

The Concept of Space and Time in Japanese Traditional Thought

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Abstract

The problem of Space and Time is a most fundamental metaphysical or ontological problem in philosophy as well as scientific inquiries since earliest times of the history of human intellectual developments. In the same way, it often associated with the religious conceptions in its earliest times and then gradually come to be deeply associated with the scientific conceptions in the course of its conceptual development. Of the various conceptions of space and time in the Eastern and Western traditions, that of Japanese tradition is significant as its syncretism of ancient Asian traditions such as Shintoism, Buddhism, and Taoism. In this paper, the attempt will be made to show the significant features of Japanese traditional thought by the philosophical analysis of the concept of space and time. To achieve the aim of the research, descriptive method and evaluative method will be used. As the contribution it can be expected that through the real understanding of Japanese philosophical conception of Space and Time, it will turn out to be cross cultural understanding among the traditional cultures of today's world.

Key words: space, time, Japanese tradition, Buddhism

Introduction

The problem concerning space and time is a most fundamental problem in the metaphysical or ontological sphere of philosophical as well as scientific inquiries since earliest times of the history of human intellectual developments. Accordingly, it often associated with the religious conceptions in its earliest times and then gradually come to be deeply associated with the scientific conceptions in the course of its conceptual development. Sometimes these two terms are presented separately but they are usually expressed as one. In philosophical studies the latter usage can commonly be found out in the West as well as the East. Western philosophy overlooked the original human context for "objects" in abstract space and time, as exemplified by theoretical, scientific reasoning.

When men began to think about the nature of "space," they probably thought of it as some sort of vessel which might be thought of as different parts of a very delicate corporal medium within which material bodies are located. In the West, the concept of space was established as a fundamental problem from the times of Miletus philosophers in Greek philosophy to scientists or philosophers of the recent time.

On the topic of time, it is quite difficult to comprehend rather than the concept of space so that it has frequently struck philosophers as mysterious. Generally, time is commonly considered as a stream that flows. The idea of time as passing is connected with the idea of events changing from future to past. Thus, the concept of time is chiefly associated with the term of 'duration'. Some have even felt that it was incapable of rational discursive treatment and that it was able to be grasped only by intuition. Some accept time as continuing flow of perception even though most people accept it as the three divisional conception of such process such as past, present and future.

Here it is noteworthy fact that the concept of Space and Time had became to a unified notion in the course of Western philosophy since the time of early nineteenth century. It had been more significant in the general theory of relativity which illustrates the advantages of replacing the separate notions of space and time by a unified notion of space-time.

On the other hand, in the Chinese tradition, Great *Tao* refers to the entire actual history of space and time—whatever has happened, is happening or will eventually happen in the universe is part of Great *Tao*. In this respect, the concepts of space and time in Taoism

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represent the absolute nature rather than their relative nature. In Buddhist epistemological thought, the intimate relation of the space and time is considered as the unified notion and the awareness of their existence ordinarily depends on the interrelation of perception and conception of each individuals. A personal essence would be present in all the different spatiotemporal instances of what people consider to be one person. In the Japanese tradition, the concepts of space and time are advanced under the syncretism of Buddhism, Taoism, and their native Shintoism. On this topic of Japanese traditional thought, Dōgen, Nishida Kitarō and Watsuji Tetsurō are prominent philosophers and thus their philosophy of 'space and time' will be focused in this research.

The Concept of Space and Time in Japanese Tradition

In seventeenth-century Japan, Matsuo Basho (1644–94) composed *haiku* that, in their extreme brevity, likewise observed nature with care, exhibiting Zen mindfulness and suggesting the interplay between the 'momentary' and the 'timeless'. The reduction of life to its most extreme conditions reveals the latent, regenerative power of nature and balances perishing and dissolution against arising and creativity. Neither side can exist without the other. In this delicate balance the inconstancy, incompleteness and nonsubstantiality associated with transience become conditions and means for creatively engaging and affirming an impermanent world. As affective responses shade more fully into the Buddhist view, they move from attachment to compassion. In other words, the Japanese philosophical conception of space and time is ordinarily associated with the ultimate truth or transcendental nature of the worldly conceptions of it.

In Japanese philosophical tradition, the conception which vividly reflects the concept of time or nonsubstantial nature of time and space, is '*mujō*' (momentariness). The object of the Buddhist doctrine of momentariness is not the nature of time, but existence within time. Rather than atomizing time into moments, it atomizes phenomena temporally by dissecting them into a succession of discrete momentary entities. Its fundamental proposition is that everything passes out of existence as soon as it has originated and in this sense is momentary. As an entity vanishes, it gives rise to a new entity of almost the same nature which originates immediately afterwards. Thus, there is an uninterrupted flow of causally connected momentary entities of nearly the same nature, the so-called continuum. These entities succeed each other so fast that the process cannot be discerned by ordinary perception. Because earlier and later entities within one continuum are almost exactly alike, we come to conceive of something as a temporally extended entity even though the fact that it is in truth nothing but a series of causally connected momentary entities. According to this doctrine, the world (including the sentient beings inhabiting it) is at every moment distinct from the world in the previous or next moment. It is, however, linked to the past and future by the law of causality in so far as a phenomenon usually engenders a phenomenon of its kind when it perishes, so that the world originating in the next moment reflects the world in the preceding moment.

At the root of Buddhism lies the (never questioned) conviction that everything that has originated is bound to perish and is therefore, with the exception of factors conducive to enlightenment, ultimately a source of frustration. There is no surviving textual material that documents how this law of impermanence came to be radicalized in terms of momentariness. It seems that by the fourth century the doctrine of momentariness had already assumed its final form. Characteristically, the debate became more and more dominated by epistemological questions, while the metaphysical aspect faded into the background.

Furthermore, in the Japanese philosophical doctrines, the concepts of space and time is recurrently discussed together with the term 'empty' or 'emptiness' (*śūnyatā*). Nishida Kitarō and Watsuji Tetsurō, two prominent philosophers in this field, constructed their philosophies

onto the syncretism of Mādhyamaka Logical analysis of *śūnyatā* and Western philosophical system. In this respect, in order to understand the Japanese philosophical concepts of space and time, there is in needs of comprehension the term *śūnyatā* and how.

Conceptually and probably chronologically, one of the earliest uses of 'emptiness' (*śūnyatā*, also translated as 'voidness') in Buddhist thought is to refer to an absence specifically of an immutable and permanent 'Self' (*ātman*), a constant referent for the term 'I', the Self postulated by non-Buddhist teachers and presupposed at least implicitly even by 'the person in the street'. It is precisely in the claim that *all* things absolutely and without exception, no matter what, are empty that the concept of emptiness really comes to the fore in Buddhist thought. As mentioned above, this claim is most frequently associated with the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature and its philosophical clarification and development in the Mādhyamaka school, particularly the work of Nāgārjuna (c.150-200).

For Mādhyamika, emptiness, that very absence - a complete and total absence of something which simply does not exist anywhere, a simple nonexistence - of inherent existence in any *x* (because *x* is always in some sense the result of causal conditioning) is the ultimate truth in that if one analyses in order to find the fundamental simples (primary existents) out of which all things are constructed, nothing will ever be found. Analysis can dissolve away *everything* into secondary existence. Thus if we ask what exists ultimately, that is, what has the type of existence called ultimate or primary, it is found that nothing has that sort of existence. On the level of ultimate existence there is nothing. That absence of ultimate existence (that is, that emptiness) applied to everything (including emptiness itself) is the ultimate truth, what is found if one searches for any ultimate status for *x*. Therefore it follows not only that if *x* is causally conditioned it is empty (of inherent existence), but also that emptiness must be the very absence of inherent existence in something or other (an *x*). In terms of actuality, emptiness (the ultimate truth) requires causally conditioned existence (the conventional truth). In fact, emptiness is precisely what makes conditioned conventional reality what it is - conventional (and not ultimate) truth. If emptiness is the absence of *y* in *x* then it can be argued that there has to be an *x* - an *x* which turns out to lack *y* - in order for it to be empty of inherent existence. *X* therefore indeed exists, but as a noninherently existing, conventional entity, a conceptual construct. In order for causally conditioned existence to be causally conditioned existence it must be empty of inherent existence, that is, empty. Thus Nāgārjuna seems to argue that holding all things to be empty (all things as secondary existents does not imply the existence of nothing at all. *

The Japanese Concept of Time in Dōgen's Philosophy of Impermanence

The Japanese Zen master Dōgen gives impermanence special prominence by identifying *mujō* (impermanence) with Buddha-nature and offering a descriptive exposition of the radical temporality of existence in terms of being-time. In Dōgen's view, 'The expounding, practicing and realizing (enlightening) of impermanence by the impermanent themselves all must be impermanent'. That is, the problem of impermanence is resolved through deepening one's realization of impermanence, which occurs most fundamentally through the practice of Zen meditation. The identification of impermanence with Buddha-nature means that there are not separate realms where one achieves enlightenment (the realization of Buddha-nature) by escaping or transcending impermanence. For Dōgen, the past, the present and the future are combined in the moments of Enlightenment.

* T.R.V.Murti (1955). *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism - A Study of the Mādhyamika System*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd. pp-199-201

Furthermore, Buddha-nature is not to be construed as an essence or attribute which one has or acquires. Rather, it is the occurrence of things as they are, free from the imposition of delusory notions of fixed essences and attachments. As identified with impermanence, it is ongoing, continually occurring and being relinquished in each situation. Experientially, the event of Buddha-nature has an original wholeness and fullness which we reflectively objectify and divide through such distinctions as self and world, being and time, now and then.

Dōgen clarifies the temporality of *mujō* in terms of being-time, stating that 'time, just as it is, is being, and being is all time'. Time and being are inseparable; there is only temporal existence. This reaffirms the nonsubstantiality, or emptiness, of all things through their temporality. Things are better understood as events taking place as constituents of the interrelational temporal-spatial field of an occasion. Dōgen offers two primary characterizations of the temporality of being-time: right now (*nikon*) and seriatim passage (*keireki*). The former is the immediate presence of events as they are within the temporal occasion, seen in discontinuity with the before and after of other times. It has a dimension of constancy as it is 'always' right now, but it is not like a point on a line or a container within which things occur. Such views, according to Dōgen, are inadequate to lived experience and contribute to the separation of time from being, and from oneself, which results in the problem of impermanence.*

Each present occasion can also be viewed in its timefulness, that is, in its continuity with other times, their relations contributing to what it is. Serial time passage indicates this continuity or interdependency with the extended field of other times. Dōgen depicts these interrelations as multidirectional, and he presents his views through descriptions of the temporality of experience rather than through metaphysical speculation.

The Impact of Mādhyamika Doctrine on Nishida Kitarō's Philosophy of Nothingness

Nishida Kitarō (1870–1945) is generally considered the most original modern Japanese philosopher and the galvanizing force behind the creation of the Kyoto school of philosophy. Nishida incorporated Mahāyāna Buddhist spirituality and its worldview into his philosophical system. In his second book, *Jikaku ni okeru chokkan to hansei* ("Intuition and Reflection in Self-consciousness"), he made a detailed analysis of the concept of self-consciousness (*jikaku*); that is, consciousness that gives rise to self-awareness as the all-encompassing system of which intuition and cognition are two aspects. Through this investigation, he arrived at the primacy of free will, which transcends cognition and on account of which experiences are repeatable.

In addition, Nishida developed his views on the ground of free will ("that which acts") a field of consciousness ("that which sees") in his essay, *Basho*. In it Nishida attacked Western paradigms of logic from two directions, epistemological and metaphysical/ syntactical. When taking the former approach he generally spoke of his logic as the 'logic of *basho*'. *Basho* is an ordinary Japanese word meaning 'place' that can serve as an equivalent for the technical terms *topos* or 'field'. ("Topos" or "Field,"). In Nishida's philosophy, *Basho* is the matrix wherein all things come into being and from which they disappear. Nishida called *basho* "absolute nothingness" (*zettai mu*) because in itself it is an unobjectifiable reality transcending both being (*u*) and nonbeing (*mu*). His reflections on the nature of time explain "absolute nothingness" as a moment that comes into being at one "present" and disappears in the next. If the present moment were some kind of being that could be grasped, there would be no time; if the present were simply nonbeing, there would also be no time.

*. D.T. Suzuki. (1964). *An Introduction to Zen Buddhism*. New York: Grove Press. pp. 123.

Time, then, should be considered the coincidence of absolutely nothing and being. The present moment (i.e., absolute nothingness) is where being and nonbeing come together. Furthermore, Nishida saw time as the continuation of discrete or discontinuous moments, and as such time has a spatial extension, inasmuch as space has a temporal direction. Nishida came to call these contradictory features inherent in the very mode of reality “dialectical.” Nishida’s basic assertion was that cognition is a phenomenon of consciousness. Taking a hint from Aristotle’s definition of *hypokeimenon* (substance), Nishida proposed a “logic of *basho*” (*basho no ronri*) that includes the very act of judgment within itself. If Aristotle’s logic is a logic that focuses on the subject-term of the proposition, as the observer studies and classifies the subject under discussion, Nishida attempted to account for how such an observer is actually included in making logical pronouncements. Nishida considered predicates to be already contained in the field of consciousness in which the observer is embedded. The one who judges emerges from the field of consciousness at the moment of intellectual reflection and submerges back into it at the moment of volition and experience.

Nishida understood the philosophical construction of reality to take place within three experiential domains or *basho*: empiricism, idealism and what he called the ‘acting-intuiting’. The empiricist speaks from out of the ‘*basho* of being’; that is, the empiricist judges the world of physical entities. The idealist, on the other hand, judges the world of psychological entities, showing their role in the construction of our experience of physical entities. This is the realm of consciousness, experience, self and the transcendent ego. Sometimes the Kyoto School refers to this as the ‘*basho* of relative nothingness’, because from the standpoint of the empiricist this psychological world is considered so transparent as to be omitted from the discussion of what is. Relative to empirical reality, it is a place of nothingness. The third *basho* is supposedly less commonly articulated in the West, although Nishida found suggestive references to it in William James, Henry Bergson, some neo-Kantians and some religiously or aesthetically oriented philosophers. The third *basho* is where knowing and doing are virtually a single act. It occurs when a person responds spontaneously without deliberation to the information being intuited, or when their intake of information is the same act as going out and gathering information. Nishida calls that immediacy the single event of ‘acting-intuiting’. This realm is unknown to the categories of both the empiricist’s material world and the idealist’s inner world. In fact, in its immediacy and oneness, it cannot be analysed in any systematic way at all. Therefore, it can be called the ‘*basho* of absolute nothingness’.

In themselves, these three realms may constitute the contents of kinds of knowing, but Nishida argues there is a formal connection among them: there is a hierarchical ‘logic of *basho*’. His analysis of the hierarchy is based in his evaluation of how the *basho* are implicated in each other through the logical analysis of the conditions of judgment. Consider an empirical judgment such as ‘The cat is black’. Nishida asks in what place, in what *basho*, one is standing when making that judgment. He argues that for such an empirical judgment to be made, one must have an experience of perceiving that black cat. In other words, one assumes there is a perceiver and a perception that makes the judgment possible. Once we recognize this fact, we realize that judgments within the *basho* of being are logically dependent on experience within the *basho* of relative being, the idealist’s world of consciousness and perception. In turn, I may ask about the judgment of ‘I see that the cat is black’. That judgment of the *basho* of relative nothingness is itself only possible as a reflection and abstraction out of an experience of the acting-intuiting. So, the *basho* of relative nothingness has as its logical precondition experience within the *basho* of absolute nothingness. The acting-intuiting, being immediate and unitary, is not itself capable of making judgments; yet at the same time, it is the totality out of which reflection can generate the judgments of either idealism or empiricism. For Nishida, it is the universal that becomes concrete through the mediation of the other two *basho*. In this way

Nishida's dialectic takes us from the simplest of truths, the empirical judgment, to show regressively its logical basis in the immediacy of absolute nothingness.*

The Impact of Mādhyamika Doctrine on Watsuji Tetsurō's Philosophy of Emptiness

Watsuji Tetsurō (1889–1960) stands out as the leading thinker on ethics in twentieth century Japanese philosophy. He is regarded as a peripheral member of the 'Kyoto School' of philosophers centring around the thought of Nishida Kitarō. Like Nishida and the Kyoto School, the thought of Watsuji can be characterized by the effort to formulate a syncretic East-West philosophy developed within the framework of a Buddhist metaphysic of 'emptiness'. At the same time, Watsuji established his own highly distinctive system of ethics. He must rank as one of the most creative and profound thinkers in modern Japanese philosophy.

Watsuji's social concept of Japanese personhood represents an original synthesis of Confucian and Buddhist ideals of the self. He articulates a Confucian model of self as a network of familial and social relationships normatively governed by rites of propriety which embodies increasingly larger social groups in the process of becoming a person. At the same time, his social concept of the person is ultimately grounded in a Buddhist metaphysic of 'emptiness' (*kū*) whereby there is a dependent co-arising of the individual and society. There is thus a systematic character underlying Watsuji's framework in that his aesthetics and ethics are both developed in connection to his social concept of the person, which is in turn formulated in the context of a Buddhist notion of emptiness as interrelational existence.

In his most popular book, *Fūdo* (1934), Watsuji criticizes Heidegger's ethics as being grounded in an individualistic concept of self based on a one-sided phenomenological description of authentic human existence as a being-in-time. Watsuji could not agree with Heidegger's theories concerning human existence. So he wrote a book named *Fūdo*, translated into English as *Climate and Culture*. He explained the concept of *fūdo* as 'the natural environment of a given land'. He thought that Heidegger overemphasized the individual and missed the importance of social and geographical factors that affect the individual human existence. He made direct response to Heidegger's *Being and Time*. He expresses his dissatisfaction as follow:

It was in the early summer of 1927 when I was reading Heidegger's "*Sein and Zeit*" in Berlin that I first came to reflect on the problem of climate. I found myself intrigued by the attempt to treat the structure of man's existence in terms of time but I found it hard to see why, when time had thus been made to play a part in the structure of subjective existence, at the same juncture space also was not postulated as part of the basic structure of existence.†

Watsuji thought that Heidegger's *Being and Time* had placed more than necessary emphasis 'temporal being' as the basic concept of human existence. Reading *Being and Time* awakened his ideas of 'place' as he was dissatisfied with Heidegger's in overlooking the 'spatial being' of human existence. His unique idea of 'spatial being' is related to his consideration to 'spatial experience' in everyday life. In his philosophy, the term climate relate to a specific region of the earth, populated by a particular people who share a great deal in common. According to him, "Climate does not exist apart from history, nor history apart from

*. Robert E. Carter (1997). *The Nothingness beyond God: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Nishida Kitarō* (2nd Ed). St. Paul, Minnesota: Paragon House. pp. 23-57.

† 2 Watsuji Tetsurō (trans. by Geoffrey Bownas). (1961). *Climate and Culture: A Philosophical Study*. Tokyo: The Hokuseido Press. p.v

climate”.* Climate is correspondent with spatiality, whereas history is correspondent with temporality. Thus climate and human social history are mutually determining.

In his discussion on the conception of *fūdo*, he uses the Japanese term *ningen* that is usually translated as ‘human being’ in English. It is composed of two words. The first word, ‘*nin*’ (人) means ‘person’ and the second word, ‘*gen*’ (間) means ‘space’ or ‘between’. Thus the word *ningen* in his thought emphasizes the meaning of ‘betweenness’ between human beings. He claims that:

Human being is itself an identity of self-contradiction: It is in climate that man apprehends himself. The activity of man’s self-apprehension, man, that is, in his dual character of individual and social being, is at the same time of a historical nature.[†]

He used the Japanese term *ningen sonzai* for explaining the notion of human existence. *Ningen* is usually translated as ‘human being’ and ‘*sonzai*’ means ‘existence’. *Sonzai* is composed of two words, one emphasizing temporal existence and the other spatial existence. *Ningen sonzai* is remarkably dual in nature and self-contradictory, referring to human existence as individual and social, in time and in space. According to him, human being is both a product of the environment and a creator of that environment at the same time. Human beings are individuals, and yet they are necessarily interrelated each other in the society. Thus, it is their nature to be environmentally conditioned and yet to condition their environment to be individuals and yet to be members of many groups. According to Watsuji the Japanese concept of ‘person’ (*ningen*) has a twofold structure as both an individual existence in time and a social existence in a ‘climate’ (*fūdo*) of space. Watsuji thus establishes the basis for an environmental ethics arguing that the self arises through a relationship between the individual and its entire spatial climate including both human society and living nature.

Watsuji’s philosophy urges awareness of ‘betweenness’ which grounded in a Buddhist metaphysic of ‘emptiness’ in human relationship in his philosophy of ‘space’. For him, to be a human existence is to be located in ‘betweenness’. For that reason, the term ‘betweenness’ plays the crucial role in Watsuji’s social ethics because his explanation of human existence cannot be affirmed without ‘betweenness’ in the relationship between person and person. According to the concept of ‘emptiness’ in Watsuji’s philosophy, the notion of ‘betweenness’ is important for its negation of the individual self and it’s stressing on the crucial role of reciprocity between individual and others or individual and his society.

On the topic of ‘time’ he maintained that the present is connected to the future, and that human’s present actions help to shape both his own future and the future of his community. As ‘being-towards-life’, humans need to engage themselves in the society they live now as the building blocks of future generations. His conception of time is quite different from the signified or limited conceptions of time accepted in common sense. Rather, it represents consciously aware the changing process of time or temporal experiences in the lifetime of each individual or in the historical process of humankind. Graham Mayeda evaluated the philosophy of Watsuji as follows:

In explaining spatiality as the limit of human existence and pointing to the fundamental relationship between time and space, Watsuji does not accord primacy to the temporal as does Heidegger. As a process of the fragmentation and union of the self, the negative activity which characterizes human existence is both spatial and temporal.[‡]

¹ Ibid., p.8.

² Ibid.

³ Graham Mayeda. (2006). *Time, Space and Ethics in the Philosophy of Watsuji Tetsurō, Kuki Shūzō, and Martin Heidegger*. New York: Routledge. p.46.

From this evaluation, it can be assumed that Watsuji sees the close relation between space and time like Heidegger. But there are some different aspects between their views. Both these two philosophers accept time and space as phenomena of the nature of human existence. Heidegger emphasizes more on time and point out the subject, temporal nature of *Dasein* in his *Being and Time*. However Watsuji emphasizes more on space and regard it as a fundamental nature of human existence.

To sum up, Watsuji was undoubtedly influenced by the Western philosophical traditions, especially Heidegger's philosophies of time, space, and human existence. Nevertheless, his main concepts are grounded in Buddhism, Confucianism, and native Shintoism. Therefore it can be said that his philosophical system is based on the intersection of very different cultures and reflects the syncretistic tendency of Japanese thought.

Conclusion

From the time when the late 20th century historical phenomenon of humankind is characterized by the information superhighway and a global free market economy. The world has never seemed so harmonized, with all of its societies mutually influenced by the same economic and cultural patterns in this postmodern time. Western philosophy, science and technology have been crucial in setting up a universal 'mass media' order, but this does not resolve the question of whether Western or Eastern cultures are better equipped to stand facing with 'hyperreality' of postmodernity.

Postmodernity has also produced a fundamentalist reaction in the East, with the apprehension to traditional cultures being met by 'hyper-traditionalism'. Yet, it can be seen how Eastern attitudes of reverence for permanence and cosmic unity are perfectly compatible with acceptance of impermanence, illusion and liberation from the ego falsehood. Eastern thinking has found ways of overcoming the obvious contradiction between changeability and uniformity, and this may be its remedial contribution to moderating the intellectual overconfidence and destructive insensitivity of Western culture.

Consequently, some Western philosophical and scientific conceptions have been counterbalanced for their inconsistencies to the postmodern values which chiefly tend to convert the traditional values such as centralization, uniformity, harmony, absoluteness, constructiveness, apparent reality and so forth. In contrast, postmodernity emphasizes to seek the opposite values such as decentralization, variety, multiplicity, diversity, deconstruction.

For that reason, the traditional views on the concepts of 'space' and 'time' were also transformed into postmodern trend of thought in several spheres of academic research in the West since late 20th century. The reason it is in need of change the traditional views of the West chiefly concerned with its fundamental philosophical system based on perceptual or empirical knowledge and methodical or pinpointing approach in finding out the truth. In other words, the Western methodology fundamentally emphasized on the specific, accurate, experimental data and its logical analysis. Therefore, the outcomes from their investigations are ordinarily categorized in the conception of 'oneness' or 'certainty' such as uniformity, harmony, standard, centralization, reality, definiteness, and static or stability.

Contrary to the West, the philosophical system or pattern of the East chiefly based on the conceptional or rational knowledge and intuitive or instinctive approach to find out the truth. In other words, the Eastern methodology fundamentally emphasized on the general, intuitional, speculative facts and its synthetical judgment. Therefore, the outcomes from their investigations are ordinarily categorized in the conception of 'wholeness' or 'uncertainty' such as diversity, multiplicity, decentralization, hyper-reality, indefiniteness, and dynamic or

impermanence. Accordingly, the concepts of 'space' and 'time' in Eastern traditions are originally consistent with the postmodern trends of thought.

As mentioned under previous headings, although the concepts of 'space' and 'time' in Japanese traditions are generally based on those of Buddhist thoughts, they were transformed into newly formulated philosophical systems in which Japanese native Shintoism, Taoism, and Buddhism join together harmoniously. In this respect, it can be concluded that the unique characteristic of Japanese way of thinking vividly reflects in the conceptual transition of 'space' and 'time'. Besides, this fact can impressively support the well-known remark on the Japanese way of thinking as 'syncretism' in worldwide perspectives.

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