

# On Religious Love — Kierkegaard and Shinran

YAMASHITA Hidetomo

## 1. Foreword: The duality of human being

The concept of love has been considered in the terms such as *eros*, *philia* and *agape* (caritas), in the West. In these concepts *eros* was considered by Plato as divine insanity in which man is driven to the absolutely eternal. However, whether eternal immortality is realized truly by this must be suspended. *Philia* is emphasized by Aristotle, but it has a basis only on the virtuous within human beings, and cannot itself reach the religious essence. But it is another question whether this concept of friendship brings an important meaning in Christianity again. *Agape*, as emphasized by John and Paul in the New Testament, is the fundamental concept in Christianity, and I will discuss it below.

In Buddhism, the problem of love is connected with 慈悲 (compassion) and is defined as removing pain and giving happiness (拔苦与乐), that is, *ji* (慈) means giving happiness and *hi* (悲) means saving sentient beings from sufferings. Moreover, the compassion which arises from three kinds of 縁 (en, condition) is called into question in Buddhism. The first is *shujoen no jihi* (衆生縁の慈悲), that is, the compassion arising from perception in sentient beings. This is awakened in the minds of ordinary men or followers of Hinayana, and called “small compassion”.

The second is called *hoen no jihi* (法縁の慈悲), or the compassion arising from the observation of the component elements of sentient beings. This is awakened in the minds of arhats (arakan) or bodhisattvas below the First Stage, and is called “medium compassion”.

The third is called *muen no jihi* (無縁の慈悲), or the compassion arising from realization of the void (or emptiness, 空). This is awakened in the minds

of bodhisattvas of the First Stage or above, and is called “great compassion”. The last is the unconditional love and, which I address below.

What kind of meaning does love and compassion have for a human existence? I think that completion of humanity is based on completion at love and compassion. Although the essence of humanity will be discussed from various viewpoints, it consists in maturity benefiting both oneself and others. However, is it really possible for a human being to love all living creatures? It is my opinion that from a mere human beings’ horizon, the love and compassion are impossible to fulfill. I have considered a mere human being’s horizon as the state of the human being who is alive on thought(the frame of thinking) (思枠). I have obtained and used this word from the next text of Uchiyama Kosho (Zen Buddhist priest).

One time teacher Sawaki told me in teaching. “The truth acquired by the Buddha (the truth of the universe) is immeasurable and boundless. It does not satisfy the thought that you want to be satisfied.” At this time, I felt that the heaven and the ground had been reversed. Up to this time I have tried hard to realize spiritual enlightenment in order to improve myself. However, I realized that I myself, who was trying hard, was already efficiently employed by the universe (Nature) which cannot subsume in my thought (the heavy frame of thinking). Although the word “thought” was usually applied to “思惑”, I have come to consider it more appropriate to use the word “思枠” since then.\*<sup>1</sup>

Unexpectedly, the text refers to the double state of I (as a human existence). The first ‘I’ who wants to improve itself, realize spiritual enlightenment or to love truly (in the present theme), that is, the ‘I’ who lives within the frame of thinking. The other is the ‘I’ who is efficiently employed in the universe

---

\*<sup>1</sup> Uchiyama Kosho, *Shobogenzo Genjokoan wo ajiwau*, Hakujusha, 1987, p.59

(Nature), that is, the 'I' who arises from causation.

Buddha's spiritual enlightenment is the awakening of this universal activity (dharma) and is not a thinking result inside the frame of thought. Kierkegaard explains in the example of the stomach that a thing called reflection cannot exceed the reflection itself. Although the stomach digests various things, the stomach itself cannot be digested. In order for reflection to exceed the position of reflection, Kierkegaard says that a qualitative leap is required, and can never become possible from inside of the frame of thinking, but only by work of God.

Being different from Buddhistic dharma (tathata), "the Other" (det Andet) of which Kierkegaard speaks in *The Sickness unto Death* is also the Ground which supports man's spiritual life while exceeding the frame of thinking. Here the duality of human existence is expressed through self-relation and God-relation.

In the relation between two, the relation is the third as a negative unity, and the two relate to the relation and in the relation to the relation; thus under the qualification of the psychical the relation between the psychical and the physical is a relation. If, however, the relation relates itself to itself, this relation is the positive third, and this is the self. Such a relation that relates itself to itself, a self, must either have established itself or have been established by another. If the relation that relates itself to itself has been established by another, then the relation is indeed the third, but this relation, the third, is yet again a relation and relates itself to that which established the entire relation. The human self is such a derived, established relation, a relation that relates itself to itself and in relating itself to itself relates itself to another\*<sup>2</sup>

It is most difficult to exceed the frame of thinking and a self-related chain. In

---

\*<sup>2</sup> S. Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death*, trans. by H. V. Hong and E. H. Hong, Princeton U.P. 1980, p.13-14

Buddhism, the Yogacara School makes an issue of the ground clinging to the thought of existence of the self (the manas-consciousness). Unless this changes to the byodosho-ti (平等性習), true compassion is never realized. Byodosho-ti is partially realized in the kendo (見道) stage, and is fully realized in the stage of buddhahood. It is the byodosho-ti which perceives the underlying identity of all dharmas, and of oneself and others, thereby making it possible for one to overcome the feelings of separation from oneself from others. I think that the reason why Kierkegaard distinguishes qualitatively between Christian love and natural love in *Works of Love* is that he perceived that it is so difficult to exceed the frame of thinking.

In order for love and compassion to be accomplished, the frame of thinking and self-relations must be exposed in all their aspects. But this occurs only through the manifestation of dharma or the work of another (God). This is Faith, or the Heart of Faith. So, religious love is accomplished through faith, and it is natural that love has the attributes of faith. Now, I want to take up the issue of the structure of faith as a basis of love.

## 2. The returning of the Absolute into this world

How is faith, and heart of faith, materialized? Both Christianity and Buddhism, teach that the origin (Anfang) of faith is the return of God and Buddha. The logical basis of this consists in the dialectical relation of the absolute to the relative. God or Buddha cannot realize themselves and have their absoluteness only by stopping at the absolute place. This typically appears in Buddhism through the episode called the hesitation of preaching and entreaty of Bonten (The Brahma King) and the first preaching, which I have discussed at length in earlier thesis. Nevertheless, the following quote is helpful.

By the way, there is a very suitable interesting simile of which I was

taught to Dr. Tanabe. A man was making all possible efforts to search for Buddha. When he thought that he would reach to the next room of the Buddha at last, now would go into the next room of the Buddha, Buddha was absence there. The Buddha came out to the world of sentient beings (Saha world) to save them where he had already passed. He went away in the Saha world conversely this time to encounter the Buddha, and he met the Buddha cooperating in work of the Buddha. If two, the direction of inside and the direction of outside, are not connected, people cannot find out the place where meets the Buddha. Because except for the work of compassion which is the inner is immediately the outer and the outer is immediately the inner, there is not the true work of the absolute. Dr. Tanabe thinks so. This is a very important thing and I also think so. Supposing we divide the absolute from the relative, it will become the relative.\*<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Takeuchi describes here the meaning of Buddha (tathagata) according to the thought of Rhys Davids who translates tathagata into “way man”. A “way man” is an administrator of a way, and used in English up to the 17th century. A “way” connected two villages, making communication possible. If spiritual enlightenment stops at spiritual enlightenment, it will be separated from the real world of suffering and the meaning of spiritual enlightenment will be lost. Spiritual enlightenment is realized only after it attaches a “way” to the real world. Thus, it can be said that spiritual enlightenment is not spiritual enlightenment, and herein is enlightenment. We can apply here the logic of Daisetsu Suzuki (即非の論理). We see here the two pillars of Buddhism, wisdom and compassion.

---

\*<sup>3</sup> Takeuchi Yoshinori, *Oso and Genso*, Writings Bd.2, Hozokan,p.228ff.

This is also clearly asserted in the thought of Kierkegaard, particularly in his work *Philosophical Fragments*. In this book, Kierkegaard discusses the fundamental problems of learning and teaching, by comparing the teachers Socrates and Christ. According to Socrates, each human being has “truth” and “an eternal thing” inside itself, and should itself be aware of it. In this case, a teacher is only merely a chance.

Viewed Socratically any point of departure in time is *eo ipso* something accidental, a vanishing point, an occasion. Nor is the teacher anything more, and if gives of himself and his erudition in any other way, he does not give but takes away.\*<sup>4</sup>

The temporal point of departure is a nothing, because in the same moment I discover that I have known the truth from eternity without knowing it, in the same instant that moment is hidden in the eternal, assimilated into it in such a way that I, so to speak, still cannot find it even if I were to look for it, because there is no Here and no There, but only an *ubique et nusquam* [everywhere and nowhere].\*<sup>5</sup>

In contrast with the Socratic teacher, in Christianity the moment (Øieblikket) has a decisive meaning and those who search for truth are specified as the non-truth itself. Moreover, non-truth is not being only out of truth, but is rebellious to truth. This is a crime. Although the teacher in this case must be a savior, it must be remembered that God originally does not need a pupil at all. So, the power of moving God is love. However, this love is unhappy. Kierkegaard says:

Yet this love is basically unhappy, for they are very unequal, and what

---

\*<sup>4</sup> S. Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments, Johannes Climacus*, trans. by H. V. Hong and E. H. Hong, Princeton U.P. 1980, p.11

\*<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p.13

seems so easy—namely, that the god must be able to make himself understood—is not so easy if he is not to destroy that which is different.<sup>\*6</sup>

According to this situation, God descends and reaches this world. But this is an absolute paradox for understanding. And before this paradox there is an either/or, that is, offense or faith, which he goes on to discuss.

Now if the moment is to have decisive significance (and without this we return to the Socratic, even though we think we are going further) the learner is in untruth, indeed, is there through his own fault—and yet he is the object of the god's love [Kjærlighed]. The god wants to be his teacher, and the god's concern is to bring about equality. If this can not be brought about, the love becomes unhappy and the instruction meaningless, for they are unable to understand each other.<sup>\*7</sup>

In other words, love will become a misfortune and probably instruction will also become meaningless. It corresponds to the necessity of Buddha's movement above. If the absolute world does not attach a "way" to this shore (此岸), it becomes itself empty. Therefore Tathagata, or God, causes a concrete movement called love and compassion, thereby attaching a "way" to this world. This concrete movement is treated as a problem of incarnation in Christianity and is treated as a problem of Name (名号) in the Pure Land Buddhism, however it lies outside the scope of this short article.

---

<sup>\*6</sup> *Ibid.*, p.25

<sup>\*7</sup> *Ibid.*, p.28

### 3. Faith or the Heart of Faith

Faith and the heart of faith are materialized by the turning of the absolute to this world, discussed above. Here I would like to touch on some points which seldom attract attention.

In Shinran the core at which Tathagata's original Vow aims is "to aspire be born in my pure land". Although people have various desires that occur inside the frame of thinking, it is difficult work to convert their energy into "aspiring to be born in pure land". The human self is alive in the "jet-black dark room of a thousand years" (Donran, T'an-luan) where he cannot expect the Tathagata's land at all. It is never aware of this darkness out of darkness. Unless it comes out with the light, however small it may be, the darkness inside the frame of thinking does not recognize even darkness. Tathagata tried to realize this impossible thing by Call of the Primal Aspiration, and in his last paper, *The place logic and religious view of the world*, Nishida Kitaro described the relation between God (Buddha) and a human being as "inverse polarity" (逆対応). Nishida says:

The human self's relation to the absolute is not a matter of imperfection, but of the self-negation of the absolute. Hence I repeat Dait' o Kokushi's verse to express the paradoxical identity of the human and the divine:

Buddha and I, distinct through a billion kalpas of time,

Yet not separate for one instant;

Facing each other the whole day through,

Yet not facing each other for an instant.

The relation between God and the human self is the paradox of the absolute, the simultaneous presence and absence of Buddha and Daitō. The religious consciousness does not arise out of our own selves; it is simul-



taneously the call of God or Buddha.\*<sup>8</sup>

Thus our faith happens from the call of the absolute, and Shinran expresses it “to hear is immediately to believe” (聞即信). When Nishida describes the concept of love, it means the limitation regarding place of absolute nothingness. However, I think that the origin of compassion is the Vow of Tathagata, “to aspire to be born in my pure land”. Soga Ryojin (a priest of Jodo-Shinshu) is also looking at the origin of the Jodo-Shinshu in Thatagata’s original Vow. Our desires are the desires for money, or the recovery of health, in short, for benefits in the present World. On the other hand, in the call of Tathagata’s Vow, “pure land” is contained. The land in which we are requested to be born is the Tathagata’ land, says Nishida, it will be the absolute nothingness, or it is “a circle without circumference and everywhere takes the center.” The call “to aspire to be born in pure land” is the returning of Buddha into the world of sentient beings, materialized in the language “NAMU-AMIDA-BUTU”. “To aspire to be born in pure land” is contained in the nineteenth, the twentieth, and the eighteenth Vow respectively, and they are considered the more detailed steps of invitation to Pure Land. (Although this theme is very important, it is difficult to treat in detail here.) Shinran develops this in the “Catechism which is that three minds immediately are One mind” (in *Kyo-Gyo-Shin-Sho*) that our religious mind will not become possible without Tathagata’s original Vow “to aspire to be born in my pure land”. It seems that this statement and that of Nishida have the same origin.

One could say, by way of description, that those who hear the call have their names written simultaneously in two separate registers. That is, they have one family register in this world, but at the same time another in the Pure Land.

---

\*<sup>8</sup> Nishida Kitaro, *Last Writings, Nothingness and the Religious Worldview*, trans. D. A. Dilworth, U. Hawaii P., 1987, p.78

From here, the Nembutsu way of life is difficult to exercise in the real world.\*<sup>9</sup>

In this way, compassion in Shinran is materialized as soon as the call of Tathagata can be heard. It is an awakening in Buddha's land which cannot be anticipated at all. Here, Tathagata's Heart is tightly realized and the realized Heart of Tathagata is just the heart of Faith. Therefore faith is not man's heart but Tathagata's Heart.

Next, I will look at the thought of Kierkegaard, who also explains accomplishment of faith in many parts of his writings.

How, then, does the learner become a believer or a follower? When the understanding is discharged and he receives the condition. When does he receive this? In the moment. This condition, what does it condition? His understanding of the eternal. But a condition such as this surely must be an eternal condition.—In the moment, therefore, he receives the eternal condition, and he knows this from this having received it in the moment, for otherwise he merely calls to mind that he had it from eternity.\*<sup>10</sup>

Thus, for Kierkegaard faith is to realize the eternal, but man does not have the condition to perform it. He must be given it by God. Here there is a clear similarity with Shinran's "to hear is immediately to believe":

Yet only in self-denial can one effectually praise love, because God is love, and only in self-denial can one hold fast to God. What a human being knows by himself about love is very superficial; he must come to know the deeper love from God—that is, in self-denial he must become what every human being can become (since self-denial is related to the

---

\*<sup>9</sup> A family register may be very uncommon among countries outside Asia. All Japanese have a family register.

\*<sup>10</sup> S.Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments, Johannes Climacus*, p.64

universally human and thus is distinguished from the particular call and election), an instrument for God.\*<sup>11</sup>

For Kierkegaard a Christian is a human being who has a relationship with the eternal. However, the selfish self must collapse when relating to the eternal, and the love poured into the human being whose self has been collapsed by God is synonymous with love of God. People become co-operants in this love, becoming tools of God. The Danish “faa det Dybere at vide” used here can also be translated “the deeper is told (or heard)”. I think that these sentences indicate the same sense in which Shinran says “to hear is immediately is to believe”.

#### 4. Mind to save all sentient beings and Christian love

Although accomplishment of compassion or faith is “to hear is immediately to believe”, the heart of Buddha or God is realized in me at the same time. The realized heart is just compassion or love. It is also worth noting that this situation is expressed with the word “pour” or “pervade” (攪入). For example, in Romans 5:5 (New International Version) we read, “And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.” In Danish, this is rendered “Guds Kjerlighed er udgyt i vore Hjerter ved den Helligaaden and som blev given os.” Interesting corollaries exist, which I will now discuss.

As the love of God is described below, it is work of “the Holy Spirit granted to us”. It makes a believer’s heart corroborate in Christ. The

---

\*<sup>11</sup> S. Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, trans. by H. V. Hong and E. H. Hong, Princeton U. P. 1995, p.364

Holy Spirit is the living power which is poured out from God into faith and is work of God. The heart of human being is the place where accepts this work of God.\*<sup>12</sup>

The following sentences written by Yüan-chao, master of the Vinaya school, in the chapter on practice in *Kyo-Gyo-Shin-Sho*, add insight.

Needless to say, our Buddha Amida grasps beings with the Name. Thus, as we hear it with our ears and say it with our lips, exalted virtues without limit grasp and pervade our hearts and minds. It becomes ever after the seed of our Buddhahood, all at once sweeping away a koti of kalpas of heavy karmic evil, and we attain the realization of the supreme enlightenment. I know truly that the Name possesses not scant roots of good, but inexhaustible roots of good.\*<sup>13</sup>

Isn't the word "pervade" the expression of the situation which has occurred in the accomplishment of our compassion or love?

Now, true compassion and love accomplish with the accomplishment of faith or the heart of Faith in this way. We can see this by the classification of two-parts and four-fold (二双四重の教判) by Shinran first. As everyone knows, Honen's *Senchaku-hongan-nembutsu-shu* was criticized severely by Myoe (1173-1232). In *Saija-ron*, Myoe argued that in the teachings of Honen Bodaisin (bodhicitta), or the aspiration to Buddhahood (enlightenment), was missing. Some counterarguments against this criticism were made by pupils, but Hoen himself left the world without explaining it. Shinran's *Kyo-Gyo-Shin-Sho* could be said to be a counterargument to this Myoe's assertion, and the essence of it is the classification of two-parts and four-fold.

---

\*<sup>12</sup> *Sinnyakuseisho-Ryakukai*, ed. by Yamatani Shogo and others, Nihonkirisutokyodan Shuppanbu, 1989, p.405

\*<sup>13</sup> *The Collected Works of Shinran*, Vol. 1, Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha, 1997, p.48

Further, the mind aspiring for enlightenment is of two kinds [of orientation]: lengthwise and crosswise. The lengthwise is further of two kinds: transcending lengthwise and departing lengthwise. These are explained in various teachings—accommodated and real, exoteric and esoteric, Mahayana and Hinayana. They are the mind [with which one attains enlightenment after] going around for many kalpas, the diamondlike mind of self-power, or the great mind of the bodhisattva. The crosswise is also of two kinds: transcending crosswise and departing crosswise. That characterized by departing crosswise is the mind of enlightenment of right and sundry practices or meditative and nonmeditative practices—of self-power within Other Power. That characterized by transcending crosswise is shinjin that is directed to beings through the power of the Vow. It is the mind that aspires to attain Buddhahood. The mind that aspires to attain Buddhahood is the mind aspiring for great enlightenment of crosswise orientation. It is called “the diamondlike mind of crosswise transcendence”.<sup>14</sup>

Shinran argues here that our aspiration to attain Buddhahood (enlightenment) is grounded by the joyful Faith sent by Buddha (Tathagata). Buddha built the original Vow of “to aspire to be born in my pure land” in order to save all sentient beings. The Nembutsu people who realized this Vow will have the great Aspiration sent at once by Buddha, and that is qualitatively different from the little aspiration made inside our frame of thinking. This large Aspiration is based according to the measure different from aspiration of which Myoe considers.

Moreover, this aspiration is nothing but the mind to save all sentient beings. The next sentences of Donran’s *Jodo-ojo-ron-chu* express this clearly.

---

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107ff.

In reflecting on the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* taught at Rajagrhā, it is clear that although among the three levels of practitioners some are superior in practice and some inferior, not one has failed to awaken the mind aspiring for supreme enlightenment. This mind aspiring for supreme enlightenment is the mind that aspires to attain Buddhahood. The mind that aspires to attain Buddhahood is the mind to save all sentient beings. The mind to save all sentient beings is the mind to grasp sentient beings and bring them to birth in the land where the Buddha is.<sup>\*15</sup>

In the great aspiration to attain enlightenment Buddha's Heart is dwelling in Nembutsu people, therefore (*eo ipso*) it is exactly the mind to save all sentient beings. Thus, the unconditional love (compassion) which is absolutely impossible inside human being's horizon buds to Nembutsu people's heart.

We arrive in the world of *Works of Love* at last. Kierkegaard writes:

True love, which has undergone the change of eternity [undergik Evighedens Forandring] by becoming duty, is never changed; it is simple, it loves and never hates, never hates—the beloved. It might seem as if that spontaneous love were the stronger because it can do two things, because it can *both* love and hate. It might seem as if it had an entirely different power over its object when it says, "If you will not love me, then I will hate you"—but this is only an illusion.<sup>\*16</sup>

Human beings changed and reconstructed by eternity are nothing but those who have converted to faith (the Christian). Simultaneous with this faith, naturally we appropriate the holy love to ourselves, since "God is love" (1 John 4:16). Then, the materialized love is not man's love but the love of God. The concept of the true love receiving eternity into itself demonstrates plainly that

---

<sup>\*15</sup> *Ibid.* p.108

<sup>\*16</sup> S. Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, p.34

this love is the love of God. I think that this has the almost same structure as Shinran's formation of the mind to save all sentient beings. In this way, Christian love will show the aspect of the eternal love.

## 5. Self-negativity as an attribute of love

Next I want to take up the two main attributes of love and compassion. (Kierkegaard's *Works of Love* develops more characters of love derived further from these two.)

First, love has the attribute of self-negativity. The Self must be grounded when Christian, love as stated above, is materialized. Everywhere love is shut up in the frame of self (thinking), it does not reach to the true one. Conversely, the frame of thinking is torn when faith and love are bestowed. There is an unconscious attachment to oneself at the base of thinking. It is very important that being blessed with faith or love is simultaneous with the awakening of unconscious attachment to oneself. This is called the two kinds of deep Belief (二種深信) by Shinran, but everywhere the work of the love which Kierkegaard describes, the same structure is materialized. The well-known phrase from Matthew 22:39, "And the second is like unto it: 'Love your neighbor as thyself.'" Kierkegaard interprets this passage as follows:

Indeed, on the contrary, it is Christianity's intension to wrest self-love away from us human beings. In other word, this is implied in loving oneself; but if one is to love the neighbor *as oneself*, then the commandment, as with a pick, wrenches [*viste*] open the lock of self-love and wrests [*fravriste*] it away from a person. If the commandment about loving the neighbor were expressed in any other way than with this little phrase, *as yourself*, which simultaneously is so easy to handle and yet has the elasticity of eternity, the commandment would be unable to cope

with self-love in this way.<sup>\*17</sup>

The commandment to love of one's neighbors teaches us directly to "love the neighbor as yourself". People protect and love themselves only at the risk of their life. We can consider this as similar to the manas-consciousness in the Yogacara School in Buddhism. This commandment teaches that we should love our neighbor like this unconditional self-love. Christ's short phrase is by no means complicated and roundabout, but we cannot but come to the conclusion that we can never love a neighbor with this phrase. Loving all living creatures truly must be love at the risk of our life. This commandment contains a dialectical contradiction with unconditional self-love and unconditional neighborly love, and the contradiction causes our complete self-negativity. Moreover, this commandment shows that the usual self-love is not true, because it exposes self-love intent only on self-preservation as incapable of loving others. Such love is based on the manas-consciousness at last.

True self-love is the one which loves others and so-called 'self-love' must be pulverized by it. This love is not accomplished, but received from Jesus Christ's. In *Works of Love* Kierkegaard writes:

Only for self-denying love does the specification "mine" disappear entirely and the distinction "*mine and yours*" become entirely canceled. . . . . Then the wondrous thing occurs that is heaven's blessing upon self-denying love—in salvation's mysterious understanding all things become his, his who had no *mine* at all, his who in self-denial made yours all that was his. In other words, God is all things, and by having no *mine* at all self-denial's love won God and won all things. <sup>\*18</sup>

A very miraculous result arises from the love of self-denial: it owns nothing

---

<sup>\*17</sup> *Ibid.*, p.17

<sup>\*18</sup> *Ibid.*, p.268



but to it all is given. This situation indicates “Nothing to cling to is an inexhaustible store” (無一物中無尽蔵) in Buddhism, and is based on the concept of pratitya-samutpada (縁起). In Christianity it arises from the fact that all is created by God. Kierkegaard continues:

When one thinks only one thought, one must in connection with this thinking discover self-denial, and it is self-denial that discovers that God is. Precisely this becomes the contradiction in blessedness and terror: to have an omnipotent one as one’s co-worker. An omnipotent one cannot be your co-worker, a human being’s co-worker, without its signifying that you are able to do nothing at all; and on the other hand, if he is your co-worker, you are able to do everything. <sup>\*19</sup>

Here he says that self-denial finds God, but it also means that finding God is simultaneous with being denied a selfish ego. This is precisely the two kinds of deep Belief of Shinran.

In this way, although faith is just the basis of Christian love, this love is accompanied by the consciousness that can do nothing by itself. However, as a coworker together with God, all is possible. This is the position of the 4th article of *Tannnisho*.

One further statement by Kierkegaard is important in this context:

The double danger is in encountering opposition precisely where he had expected to find support; thus he has to turn around twice, whereas the merely human self-denial turns around once. Therefore all self-denial that finds support in the world is not Christian self-denial. It was in this sense that the ancient Church Fathers said that the virtues of paganism are glittering vices. ……*Christian self-denial* is: without fear for one-

---

<sup>\*19</sup> *Ibid.*, p.362

self and without regard for oneself to venture into the danger in connection with which the contemporaries, blinded, prejudiced, and conniving, have or want to have no idea that there is honor to be gained; therefore it is not only dangerous to venture into the danger but is doubly dangerous, because the derision of the onlookers awaits the courageous one whether he wins or loses.\*<sup>20</sup>

This opinion on self-denial is a feature of Kierkegaard. He thinks that Christian love cannot help but be in conflict with the world and thus is necessarily forsaken by the world. It is not clear whether this opinion is fundamental principle with regard to religious love, but I think it important indication.

## 6. Non-dependability of love

I want to take up only one more attribute of the love about which Kierkegaard argues.

This is the non-dependability of love.

Be honest, admit that with most people, when they read the poet's glowing description of erotic love or friendship, it is perhaps the case that this seems to be something far higher than this poor: "You *shall* love."

**"You shall love." Only when it is a duty to love, only then is love eternally secured against every change, eternally made free in blessed independence, eternally and happily secured against despair.\*<sup>21</sup>**

The love of "You shall love" is unchangeable compared with the changeableness of natural love and attachment. It is not influenced by the attributes of

---

\*<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p.196

\*<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p.29

object, nor has it a non-dependability.

“In other words, since the neighbor is every human being, unconditionally every human being, all dissimilarities are indeed removed from the object, and therefore this love is recognizable precisely by this, that its object is without any of the more precise specifications of dissimilarity, which means that this love is recognizable only by love.”<sup>\*22</sup>

Here we see that the neighbor is every human being. Kierkegaard states this again elsewhere.

You can never confuse him with anyone else, since the neighbor, to be sure, is all people. If you confuse another person with the neighbor, then the mistake is not due to the latter, since the other person is also the neighbor; the mistake is due to you, that you will not understand who the neighbor is.<sup>\*23</sup>

Targeting others, Christian-love is completely independent of the other's character of infinite variety, and loves the other itself. For the human being whose selfish frame of thinking has been smashed the others completely lose the difference which each has. The neighbor is every human being.

This is connected also with Buddha's Compassion applied to all beings in ten quarters.

Moreover, in *Practice in Christianity*, it becomes the problem of the “all” in “Come here, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest”(Mathew 11:28). We must notice that this indiscriminate nature of a neighbor does not mean the abstractness of a neighbor but the most concrete neighbor in itself. In the term of M. Buber, it corresponds to the Thou of

---

<sup>\*22</sup> *Ibid.*, p.66

<sup>\*23</sup> *Ibid.*, p.52

“I-Thou”. F. M. Dostoevski said, “We can love a far person but cannot love a near person.” A neighbor is exactly the one impending and before our eyes who is missed just as we make a neighbor’s concept into a problem. In the Buddhist view, love is not based on the attribute of the object, but rather the “One true man of no rank” of which *Rinzairoku* speaks. Kierkegaard says:

It is indeed true (as pointed out earlier, where it was shown that the neighbor is the pure category of spirit) that one sees the neighbor only with closed eyes, or by looking *away from* the dissimilarities. The sensitive eyes always see the dissimilarities and look *at* the dissimilarities.<sup>\*24</sup>

That love is not dependent on the attributes of all objects in time does not mean one should disregard them. Rather, Kierkegaard is also checking that the aspects of actual discrimination are received firmly again (*Gen-tagelse*) by the transcendence from these differences.

In other words, when the dissimilarity hangs loosely in this way, then in each individual there continually glimmers that essential other, which is common to all, the eternal resemblance, the likeness.<sup>\*25</sup>

He insists that we shall see them loosely (*løst hængende*). This is a delicate religious position, and we can compare it with “Emptiness is immediately Form” (空即是色) in “Hannya-shin-gyo”. Meditation on 空 (Emptiness) recognizes that all is empty and has no substance. However, when this is realized, the aspects of reality are on the contrary received again as the irreplaceable. I think it is a very important fact. Buddhism teaches that even a color or a smell has the truth of the middle way, i.e., the middle path is found in all things. This is called “Isshiki-ikko-muhi-chudo” (一色一香無非中道). I think that Kierkegaard as-

---

<sup>\*24</sup> *Ibid.*, p.68

<sup>\*25</sup> *Ibid.*, p.88

serts the same thing here. Saying in Christianity everything is received in the irreplaceable as the creature of God. The following text expresses also a keen insight into such situation.

When it is a duty to love the people we see, *one must first and foremost give up all imaginary and exaggerated ideas about a dreamworld where the object of love should be sought and found—that is, one must become sober, gain actuality and truth by finding and remaining in the world of actuality as the task assigned to one.*<sup>\*26</sup>

This is exactly the world of “Emptiness is immediately Form”.

Kierkegaard considers the work which forces love to depend on the attributes of object and makes it the object of selfish love as objectifying, calculation, and comparison. I will discuss each in turn.

*As soon as love dwells on itself, it is out of its element.* What does dwelling on itself mean? It means that love itself becomes an object. But an object is always a dangerous matter when one is supposed to move forward; an *object* [Gjenstand] is like a finite fixed point, like a boundary and a halting, a dangerous matter for infinitude.……Thus, when love *dwells* on itself, it must be in its particular expression that it becomes itself an object, or that another separate love becomes the object—love in the one person and love in the other person. When the object is a finite object in this way, love dwells on itself, inasmuch as *infinitely* to dwell on itself is indeed to move. But when love dwells finitely on itself, all is lost.<sup>\*27</sup>

Thus objectifying hinders the working of true.

---

<sup>\*26</sup> *Ibid.*, p.161

<sup>\*27</sup> *Ibid.*, p.182

An accounting can take place only where there is a finite relationship, because the relationship of the finite to the finite can be calculated. But one who loves cannot calculate. When the left hand never finds out what the right hand is doing, it is impossible to make an accounting, and likewise when the debt is infinite. To calculate with an infinite quantity is impossible, because to calculate is to make finite. Thus, for his own sake the lover wishes to remain in debt.<sup>\*28</sup>

Here the ground level of Christian love is cleared. I think that it is the same as the preparedness after conversion of The King Ajase.

In comparison, everything is lost, love is made finite, the debt is made something to reply—exactly like any other debt. ……What does comparison always lose? It loses the moment, the moment that ought to have been filled with an expression of love's life. ……The moment of comparison is, namely, a selfish moment, a moment that wants to be *for itself*; this is the break, is the fall—just as dwelling on itself is the fall of the arrow.<sup>\*29</sup>

Here it is said that infinite love is lost by comparison. Kierkegaard specifies the moment as “an eternal atom” in *The Concept of Dread*, and it is here that the relation between time and eternity is lost by comparison.

(やましたひでとも・静岡大学)

---

<sup>\*28</sup> *Ibid.*, p.178

<sup>\*29</sup> *Ibid.*, p.183