

ABSURDITY TO EXISTENCE IN KIERKEGAARD AND TANABE HAJIME

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Анотация

Баба Томомиши. Киркегоровата абсурдност на съществуването и Танабе Хадзиме. Целта на дадената статия е изясняване влиянието на идеите на С.Киркегор върху формирането на мирогледа и концепцията на един от основателите на съвременната японска философия Танабе Хадзиме (1885-1962). Авторът анализира три етапа в ставането на философския мироглед на Т.Хадзиме: етапът на заниманията му с теоретична логика, етапът, свързан с обучението му в Германия, с философските идеи на немския идеализъм, на диалектиката, социалната онтология и етапът, посветен на философията на религията, на философския ирационализъм и на идеите на С.Киркегор. Историко-философското изследване на формирането на идеите на Т.Хадзиме в дадената работа включва анализа на процеса на разбиране от японския мислител на определени ограничения на рационализма, на неизбежността от обръщането към размишления за същността на социалния и индивидуален конфликт, на парадоксалността и отрицанието в реалното съществуване. Изследва се цял ред категориални взаимозависимости, свързани с концепцията за абсурдността на битието, неговата ирационализация, с идеите за „абсолютното нищо“, с заимстваното от Т. Хадзиме от Нишида, „обединение посредством отрицанието“, диалектиката извън рационалното мислене, или „абсолютната диалектика“ и т.н. Авторът на статията подчертава позитивния характер на възприятието, разбирането и интерпретацията на идеите на С.Киркегор от Т.Хадзиме, стремежа на японския мислител да изяви позитивния смисъл в идеите на „великия датчанин“ и да определи тяхното значение в съвременната култура на Япония.

Ключови думи: екзистенциализъм, метаноетика, «абсолютна диалектика», ирационализъм, абсурд

Анотация

Баба Томомиши. Кьеркегорова абсурдност съществувания и Танабе Хадзиме. Целью данной статьи является выяснение влияния идей С.Кьеркегора на формирование мировоззрения и концепции одного из основателей современной японской философии Танабэ Хадзимэ (1885-1962). Автор анализирует три этапа становления философского мировоззрения Т.Хадзиме: этап занятия теоретической логикой, этап, связанный с обучением в Германии и философскими идеями немецкого идеализма, диалектики, социальной онтологии, и этап, посвященный философии религии, философскому иррационализму и идеям С.Кьеркегора. Историко-философское исследование формирования идей Т.Хадзиме в данной работе включает анализ процесса понимания японским мыслителем определенных ограниченностей рационализма, неизбежности обращения к размышлениям о сущности социального и индивидуального конфликта, парадоксальности и отрицания в реальном существовании. Исследуется целый ряд категориальных взаимозависимостей, связанных с концепцией абсурдности бытия, его иррационализации, идеями «абсолютного ничто», заимствованного Т.Хадзиме у Нишида, «объединения посредством отрицания», диалектики вне рационального мышления, или «абсолютной диалектики» и т.д. Автор статьи подчеркивает позитивный характер восприятия, понимания и интерпретации идей С.Кьеркегора Т.Хадзиме, стремление японского

мыслителя выделить позитивный смысл идей «великого датчанина» и определить их значение в современной культуре Японии.

Ключевые слова: экзистенциализм, метаноэтика, «абсолютная диалектика», иррационализм, абсурд

Анотація

Баба Томоміші. Кьеркегорова абсурдність існування і Танабе Хадзіме. Метою даної статті є з'ясування впливу ідей С. К'єркегора на формування світогляду та концепції одного із засновників сучасної японської філософії Танабе Хадзіме (1885-1962). Автор аналізує три етапи становлення філософського світогляду Т.Хадзіме: етап заняття теоретичної логікою, етап, пов'язаний з навчанням у Німеччині та філософськими ідеями німецького ідеалізму, діалектики, соціальної онтології і етап, присвячений філософії релігії, філософського ірраціоналізму та ідеям С. К'єркегора. Історико-філософське дослідження формування ідей Т. Хадзіме в даній роботі включає аналіз процесу розуміння японським мислителем певних обмежень раціоналізму, неминучості звернення до роздумів про сутність соціального та індивідуального конфлікту, парадоксальності і заперечення в реальному існуванні. Досліджується ціла низка категоріальних взаємозалежностей, пов'язаних з концепцією абсурдності буття, його ірраціоналізацією, ідеями «абсолютного ніщо», запозиченого Т.Хадзіме у Нішіда, «об'єднання за допомогою заперечення», діалектикою поза раціональним мисленням», або «абсолютною діалектикою» тощо. Автор статті підкреслює позитивний характер сприйняття, розуміння та інтерпретації ідей С. К'єркегора Т.Хадзіме, прагнення японського мислителя виділити позитивний сенс ідей «великого данця» і визначити їх значення у сучасній культурі Японії.

Ключові слова: екзистенціалізм, метаноетика, «абсолютна діалектика», ірраціоналізм, абсурд

Introduction. The purpose of this paper is to clarify the effect of Kierkegaard's thought to a Japanese philosopher, Tanabe Hajime (1885-1962). In order to discuss this theme, a concept of 'absurdity' is focused on. In Kierkegaard's thought, absurdity is a feature of Christian relation between absolute being and existence. Absolute being, which is eternal and infinite, moves into the temporal and finite world. Kierkegaard considers this movement absurd for existence. Because of this absurdity, one cannot understand the relation rationally. Kierkegaard insists that it should not be comprehended in logic but be believed.

Absurdity played an important part in Tanabe's thought. He realized ineffectuality of his own thought for the contemporary society through World War II. After the end of the War, he reached a deadlock. He concluded that the reason of the ineffectuality derived from rationalism of his thought. While accepting stimulating suggestions from Kierkegaard's thought, which emphasized absurdity in the actual world, he tried to his original thought again.

Of Tanabe Hajime. In Europe, Tanabe may not be as famous as Nishida Kitaro, a forerunner of Japanese philosophy. This situation is similar in Japan. However, he served as head of the department of philosophy in Kyoto Imperial University as the successor of Nishida. Also in the aspect of the thought, he created his originality by repeating acceptance and criticism of Nishida. Therefore, Tanabe can be evaluated, along with Nishida, as the founder of Japanese philosophy.

His thought is distinguished in three periods. At first, he studied in Mathematical Philosophy. After studying abroad in Germany, his concern changed gradually to German Idealism, dialectic, social ontology. Moreover, the experiences of WWII forced him to change his concern again. At last, the main aim of his thought moved toward philosophy of religion, especially, human being founded on religion.

Logic of species (Shu no ronri). Tanabe's representative thought in the second period is called 'Logic of Species' (Shu no ronri). Species (shu) is defined as mediation between individual (ko) and genus (rui). In other words, both exist not solely but relating each other through species. The aim of this logic on the theoretical aspect is to explain the dialectic of the individual and the universal mediated by the particular. On the practical aspect, he considers the appropriate relation between individual human being and universal human race through nation state or ethnic nation. In 1930's, when he addressed this problem, the power of nations increased more and more. In proportion to this movement, the freedom of individual human being was restricted. He confronted such a situation and tried to overcome this conflict.

Tanabe argues that the conflict between species and individual is not resolved by rational ways. In other words, even if the explanation succeeds rationally, it does not always mean that the conflict has overcome actually. The conflict is inevitable in so far as individual relates as individual to genus. However, he also insists that this conflict rather brings about a chance to realize the appropriate relation.

The way of it is as follows. As the conflict against species is getting deeper, individual feels its own inability. If the conflict reaches to its maximum level and this feeling moves toward the self-denying, it enables to receive the relation in another form. In the new relation, species and individual do not exist separately but are founded by 'a whole'. A whole is called 'absolute nothingness' (zettai mu), which is borrowed from Nishida. It is not something empty in the meaning of western philosophy but the subject of moving force. In the light of the understanding of absolute nothingness, the relation of species and individual is explained as the movement of it. The movement has dialectic features which achieve to unification through negation. This dialectic movement functions also in the relation between species and genus, genus and individual. Totally, in the logic of species, individual develops genus dialectic by mediation of species.

The limit of rational thought and the conversion to Metanoetic. Logic of species explains dialectic ontology in the actual world. While individual accepts the force of nation as a logic of its own being, nation consists of individual who cannot be abstracted in it. Both being were supposed to be united like this. Nevertheless, the logic was used as a theory which subordinated people to the imperial nation. In face of this fact, Tanabe concluded that the reason why the logic was failed was to deal with negativity not in action but logic.

After the war, his concern was focused on overcoming a failure of the rational thinking through accepting its ineffectiveness. He dealt with this theme in a book, '*Philosophy as Metanoetic*' (*Zangedo tositeno Tetsugaku*). Metanoesis (zange) is an action of self-surrender. Tanabe emphasize an unavoidable fact that the rational thinking reach to antinomie between thought and actuality. However, no sooner one has a experience of this antinomie deeply and surrenders its own self, he is revived by mediation of absolute nothingness. The power of absolute nothingness is called Other-power (tarikiki). It is a sort of religious power which Tanabe borrowed from Shinrann, the founder of Pure Land Buddhism (Jodo Shinsyu).

Individual can do self-surrender with encouragement by Other-power. This action makes his conscious turn to absolute nothingness and realize that he exists on the base of it. On the other hand, absolute nothingness is comprehended as the subject of movement again. It appears into the actual world as self-denying, that is, with a concrete form. In this sense, this action is regarded as negative. The complementary relation, in which absolute nothingness and individual exist like this, is called 'absolute dialectic'. Although the logic of this dialectic is not understood by rational thinking, self-surrender plays an important part to accept it as something absurd. Tanabe improved the logic of species religiously like this.

Attractive point of Kierkegaard thought for Tanabe. '*Philosophy as Metanoetic*' showed human being who exists in the irrational actual world. Tanabe analysed such construction with

referring to Buddhism, especially the thought of Shinran. He also found out similar features in Christianity, especially in Kierkegaard's thought. He published '*Existence, Love and Practice*', in which he discussed it, after '*Philosophy as Metanoetic*'.

The concept which Tanabe mainly focuses on in this book is 'existence'. He appreciates Kierkegaard's comprehension of it in following three points.

The first is that existence is defined from the aspect of actuality. The rational thought treats human being in ideal aspect. It considers especially what the idea of human being is. The actual problems, for example, conflict, paradox, negation and so on, which result from actual practices, are not treated enough by it. Existence is actual being who is the subject of practice.

The second is that existence is understood not general but individual being. This individual being is called 'the single individual' in Kierkegaard's thought. This individuality means not numerical but qualitative characteristics of 'single'. Existence has such individuality which is abstracted or disappears in the rational thought.

The third is that existence means the self. The self as individual being faces the important decision whether to accept the relation to absolute being. The right decision makes him who he is. Kierkegaard represents it as 'either-or'. The self also is defined as the subject of this decision.

According to the above analyses, Tanabe understands existence as the single individual who is aware of and decides the one's own self in the actual action. Kierkegaard insists that the relation between absolute being, that is, God and existence can come true only through admitting one's own sin. This denying of the self does not mean disappearance of the self but provides the new relation to absolute being for him. Existence can find the new self again in this relation. Tanabe regards this existence as the subject of self-surrender in his '*Metanoetic*'.

This similarity of both thoughts can be pointed out from the standpoint of absurdity as follows. Again, Tanabe's main theme after the war was to explain human being who confronts irrational actuality. He tried to construct the new thought which enable to overcome such condition. This was the reason why he became interested in Kierkegaard.

Kierkegaard explains that the relation between God and existence comes true by God's works or God's love and not only by the action of existence. Hence, the process cannot be understood rationally. Although this relation is irrational in this meaning, he considers the true relation as absurd originally. That is, he interprets the irrationality as absurdity positively and regards this feature as Merkmal of existence.

Tanabe appreciates also such Kierkegaard's attitude to irrationality. He defines that the process of the relation to absolute nothingness is irrational. For him, this irrationality should not be resolved rationally but be accepted as absurdity. In this point, we can see the similarity and effectivity between both thoughts.

Criticism for Kierkegaard by Tanabe. In addition to the individual inner problem, Tanabe kept the other concern. It was the social, ethical one. As we have seen in logic of species, while discussing philosophical theory, he always had social concern in mind. Although the appreciation of existence, he criticized Kierkegaard's thought from this standpoint. He insisted that the mention of society and history is lacking in it. In other words, Kierkegaard is interested only in the individual self less in the contemporary people.

Certainly, Kierkegaard's dialectic is mainly intended to explain the religious relation and seems not to return to the ethical, social relations. However, we are required to pay attention to his criticism, because one of the purposes of Kierkegaard's thought is to introduce Christianity in the Christian society. In this purpose, it should have some kind of concern for other contemporary people. In my opinion, Tanabe's criticism to Kierkegaard comes from not lack of the concern for social matter but disagreement on Kierkegaard's concern for it. The feature of Tanabe's understanding of Kierkegaard is found in this point.

The feature of Tanabe's understanding of Kierkegaard. Tanabe accepted the concept of 'absurdity' from Kierkegaard's thought as the way of relating to absolute being. However, there is not a remarkable but important difference between both thoughts. It is understanding of absolute being, which make existence be conscious of this absurdity. Whereas the consciousness of it occurs to existence in front of absolute being (God) in Kierkegaard's thought, according to Tanabe, existence is conscious of it in the actual world, where absolute being (absolute nothingness) moves. As mentioned above, absolute nothingness is a hole as the power. Because of not having form originally, it is not understood rationally. It does not force existence self-denying directly but stimulates it. Therefore, Tanabe focuses on the shame of one's own inability (the self-surrender), rather than the contradiction of the relation to absolute being. He especially shares the former in Kierkegaard's concerns.

It is considered that this difference of the concern influences the Tanabe's understanding of Kierkegaard. As is well known, Kierkegaard insists on absolute difference or contradiction between absolute being and existence. Nevertheless, existence can exist only in this relation. Such oneness of the relation brings about absurdity. On the other hand, absolute nothingness is the power, which makes every being exist, in Tanabe's absolute dialectic. Because it is nothing, absurdity mean inability of rational thinking about it. Hence, the relation between absolute nothing and existence cannot be defined as the only one. In other words, it enables to choose better relations in which absurdity can be overcome. Tanabe actually insisted a unity of Christianity, Marxism and Buddhism after researching of their strengths and limits. Of course, Kierkegaard should reject the relations other than Christianity. Did Tanabe grasp severity enough derived from the oneness of the absurd relation?

In addition to his individual concern, the reason why Tanabe accepted Kierkegaard's thought in that way can be found in historical circumstance of Japanese philosophy. There was a mainstream aiming at fusion of eastern and western thought at the beginning of it. In particular, while based on absolute nothing Nishida argued, the Kyoto school constructed original theories assimilating western philosophies arbitrarily. Although such a way may be evaluated as eclectic in one view, it was their strategy at that time. Tanabe also constructed his thought under this circumstance.

Thus, the difference of the interpretation of absolute being affect Tanabe's understanding of Kierkegaard. That is why we need to pay attention in reading it.

Conclusion. Existence encounters many irrational happenings in the actual world. Moreover, he cannot avoid them as far as being as existence. Therefore, it cannot be overcome rationally but should be accepted as absurdity. This understanding of existence is shared by Kierkegaard and Tanabe.

The concepts of Kierkegaard's thought are discussed carefully in Japan which culture is not based on Christianity. Of course, such a cultural gap does not at all negate Kierkegaard's thought. Rather, the importance in modern Japan increases more and more. A mighty rationalism spreads in our society, for example, systemizing of social structures and advancement of science technologies. On the other hand, this rationality makes many problems by subordinating existence to it. This condition makes us conscious of irrationality of this world. Kierkegaard's and Tanabe's understandings of absurdity must give us suggestive hints to this problems.

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