new concerns and insights into what natural theology is all about, as these converge in the midst of an emergent understanding of Whitehead's metaphysics that I might realize on my own.

Section I: Justification and Transmutation in Martin Luther: *Lectures on Romans (1515-1516) and Explanations of Ninety-Five Theses (1518)*

It is well-known that in the case of Luther's theology what is primarily meant by justification is the "Deum iustificare," justification of God. Justification of God in this sense is coterminous with praising and believing in God. No Christian religiosity would be conceivable without having something to do with it in the end. However, it is to be noted that what is decisive in Luther's religious thought is the fact that justification or praising of God is actually to be realized in and through "knowing, acknowledging, and confessing that we are sinners" (LR, 72). It is unjust to speak of the act of praising God apart from confessing our sins. For this reason, our God-talk cannot but be confessional through and through, in Luther's case. In this respect, Luther's exegesis on Rom. 3:4 is crucial:

The Greek text reads: "God shall be truthful" or "Let God be truthful." These words give expression not so much to the truthfulness of God as to a confession of the truthfulness of God. What they mean is this: It is right that all should confess and admit that God is truthful. (LR, 63-64)

Here we have to recognize an inner necessity to the effect that in order for justification of God to be actualized in us it needs to be accompanied by our knowledge, our acknowledgement, and our confession that we are sinners, namely, by our inner movement of metanoia or transmutation. This inner necessity that lies between and connects justification and transmutation is expressed by Luther with the words of confession mentioned earlier: "Let us,

therefore, say to God: Oh, that we might willingly be emptied that we might be filled with thee; Oh, that I may willingly be weak that thy strength may dwell in me; gladly a sinner that thou mayest be justified in me, gladly a fool that thou mayest be my wisdom, gladly unrighteous that thou mayest be my righteousness!" (LR, 70-71)

The justification of sinners, in the sense of what we as Christian believers usually call "justification by faith alone," is an experience of Divine Grace with which we are blessed while immersed in the above-mentioned justification or praising of God. Luther regards the experience of Divine Grace as beckoning us to hope to be forgiven, as manifested in the following passage: "As soon as they would find (as they inevitably must) that this is so, they surely would be scared, especially since we tend to anticipate, not something better, but the bad, because from ourselves we are naturally evil, and they would humble themselves, constantly seek the grace of God with wailing and groaning, and thus they would make steady progress. For when we are told to hope, we are certainly not told so in order that we might hope to have done what we should, but that the merciful God who alone can see into the innermost depth of our being (beyond the surface of which we cannot penetrate) will not impute our deeds as sin to us so long as we confess to him" (LR, 88).

As in the above, it is inherent in the inner core of Luther's revealed theology that "justification" and "metanoia" (penitence) or "transmutation" must necessarily go hand in hand, the former being the culmination of our life in faith while the latter being the means of our life in faith by which we are creatively transformed by the merciful power of God into a new spiritual life. It is well-known that the rich connotation of the term "metanoia" is provided by Luther himself in the explanation of his first thesis, and again in a letter, which was enclosed with the *Explanations of the Ninety-Five Theses (1518)*. He writes:

[T]he Greek word *metanoieite* itself ... means "repent" and could be translated more exactly by the Latin *transmentamini*, which means "assume another mind and feeling, recover one's senses, make a transition from one state to another, have a change of spirit."⁽⁴⁾

After this it happened that I learned—thanks to the work and talent of

the most learned men who teach us Greek and Hebrew with such great devotion—that the word means *metanoia* in Greek; it is derived from *meta* and *noun*, that is, from “afterward” and “mind.” *Poenitentia* and, therefore, means coming to one’s right mind and a comprehension of one’s own evil after one has accepted the damage and recognized the error ...

Then I progressed further and saw that *metanoia* could be understood as a composite not only of “afterward” and “mind,” but also of the [prefix] “trans” and “mind” (although this may of course be a forced interpretation), so that *metanoia* could mean the transformation [*transmutatio*] of one’s mind and disposition. Yet it seemed to express not only the actual change of disposition but also the way by which this change is accomplished, that is, the grace of God. Such transition of the mind, that is, the most true *poenitentia*, is found very frequently in Holy Scripture.

Continuing this line of reasoning, I became so bold as to believe that they were wrong who attributed so much to penitential works that they left us hardly anything of *poenitentia*, except some trivial satisfaction on the one hand and a most laborious confession on the other. It is evident that they were misled by the Latin term, because the expression *poenitentiam agere* suggests more an action than a change in disposition; and in no way does this do justice to the Greek *metanoein*.⁽⁵⁾

Interestingly enough, as has been discussed earlier, Whitehead ventures to show the combination of “justification” and “transmutation” in a peculiar manner at the final stage of his *Adventures of Ideas*. It is my intention in the present essay to approach this peculiarly Whiteheadian natural-theological factum of the combination of “justification” and “transmutation” step by step from within the purview of Luther’s revealed theology.

Section II: From Revealed Theology To Natural Theology: The Standpoint of John B. Cobb, Jr. in *A Christian Natural Theology: Based on the Thought of Alfred North Whitehead, Second Edition (2007)* and *Beyond Dialogue: Toward a Mutual Transformation of Christianity and Buddhism (1982)*

In his vision of a Christian natural theology Cobb basically assumes that while “theology,” on one hand, signifies “any coherent statement about matters of ultimate concern that recognizes that the perspective by which it is governed is received from a community of faith”⁽⁶⁾ and “faith in Christ” requires no prior conceptual clarification because it can proceed to Christological formulation, as is observable in much of the greatest theology,⁽⁷⁾ there is, on the other hand, the “priority of natural theology” that “applies *only* to doctrinal formulation.”⁽⁸⁾ Here I am impressed with a brilliant theological articulation of Whitehead’s three-fold rhythm of education: romance, precision, and generalization.⁽⁹⁾ From this point of view, Cobb opts for a bipolar strategy of his Christian natural theology based on the thought of Whitehead which he expresses in these terms: “The argument presented asks to be judged in terms of its philosophical merits, but the selection of topics and the focus of inquiry are determined by theological passion.”⁽¹⁰⁾

One of the foremost examples of this strategy, I think, is the case of his inherently Whiteheadian interest in the problem of the two ultimates, “Creativity and God,”⁽¹¹⁾ as passionately applied to Buddhist-Christian dialogue in terms of the issue of “the Christian God and Buddhist Emptiness.”⁽¹²⁾ I believe Cobb’s Christian natural theology has been culminating in the combination of the “Creativity and God” argument (which is internal to Whiteheadian scholarship as testified in *A Christian Natural Theology: Second Edition [2007]*) and the “God and Emptiness” dialogue (which has cultivated a new avenue toward a “dialogical” natural theology in *Beyond Dialogue: Toward a Mutual Transformation of Christianity and Buddhism [1982]*).

Here I can observe a new *metanoia*, a new transmutation of the Christian mind occurring, which, to use Cobb’s own language, is the way of passing over to the other shore, the Buddhist territory of emptiness, while at the same time coming back to this shore, the Christian domain of God.⁽¹³⁾ Cobb reminds us afresh of Whitehead’s language of “transmutation of the reality” (see AI, 295) as creatively meaningful: namely, from the reality as immutably closed toward

the reality as dialogically open for rebirth.

Here it is peculiarly important to my mind that Martin Luther's language of metanoia or transmutation as regards one's mind and disposition in metamorphosis is making a radical shift toward an interreligious/intercivilizational co-transformation.⁽¹⁴⁾ This move very much fits in with Whitehead's idea of "The New Reformation" as centering around Plato's doctrine of the "divine persuasive as the foundation of the order of the world" or "Grace" vis-à-vis a coersive agency (AI, 160, 166), with its repercussions extended on its second and third phases, namely, the life of Christ and the first period in the formation of Christian theology by the schools of thought mainly associated with Alexandria and Antioch.

In going through a dialogue with the Buddhists, including Shin and Zen believers, Cobb is eager to hold the non-subordination of God to the Buddhist emptiness and vice versa inasmuch as he believes that whereas the Buddhist ultimate, emptiness, is ultimate reality, the Christian God is to be called the ultimate actuality—the actuality which is to be understood as "the Empty One" in Buddhist terms (BD, 112-113). This stance of non-subordination of God to emptiness is certified in terms of a Whiteheadian scholarship by Cobb in the following passage: "I have recited the ways in which Whitehead's language seems to imply the subordination of God to creativity. It is important to counterbalance this by pointing out that for Whitehead, God is fully actual, creativity in itself is not. It participates in actuality only through its embodiment in actual things. In itself it can do nothing at all. It does not even exist. It is not even a "reason" for the coming into being of actual entities. In Whitehead's terminology, only actual entities are the reasons for what happens" (CNT2, 118).

His above critique of Whitehead notwithstanding, Cobb has adopted and even creatively used Whitehead's conceptuality of "creativity as primordially characterized" in reference to his understanding of Shinran's view of Amida in relation to the *Dharmatā Dharmakāya* (Jpn., Hosshō Hosshin) or emptiness as characterized with "wisdom and compassion" (BD, 127-9). This, I believe, is one of the finest moments when a Christian scholar has neatly succeeded in having a serious dialogue with the Buddhists—and this in line with refurbishing a Christian natural theology in a Whiteheadian manner.

Section III: Katsumi Takizawa's Break Through of Revealed Theology: *Buddhism and Christianity* (1950), *A Sequel to "Buddhism and Christianity"* (1979) and *An Introduction to Pure The-Anthropology* (1988)

Katsumi Takizawa has learned from Kitaro Nishida that the fundamental point of the coming into existence of the human self has nothing to do with general concepts. What he has grasped is, rather, the fact that individual beings are immediately and unconditionally located within the place of absolute Nothingness with no mediation by any general concepts. He began expressing his grasp of this state of affairs in terms of the notion of the "*Proto-factum* Immanuel" ever since he studied with Karl Barth in Germany in the early 1930's.

What was crucial for Takizawa, however, was to say in distinction from Barth's thesis that the *Proto-factum* was not initiated by the incarnation of the Eternal Logos in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Rather, it is fundamentally *with any and every human being in such a way that the knowledge of God is possible even outside of the walls of the Church (extra muros ecclesiae)*—the fact which is testified as true, for instance, by Nishida's philosophy. Takizawa addressed the idea of God's knowability even outside of the walls of the Church to Barth; however, Barth responded with a critical reservation, saying, "It might be possible in principle, but is not possible in actuality. [prinzipiell möglich, aber faktisch unmöglich]"⁽¹⁵⁾

In 1950 Takizawa wrote *Buddhism and Christianity* in dialogue with the Zen atheist scholar Shin'ichi Hisamatsu with *Proto-factum* Immanuel as its pivotal principle. Let me summarize some of its major contents in order to see whether Takizawa is really successful in breaking through the rigid domain of revealed theology for dealing with the Buddhist position of Hisamatsu properly theologically and if so, how? Let me now quote seven passages from my 1983 essay "Principles for Interpreting Christ/Buddha: Katsumi Takizawa and John B. Cobb, Jr.":

- (1) In his 1950 book, *Buddhism and Christianity* (TKC, VII, 249-361), Takizawa critically deals with Zen Buddhism, especially Shin'ichi Hisamatsu's Zen atheism, from the perspective of Logos Christology. The reason why he has chosen Buddhism as a "true counterpart of Christianity" (TKC, VII,

35—351) is that he finds a genuine polarity between the Buddhist and the Christian understanding of the relationship between the enlightened or faithful and the unenlightened or unfaithful—and this within the context of their common knowledge of the *Proto-factum* Immanuel. The Buddhist realizes his or her own nature or self as “empty,” whereas the Christian believes in Jesus as the “Christ.”

- (2) The Christian believes in God who is through-and-through *with us* humans. This is *decisively* true of Jesus. Commensurate with what Hisamatsu calls the “non-ego subject” (Jpn., *mugateki shutai*) or “the original self” (Jpn., *honrai no jiko*), Takizawa understands Jesus of Nazareth as the “spontaneous self-actualization of the *Proto-factum*” (TKC, VII, 273). He finds a parallelism between the enlightened one (i.e., Buddha) and Jesus. Indeed, Jesus is a Buddha. Consequently, faith means for Takizawa a two-dimensional actuality, an actuality co-constituted by the believer’s acceptance of the *Proto-factum* here-now and by his or her being influenced by the past actualization of the *Proto-factum* as Jesus as the Christ (TKC, VII, 274).
- (3) There is for Hisamatsu no other true Buddha than the selfless I who is the true subject of *ōsō-gensō* or of going to the Pure Land (*ōsō*) and returning to the world (*gensō*) (TKC, VII, 261). Fully affirming this fact with Hisamatsu, Takizawa refers to the possibility of the knowledge of God *apart from* the figure of Jesus of Nazareth, based upon his Christological conviction that the *Proto-factum*, immediately related to any human being, was not initiated by the Incarnation of Jesus of Nazareth. The relationship of the Christian believer to Jesus is rather that of continuity-in-discontinuity.
- (4) For Takizawa, the existence of the *Proto-factum* Immanuel alone enables us humans to be spontaneously compassionate. Takizawa’s understanding of “spontaneity” now tends to be critical of Hisamatsu’s Zen atheism. Takizawa criticizes Hisamatsu for failing to recognize the difference between the actual sign, the original self, and its real ground, the *Proto-factum*. In this Christological reinterpretation of Buddhism, Takizawa designates the *Proto-factum* the “primary contact of Buddhahood and sentient beings” and distinguishes it from its sign as the “secondary contact,” the enlightened human self.

- (5) But here arises a question. Is this extension of Takizawa’s concept of the *Proto-factum* to what might be ultimate in Buddhism adequate? There are at present two conflicting opinions about this among leading Buddhist scholars in Japan. Some, such as Ryomin Akizuki and Gempo Hoshino, affirm Takizawa’s concept of the *Proto-factum*, identifying it with Zen Buddhist notion of *hongaku* (original enlightenment), the enlightenment preceding *shikaku* (emergent enlightenment in some humans) (BKK,⁽¹⁶⁾ 108: TKC, VII, 459-463). But others, represented by Masao Abe, interpret it as a consequence of delusion because the ultimate Buddhist standpoint is that of Emptiness emptying all forms, including the *Proto-factum* (BKK, 169-170, 184). This split of opinions, to my mind, indicates at least one thing: Takizawa’s notion of the Immanuel is only *analogically* applicable to Buddhism, but not univocally, as is so intended by Takizawa.⁽¹⁷⁾
- (6) Takizawa’s critique of Hisamatsu’s Zen atheism is through-and-through Christological as in the above. It has a merit in pointing out the one who precedes and undergirds the humanly authentic figure, whether Jesus or the enlightened person. For Takizawa the one who precedes Jesus is God the Father or Creator who is with us creatures *as the Proto-factum* Immanuel or the Logos. But here arises a question: Is what Zen Buddhists, such as Hisamatsu, calls Buddhahood or Formless Self the same reality as God the Father or Creator? Takizawa adheres to this identification in his critique of Hisamatsu. Within the scope of this identification it necessarily follows that there must be something like the *Proto-factum* as the Logos in Zen Buddhism, too.
- (7) But it seems to me that Zen Buddhists, such as Hisamatsu and Abe, deny that identification because Buddhahood is formless, whereas God the Father or Creator has a form—form of creation—however invisible and supreme (BKK, 146, 150). They also deny the *Proto-factum*, in the sense of the substantial unity of Buddhahood and sentient beings, *if it means the Logos*. For the Zen experience is utterly devoid of anything like the Christian Logos although it is related to the coincidence of Buddhahood and the self.⁽¹⁸⁾ Rather, Zen Buddhists experience that Buddhahood *is me*, that there can be no satori if anything—however divine—is interjected between Buddhahood and the self. This is because Buddhahood in reality is “Buddhahood and me.”⁽¹⁹⁾ Buddhahood, as the all-encompassing

Reality, by definition includes in Itself worldly actualities by the principle of *pratityasamutpāda* or dependent co-origination. That is to say, there can be no satori if any single bit of over-against-ness of the divine remains in one's self-realization. Accordingly, satori is awakening to the fact that “*I am Buddhahood*” because I am “*I and Buddhahood*.”⁽²⁰⁾

The above summarizing scrutiny of mine as regards Takizawa's dialogue with Hisamatsu and its various repercussions shows that Takizawa's standpoint of the *Proto-factum* Immanuel has been analogically successful, but not in real terms in having a genuine interreligious dialogue with the Buddhists, especially the Zen Buddhists. This means that the notion of the *Proto-factum* Immanuel is not really profound enough for accounting for the subtleties of the religious world, including Buddhism (especially Zen) and Christianity.

Takizawa has often said that the *Proto-factum* Immanuel is an absolutely objective reality excluding a binding power of any subjective modes of being, including Jesus of Nazareth and the enlightened persons (e.g., *TKC*, VII, 66-67, 280, 455). However, this way of saying something about the *Proto-factum* Immanuel tends to become a fallacy of misplaced objectiveness because it is Takizawa, a human subject, who says so. Takizawa is not really mindful of what Whitehead refers to as the “reformed subjectivist principle.”⁽²¹⁾

This critical view of Takizawa's Logos or Proto-factum Christology vis-à-vis Zen Buddhism notwithstanding, there is a striking passage in his explication of Jodo Shinshu. In that passage, Takizawa explicates Shinran's expression: “Amida Buddha as *eternally realized*” (Jpn., *kuon jitsujō* Amida Butsu):

In the traditional Shinshu exposition Amida Buddha is simply designated the *Upaya* Buddha, but is never called the *Dharmakaya*. But as is clear in that expression by Shinran, it cannot follow from here that there is any bit of difference in ontological value or in power between Amida and the *Dharmatā Dharmakāya* (Jpn., *Hosshō Hosshin*). Amida is the *Upāya* Buddha only insofar as he is the *Dharmatā Dharmakāya* as conditioned by the fact that he is directly at one with each sinner in an absolute distinction and order. (*ZBK*,⁽²²⁾ 137)

This passage is amazingly akin to Cobb's insight that Shinran strongly tends

to renounce the general Buddhist subordination of Amida to ultimate reality as such so far as practical and religious matters are concerned.⁽²³⁾

At any rate, what has appeared in the midst of Takizawa's dialogical struggles with Buddhism, Zen and Shinshu, is the fact that the authentic religious figures, such as Jesus and the enlightened Zen practitioner, are immediately related to ultimate reality, Emptiness or Buddhahood or *Dharmata Dharmakaya*, while, however, at the same time being mediated by the *Proto-factum* Immanuel or Amida. The two occasions, A (e.g., Jesus or a Zen practitioner) and B (the *Proto-factum* Immanuel or Amida), refer analogically to C (ultimate reality or Buddhahood). This is really a curious truth which I might be able to designate analogically by reference to the Thomist Analogy of Attribution *Duorum Ad Tertium (two to the third)* which Aquinas finally discarded (because he sensed that there would be no such tertiary reality that is above and beyond God as *esse ipsum subsistens* and the world).⁽²⁴⁾

In my view, this whole issue is related to the problem of the “transmutation of the Reality,” our major concern throughout the present essay. What I mean is that the *Proto-factum* Immanuel has to go through the transmutation of the Reality, but how? I might say: what is before our eyes is a process of re-envisioning the truth that the *Proto-factum* Immanuel is ultimate religiously or Christologically, and yet it is related further, analogically, to the reality that is ultimate metaphysically. If I am not mistaken in my understanding of my teacher, Professor Takizawa has encountered the necessity of this process of re-envisioning at the final stage of his philosophical career, which is testified in his posthumous book *An Introduction to Pure The-Anthropology* (1988).

Katsumi Takizawa was conferred an Honorary Doctorate in Theology at the University of Heidelberg in 1984 and he had prepared on this occasion a lecture manuscript (now designated the “Heidelberg Address”) on “Theologie und Anthropologie—ein Widerspruch? Entwurf einer reinen The-anthropologie.” Unfortunately, he was not able to read it; he suddenly passed away because of acute leukemia on June 26, 1984 at his residence in Fukuoka, Japan. The doctorate was conferred on him posthumously by a representative of the University of Heidelberg in Fukuoka. The “Heidelberg Address” is now contained in the Japanese book *An Introduction to Pure The-anthropology* (Fukuoka: Sogensha, 1988; hereinafter *IPT*).

As far as I can see, Takizawa's pure the-anthropology culminates in a three-

fold vision of reality: 1. Humans, as beings, are located within the depths of being and should not be concerned about going deeper than the “holy limits” given there; 2. Humans are obliged to express God in their lives; and 3. To express God in their lives is the fundamental cum essential Bestimmung (destiny) for humans (*IPT*, 273-274).

In distinction from revealed theology, some of the major characteristics of Takizawa’s pure the-anthropology are most clearly shown in the following passage: “My *pure* the-anthropology is helped and led by the form that is given contingently and once for all, namely, Jesus of Nazareth in the Bible, but is not bound by it. Rather, it is led by this form as a living signpost and is orientated toward the Way, toward the Truth, toward the Logos in the beginning, with Karl Barth toward the *Proto-factum* Immanuel, that is, toward the eternally new, absolutely inseparable, non-identical, irreversible relation of God and the humans. Hence, the-anthropology cannot, is not allowed, and will not have as its original content any specific/historical form within itself” (*IPT*, 272).

If so, is this standpoint showing a make-up of the so-called natural theology? By no means. For in the case of Takizawa’s the-anthropology, there is no reference to a clear triadic vision of God-the metaphysical ultimate (creativity)-the world,⁽²⁵⁾ such as is shown by Cobb. Rather, what is provided by Takizawa is a triadic vision of Jesus of Nazareth-the *Proto-factum* Immanuel-the humans who express God in themselves. As far as this vision is concerned, Luther’s reference to the triadic structure composed of *Deus absconditus*, *Deus revelatus*, and the believer is rather akin to Takizawa’s vision of the-anthropology. However, since Takizawa dislikes the state of “being bound” even by Jesus of Nazareth, while emancipated by the power of the *Proto-factum* Immanuel directly, he seems to have broken through the rigid domain of revealed theology.⁽²⁶⁾ Strictly speaking, Takizawa’s pure the-anthropology is neither a natural theology nor a revealed theology, but rather is an interim scholarly attempt between the two.

For Takizawa’s type of Christology to undergo a transmutation into a natural theology, there might be an indispensable condition, it seems to me. That is to recognize that what Takizawa designates as the “inseparableness” inherent in the relationship between God and the humans is not an attribute of God, but is the metaphysical reality of inseparableness in itself (such as Buddhist emptiness and Whiteheadian creativity). The inseparableness of

God and the humans is, in itself, the reality, the tertiary reality that goes beyond and above the realities of God and the humans (or the world).⁽²⁷⁾ The reality of inseparableness is metaphysically deeper than God and the humans while containing within itself the two—deeper than what Takizawa refers to as the “depths of being” (Jpn., *fukai hikumi*).

God and the humans are, first and foremost, in the grip of this reality, thus necessarily and unavoidably obliged to be loyal ontologically to it. Second, although we all, including God and creatures, are asked to be loyal to this ontologically unavoidable loyalty to the reality of inseparableness, it is only God but not we humans who responds with loyalty which I might call an attitudinal, self-conscious loyalty. Here emerges the dimension of “non-identicalness.” Third, God who is self-consciously loyal can and does actually call forth loyalty in us who are not loyal—out of Divine Grace. Here lies the dimension of irreversibility. What Nishida calls “the Call of God or the Buddha” applies very well to the issue here (*Zenshu*[*Complete Works*], XI, 409).

The form of a theology that emerges here is one which I call a “Theology of Loyalty”⁽²⁸⁾ It consists of three principles: 1. God is loyal to Emptiness; 2. Emptiness empties itself; and 3. God is the only one in the universe who can and does actually evoke loyalty in us creatures. “Theology of Loyalty” is a genuine form of natural theology in me.

Section IV: Kitaro Nishida’s Metaphysics of “Reversion” : *Intuition and Reflection in Self-consciousness (1941)*

In his *Intuition and Reflection in Self-consciousness* Nishida wrote, “When absolute free will turns and views itself (Jpn., *hirugaette onore jishin o mita toki*), or, in Boehme’s terms, when the objectless will looks back on itself, the infinite creative development of this world is set up” (*Zenshu*, II, 287).⁽²⁹⁾ It is important to see that what I designate as the first and third elements of my thesis of theology of loyalty, mentioned above, are already put forward in this passage. As to my second principle of “emptiness emptying itself,” we just need to pay due attention to the fact that Nishida’s famous essay on “Logic of Place and the Religious Worldview” contained in the Volume XI of *Zenshu* (*Complete Works*) is an antecedent elaborate case where Nishida articulates the logic of absolute Nothingness as converting itself into the place of absolute Being (*Zenshu*, 403). Nishida wrote:

A true absolute must possess itself through self-negation. The true absolute exists in that it returns to itself (Jpn., *jiko jishin o hirugaesu*) in the form of the relative. The true absolute One expresses itself in the form of the infinite many. God exists in this world through self-negation. In this sense, God is always immanent. Hence the old phrase that God is “nowhere and yet everywhere in this world.”⁽³⁰⁾

I am now sensing that Nishida’s metaphysics of “reversion” and my thesis of “theology of loyalty” can go hand in hand in re-envisioning the task of natural theology for today.

In my recent Japanese article “The Problem of the Two Ultimates and the Proposal of an Ecozoics of the Deity: In Dialogue with Thomas Berry,” I have schematized the way in which I can incorporate my theology of loyalty into the core of ecology or what Thomas Berry designates the “ecozoic.”⁽³¹⁾ For the geologist (or Earth-theologian) Berry, it is imperative that we enter the “Ecozoic Era” after the Cenozoic Era has come to the end mainly because of humankind’s exploitation of the Earth—by re-envisioning the human task or what he calls the “Great Work” on Earth anew in unity and collaboration with the entire Earth community.

I thought I have to twist the word “Ecozoic” as a geological epoch into creating a new natural theological concept: an Ecozoics of the Deity, meaning that when God reflects upon the ground or “eco” (i.e., the place of absolute Nothingness) of God’s being loyally, God as Loyal Life necessarily gives rise to the “life” (Gk., *zōē*) of the world precisely in and through the ground or “eco” (i.e., the place of absolute Being) of the world as this is inseparable from the ground or “eco” of God—and this by benevolently evoking loyalty in us creatures out of Grace. Within this context I have learned a lot from the two passages of Nishida quoted earlier.

Conclusions

After going through a long spiritual journey throughout the present essay up to here, I am amazed at the affinity of Nishida’s passage concerning “the true absolute’s converting itself into the form of relative” (*Zenshu*, XI, 398) with Whitehead’s passage: “In this Supreme Adventure, the Reality which

Adventure transmutes into its Unity of Appearance, requires the real occasions of the advancing world each claiming its due share of attention” (AI, 295).

We, first, began with Luther’s revealed theological issue of “poenitentia, metanoia, transmutation” as this gave rise to the Reformation. Second, we studied with Cobb concerning the Christian natural theological issue of “God and creativity” as this was dialogically related to the issue of “God and Buddhist emptiness.” At this stage what was important in terms of “transmutation” was the “mutual transformation of Christianity and Buddhism beyond dialogue.” Metanoia is a dialogical issue through and through—even beyond the walls of the Churches and the formal “Dialogue.”

Third, Takizawa has broken through the walls of the Churches into a serious dialogue with the Zen atheist Hisamatsu. In Takizawa’s case, too, metanoia is a dialogical issue as well as the problem of a self-relinquishing transcendence toward the *Proto-factum* Immanuel supporting everyone at the bottom of existence, including Jesus and the rest of us.

Fourth, Nishida’s metaphysics of “reversion” goes hand in hand with Whitehead’s concept of an “Adventure in the Universe as One.” And my own proposal of a “theology of loyalty” is going to be incorporated into the core of ecology as an ecozoics of the Deity. Metanoia or repentance is now a cosmic, ecozoic issue.

It is precisely at this cosmic juncture that Whitehead’s use of another Lutheran terminology, “justification,” makes sense in reference to the universe: “This Appearance, thus enjoyed, is the final Beauty with which the Universe achieves its justification” (AI, 295). In my view, the connotation of the “justification of the Universe” might be inclusive of both “deum iustificare” and “justification by God.” In this context, Hartshorne’s vision of the “total reality of God-and-universe” has much to teach us all. He maintains: “...if the universe is eminently animate and rational, then either it is God, or there are two eminent beings, God and Universe, and a third supereminent entity, which is the total reality of God-and-universe. The dilemma is satisfactorily dissolved only by the admission that the God who creates and the inclusive creation are one God.”⁽³²⁾

Lastly, let me touch upon the issue of the cosmic evil which was taken up by Toyohiko Kagawa to explore throughout his career. He published a biological-theological book *The Purpose of the Universe* by Mainichi Shimbunsha in 1958.

Kagawa is of the opinion that the way of salvation from the cosmic evil has been sought in a threefold manner: Indian religious atheism, Western theism, and Modern scientific approach.

Kagawa finishes his book by this final acknowledgement: “However, since our human capacity is limited, there might be no other way of solution than relying upon the absolute will of the universe who has prepared apriori the power of enabling existence, evolution and development to continue for humans....I think we should find the assistance by the transcendent cosmic will in the midst of our struggles for cultivating all possible ways.”⁽³³⁾ Kagawa has been in search of the justification of the Universe.

November 30, 2012

This essay is an English and more elaborate version of a Japanese lecture on the same theme "Kami to shizen no henbo : Martin Luther kara Cobb, Takizawa, Nishida, Whitehead made" which I delivered at the 34th Annual Conference of Japan Society for Process Studies which was convened at Campus Plaza Kyoto, September 8 thru 9, 2012.

Notes

- (1) Wilhelm Pauck, ed., *Luther: Lectures on Romans* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961; hereafter cited as LR)
- (2) Alfred North Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas* (New York: The Free Press, 1967; hereafter cited as AI)
- (3) David Ray Griffin, *Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), pp. 8-9.
- (4) *Luther's Works: American Edition [hereinafter AE]* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House and Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1955—) 31:84 (WA 1: 530)
- (5) *Letter to Staupitz*, AE 48: 66-8 (WA 1: 525-6).
- (6) John B. Cobb, Jr., *A Christian Natural Theology: Based on the Thought of Alfred North Whitehead. Second Edition* (Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007; hereafter cited as CNT2), p. 165.
- (7) *Ibid.*, 16.
- (8) *Ibid.*, 16.

- (9) Alfred North Whitehead, *The Aims of Education* (New York: The Free Press, 1967), 15-42.
- (10) *Ibid.*, xix.
- (11) Significantly enough, this is the title of Ch. 5, Sec. 2 of the Second Edition. See *ibid.*, 113-120.
- (12) See John B. Cobb, Jr., *Beyond Dialogue: Toward a Mutual Transformation of Christianity and Buddhism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982; hereafter cited as BD), Ch. 5, Sec.3: “God and Emptiness.”
- (13) See BD, Ch. 4: Passing Over and Ch.5: Coming Back, 75-118.
- (14) I believe Martin Luther’s motive of metanoia or the transmutation of the mind and disposition facilitated from beyond one’s self—that is, from Divine Grace—provides a rich soil where a proper metaphysical thinking can cherish itself. Probably Whitehead knew that. The following letter written by Luther to Johann von Staupitz in 1518 testifies to the riches of this occasion:

“Reverend Father: I remember that during your most delightful and helpful talks, through which the Lord Jesus wonderfully consoled me, you sometimes mentioned the word “*poenitentia*.” ...I accepted you as a messenger from heaven when you said that *poenitentia* is genuine only if it begins with love for justice and for God and that what they consider to be the final stage and completion is in reality the very beginning of *poenitentia*.

Your words pierced me like a sharp arrow of the Mighty. As a result I began to compare your statements with the passages of Scripture which speak of *poenitentia*. And behold—what a most pleasant scene! Biblical words came leaping toward me from all sides, clearly smiling and nodding assent to your statement. They so supported your opinion that while formerly almost no word in the whole Scripture was more bitter to me than *poenitentia* (although I zealously made a pretense before God and tried to express a feigned and constrained love for him), now no word sounds sweeter or more pleasant to me than *poenitentia*. The commandments of God become sweet when they are read not only in books but also in the wounds of the sweetest Saviour” (Martin Luther, *Letter to Staupitz* [1518], AE 48: 65-6 [WA 1: 525]).
- (15) Katsumi Takizawa, *Takizawa Katsumi Chosakushu (Katsumi Takizawa's Collected Works)*, Vol. II (Kyoto: Hozokan, 1975), p. 532; hereafter cited as TKC with volume number. Altogether 10 Vols. published: 1972-1975.
- (16) Seiichi Yagi and Masao Abe (eds), *Bukkyo to Kirisutokyo: Takizawa Katsumi tononotaiwa o motomete (Buddhism and Christianity: In Search of a Dialogue with Katsumi Takizawa)* (Tokyo: San'ichi Shobo, 1981).
- (17) This observation of mine is testified by the fact that even Hoshino, who supports Takizawa in this regard, proposes as a partial revision of his thesis, the inclusion of Emptiness at the base of the *Proto-factum*. See *TKC*, VII, Editor's Introduction, pp. 460-461.

- (18) See Shin'ichi Hisamatsu's conversations with Paul Tillich, "Dialogues, East and West," *The Eastern Buddhist*, 4/2, October 1971, 89-107; 5/2, October 1972, 107-128; and 6/2, October 1973, 87-114.
- (19) Cf. Shizuteru Ueda, "Gyakutaiō to byōjōtei" (Relation of Inverse Polarity and Everyday-Mind), *Riso*, No. 536, January 1978, 30-50.
- (20) See Tokiyuki Nobuhara, "Principles for Interpreting Christ/Buddha: Katsumi Takizawa and John B. Cobb, Jr.," *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, Vol. 3, 1983, 69-74.
- (21) See Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, Corrected Edition, eds. David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne (New York: The Free Press, 1978), 157, 160, 166, 167; hereafter cited as PR.
- (22) Katsumi Takizawa, *Zoku: Bukkyo to Kirisutokyo (A Sequel to "Buddhism and Christianity")* (Kyoto: Hozokan, 1979).
- (23) See John Cobb's paper on "The Buddhist Witness to God" (unpublished, 1977), p. 11.
- (24) See Tokiyuki Nobuhara, "Portraying 'Authentic Existence' By the Method of Analogy: Toward Creative Uses of the Analogy of Attribution *Duorum Ad Tertium* For Comparative Philosophy of Religion," *Bulletin of Keiwa College*, No. 1, February 28, 1992, 61-83; No. 2, February 28, 1993, 27-50; No. 3, February 28, 1994, 1-19.
- (25) A metaphysical or natural theology can be born only where there exists in our mind the triadic vision of God, the metaphysical ultimate (including creativity, Buddhist emptiness, or The Thomist "esse") and the world. It is important for us in this context to envision Analogy of Attribution/*duorum ad tertium* as a viable analogical possibility accounting for this vision. This analogy is ascertained as true, it seems to me, when Whitehead acknowledges as in the following passage: "Neither God, nor the World, reaches static completion. Both are in the grip of the ultimate metaphysical ground, the creative advance into novelty. Either of them, God and the World, is the instrument of novelty, for the other" (PR, 349). In this respect, Whitehead goes far beyond the purview of Aquinas who discarded this type of analogy since he saw that there might be no such (tertiary) reality as that which goes beyond and above the realities of God as *Esse Ipsum Subsistens* and the world. Here lies the greatness of Whitehead's contribution to the history of metaphysics in the West and beyond. See also n. 24 above.
- (26) In this respect, his type of Christology is free from what Pannenberg critically designates a Christology "from above" that gets started from the divinity of Jesus without reference to his fate and history. I myself have attempted to describe a Christology "from below" in tandem with Takizawa's vision of the *Proto-factum* Immanuel as the depths of being in my article "*Analogia Actionis: A New Proposal for Christology 'From Below'*," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, 39/4 1984, 269-285.
- (27) What I designate here as the "reality of inseparableness" is akin to what Whitehead calls "mutual immanence" in reference to the intra-Trinitarian perichoresis—and this insofar as the mutual immanence is inclusive of whatever happens in the world as well as whatever happens within the Godhead. Cf.: "These problems came before the

- Christian theologians in highly special forms. They had to consider the nature of God. On this topic, there can be no doubt that the Arian solution, involving a derivative Image, is orthodox Platonism, though it be heterodox Christianity. The accepted solution of a multiplicity in the nature of God, each component being unqualifiedly Divine, involves a doctrine of mutual immanence in the divine nature. I am not in any way venturing upon a decision upon the correctness of the original assumption on this multiplicity. The point is the recourse to a doctrine of mutual immanence" (AI, 168).
- (28) See Tokiyuki Nobuhara, "Sunyata, Kenosis, and Jihi or Friendly Compassionate Love: Toward a Buddhist-Christian Theology of Loyalty," *Japanese Religions*, 15/4, July 1989, 50-66.
- (29) See Kitaro Nishida, *Intuition and Reflection in Self-consciousness*, trans. Valdo H. Viglielmo with Takeuchi Yoshinori and Joseph S. O'Leary (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 143.
- (30) See Kitaro Nishida, *Last Writings: Nothing and the Worldview*, translated with an introduction by David A. Dilworth (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), pp. 69-70. Nishida's expression "*jiko jishin o hirugaesu* (it returns to itself)" refers to the central mature motif of his "philosophy of (what I might call) reversion." The said expression can be translated as "it converts itself into the form of the relative through and through." The original expression is, by the way: "*dokomademo souteitekini jiko jishin o hirugaesu.*" Dilworth, however, seems to have hesitated to translate the word "*dokomademo*," meaning "through and through," into English somehow. What Nishida might have meant is a thorough-going transmutation (or conversion) of absolute Nothingness into the relative—in terms of Whitehead's grasp, probably, into "its [the Reality's] Unity of Appearance."
- (31) *Process Thought*, No. 15, 2012, 71-85.
- (32) Charles Hartshorne, *The Divine Relativity: A Social Conception of God* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1964), p. ix. See also Tokiyuki Nobuhara, "Hartshorne and Nishida: Re-Envisioning the Absolute. Two Types of Pantheism vs. Spinoza's Pantheism": <http://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Cont/ContNobu.htm>
- (33) Toyohiko Kagawa, *The Purpose of the Universe* (Tokyo: Mainichi Shimbunsha, 1958), pp. 364-65.