1 the significance of ethics as the study of *ningen*

The essential significance of the attempt to describe ethics as the study of *ningen*[1] consists in getting away from the misconception, prevalent in the modern world, that conceives of ethics as a problem of individual consciousness *only*. This misconception is based on the individualistic conception of a human being inherent in the modern world. The understanding of the individual is itself, as such, an achievement of the modern spirit and bears an importance that we must never be allowed to forget. However, individualism attempts to consider the notion of the individual that constitutes only one moment of human existence and then substitutes it for the notion of the totality of *ningen*. This abstraction is the origin of many sorts of misconception. The standpoint of the isolated ego, which constitutes the starting point of modern philosophy, is merely one such example.

Insofar as the standpoint of the ego limits itself to contemplating objective nature alone, the misconception does not come to the fore so conspicuously. Indeed, the standpoint of the contemplation of nature is already a step away from concrete *human* existence; it is established as the field in which everyone is made to play, in an exemplary way, the role of a subject contemplating an object. But so far as the problems of human existence are concerned, that is, so far as matters connected with practice and action are concerned, isolated subjectivity has, basically speaking, no connection with them. In spite of this, the standpoint of isolated subjectivity, which abstracts from the practical connections between person and person, is here forcibly applied to the questions of ethics. In this way, the field of ethical questions is also

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confined to the relation between subject and nature. Within this field, ethical questions are allocated their own region in which to deal with matters of volition, as distinguished from matters of knowledge. Hence, such problems as the independence of the self over against nature, or the sway of the self over the self itself, or the satisfaction of the desires of the self, and so on are of central importance to ethics. In whichever direction ethical theories may be led, however, we cannot solve the problems of ethics from this standpoint alone. Therefore, in the final analysis, ethical principles cannot be posited unless we bring forward such ideas as that of a super-individual self, the happiness of society, or the welfare of humankind. And this indicates precisely that ethics is not a matter of individual consciousness alone.

The locus of ethical problems lies not in the consciousness of the isolated individual, but precisely in the in-betweenness of person and person. Because of this, ethics is the study of *ningen*. Unless we regard ethics as dealing with matters arising between person and person, we cannot authentically solve such problems as the distinguishing of good from evil deeds, obligation, responsibility, virtue, and so forth. We are able to clarify this by having recourse to the concept of "ethics" such as we are now proposing.

The concept "ethics" is expressed in Japanese by means of the word *rinri*. Incidentally, words are among the most marvellous things that we human beings have created. No one person has the privilege of declaring that she alone has created them. In spite of this, for everyone, words are one's own. Words are the furnace by means of which merely subjective connections made by individual human beings are converted into noematic meanings. In other words, words are concerned with the activity whereby preconscious being is turned into consciousness. Now, this preconsciousness is at the same time subjective reality and, as such, cannot be objectified by any means; it is a cluster of practical act-connections. Therefore, when its structure takes form in consciousness, its origin is not derived merely from individual existence, even though its content exists *in* individual consciousness. In this sense, words are also expressions of the subjective existence of *ningen* and open the way toward subjective existence for us. This is why we must first make use of words in an attempt to clarify the nature of the concept "ethics."

The word *rinri* consists of two words: *rin* and *ri*. *Rin* means *nakama*, that is, "fellows." *Nakama* signifies a body or a system of relations, which a definite group of persons have with respect to each other, and at the same time signifies individual persons as determined

by this system. In ancient China, parent and child, lord and vassal, husband and wife, young and old, friend and friend, and so forth constituted "the grand *rin* of human beings," that is to say, the most important kinds of human fellowship. The relation between parent and child is one of these. Now it is not the case that father and son first of all exist separately, and then come to relate to each other in this way later on. But rather, only through this relationship does the father obtain his qualification as father, and the son his qualification as son. In other words, only by virtue of the fact that they constitute "one fellowship," do they become respectively father and son. However, why does one "fellowship" prescribe each member within itself as father or son, whereas another "fellowship" prescribes that its members be considered friends to one another? It is because "fellowship" is nothing but a manner of interaction through which people have definite connections with each other. Hence, *rin* signifies *nakama* (in general) and, at the same time, a specific form of practical interconnection among human beings. From this it follows that *rin* also means *kimari* (agreement), or *kata* (form), that is, an order among human beings. The *rin* are conceived of as ways of *ningen*.

The forms of practical connection, as just noted, cannot itself exist apart from these connections. As specific forms in which human beings act, they exist only together with these practical connections. But when dynamic human existence is actualized repeatedly, in a definite manner, we can grasp this pattern that constantly makes its appearance in separation from the basis of this dynamic sort of existence. This manner is *rin* or *gorin gojō* (that is, the moral rules that govern the five human relations) as transformed into noematic meaning. The term *ri* signifies "reason" and is added to the term *rin* for the purpose of expressing emphatically the aforementioned manner of action or relational pattern. Therefore, *rinri*, that is, ethics, is the order or the pattern through which the communal existence of human beings is rendered possible. In other words, ethics consists of the laws of social existence.

If this is so, then a question arises as to whether ethics is already established and, as a result, has no further implication as to what ought to be. To this question, we can answer both "yes" and "no." Insofar as a group of friends are relationally established, as the phrase *hoyu yushin* ("reliance prevails among friends") indicates, "reliance," as a manner of practical connections, already lies at the basis of the group. Apart from such reliance, friendship cannot obtain. But the group is not a static entity, for it exists dynamically in and through these

practical connections. The fact that actions were performed previously in a definite manner does not make it impossible for subsequent deeds to deviate from this manner of acting later on. In this sense, we can say that communal existence contains the danger of extinction on each and every occasion. Moreover, human existence as such infinitely aims at the realization of communal existence by virtue of the fact that human beings are *ningen*. Because of this, the pattern of practical connections already realized serves, at the same time, as a pattern yet to be achieved. Therefore, although ethics is already what is, without being merely what should be, it is also regarded as what should be achieved infinitely, without thereby being a mere law of being.

As can be seen from the preceding, we can clarify the concept of ethics with the help of an analysis of the meaning of the word *rinri*. It is evident that this word carries on its back the ancient history of Chinese thought. The more we pursue the social structure of ancient China in a religio-sociological fashion, the more this history of thought comes to reveal its interesting significance. However, our intention here is not to revitalize the ideology of social ethics based on the social structure of ancient China in its original condition. Our purpose is merely to try to restore the significance of ethics as the way inherent in human relations for the sake of illustrating our contention that, through and through, ethics is concerned with those problems that prevail *between* persons.

Granted the concept of ethics as thus clarified, it is quite evident that such matters as the relationship between person and person, the nature of human existence, the resulting practical interconnections, and so forth, have played an important role in this clarification. We said previously that *rin* means a "fellowship" and is, furthermore, a pattern of act-interconnections that makes its appearance within fellowship. But what is *nakama*, and what is *ningen*? That is not self-evident. To inquire into the nature of ethics is, after all, equivalent to asking about the manner of human existence and to asking about *ningen*. In other words, ethics is the study of *ningen*.

With this in mind, we must now make clear the meaning of the concept *ningen*, which we have used somewhat ambiguously thus far. This task is particularly necessary for the purpose of distinguishing *ningen* from the idea of human being that is prevalent in philosophical anthropology, which is now in vogue. Philosophical anthropology tries to grasp a "human being" as the unity of the drives of life and spirit, as does Max Scheler in his book *Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos*.[2] This is nothing more than a new view within a problematics

that sees the "human being" exclusively from the standpoint of the unity of body and mind. All that Scheler enumerates as various types of traditional anthropology[3] belong to the realm of this problematic. These types are the following: (1) The idea of a human being inherent in the faith of Christianity. According to it, a human being was first of all created by a personal God, sinned through Adam's Fall, and will be redeemed by Christ. This view constitutes the starting point of an anthropology, whose interest is centred around the problem of body and soul. (2) The study of human being, as possessing reason (*homo sapiens*): (a) that a human being possesses spirit, that is, reason; (b) this spirit forms the world as the world; (c) spirit, that is, reason is active by itself, without dependence on sensibility; (d) the view that this spirit does not suffer change with respect to races, as well as historically. (Only this last point was later overthrown by Hegel.) It was Dilthey and Nietzsche who perceived that this sort of anthropology is nothing more than a Greek invention. (3) The perspective of a human being as worker or technician (*homo faber*). This view is posited in reaction to the second type, that is, *homo sapiens*. No essential distinction is made between human beings and animals here. A distinction is made only because human beings produce words and tools and because human beings have brains that exhibit a special development in comparison with the brains of other animals. This is the standpoint of anthropology, as expounded by naturalism and positivism. (4) The view that a human being is enfeebled by virtue of her having spirit. This view is a new attack against *homo sapiens*. (5) The assumption of a superhuman being. This is the anthropology of the great personality, such as one which lifts the self-consciousness of human beings to a higher level. These five types, without exception, remove (or abstract) the human being from social groups, and deal with him as a self-sustaining being. Hence, the problem of a human being is always centered around spirit, body, or the self. Even though this sort of anthropology is proclaimed as philosophical anthropology, in an attempt to distinguish it from the anthropology that developed as a theory of the body in "ethnology," there is no difference between them with regard to their basic attitude, for they both try to grasp the essence of a human being in the form of an individual alone.

This tendency seems to result from the fact that such words as *anthropos*, *homo*, *man*, or *Mensch* cannot denote anything but an individual human being. If we take such a stance, we have no alternative but to explain such things as the relationships between person and person, communal existence, society, and so forth by appealing to terms

somewhat different from that of *human being*. But if a human being is, basically speaking, a social animal, then social relationships cannot be separated from her. It must be that a human being is capable of being an individual and at the same time also a member of a society. And the Japanese term *ningen*, that is, "human being," gives most adequate expression to this double or dual characteristic. Therefore, if one takes the position of *ningen*, an attempt to posit the "study of *ningen*" (anthropology) and the "study of society" as somewhat separable from each other would mean nothing more than to have abstracted some single aspect from the complex concrete human being and to let this single aspect stand quite alone. On the contrary, if we want to conceive of a human being in its concreteness, then the two must be one single "study of the human," of *ningen*. At the same time, this study must not be something that haphazardly combines the study of the individual and the study of society but a study basically differing from them both. For the attempt to comprehend the individual and society as the double or dual characteristic of *ningen* and thereby to uncover there humankind's most authentic essence, can by no means be implemented from a standpoint that presupposes a primary distinction between individual and society.

The next issue is to determine in what manner the word *ningen* signifies this twofold characteristic. Does it not, in ordinary usage, have exactly the same meaning as man or *Mensch*? And is not the "study of *ningen*" the Japanese translation of the term *anthropology*? Indeed, that is true; but that is not the whole story. As the literal meaning of the Chinese characters of *ningen* indicate, it is also a word that signifies the *betweenness* of human beings, that is, the "public." Moreover, this is actually the original meaning of the word. In the literature, as well as in those Buddhist sutras the Japanese have adopted from China, the word *ningen* is always used in the sense of "public." In addition to this, during their long history, the Japanese have diverted its meaning to signify an individual human being, as well. This diversion was rendered possible through the usage of certain words that appear in the Chinese translation of Buddhist sutras depicting the view of a human being as involved in *samsara* (transmigration). Because the Indian word that denotes the "world of beasts" was translated, for the sake of convenience, as "beasts," it was regularly used side by side with the word *ningen*. This latter came to mean "humankind," and then "a human being" with the view of distinguishing human beings from "beasts." But what is noteworthy here is not this accidental fact, but the historical fact that the word *ningen*, denoting the "public," was capable of taking in, at the same time, the

meaning of "a human being," irrespective of whatever medium might have intervened to produce this result. Various verses, aphorisms, and maxims about human beings were transmitted from China and became well-known among the Japanese people. In them, without exception, the word *ningen* signifies the "public." Still, it was found that, whatever is said there about the "public," also holds good for the individual human beings living within this public. This experience was given expression through an alternation of the word's meaning.

Keeping an eye on this, one had better consider other words that express the whole, as well as the parts, of human existence. The word *nakama* denotes a group, and yet there is also the phrase, a "single *nakama*." The word *roto* also denotes a group, and yet individuals belonging to a group are also called *roto*. This is the case with many Japanese words such as *tomodachi* ("friends"), *heitai* ("soldiers"), *wakashu* ("young fellows"), *renchu* ("a party"), and so forth. These words obviously show that, in so far as human existence is concerned, the whole exists in the parts and the parts in the whole. Judging from this, we can conclude that it is by no means strange that the word *ningen*, denoting *yononaka* (the "public") as the whole of human beings, came as well to signify individual human beings living in the public sphere.

The Japanese language, therefore, possesses a very significant word; namely *ningen*. On the basis of the evolved meaning of this word, we Japanese have produced a distinctive conception of human being. According to it, *ningen* is the public and, at the same time, the individual human beings living within it. Therefore, it refers not merely to an individual "human being" nor merely to "society." What is recognizable here is a dialectical unity of those double characteristics that are inherent in a human being. Insofar as it is a human being, *ningen* as an individual differs completely from society. Because it does not refer to society, it must refer to individuals alone. Hence, an individual is never communal with other individuals. Oneself and others are absolutely separate. Nevertheless, insofar as *ningen* also refers to the public, it is also through and through that community which exists between person and person, thus signifying society as well, and not just isolated human beings. Precisely because of its not being human beings in isolation, it is *ningen*. Hence, oneself and the other are absolutely separated from each other but, nevertheless, become one in communal existence. Individuals are basically different from society and yet dissolve themselves into society. *Ningen* denotes the unity of these contradictories. Unless we keep this dialectical structure in mind, we cannot understand the essence of *ningen*.

It is quite interesting that Dr. S. Yoshida exhibited this dialectical structure by means of the metaphor of one circle possessing different centers within it. But, in my opinion, this circle, which may well have a variety of different centers, cannot be conceived of except as a unity of contradictories. Yet this is impossible, at least insofar as a finite circle is concerned. Therefore, Yoshida conceived of the radius of this circle as being infinite. His view is that each center indicates the individuality of personality, and the circle, with an infinite radius, indicates the infinity of personality. In infinity, all phases of discrimination terminate in identity. However, Yoshida's harmony of identity and difference was applied to the relation between the individual and the infinite, so to speak, and not to the relation between individuals and society with which we have been concerned thus far. Any kind of society is a finite human reality, and therefore, to amplify the metaphor, the circle that represents this fact must have a finite radius. This kind of circle cannot be an appropriate metaphor in this instance, if the possibility of its having different centers is excluded. With this in mind, we can think of a circle with a finite radius, as a determination of a circle with an infinite radius. If the infinite radius turns out to be finite through its negation, then a finite circle is established as the realization of an infinite circle. In this case, the relation of the same circle with different centers, as is the case with an infinite circle, is also materialized in a finite circle. Such a thing may be inconceivable geometrically, but human existence possesses precisely this sort of structure. Here the finite circle, based on the infinite one, exactly specifies a society. Although centers are the negation of a circle insofar as they are points and are individuals separated from each other, they are, as centers, the centers of the same circle. The metaphor of the circle with different centers can have this meaning only when it gives expression to a structure of this sort.

Now, the concept of *ningen* is determined in terms of the dual characteristics of "public" and "individual" human beings, as is not the case with *anthropos*. However, we conceived of what is called the *public* by treating it as a direct synonym of communal existence, or society. Was this procedure appropriate? By raising this question, we approach one of the central problems of modern philosophy; namely, the meaning of *public*.

When Heidegger characterized human existence by means of the phrase *being in the world*, he made use of the concept of intentionality prevalent in phenomenology, as his jumping-off point. He carried this structure a step further, to transfer it to existence, and understood it as

having to do with tools. Therefore, we can say that he set the pattern for explicating the subjective meaning of what is called the *world*. But in his philosophy, the relation between person and person lies hidden behind the relation between person and tools. It is obvious that the former relation was overlooked, in spite of his assurance that he had not neglected it. For this reason, his disciple K. Löwith tried to bring to light this hidden element and clarify the idea of "world" mainly with reference to the relationships between person and person.[4] Although Heidegger's study is concerned with general phenomenological anthropology, Löwith departs from this approach and turns toward anthropology. And this latter, anthropology, deals with the relation between oneself and the other, that is, with the mutual relations of persons, instead of with individual "persons." Here, a human being is a person "together with others," and the world is *mit-Welt*, that is, the public, whereas *being in the world* means "to relate with others." Because of this, this anthropology was bound to become the basis for the framing and understanding of ethical problems. The essential feature of life consists in the fact that persons assume an attitude of behaving themselves in relation with one another, and this attitude includes within itself the basic behavior of human beings, that is to say, their *ethos*. For this reason, the study of reciprocal human existence turns out to be ethics itself. Löwith's concern, then, was to analyze the meaning of *world* to include the *betweenness* of persons (the "public").

According to Löwith, then, the German word *Welt* implies a human factor. Its significance is, from our perspective, somewhat similar to that of the Japanese word *seken*, which means "the public." Such words as *ein Mann von Welt* ("a man of the world"), *weltkündig* ("being accustomed to the way of the world"), *weltfremd* ("inexperienced in the way of the world"), *weltflüchtig* ("being aloof from worldly affairs"), *weltlich gesinnt* ("being a person interested in worldly affairs"), *Weltverächter* ("being a person who looks askance at the world"), *Männerwelt* ("the world of men"), *Frauenwelt* ("the world of women"), and so forth indicate, respectively, some definite realm of society. That is to say, *Welt* is not just the world of nature, but of community existence, namely; of a society in which persons are related to each other. Thus, the analysis of *in-der-Welt-sein* must be an analysis of community life.

What has been said of the term *Welt*, applies to an even greater extent to *yononaka* or *seken* ("the public"). Just as the term *Welt* originally meant "a generation," and "a group of people," so *yo*, in Japanese, signifies "a generation," and "a society." That is to say, *yo* transits

temporality and at the same time means something spatial, something to get away from or wander about in. But when *se-ken* or *yo-no-naka* are spoken of, what is signified is not only *yo*, that is, *Welt*, but is also combined with such words as *ken* (or *aida*), that is, betweenness or *naka*, in. In other words, what is implied here is the phrase, *in-der-Welt*. Moreover, the words *ken* or *naka* additionally, as is not the case with the word *in*, have not only a merely spatial significance, that is, only a concern about tools, as in Heidegger, but also express quite evidently human relations as well. This is indicated by such phrases as *danjo-no-aida* ("the relation between man and woman"), *fūfu-no-naka* ("conjugal relations"), and *naka-tagai-suru* ("to break up relations"), and so forth.

Incidentally, those human relations now under consideration are not objective relations that are established through subjective unity, as is the case with spatial relations between object and object. Rather, they are *act-connections* between person and person like *communication* or *association*, in which persons as subjects concern themselves with each other. We cannot sustain ourselves in any *aida* or *naka* without acting subjectively. At the same time, we cannot act without maintaining ourselves in some *aida* or *naka*. For this reason, *aida* or *naka* imply a living and dynamic betweenness, as a subjective interconnection of acts. A betweenness of this sort and the spatio-temporal world combine to produce the meaning conveyed by the words *se-ken* (the public) or *yo-no-naka* (the public). Additionally, these words are used to indicate something like a single subjective entity, as is suggested by the phrases *seken ni shirareru* ("to become public"), or *yononaka o sawagaseru* ("to cause a stir in society"). There is no doubt that *seken* or *yononaka* here mean society, or communal existence regarded as a subject. When only a few friends know about something, we cannot say that it has become public. Or were a few persons to cause a stir, we could not say that *seken* was astir. *Seken*, as a knowing or stirring subject, even though being an interconnection of acts between person and person, is simultaneously nothing but the community as subject, that is, the subject as community existence, which transcends the individual subjects involved in this interconnection of acts.[5]

The "plus value" of the concepts of *seken* or *yononaka* over against that of *Welt* lies in the fact that the former gets a grip on the temporal as well as the spatial characteristics of subjective communal existence. As was said before, the term *Welt* signifies a generation, or a "group," a sum total of people or the place where people live. But as time went on, it came to lose this spatio-temporal significance, and

finally came to mean one-sidedly the world as the sum total of objective natural things. On the other hand, so far as *seken* or *yokonaka* are concerned, the meaning of something subjectively extended, which undergoes constant transformation, has been tenaciously preserved. Hence, the concept of *seken* already involves the historical, climatic, and social structure of human existence. In other words, what is called *seken* or *yokonaka* indicates a human existence that is historical, climatic, and social.

With regard to the term *ningen*, which is characterized by *yononaka* and at the same time by *hito* (i.e., an individual human being), we call the character of *yononaka* the social nature of *ningen*, on the one hand, and that of *hito* the individual nature of *ningen*, on the other. To see *ningen* only in the form of *hito*, is to see a human being merely from the perspective of his individual nature. This view, if it be held alone, and even if it is allowed as a methodological abstraction, cannot come to grips with *ningen* concretely. We must grasp *ningen* through and through as the unity of the aforementioned apparently contradictory characteristics.

We described *ningen*, which possesses this dual structure, as something subjective. The implication is that *ningen*, although being subjective communal existence as the interconnection of acts, at the same time, is an individual that acts through these connections. This subjective and dynamic structure does not allow us to account for *ningen* as a "thing" or "substance." *Ningen* cannot be thought of as such apart from the constantly moving interconnection of acts. This, despite certainly producing individuals, also makes them submerge in the whole. This way of being, which is peculiar to *ningen*, or to be more precise, this transformation from being to nothingness, and from nothingness to being (hence, this way of becoming a human being), we attempt to express by the Japanese concept of *sonzai*. Therefore, our concept of *sonzai* is different from *Sein*, *einai*, or *esse*. And our study of *sonzai* is also not equivalent to Ontology.

Why would I, in the present world in which the concept of *sonzai* is used as equivalent to *Sein*, deliberately attempt to oppose this usage by separating the former (*sonzai*) from the latter (*Sein*)? It is because, indeed, the meaning of the Japanese term *sonzai* is all too different from that of *Sein*. The special meaning with which *Sein* has been burdened and which is the central issue of philosophy can hardly be found in the word *sonzai*. At the starting point of Fichte's philosophy, *Sein* consists in a positing that "A is A." As the starting point of Hegel's logic, *Sein* is the direct, undetermined "to be," but this is not the case with *sonzai*.

The key issue of *Sein* lies in the view that the concept of *Sein*, as intended by these philosophers, has the same meaning as the copula of formal logic, but even though functioning in this way, also implies the proposition, "A *is*." Conversely, out of the fact that the "to be," which signifies that something *is*, functions at the same time as the copula, there emerged the problem of relating thinking and being. Aristotle had already pointed out that *einai* gives expression to the relation of thinking and being itself. Hobbes put special emphasis on the contention that *est* is not confined to being a mere sign of connection but also exhibits the cause of this connection. That is to say, *est* exhibits *essentia*, but not *existentia*. When it is said that the sky *is* blue, something identical that forms the basis of the connection between the sky and the color blue is given expression to by the word *est*. Over against Hobbes, J. S. Mill insisted that *est* also refers to *existentia*. It is true that the copula, as Hobbes pointed out, is a sign connecting subject with predicate. The view that *est*, as the copula, is something more than a sign and refers to *existentia*, is mere mysticism. When a centaur, which is at once a human being and a horse, is said *to be* a product of a poet's imagination, this assertion does not at all mean that there *are centaurs*. Yet *est* does not only operate as copula; viewed from another angle, *est* refers to *existentia*. In other words, *est* refers to "A *is* A," and also to "A *is*." Now, this affirmation concerning *essentia* and *existentia* occupied the central place in the ontology of the Middle Ages and was based on Aristotle. What happens to all of these problems, however, if we substitute *sonzai* for the term *est*? Is it possible to say that *sonzai* plays the role of copula, or that it expresses the *essentia*? The answer is absolutely no! If this is true, then when you translate the term *Sein* into *sonzai*, you cannot, I am afraid, escape the accusation that you have no knowledge about the issues surrounding *Sein*.

Then what is the original meaning of the word *sonzai*?

The original meaning of the Chinese character *son*, of *son-zai*, is "subjective self-subsistence." It means maintenance or subsistence over against loss. But the self, although subjectively sustained, is thereby objectified and becomes an intentional object, physical or mental. When such words as *sonshin* (the survival of the body), *sonmei* (the survival of life), *sonroku* (the survival of records) are spoken of, a self is maintained in the form of body, life, or records. Because what is thus maintained thereby continues to be, it is said to maintain itself. If the subject maintains the body, the body also subsists. Thus, generally speaking, usage such as *mono ga son suru* ("a thing subsists") comes to be. In this case too, however, *son* (subsistence) is opposed to "loss." *Son*, no

matter whether it is asserted in the form of *jiko o son suru* ("the sub-sisting of the self") or in the form of *mono ga son suru* ("that a thing subsists") is on every occasion capable of changing into "loss." That is to say, it is *son* of *son-bo* ("maintenance and loss") whose essential fea-ture lies in its temporal character.

The original meaning of the *zai* of *son-zai* lies in the fact that the subject stays in some place. Therefore, *zai* is said to be opposed to *kyo* (departure). *To depart* means that what is capable of departing of it-self, moves from one place to another. Hence, only that which is ca-pable of going and coming of itself is able to stay at some place. All the usages, such as *zai shuku* ("staying at an inn"), *zai taku* ("staying at home"), *zai go* ("remaining in one's homeland"), *zai sei* ("remain-ing in this world") show this to be so. Now the place where the subject stays is a social place such as an inn, home, homeland, or the world. In other words, it consists in such human relations as that of the family, village, town, or the general public. Hence, *zai* means that she who acts subjectively, while coming and going in human relations in one way or another, nevertheless, remains within these relationships. Of course, *zai* is also applied to things. But things are incapable of departing from the scene of themselves. Originally, to say that such things stay (*zai*) at some place is an anthropomorphic way of speaking. The determination of place is a human being's business. Hence, to say that a thing stays at some place is only to say that a human being assigns this place to it and possesses it.

If it is tenable to hold that *son* is the self-sustenance of the self and *zai* means to remain within human relations, then *son-zai* is pre-cisely the self-sustenance of the self as betweenness. That is, it means that *ningen* possesses herself. We could also simply say that *sonzai* is "the interconnection of the acts of *ningen*." Hence, in the strict sense of the word, *son-zai* is only applied to *ningen*. The phrase *mono no sonzai* (i.e., "the being of a thing") is nothing but an anthropomorphic expression of "the being of a thing," which is derived from being as a human being.

We Japanese have constructed the concept of *sonzai* in line with that original meaning of the word. If what has been argued so far is accurate, then it is beyond doubt that *sonzai* cannot be equivalent to *Sein*. But just because of this, we are able to use the notion to describe the subjective, practical, and dynamic structure of human being.

In the preceding, we defined four basic concepts; namely, (1) *rinri* (ethics), (2) *ningen* (human being), (3) *yononaka* (the public), and (4) *sonzai* (human existence). Ethics is a way, or the manner of the

interconnection of acts that makes *ningen* truly *ningen*. That is, it is a manner of *sonzai* of *ningen*. Hence, the science of ethics is the study of *ningen* regarded as that of *ningen sonzai*. By virtue of the fact that this study probes into the practical basis of "being" and "the consciousness of the ought" and so forth, it claims a basic status over against "the study of being" and "the study concerning the consciousness of the ought to be." Through the basic clarification of *ningen's sonzai*, the problems of how objective beings arise or of how consciousness of the ought to be arises in each age can be resolved. Therefore, prior to questions concerning all sorts of natural beings and idealistic oughts, the clarification of the basic ground must be carried out on the level of subjective and practical *sonzai*.

The problem of the method to be considered in the next chapter is a problem concerned with exactly how an elucidation of this subjective *sonzai* is to be carried out. Assuming that this task is successfully carried out and that the method is thereby established, then the structure of *sonzai* inherent in *ningen* will be clarified from the angle of its unique dual nature, or double characteristics. To have in advance a bird's eye view of the problems of ethics as the study of *ningen*, we will present, in outline, the problems involved as a result of this dual structure of human being.

The first point to be argued is that of the double structure of a human being itself. No matter which topic of the everyday existence of *ningen* we take up, we are inevitably enabled to probe this double structure. A detailed grasp of this double structure will reveal that it is precisely a movement of negation. On the one hand, the standpoint of an acting "individual" comes to be established only in some way as a negation of the totality of *ningen*. An individual who does not imply the meaning of negation, that is, an essentially self-sufficient individual, is nothing but an imaginative construction. On the other hand, the totality of *ningen* comes to be established as the negation of individuality. A totality that does not include the individual negatively is also nothing but a product of the imagination. These two negations constitute the dual character of a human being. And what is more, they constitute a single movement. On the very ground that it is the negation of totality, the individual is, fundamentally speaking, none other than that totality. If this is true, then this negation is also the self-awareness of that totality. Hence, when an individual realizes herself through negation, a door is opened to the realization of totality through the negation of the individual. The individual's acting is a movement of the restoration of totality itself. The negation moves on to the negation of negation. This is the essential feature of the movement of negation.

Now, that *ningen's sonzai* is, fundamentally speaking, a movement of negation makes it clear that the basis of *ningen's sonzai* is negation as such, that is, absolute negation. The true reality of an individual, as well as of totality, is "emptiness," and this emptiness is the absolute totality. Out of this ground, from the fact that this emptiness is emptied, emerges *ningen's sonzai* as a movement of negation. The negation of negation is the self-returning and self-realizing movement of the absolute totality that is precisely social ethics (i.e., *Sittlichkeit* in German). Therefore, the basic principle of social ethics is the realization of totality (as the negation of negation) through the individual, (that is, the negation of totality). This is, after all, the movement of the realization of absolute totality. When seen in this way, it is clear that the basic principle of social ethics involves two moments. One of these is the establishment of the individual as the other, over against totality. What is at stake here is the taking of a first step toward self-awareness. Apart from the self-awareness of an individual, there is no social ethics. The other moment is the individual's surrender to the totality. This is what has been called the *demand of the superindividual will*, or of total will. Without this surrender, there is also no social ethics.

When the basic principle of social ethics is grasped in this way, it also becomes clear that the basic issues of ethics, such as conscience, freedom, good and evil, and so on are all included within this principle. Conscience is the call of the original totality; freedom is none other than the negativity itself of the movement of negation; and good and evil consist respectively in going back into and going against the direction of this movement. Within the purview of this principle, however, these issues cannot yet come to be dealt with concretely, for attention is paid only to the double character of individuality and totality peculiar to *ningen*, and we have not yet embarked upon a study of the structure of a totality inclusive of numerous individuals. Totality is said to arise in the negation of individuality, but it is not able to appear through the negation of one individual alone. Individuals are the many, and the totality as community existence arises at the point where these many individuals become one by forsaking their individuality. But in any totality whatsoever, individuality is not extinguished without residue. As soon as an individual is negated, it negates the totality so as to become an individual once more. In this way, it repeats the movement of negation. Totality subsists only in this movement. Seen from this angle, it is clear that the dynamic structure of the disruption into many individuals, and of their community as well, enables the totality to

reappear. The *sonzai* of *ningen* is not only the movement of negation between the individual and the whole. It must also consist in the restoration of totality through indefinite numbers of individuals opposing each other in their disruption into self and other.

The second point to be discussed is the structure of *sonzai* peculiar to *ningen*. How is the *sonzai* of subjective *ningen* disrupted into self and other: What kind of thing is the disruption of subjects? And what does it mean to say that this disruption is negated and brought back to unity? What comes to the fore here is the most basic problem of spatiality and temporality. The disruption of subjects and the reunification of these disrupted ones, that is, the movement of disruption and then of unification, is fundamentally spatio-temporal. All noematic space/time and all formal space/time as the condition through which natural objects arise is, without exception, derived on this basis. In a word, it is the case that space and time are derived from the *sonzai* peculiar to *ningen*, but not that *ningen* is in space and time.

It is not until this basic spatiality and temporality are brought to light that the practical interconnection of acts is disclosed in its concrete structure. In other words, only here can *ningen's* acts acquire their full-fledged determination. From the standpoint of activity, we are truly able to come to grips with that path of *ningen* that is called *trust* and *truth*. For only in *ningen's* acts, does the truth of (*ningen's*) *sonzai* take place or not, and this either/or situation is precisely where trust and truth are located. Against this background, such issues as good and evil, conscience, freedom and justice, and so on can be clarified concretely. The law inherent in the *sonzai* of *ningen*, which occurs spatio-temporally, discloses each of its elements in the form of these problems.

Incidentally, the *sonzai* of *ningen*, whose acts are interconnected by this law, is nothing more than the various systems of social ethics. There is no place in which systems of social ethics cannot be found, so long as the paths of *ningen* are practiced. But the systems of social ethics are not uniform. Thus, we must pay attention to their various forms and particular laws.

The third point to be argued here is that of the structure of solidarity, which inheres in these systems of social ethics. First of all, we shall try to grasp solidarity from the viewpoint of the community of *sonzai*. We can follow it pyramidically, from the simple *sonzai* community connecting two persons up to the complicated one of the national connection. Each stage has its own structure of solidarity, and in this way each of these structures exhibits a particular form of the law inherent in the *sonzai* of *ningen*. Trust and truth and freedom and jus-

tice appear here in their special form and by name. Precisely in these forms of solidarity people acquire the definite qualification of *persona* and come to be concretely burdened with responsibility and obligation.

Now, that these forms of solidarity overlap pyramidically means that each *sonzai*-community always has both a private and a public character. By reason of being finite, no finite *sonzai*-community can escape this "privacy." The closer the community of *sonzai*, the more "privacy" is intensified. Thus, on the one hand, "privacy" mediates the unity of social ethics, without thereby ceasing to be private. On the other, it prevents the truth inherent in *ningen* from emerging. This is the reason why *ningen sonzai* makes its appearance in a defective form of solidarity. Here, societies of mutual interest arise (*Gesellschaft*), or what could be called *egoistically connected societies*. These societies, although drawing lessons concerning communal structure from the community of *sonzai*, do not make *sonzai* communal. Here trust, sincerity, service, responsibility, obligation, and so forth are made use of formally but have no substance. That is to say, they are systems of social ethics, without thereby being socially ethical. For this reason, they can be called *deprived forms* of social ethics. But these deprived forms make us conscious of solidarity all the more strongly. It is inevitable, when seen from the angle of the community of *sonzai*, that there should arise an uneven distribution of light and shadow with respect to communal organization, on the ground that the *sonzai* of *ningen* has a spatio-temporal structure. Now, even though the forms of solidarity become conspicuous by abstraction from their actual quality, the communal character becomes a uniformly tightened system without a variety of light and shade. Such is the state, as a legal system of social ethics, wherein each structure of solidarity is given expression in legal fashion and responsibility and obligation are imposed compulsorily. The authority of totality operates here in the guise of the state, and social ethics is protected from destruction by this authority. But the real state includes communities of *sonzai* and societies of mutual interest (*Gesellschaft*) as its substance. There is no state that is nothing more than a mere legal construction. The solidarity expressed legally falls short of expressing the way of *ningen*, if it is not backed up by the community of *sonzai*.

Incidentally, *ningen's sonzai*, which is provided with the preceding structure of solidarity, is essentially spatio-temporal. It forms a system of social ethics in some place, and at some period of time. Apart from land and a specific time period, a system of social ethics would turn out to be a mere abstraction. As Tönnies pointed out, family ties

occur in the "home," connections of neighbors in the "village," and links of friendship in the "town." And the home, the village, and the town are all burdened with historical tradition and re-create their history day by day. Or rather, I should say that the connections themselves of family, neighborhood, and friendship together constitute the content of this history. Therefore, the spatio-temporal structure of the *sonzai* of *ningen* must already be a climatic and historical structure when it is materialized in the form of a system of social ethics.

The fourth point to be argued is precisely the existence of this climatic and historical structure. For here the *sonzai* of *ningen* is given concreteness in the full sense of that term. Such a thing as the *sonzai* of *ningen* in general does not exist in reality. What was deemed universally human by Europeans, in the past, was outstandingly Europeanlike. This is understandable. The significance of world history lies in this, that the way of *ningen* is realized in a variety of climatic and historical types. Just as the universal is capable of being universal only through and in the particular, so the *sonzai* of *ningen* can be universal only through its particular materializations. In this way, only where each historical nation aims at the formation of totality in its particularity, do international relations become possible, in the true sense of the word. An approach that attempts to be international by ignoring nationality is nothing more than an abstract illusion.

The last investigatory task leads us to the theory of national ethics. This topic has two aspects: as the study of principles and of history. The former is the theory of national ethics as a part of the system of ethics, and the latter is the study of the history of ethics peculiar to a nation and, hence, for us, of the history of Japanese ethics. These two must not be confounded. Still, even the study of principles cannot be completely separated from the problem of history. As was said before, the climatic and historical *sonzai* of *ningen* is what is here in question. The significance of a "nation" consists in the fact that the totality of *ningen* is formed as particular types. Hence, as a climatic and historical product, *nation* must be clarified through an investigation into its origin. That the investigation of *nation* is usually carried out through its connections with wars against other nations is itself based on climatic and historical conditions. The national communities that emerged because of the disruption of the foundation of the unified Roman Catholic world and those that never achieved anything more than the unity of a nation differ in their climatic and historical structure, even though they may be designated by the same word. Our task here is to inquire into what a nation is, in its various forms, and to clarify what kind of

position the realization of national totality occupies in the movement of social ethics, which consists in coming back to a seeming authenticity via a disruption between self and others. Given that the place wherein every form of social ethics dwells is a national totality, the importance of this task will be self-evident.

I hold the position that the business of ethics as the study of *ningen* is to solve the problems noted here by appealing to the basic structure of the *sonzai* of *ningen*.