

《論 文》

A Study of the Future Vision of Philosophy  
—From the Perspective of the History of Western Philosophy—

HIROMICHI NISHINO

西洋哲学の将来あるべき姿に関する一考察  
—西洋哲学史の視点から—

西野 博道

キーワード

Continental rationalism (大陸合理論), British empiricism (イギリス経験論), German idealism (ドイツ観念論), existentialism (実存主義), structuralism (構造主義)

Abstract

Philosophy is the basis of all learning. Pythagoras, who is famous as a mathematician, was a philosopher. A medical doctor still hopes to become a philosophy doctor (Ph.D.). Both the humanities and sciences are eventually in the category of philosophy. In studying European literature, it is impossible to properly understand the author's message without a deep understanding of Christian doctrine. Similarly, without keeping a grasp of the history of Western philosophy, we cannot understand European literature, nay, the literature of all over the world. In particular, contemporary literature cannot be discussed without Nietzsche or Sartre, and the same is true for structuralism and post-structuralism. Those who aspire to be authors will be able to understand their role, and their aims should be based not on theology nor philosophy, but on literature, because true literature that takes subjects from our daily lives, gives us a guideline for a noble life, teaches us the reason for living and how to live, invites us into the world of sublime beauty, and enriches our spirits. Philosophy is the basis of that kind of literature. Therefore, in this paper, the present writer who takes a bird's-eye view of the history of Western philosophy, briefly points out the essence of each philosopher, and attempts to consider the direction of philosophy toward the future. It also allows us to imagine what future literary works look like.

### Introduction

Looking back on human history, we see many wars caused by religious conflicts. People fought each other because of differences in the gods they believed in and their doctrines, and many crises and tragedies

occurred. But in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, people put an end to those days when such religions dominated both the state and the minds of the people. Since modern times, what people believe in the world has changed from religion to science. The Ptolemaic theory was denied, and it became a common knowledge that the earth is moving. Technology has made

remarkable strides, capitalism spread with the Industrial Revolution in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the influence of religion waned, and in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Nietzsche even left the words “God died.” Since then the misfortunes of mankind have continued. There are two World Wars, the Cold War, the Vietnam War, and the Gulf War. Conflicts around the world never cease. After the US-Soviet confrontation, the tension between the U.S. and China has increased. In society, we have many problems to resolve, for example, the loss of employment due to the development of AI, the scramble between nations for limited resources, and we also remember the “9/11 terrorist attack” that occurred in New York in 2001, and the “3/11 Earthquake” that occurred in East Japan in 2011 with the serious nuclear power plant accident. Over the past three years, the corona pandemic afflicts the world endlessly, and the Russian invasion of Ukraine began in February 2022, showing no signs of ending.

Throughout the ages, when humanity faced crises, philosophy developed rapidly. Philosophy begins with fear. It is also said that when man is in the depths of unhappiness, he can touch the truth. Philosophy is necessary in times of disasters, harsh conditions, and widespread anxiety. Man could choose the right path through philosophy. Popular novels, on the other hand, try to dissolve loneliness in modern society. Sometimes, however, stupid novels only stir up the emotions of young people, deny tradition and common sense, and appeal for spiritual freedom from preconceived notions. The novel is limited to personal experience, depicts only a very limited and small world, and does not take a bird’s-eye view of the complex and diverse modern society. From there, we seldom receive any new messages or visions.

Unfortunately, modern people tend to avoid a head-on confrontation with the question of “What do we live here, and why do we live now?”, and develop only science and technology without thinking about justice, coexistence with nature, the weight of life, etc. Nuclear power possessed by mankind might be a weapon of destruction that will destroy the entire world. While holding it in hand, humanity does not know its purpose and how to use it. Now is the time for us to become familiar with philosophy and to acquire the ability to think deeply and highly again. In order to do so, we first need to have a firm grasp of the outline of the history of Western philosophy.

### The Man Who Loved Dialogue

Greek philosophy began with Thales (624?-546? BC) who said, “The source of all things is water.” This is the trigger for many people to start thinking about how this world works. And the word “sophist,” which meant “wise man,” appeared and began to increase. However, since their sole purpose was to win the controversy and to earn money, there were a lot of quibbles. Before long, the word “sophist” came to be used to mean a sophistry. Then, Socrates (470-399 BC) appeared. He was born in Athens, Ancient Greece, as the son of a stonemason (also a sculptor). One day, one of his friends went to the Temple of Apollo at Delphi and heard, “There is no one wiser than Socrates in the world.” Socrates thought he knew nothing about this world, so he decided to have a dialogue with the statemen and poets (artists) who were called wise men at the time to see if the divine message was really correct. And when Socrates asked many questions about their thoughts and

theories, he realized that none of the wise men could answer. They had no understanding of the essence of beauty, goodness, and other things that were most important to human beings. Socrates realized that those who called themselves wise men were not aware that they knew nothing about the world. He also realized he was wiser than them because he was aware he knew nothing about the world.

When people mistake themselves for being omniscient, they don't try to know anything more. Socrates realized that we should be aware that we know nothing about. If we assume we know everything, we will be satisfied with the current situation and will not try to find something new. However, if we realize that we are ignorant, we will be motivated to pursue the truth voraciously. It is also the idea of knowing one's true self by becoming aware of ignorance. The proverb "Know thyself," inscribed on the pillar of the Temple of Apollo, was the starting point of philosophy for Socrates. In this sense, he was also a conservative philosopher.

We sometimes feel that we have seen and heard everything and know everything, but that is only how we interpret what we see and hear, and in fact, we do not understand what the essence of everything is. None knows, but God knows. However, only the genuine "worldview" that unfolds in one's own mind that interprets something, is undoubtedly the truth that the person has. Socrates, with his "knowledge of ignorance," tried to reset the pedantic worldview, and also tried to start a genuine philosophy of knowing what the real self is. That is why Socrates has an unwavering presence in the history of philosophy. Also, he insisted that everyone tries to live righteously, but sometimes they go astray and fall into evil because they do

not know what is good and what is bad. Evil deeds come from ignorance of goodness. Socrates taught everyone that by knowing virtue, one can live a good life. *Arete* (virtue) was the most important concept of Socrates in his later years. He also said that those who live by practicing virtue (goodness) are happy.

Socrates understood that Apollo had set himself on a mission to make people aware of their ignorance, and he did his utmost to refute and persuade many sophists and his fellow citizens of Athens to realize they were ignorant. But while his activities produced supporters around him, many influential people and their colleagues who were dragged into debate and subjected to their ignorance, felt resentment against Socrates and grew to hate him. Some young men appeared to imitate Socrates' examination, and that made senior citizens angry. As a result, Socrates was accused of corrupting youth, sentenced to death. He drank poison and died at the age of 71. For Socrates, however, death was by no means a pessimistic ending. After his death sentence, he told a friend who had come to see him and tried to encourage Socrates to go into exile, that the important thing was "not just to live, but to live as a person of high virtue." He valued dialogue and left nothing written.

### The Theory of Ideas

Plato was born in Athens, Ancient Greece, in 427 BC. He was the author of *Apology of Socrates*, *Phaedo*, *The Republic*, and so on. He was a disciple of Socrates and advocated the Theory of Ideas (=Theory of Forms). In other words, "Idea" is the idea that there is a real, ideal, and perfect form, and that the world we live in now is only a shadow of the ideal

world and it is imperfect. He emphasized mathematics and geometry, and used them as the basis for supporting his “Theory of Ideas” as a true reality beyond human senses.

Plato wrote many plays called “Platonic Dialogues” over a period of half a century, from his thirties to the age of eighty. Many of his writings feature his mentor, Socrates, as the main character, and the story consisted of conversations between Socrates and other characters. *Phaedo* is one of the series of the Dialogues, in which Plato’s unique philosophy, “Theory of Ideas,” appeared for the first time. *Phaedo* depicts the day of Socrates’ execution through dialogue, and on the morning of his execution, Socrates, who is allowed to see and converse with his friends, enjoys a lively dialogue. Socrates speaks of the relationship between body and soul, arguing that for philosophers, death is never an abomination nor calamity, but rather the final liberation of the soul imprisoned in the body. Then, in the evening, Socrates drank poison and died. In this story, the concept of the eternal and unchanging Idea is presented as an argument for the proof of the immortality of the soul. The Idea world is the perfect one of eternal immortality. The Idea world is real, and the earth on which we live is like a shadow of the Idea, and man is the form of the soul that has fallen from the Idea world, combined with the body. We see, hear, and touch things in the world in which we live, and perceive them with our senses, but they are imperfect beings that imitate Ideas. Ideas, which exist truly, do not rely on the senses, but we can recognize them if we think logically in our heads, and correctly discern truth and falsehood, or good and evil. They can be recognized by such a power of reason.

In *Phaedo*, Plato cites the basis on which

the Idea exists. For example, there are concepts that are “beautiful” or “right” and it is difficult to clearly define what they refer to. All of this has an answer to the Idea. The human soul is originally in the world of Ideas, and because we are born into this world, the soul is imprisoned in the body. However, the reason why we think something is “right” and feel something is “beautiful”, is because we remember the “right” and “beautiful” that our soul knew when it lived in the Idea world. This is called “anamnēsis (recollection theory).”

It is worth noting that Plato’s Theory of Ideas not only had a great influence on later philosophers, but also became an important source of the Romantic view of art in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Plato also developed a theory of the state, talking about what the state is and what justice is. He envisioned an ideal state ruled by philosophers trained to realize the Idea of goodness in the world. After the age of 40, Plato founded a school in Akadēmeiā (Academia) on the outskirts of Athens, where he taught geometry and philosophy, and raised disciples. The educational goal was to direct the soul of youth from this world to the world of Ideas, and Aristotle appeared among those disciples. Plato died at the age of 80, in 347 BC.

### Erudite Person

The Ancient Greek philosopher, Aristotle, was born in 384 BC in the ancient Kingdom of Macedonia. He was the son of a physician who served the king. He lost both his parents at an early age. From the age of 17, he studied under Plato for about 20 years. He then returned to Macedonia at the age of 42 and tutored Alexander the Great (356-323 BC), who was then 13 years old. At the age of 49, with the

accession of Alexander to the throne, he returned to Athens and founded a school in Lyceum (Lykeion), a suburb of Athens. While Plato's Academy was devoted to the abstract speculation, Aristotle's Lyceum focused on scientific studies. Aristotle wrote *Organum*, *Physics*, *Metaphysics*, *Politics*, and many more. In fact, most of the works attributed to Aristotle were compilations of his lecture notes.

Aristotle studied and classified every discipline, for example, logic, biology, physics, astronomy, meteorology, zoology, botany, psychology, literature, aesthetics, political science, economics, ethics, metaphysics, etc. Because he laid the foundation for those disciplines, he is regarded as the father of all kinds of learning. He also rejected his mentor Plato's Theory of Ideas, and advocated the philosophy of realism. He defined Plato's way of thinking idealism. According to the Theory of Ideas, Idea, the essence of everything in the world and the norm of everything should be pursued as an ideal form. However, Aristotle insisted on the opposite position that values the reality present here on earth rather than aiming for the ideal. Aristotle's realism is the idea that truth exists in the real world in which we live, and that the essence of everything is in the thing itself. He called the essence inherent in everything "eidos (form)," and called the material or substance of eidos "hyle."

Thus, Aristotle's ideas are often at odds with his mentor Plato. For example, when asked what "courage" is, Plato replied that there is an Idea of "courage" and that the closer you get to that ideal, the more desirable it is. But Aristotle replied that since it is not good for any emotion to be extreme, "courage" should be somewhere between recklessness and cowardice. It is best to be moderate. The

reason why the ideas of the two philosophers are at odds is that Plato's philosophy was similar to mysticism, as can be seen from the fact that it later had a great influence on theology, whereas Aristotle was a philosopher who made many achievements in the field of natural science.

Aristotle replied to the question "What do people live for?" by saying, "The ultimate goal of mankind is happiness." He said that true happiness required a long life, and that it is important to acquire "virtue" in order to be happy. "Virtue" he said, is "courage", "temperance", "fraternity", "justice", "pride", and "moderation." He also emphasized the importance of "friendship". He asserted, "Without friends, no one would want to live, even if he had all other goods."

Aristotle's scholarship contributed greatly to the later advancement of science, but he was particularly interested in flora and fauna. Since he was once a tutor to Alexander the Great, he is said to have asked the Great King to send samples of the local flora and fauna of the conquered lands. Aristotle was also interested in astronomy. Plato said that since the divine maker of the earth is perfect, the earth created must also be perfect, and he said that the earth is round from the idea that the circle is a perfect shape. The people of ancient Greece generally believed that the earth was flat. Aristotle, however, observed the phases of the moon and although he argued for the Ptolemaic theory, Aristotle insisted that the earth was round, by analogy from the shadows of the earth's curves projected on the moon. This episode illustrates well the characteristics of the two geniuses, Plato and Aristotle. And, of course, Aristotle's ideas led to later empiricism. In his later years, Aristotle spent his time in his mother's

hometown, Chalcis, Ancient Greek. He died there in 322 BC, at the age of 62.

### The Great Church Father

After the period of Hellenism, the Roman Empire appeared. And the next big wave after Ancient Greek philosophy was Christian theology. Later, the European medieval world would be an era in which Christianity dominated every state, but the theology that swept European medieval society was deeply connected to Greek philosophy and other philosophical claims, such as Epicureanism (hedonism), Stoicism, and mysticism (gnosis) from the East. Various philosophies and ideological assertions were considered to have been incorporated and systematized as theology.

Christianity was deeply engraved in European culture and history, and had a tremendous impact. Therefore, here is a brief look back at its history. Primitive Christianity, which first began as a local religion in Judea after the death of Jesus Christ, would later grow into a universal religion throughout Europe. And efforts to do so began with Paulos. Christianity, which had been a mere crude Jewish religion was fused with the essence of ancient philosophy and rationalized. Paulos placed particular emphasis on the term “Holy Spirit,” which was later combined with God the Father and the Son of God (Jesus Christ), leading to the “Trinity.” Other Church Fathers of the early days also made great efforts. Among them, the great Church Fathers was Augustine. He is the first giant of Christian theology. During his career, the Roman Empire had already recognized Christianity as the state religion (in 313 AD), and his theological theory was strengthened.

It was through him that Christianity came to a theology systematized and armed with theory that could be comparable to traditional philosophy.

Augustine was born in North Africa (present-day Algeria), a Roman colony, in 354 AD. He lived in the Roman Empire's later years. In 397 AD the Empire was divided into East and West, and the Western Roman Empire was destroyed in 476 AD when the classical cultures of Greco-Rome were being destroyed by the great migration of the Germanic peoples. As befits these troubled times, Augustine, too, led a turbulent life. As a young man, he drowned in lust and led a life of indulgence. He believed in Manichaeism, which originated from Zoroastrianism, and became a skeptic. Later, he learned about Neo-Platonism and the idea that there exists something transcendent beyond the human spirit led him to become a Christian and completely abandoned the hedonistic life. He knew that the true thing existed outside of his life. In 391 AD, he became a priest in the North African city of Hippo, and later became a bishop of Hippo. He strove to establish the doctrine of the Christian Church. He argued that “believing” is important in order to “know”, and advocated salvation by the divine grace. He emphasized the Church and the Pope (representing Jesus). He wrote *Confessiones*, *De Civitate Dei contra Paganos* (*The Kingdom of God*), *Trinitarianism*, etc. He died at the age of 76, in 430 AD.

### Cogito, Ergo Sum (I think, therefore I am)

René Descartes was born in France in 1596. His father was a councilor of High Court Judge and his mother was too weak to die a year after giving birth to Descartes. At the

age of 10, he enrolled in a Jesuit school called La Flèche, where he studied conservative scholastic philosophy, theology, etc. He loved mathematics throughout his student days, graduated with honors from the academy, and entered Université de Poitiers (University of Poitiers) to study law. He then enlisted in the army and spent time in Germany. After his return, he traveled to Venice and Rome, and when he returned to Paris, he interacted with many scholars and philosophers. After moving to the Netherlands at the age of 32, he began to work on philosophy and write in earnest. At the age of 45, he published *Meditationes de prima philosophia* (*Meditations on First Philosophy*) in Paris. He was criticized as a “thinker who spread atheism”. In October 1649, he was invited by Queen Kristina of Sweden (1626–1689) to arrive in the capital city, Stockholm. He lectured for the Queen, but contracted a cold and got pneumonia. He died there in February 1650, at the age of 53. He published eight books during his lifetime (including after his death).

Descartes’ philosophy is also a kind of Platonism. Descartes was a rational philosopher who believed in what he thought in his head rather than what he saw with his eyes, and his spirit of “cogito ergo sum (I think, therefore I am)” is probably metaphysical. In other words, Descartes put the Idea of Plato’s Theory of Ideas into the human mind.

Descartes established the basic principle of philosophy. If we compare it to mathematics, it is like discovering “ $1 + 1 = 2$ ” for the first time in the world. For this achievement, Descartes is considered the father of modern philosophy. He used “methodological skepticism”, a method of thoroughly doubting everything in the world, and after much doubt, he sought a universal and absolute

truth that could be asserted that this doubt alone was indisputable. Everything we see might be a hallucination. All the sounds we hear could be auditory hallucinations. Right now, we can’t tell if we are awake and living in reality, or if we are asleep and dreaming. We don’t even know if this world really exists in the first place. It’s a strange idea, but demons may be showing us a false world... Then, while doubting everything, Descartes realized that only his consciousness of doubting things definitely exists. Even if he suspected that his consciousness did not actually exist, he couldn’t deny the fact that he himself doubted it. This is “Cogito, Ergo Sum”. This idea led to the development of modern philosophy by elucidating the structure of the world on the premise that one’s own consciousness exists.

Now, Descartes made it clear that our consciousness definitely exists. But at this point, it’s not clear whether the world really exists, nor what the essence of things in the world is. The next task, then, is to establish an “epistemology” that examines whether we really perceive the world correctly. Investigation of the extent to which humans can correctly perceive things has become a major issue. So, Descartes coined the idea of “rationalism”. “Rationalism” is the position that correct knowledge can be acquired only after thinking logically in the head. It is a Cartesian way of thinking that even if he doubted everything in the world, he could place absolute trust in his own consciousness alone. He argued that even if Man does not experience anything, he is born with a concept (innate idea), and that the conclusion drawn on the basis of it is correct knowledge. And Man is born with the concept of infinity. Then, there are infinite entities. For Descartes,

infinite substance is God, that is, God exists. For example, the value of pi continues indefinitely. Man cannot know all the numbers. Even if he uses a computer to calculate hundreds of millions or trillions of digits, he will not reach infinity, so he cannot say that he has fully calculated the value of pi. But God, who is omniscient and omnipotent, naturally knows all the values of pi. What does it mean to know about the infinite numbers? It cannot be imagined by human beings, who are finite entities. But Descartes was convinced that as long as Man knew the concept of infinity, there existed an entity that knew infinity. He concluded that if God exists, Almighty God would not cause Man to have a false perception, and that Man can correctly perceive the world.

### Knowledge is Power

Francis Bacon is the founder of British empiricism. He was born in London in 1561, a son of Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal. He attended Trinity College, Cambridge, but dropped out after two years without graduating. Bacon did not appreciate Aristotle's philosophy, as superior to discussion and controversy but not useful to human life, and increased his interest in the natural sciences. He later studied law and qualified as a barrister. At the age of 23, he became a Member of Parliament, and eventually became Chief Justice of the Supreme Court (Lord Chancellor). However, he became involved in a political trouble. He was accused of taking bribes, and he was resigned and imprisoned.

Bacon advocated "induction" as a scientific research method. In other words, it is a method of deriving general laws and universal facts from individual cases and concrete facts.

He said that Man does not have innate knowledge or ideas, and he emphasized sensory experience such as experimentation and observation. In empiricism, experience is not a personal experience, but has a strong connotation of objective and public experimentation and observation. His particular emphasis on sensory and perceptual experience led to the genealogy of John Locke, George Berkley, and David Hume. Bacon's philosophy is also called "sensualism" or "sensationalism", and his empiricism later influenced "materialism" or "positivism". On the other hand, empiricism conflicts with metaphysics such as continental rationalism, intuitionism, and mysticism.

Bacon's science differs from Aristotelian scientific thought. In other words, Aristotelian science shows that Man observes nature, accumulates, organizes, and systematizes its records. But Bacon's science argues that Man does not merely imitate nature, but intervenes, manipulates, and experiments with nature. Knowledge can be obtained through experience and experiment.

Bacon advocated that "knowledge is power", but at the same time, he said that human beings sometimes make false perceptions due to preconceived notions and prejudices. Bacon called these notions that hinder correct perception, "Idols". And Bacon classified them into four categories. One is the Idol of the Tribe, which is a false assumption by the senses that every human being has, such as an optical illusion. Next is the Idol of the Cave, which is a prejudice arising from the mind of individual (personality) or from the environment in which we grow up. Next is the Idol of the Marketplace, which is a prejudice due to false gossip from people. Finally, the last one is the Idol of the Theater, which is the prejudice



that arises from believing without thinking about what experts and great people say. Bacon requested people to remove these four Idols and concluded that the conclusions drawn by the induction, that is, the method of collecting cases and evidences through observation and experimentation and finding the common concepts to them, are correct knowledge.

Bacon also said, “Reading enriches people, speaking makes people agile, and writing makes people sure.” Knowledge and scholarship gained through experience and experimentation make people happy. Bacon separated learning from religion, reason from faith, and he can be said to have established the basic ideas of modern natural science. He published *The Advancement of Learning* (1605), *New Atlantis* (posthumously published), *Novum Organum* (*New Organon*, 1620), etc. In his later years, in order to experiment with freezing, he stuffed a chicken with full of snow. Then he caught a cold to die in 1626, at the age of 65.

### **At Birth, the Mind is a Blank Slate**

John Locke (1632-1704) was born in Somerset, southwest England, the eldest son of John Locke, an attorney and a clerk of a magistrate in Somerset. He grew up in a Presbyterian Puritan family and attended Oxford University. He studied philosophy and medicine, earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees, and became a Christchurch Fellow. He then became a lecturer at the University of Oxford, where he taught Greek, rhetoric, and philosophy. When Earl of Shaftesbury (1621-1683), for whom Locke served as a private secretary, fled to the Netherlands, where Locke also went. Later, when the Glorious Revolution broke out in 1688, he

returned to England.

Locke advocated the idea of democracy which eliminated the state’s interference with the individual, and had a great influence on liberal individualism. He insisted on the “right to revolution” and had a major influence on the later French Revolution and the American Revolution. Locke denied the nativism, and took a stand against Platonism, which holds the idea that only Idea that humans are born with exists. Locke’s philosophy belongs to the genealogy of nominalism (the belief that universality does not exist) that the universal exists only as the name of the thing.

Locke held that the existence of God is true without any argument, but Man has no idea (knowledge) when he is born. Nothing is universal beyond experience. Man was originally born in a state of blank slate (*tabula rasa*), and by experience of perception (accumulating various ideas), letters are written on the blank slate, and knowledge is formed. He held that there is not a single principle that all mankind can universally agree on. English empiricism was a philosophy that disliked to boast out the truth. Locke did not claim that there is no universal truth, but his idea is that different experiences have different ideas. He published *Two Treatises of Government* (1689), *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), etc. He died in Essex in 1704, at the age of 72.

### **The Bundle Theory of Mind**

David Hume (1711-1776) was born in Edinburgh, the capital of Scotland, as the second son of Joseph Home (Hume), a lawyer and the 10<sup>th</sup> branch of the Earl of Home family. He lost his father when he was two

years old. He entered the University of Edinburgh at the age of 11 to study law, but dropped out. Later, living at his family home in Berwickshire, Scotland, he immersed himself in philosophical studies. Although Hume himself did not profess to be an atheist, he missed out on professorships at the University of Edinburgh and the University of Glasgow because he was considered an atheist. He served as a tutor to the children of nobles, military aide-de-camp, librarian (at the University of Edinburgh), and later held positions such as secretary to the French ambassador, British Chargé d'affaires, and Under Secretary of State for Northern Department. He criticized Descartes, and he was the first philosopher to have skepticism about God. He also denied innate ideas. He was a hardcore skeptic and an atheist. He was an opinion leader of Britain's empiricists, along with Bacon and Locke, and it can be said that British empiricism was perfected by him.

Descartes' "Cogito Ergo Sum" made epistemology the central problem of modern philosophy, and from then on, rational theory became mainstream. But modern philosophy later divided into two groups. One is the continental rationalism begun with Descartes, which regards reason as absolute, later divided into German idealism and French materialism. The other is English empiricism that emphasizes experience while acknowledging human imperfections with Hume as the perfecter. The former is a method of drawing a conclusion according to a certain logical or mathematical rule, such as, if "A = B" and "B = C", then "A = C", or a method of drawing another new conclusion starting from some premise (deduction). The latter is a method of finding common concepts from many observations and drawing provisional

conclusions (induction).

Empiricism is the position that correct knowledge can be obtained from information, that is, experience, which has originally entered through the five human senses. The founder of empiricism was the English philosopher Bacon, born in 1561 before Descartes, and he valued experience more than logical thinking such as rational theory. Bacon's thought was succeeded by subsequent generations, an English philosopher John Locke, an Irish philosopher George Berkeley, (1685–1753), and David Hume, the Scotsman. Locke argued that the mind at birth is like a blank slate *tabula rasa* with no knowledge, and that our knowledge comes from observation and experience. Locke denied the existence of innate ideas. Locke's empiricism was closer to idealism in terms of methodological attitudes because it sought to show the structure of recognition through the exploration of the ideas that consciousness creates on the basis of experience. Hume's thought also inherits this attitude of Locke. But Hume strongly criticized metaphysics.

Berkeley explained that to exist is to be perceived. In other words, everything in this world can be perceived not because it exists, but because it is perceived, it can exist. He denied the existence of material substance, and insisted that familiar objects like books and pencils are ideas perceived by the human mind and cannot exist without being perceived. Everything around us, clothes, food, buildings, plants, rivers, mountains, the sun, the moon, etc., does not exist independently there. Existence refers to the perception by which someone sees or hears anything. He also argued that there is no such thing as something that is not perceived by all human beings in the world, but rather that it exists

because God perceives it. This is an idea that has become extreme because of the emphasis on experience. Then Hume came along, insisting that the mind itself is simply “a bundle of perceptions”. In other words, there is not even the human mind that Berkeley admitted. Hume believed that there was no substance in the world, but only perception. He argued that the human mind, as well as Descartes’ self in “*Cogito Ergo Sum*,” consists of nothing more than a bundle of knowledge and perception received from experience, and has no substance.

Hume held that passions rather than reason govern human behavior. Hume argued that we experience only a bundle of sensations, and the self is nothing more than this bundle of causally-connected perceptions. The philosopher who said, “Man is a bundle of perceptions,” insisted that perception (all that appears in the mind) is divided into two: impressions and ideas. And he thought all ideas were born from impressions, and impressions were the cause and ideas were the result. There are simple and complex respectively. The human mind is made up of overlapping experiences, and that knowledge is formed by the combined ideas.

Hume remained skeptical of trust in reason. He held that concepts that do not exist in reality, that is, the products of the imagination, are all combinations of past experiences. Expectancy of the future is just based on past experience. Hume considered even God to be a concept created from a combination of multiple experiences.

It is therefore by EXPERIENCE only, that we can infer the existence of one object from that of another. The nature of experience is this. We remember to have

had frequent instances of the existence of one species of object; and also remember, that the individuals of another species of objects have always attended them, and have existed in a regular order of contiguity and succession with regard to them. Thus we remember, to have seen that species of object we call flame, and to have felt that species of sensation we call heat. We likewise call to mind their constant conjunction in all past instances. Without any farther ceremony, we call the one cause and the other effect, and infer the existence of the one from that of the other. In all those instances, from which we learn the conjunction of particular causes and effects, both the causes and effects have been perceived by the senses, and are remembered. But in all cases, wherein we reason concerning them, there is only one perceived or remembered, and the other is supplied in conformity to our past experience. <sup>(1)</sup>

According to Hume, it is only by experience that one object can be inferred from one object to another. For example, “when approaching the flame, it is hot” is not caused by the temperature of the flame, but the experience of “approaching the fire” and feeling “it is hot” occurs one after another, and when it overlaps, people expect heat just by looking at the flame. In other words, causality means that one is perceived or remembered, and the other is supplemented to coincide with past experiences.

Hume’s thought follows theory of ideas in epistemology and belongs to the lineage of idealism that follows a German philosopher, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831). Hume was opposed to materialism. After all,

Hume's philosophy influenced not only analytic philosophy which has been the mainstream in the English-speaking world since the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but also continental philosophy which has been the mainstream since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially a German philosopher, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804).

Hume published a number of books, including *The Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-1740), *Political discourses* (1752), and *The History of England* (1755-1762). He died in Edinburgh at the age of 65 from abdominal cancer. He remained atheist throughout his life.

### Rationalism and Empiricism Complement Each Other

Immanuel Kant was born as a fourth of nine children of a German harness maker, Johann Georg Kant and Anna Regina Reuter, in Königsberg, the capital of East Prussia in 1724. He entered the University of Königsberg and after leaving school, he worked as a tutor for about 9 years. Then he submitted his dissertation to the university and obtained a master's degree. Later (1770), he became a professor at the University of Königsberg (Faculty of Philosophy). 16 years later, he became President of the university. After all, he spent his whole career there.

Kant held that the intelligence gained by experience was not absolute, and in a world where Christian values and morality could only be obtained by having faith, Kant insisted anyone could obtain them. He held that Man has certain laws that he should follow (moral laws), and that if he acts according to those moral laws, he can be free. Kant established a philosophy that integrated continental rationalism and English empiricism.

What is cognition? How can we perceive

things correctly? In epistemology, which addresses the question of such knowledge, "To what extent is the limit of human knowledge?", philosophers were at odds between the positions of rational theory which valued logical thinking, and empiricism which valued experience. It was the German philosopher Kant who settled the matter.

Kant criticized rational theory because when people tried to gain knowledge through logical thinking, and confronted with something beyond the limits of their own thinking power, they would think that God exists, like Descartes, in order to make sense of it. Kant criticized empiricism because if we try to obtain knowledge from experience alone, we will eventually come to the extreme conclusion that, like Hume, there is no matter in this world. Both the idea of rational theory and the idea of empiricism are necessary for correct recognition. Kant argued that human beings can gain knowledge by logical thinking in their heads based on experience.

Kant is also a philosopher who set the limits of the extent to which Man can perceive the world. First, he argued that human beings cannot know things themselves and can only know phenomena such as light and sound emitted by things. This is because, when Man sees or touches things, he recognizes objects after defining them in a way that is easy for him to understand. For example, let's suppose you are watching TV, and you see a person in the center of the screen, and a mountain in the distance. However, there are no people actually in the TV, and the TV screen is flat and the mountain is not in it. Yet, people watch TV as if they were real and they had a sense of substance because they are changing the information that comes in through sight and hearing so that it is easier for them to

understand. The same can be said for the scenery we see in reality. Therefore, Man cannot recognize pure things themselves.

He then said that it was pointless to think about things that transcended time and space, that is, about God, the soul, the afterlife, the Idea, and so on. Since they cannot recognize their existence through the five senses, they are not within the scope of philosophy. There may or may not be God, the soul, the afterlife, the Idea, but Kant concluded that there is no need to debate it. What is interesting is that both rational theory and empiricism affirmed God, but when the two ideas were combined, they somehow came to deny thinking about God. Isn't it because philosophers resolve contradictions in their theories by saying that there is a God that cannot be recognized by Man? If rational theory and empirical theory complement each other for their deficiencies, there will be no need for God because there will be no fatal hole in the theory.

Kant wrote so many great and important books and articles. Most notably three critical works: *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (*Critique of Pure Reason*, 1781; second edition 1787), *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (*Critique of Practical Reason*, 1788), and *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (*Critique of Judgment*, 1790), are his masterpieces. He lived a very strict life. He never married. He was single all his life. He died at Königsberg in 1804, at the age of 79, uttering "*Es ist gut* (It is good)" just before death.

### Das absolute Wissen

Called the "Perfectionist of Modern Philosophy", a German philosopher, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel was born in 1770, in the Duchy of Württemberg, the son of Georg

Ludwig who was an official. Hegel was the same age as Beethoven and a year younger than Napoleon. He lost his mother Maria at the age of 13. He studied theology and philosophy at the University of Tübingen and after graduation, worked as a tutor. Then he became an unsalaried lecturer at the University of Jena (Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena), but the Kingdom of Prussia surrendered due to Napoleon's invasion and Jena was occupied by French troops. The university was closed and he lost his position. After that, he worked as an editor for a newspaper. In 1816, he became a professor at the University of Heidelberg (Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg) and then he became a professor of philosophy at the University of Berlin. In 1829, he became President of the University of Berlin, but suddenly died in 1831, at the age of 61, after contracting the infectious disease cholera.

Kant argued that Man can only know phenomena and that things can only be perceived as phenomena, but Hegel argued that things themselves can also be known. Hegel believed that all phenomena are beings born of human reason. He also said, "It is meaningful to understand each aspect of the positive and the negative, and to go to a higher state and overcome it through its unity", which leads to universal truth. It means the perfect unity between what man perceives and real things in the world, or between subjectivity and objectivity. To put it simply, it means to know the truth. The "dialectic (Dialektik)" is used for this purpose.

The "dialectic" is that if you have an idea, and you are confronted with an idea that conflicts with your idea, you can progress to a better idea by integrating the two opinions

and resolving the contradiction. To put it simply, you can develop your theory by incorporating various values and ideas from a broad perspective without rejecting opinions that differ from yours. To give a commonly used example, suppose you look at an object from above and you perceive its shape as a circle. But suppose it's a rectangle when viewed from the side. Based on these two perspectives, it can be said that the object is a cylinder. Hegel argued that this "dialectic," the mechanism by which theory develops in the wake of conflict, applies not only to dialogue, but also to everything in this world. Using the "dialectic," we can overcome the conflict between subjectivity and objectivity and arrive at the truth. Hegel also believed that human history was headed toward the realization of freedom through "dialectics." Every nation always has its own things that are right, morals, ethics, etc. However, if new values are born, contradictions arise. There is no common righteousness, no common values in any era or nation. Therefore, with the passage of the times, we must change what is considered to be correct. In this way, whenever a contradiction arises, humanity repeats the "dialectic", and progresses toward the ideal.

Diese letzte Gestalt des Geistes, der Geist, der seinem vollständigen und wahren Inhalt zugleich die Form des Selbst gibt und dadurch seinen Begriff ebenso realisiert, wie er in dieser Realisierung in seinem Begriffe bleibt, ist das absolute Wissen; es ist der sich in Geistesgestalt wissende Geist oder das *begreifende Wissen*. Die *Wahrheit* ist nicht nur *an sich* vollkommen der *Gewißheit* gleich, sondern hat auch die *Gestalt* der Gewißheit seiner

selbst, oder sie ist in ihrem Dasein, das heißt, für den wissenden Geist in der *Form* des Wissens seiner selbst. <sup>(2)</sup>

From the standpoint of idealism, Hegel describes in his book, *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (*The Phenomenology of spirit*) published in 1807,<sup>(3)</sup> the process of starting from consciousness, recognizing the object itself behind phenomena through dialectics, and becoming the Absolute in which subjectivity and objectivity are integrated. Hegel says that if consciousness changes its knowledge (that is, its relation to the object), so does the object. For new consciousness with transformed knowledge, the object also changes. Because the object belongs to knowledge, the object changes inherently. In this way, our consciousness moves to a higher level. Eventually, objects also change from the way things exist to the law. Consciousness eventually grows into "absolute Wissen (absolute knowledge)". Consciousness preserves the resolution of contradictions faced in various situations as its results. Thus, the true becomes the whole. Hegel's dialectic of the experience of consciousness has the possibility and path to grow to Absolute Knowing. Consciousness grows while encountering real objects. And the consciousness that has grown and realized knows that the various objects that we have thought to be opposing are actually ourselves. The reason why we thought that the object was different from us was because there was an aspect of the object that we could not understand. Consciousness cannot grow by staying with itself, and it can only be realized by making various objects on its own. The path to the true is our self-consciousness, and the true thing that we have acquired at the end of our experience is

the entity that spreads out as this world. Consciousness goes beyond the narrow position of personal subjectivity through experience, and knows that it is a member of society and part of universality. Through experience, we can grow ourselves into social beings and universal beings. This growth is also our self-realization. Hegel's philosophy sought to grow the modern individual into an entity that produces higher concepts. This made history meaningful. In other words, truth is the product of the experience of world history.

Hegel's ideas influenced the German philosopher, Karl Marx, born in 1818, and gave rise to socialism. And socialism was supported by a large number of people around the world. However, the shortcomings of socialism were gradually discovered, and at the same time, Hegel's "dialectics" were criticized. Then an entirely new philosophy began. There are two philosophers who pioneered this process. The German philosopher, Arthur Schopenhauer, born in 1788, rejected Hegel's "dialectic" by saying that the basis of everything is "Blind Will to Survive." He said, "In this world, all living things, including humans, are just struggling to live without any meaning, and there is no progress or development there." The Danish philosopher, S. A. Kierkegaard, born in 1813, argued that it was better to choose "this or that" rather than dialectical thinking to incorporate "this and that." Kierkegaard wanted to pursue his own truth rather than universal truth.

Hegel was one of the most important figures in German idealism, and European history reached a turning point with Hegel's death. In France, a year before his death, the July Revolution broke out, and a liberal movement developed in Germany after that.

The German civil revolution, called March Revolution, broke out in 1848.

Karl von Hegel (1813-1901) was one of Hegel's three sons. He earned a Ph.D. at the University of Berlin. His doctor's thesis was about Alexander the Great, and he became a well-known historian of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Germany. Karl also became vice-rector at University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, in 1870.

### **Despair is a Deadly Disease**

The founder of existentialism, Søren Aabye Kierkegaard (1813-1855), was a Danish philosopher. He criticized the rational-centric Hegel, and sought not to extract truth from abstract concepts, but from every individual subjective and concrete existence. He declared for the first time that "I should live like this" instead of "human beings should live like this." Leaning into mysteries incomprehensible by reason, Kierkegaard thrust into the mysteries of God, while later Nietzsche and Sartre turned to atheism. He had a great influence on Heidegger and modern Christian thinkers.

Kierkegaard was born in 1813 to a wealthy merchant family in Copenhagen, Denmark, the youngest of seven children. Of the seven, up to five died by the age of 34. He entered the University of Copenhagen at the age of 17, where he studied theology and philosophy. At the age of 24, Kierkegaard met and fell in love with a 14-year-old girl named Regine Olsen (1822-1904). They got engaged, but he broke off the engagement four years later (1841). He remained financially dependent on his rich father for the rest of his life, but wrote many books.

Kierkegaard did not object to man as an abstract concept, but to man as a concrete

factual being. In anxiety, anguish, and despair, he pursued the subjective truth of the individual, that is, the truth only for himself. He said, “The sickness that leads to death is despair”, and he believed that no matter what possibilities and ideals we pursued in the real world, we could not avoid the despair brought about by death, and that only the possibility of salvation by God could be possible (opposed to the conventional belief that if we believe, we will be saved). Despair is a characteristic that only human beings have, and it is important not to look away from it, but to live independently and subjectively. Contrary to Hegel’s attempt to capture the world and history as a whole, Kierkegaard argued that each human being has its own essence. He argued that being in history and choosing one’s own destiny would not be solved by the abstract theory Hegel emphasized. Kierkegaard argued that each is determined by everyone’s concrete thinking.

Two of his masterpieces, *Either/Or* (*Enten-Eller. Et Livs Fragment*), was published in 1843, and *Sickness unto Death* (*Sygdommen til Døden*) was published in 1849. In our life, there are times when we can pursue “this and that”, but sometimes we need to choose “this or that.” In the end, someone falls into despair. Therefore, beyond the ethical way of being there is the religious way of being, in which Man directly confronts God, experiences God as an individual, and achieves his original way of being. Personal experience determines choice. For Hegel, faith is justice, but for Kierkegaard, at some point, faith becomes irrational. To leave judgment to the objectivity of the masses, he said, is to lose oneself. Only God’s miracle is believed. In order to overcome the despair that there is no meaning in this world, Kierkegaard once again

bet on the miracle of God, the possibility that God exists.

Though he was a Christian, Kierkegaard hated the Danish Church. In October 1855, during the struggle for reform of the Danish Church, small and thin Kierkegaard collapsed on the streets of Copenhagen and died in a hospital the following month. He was 42 years old. He loved coffee.

### Materialism

Karl Marx was born in 1818, in Trier, a territory of the Kingdom of Prussia. His father came from a family of generational Jewish priests, but he was a liberal and converted to Protestantism, making a living as a lawyer. Marx’s mother was Dutch-Jewish, and the Marx family was wealthy. He studied law, philosophy, literature and history at the Universities of Bonn and Berlin. In 1841, he received his doctorate in philosophy. Because he could not become a university professor, he became the editor-in-chief of a newspaper company, which eventually fell out of print. But Marx who had married the daughter of a Prussian nobleman four years older than him, moved to Paris with his wife and became involved in the running of the magazine’s first issue. However, it was discontinued in the first issue, and although he subsequently contributed numerous articles to the journal, Marx was expelled from the country due to his critical views of the government and moved to Brussels, Belgium. In 1849, he fled to England and studied economics at the British Museum in London. He died in London in 1883, at the age of 64.

Marx regarded capital as a common asset of society and the workers who multiplied that capital as agents of social change. The



Prussian government was wary of Marx because he was a dangerous revolutionary thinker who aimed for a society of equality without a gap between the rich and the poor, eliminating the distinction between capitalists (the bourgeoisie) who exploited surplus value and workers (the proletariat) who were exploited. Traditionally, it was thought that spiritual things moved history, but Marx taught that material things, the development of productive forces, make history. This way of thinking is called “historical materialism.” Marx argued that capitalist society would eventually come to an end, and that the era of socialism and communism would come in the future.

Marx was a philosopher of “materialism,” who held that everything in this world was ordained by matter, and that there was no such thing as God, the soul, the afterlife, or Ideas. In other words, it’s the idea that there is only matter in the world. Since the reason for everything in this world is in matter, “justice” and “emotion” in the human mind are also determined by matter. For example, eating delicious food makes the human mind happy because of the substance of delicious food. If you get angry when you’re beaten, it’s the substance of the fist that creates anger in your heart. Also, suppose that people in a certain country live by catching fish from the sea, and the idea that “you should not catch too much fish” is correct there. That correctness is not a universal truth that is available anywhere in this universe. There is a reason for the substance that if you catch too much fish and destroy the marine ecosystem, you will have trouble eating.

And, of course, Marx thought that the morality of “do not tell a lie”, the ethics that “human life must be valued the most”, the

religion that “if you believe in God, you will be saved”, and the virtue of “do not take revenge even if you are damaged”, are all things that matter prescribes. Moreover, the ruling class of the nation can manipulate matter at will, using money and power. To be able to manipulate matter as they wish means to be able to determine the morals, ethics, religious teachings, and justice of a country in their own favor. For example, what about the teachings of religion? “The rich go to hell because they are wicked, and the poor go to heaven because they are good. Under heaven all men are equal.” If it is true that you can make it easier in the other world because of the hardship in this world, you will be able to keep the balance. But from the perspective of “materialism,” there is no such thing as the other world. Isn’t the point that it is a convenient teaching for the ruling class to force the poor to work hard for low wages by saying that they can make it easier in a non-existent heaven because they work and struggle pretty hard in this world?

According to Marx’s thinking, it can be interpreted as follows. There is no God. That is why we create equality not with God, but with the power of man. Then, how can we create equality? Marx cited Hegel’s “dialectic” and arranged it. The relationship between management and labor is contradicted by the productive forces that improve with the development of the economy. In other words, even though the company’s profits are rising, workers’ wages remain the same. Therefore, the disgruntled workers wage a struggle against the ruling class, and working conditions will be improved. Thus, humanity advances by the class struggle that arises whenever contradictions arise. Therefore, Marx concluded that if the workers of the

whole world united to start a revolution, we would be able to create an ideal socialist country in which all people were equal to each other.

However, we learned that when it came to socialism, the motivation to work declined, and the economy of one socialist country stagnated. In addition, shortcomings such as the danger of becoming a one-party state, a dictatorship, or not being able to freely make political statements were pointed out. In modern times, in liberal countries, many people recognize Marxism as a dangerous idea. However, isn't it premature to underestimate Marx with this? Because when Hegel said that humanity has progressed in "dialectics," he is quite right. Modern capitalism is very different from pre-Marx capitalism. We will not force people to work hard for low wages, and the gap between the rich and the poor is not as severe as it was before. Capitalism, which advocates liberty, has united the good points of the two sides and resolved the contradictions in the face of the opposing idea of socialism that advocates equality. Therefore, in modern society, there is capitalism that combines freedom and equality. Maybe Marx had anticipated this. If every time a contradiction arises, it is resolved and mankind progresses. Then of course there must be a contradiction in the socialism that he insisted. And there will be contradictions in modern capitalism at some point. In what Hegel says, there will be no contradictions in an ideal world that realizes true freedom. But it is a story of an endless future. Marx's assertion that a socialist country is an ideal country may have been a trick to motivate the workers to start a revolution.

*Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei (The*

*Communist Manifesto*, 1848), *Das Kapital. Kritik der politischen Ökonomie (Capital: Critique of Political Economy*, 1867): These books are his representative works.

### Gott starb (God died)

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche was born in 1844, in the Prussian Plovinz Sachsen, to a wealthy Lutheran pastor. When Nietzsche was five years old, his father died. He studied theology, philosophy, and classical philology at the University of Bonn, but stopped believing in God along the way, so he abandoned his theological studies. While at university, he transferred to the University of Leipzig (Universität Leipzig). In 1864, at the age of 24, he became a professor at the University of Basel, teaching classical philology on ancient Greece. However, after working at the university for 10 years, he resigned his job due to ill health and other factors. From then on, he entered a life of writing.

Nietzsche was an atheistic existentialist. The Danish philosopher Kierkegaard (1813-1855) is said to be the father of existential philosophy, but he was a theistic existentialist. For Kierkegaard, despair was a "deadly disease" in which he saw the possibility of living in faith. Nietzsche said that, unlike Kierkegaard, God or Christian values are no longer useful in modern society. Nietzsche's position was nihilism that completely denied European philosophy. The faith of surrendering everything to God is the same as that of a slave. Morality is the value that the weak unilaterally label the strong as the bad guys and gain mental superiority. Christianity is a missionary based on the weak that the punishment falls on the strong and that if their daily deeds are good, the weak can go to

heaven. Nietzsche denied life after death, and he thought that this world is meaningless and repeats itself endlessly. However, he said that the important thing is not to rely on God's existence there, but to think for yourself and live by your own power. Nietzsche was really a pioneer of "existentialism." Speaking of Nietzsche, we easily feel the image of a pessimistic philosopher who coined the quote "God died", but that is a big mistake. His quote continues.

Gott starb: nun wollen *wir*-daß der Übermensch lebe. <sup>(4)</sup>

(God died: now *we* want the superhuman to live.)

In the same book, *Also sprach Zarathustra* (*Also spoke Zarathustra*), Nietzsche explains "God" and "superhuman" as follows:

Einst sagte man Gott, wenn man ich auf ferne Meere blicket; nun aber lehrte ich euch sagen: Übermensch. Gott ist eine Mutmaßung; aber ich will, daß euer Mutmaßen nicht weiter reiche, als euer scaffender Wille. Könntet ihr einen Gott *schaffen*? — So schweigt mir doch von allen Göttern! Wohl aber könntet ihr den Übermenschen schaffen. <sup>(5)</sup>

Here, Nietzsche said that "God" was only a speculation, that we should no longer talk about "God," and that we should use the word "superman" instead of "God." Instead of creating a single "God," we should create many "superhumans."

I would like to explain in order what the death of God is and what the superhuman is. In modern times, with the development of natural science, the existence of God became

shabby, and the influence of Christianity also weakened. In order to convince modern people that there is no God, Nietzsche described this situation as "God died." He argued that the idea of Christianity came from the "Ressentiment" of the weak. "Ressentiment" means jealousy, bitterness, or resentment. In other words, the poor and others were jealous of the rich and powerful, and by believing in Christianity that used beautiful words such as "equality" and "philanthropy," they justified themselves, the weak, and blamed the strong who had money. The weak regarded the strong as evil. Besides Christianity, Nietzsche rejected all the values and traditions that emerged from "Ressentiment." And then comes the idea of nihilism that if there is no God, there is no meaning to man's birth, and that there is no value in living. But the gist of Nietzsche's thought is not the nihilism of "God died" but the overcoming of nihilism, "Then what should we do now?" You will see that he is not pessimistic, but a philosopher with a very positive personality. Then, in a world without God, what should we humans live for?

Nietzsche argued that human beings should accept the fate that they have no choice but to live in this meaningless and aimless world, and that they should become ideal persons, or *Übermenschen* (superhumans) who can create their own meaning and purpose for living. The philosophies that began with Socrates were studies of searching for answers to God's problems, such as "What kind of way of life is right?", "What is the structure of this world?", or "Why were people born?" But philosophy after Nietzsche changed to the discipline of "there is no answer because there is no God, man creates the answer." Such ideas are called "existentialism." In 1900, Nietzsche contracted pneumonia and died at the age of 55.

## We Should Live in a Finite Time as Ourselves

Martin Heidegger was a German philosopher who was born in rural Meßkirch, Germany, in 1889. His father was a barrel maker and also worked for the church. Heidegger studied theology at the University of Freiburg, but changed his major to philosophy along the way. He published *Sein und Zeit (Being and Time)* in 1927, and argued that human beings should face up to the fact that they are beings to death. And also, he pointed out that instead of thinking about nothing and spending time idly, but cherishing the limited time, they have to live seriously. The meaning of the world to him as an existentialist was not for the objective world, but for the world manifested in the subjectivity of the individual, a world that appeared according to the interests of the individual. He argued that it is important to decide for oneself the path one should take.

Heidegger became rector at the University of Freiburg in 1933, but was expelled from the university for a time after World War II for his support of the Nazi Party. Modern philosophy, which began with Descartes, was dominated by discussions of “epistemology”, but Heidegger focused on “ontology”, which considers existence. And before delving deeper into what existence is, he said it is essential to analyze the existence of human beings who are interested in existence and thinking about existence like Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. Some of humans tried to understand the meaning of existence and have been facing the question of existence since the days of Greek philosophy. Heidegger named this existence of human being who knows the concept of existence, “Da-sein.” “Da-sein” means “there being”, “being there”, “being-in-

the-world”, or just “existence.” And he preached the right way of life as “Da-sein.” Human beings as “Da-sein” feel “anxious” just by living in this world because there is no meaning in this world. Even if you live in a meaningless world, there is no reason to exist. In order to forget this “anxiety”, “Da-sein” obscures one’s existence by not having one’s own opinion, not judging things by one’s own will, and so on. Specifically, we believe that what the majority of people decide is right, we think what the masses say is beautiful, and we live in such a way that we imitate what others around us are doing. That way, even if you are replaced by a stranger the next day, your existence will not change much. Heidegger called “Da-sein” who has lost sight of himself in order to alleviate “anxiety” as “Das Man” (the worldly man).

Then, how can we find ourselves as different from others? Heidegger realized that death was one’s own and could not be exchanged with anyone. In other words, thoughts, actions, experiences, etc. can be imitated by others, but only one’s own death is possessed by one’s own existence. *Time* finds its meaning in death. Therefore, if you are always conscious that you are a being who is heading toward death, you can live in a finite time as yourself. When you realize that death can come at any moment, you can establish a true self.

Heidegger says in his book, *Being and Time*, that “Da-sein” is a state of “Sein zum Tode” (being towards an end). He points out that death always comes to everyone. And we never know when we’re going to die. Death cannot be exchanged with anyone, and a true self cannot be exchanged with anyone, too. Therefore, death is the most unique possibility for “Da-sein”. It is only when we face our own death that we can understand that we

are original. To think about the possibility of death is to think about living. Because we don't know anything about life after death, it's impossible to get a complete view of "Dasein". So, we tend to try to understand the meaning of death by analyzing the death of others, but Heidegger denies it. No matter how much we analyze the death of others, we cannot find the meaning of our own death. It is quite possible to grasp the whole picture of one's existence just by realizing that we are just beings who are going to die. Death is the possibility of our own existence. It is important to aim for some kind of possibility in the form of anticipation. What does death mean to us? It is meaningful in how we live.

Heidegger died in Meßkirch, West Germany, in May of 1976, at the age of 86.

### **L'existence précède l'essence**

Jean-Paul Sartre was born in Paris, France, in 1905. His father, a naval officer, died of illness when Sartre was two years old. In 1938, he published the novel *La Nausée* (*Nausea*). In 1943, he published *L'Être et le néant: Essai d'ontologie phénoménologique* (*Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*). And when World War II ended, Sartre's existentialism quickly spread throughout the world, fascinating many young people, and creating an existentialist boom. Later, Sartre turned to Marxism and communism. With the rise of structuralism, Sartre's ideas came under criticism.

Sartre said "L'existence précède l'essence" (Existence precedes essence), in his book<sup>(6)</sup> and that since God has not given us an essence in advance, we can determine the essence by our own will, so we can build our own essence

with our own power and open up our own life. In addition, he insisted that we should change society for the better with our own power. Existentialism is humanism, he said. Sartre, who was credited with establishing existentialist literature, was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1964, but declined the award.

Existence refers to the existence of human, and essence refers to the character of the person and the meaning and purpose of life. "Existence precedes essence" means that human beings are not necessarily born into this world for some reason, and exist without being given any meaning. Many non-human things exist for a reason. For example, chairs were made to sit, pens were made to write, and clocks were made to check the time. But human was not created by God for a purpose. Therefore, human is a free being who can choose for himself what he or she lives for, and every human being can become what he or she wants to be because he is nothing at first. This idea is similar to the theory of Nietzsche, a pioneer of existentialism. But the difference between Nietzsche's superhuman thought and Sartre's existentialism is the interpretation of God. Nietzsche tried desperately to deny God, saying that Christianity originated from "Ressentiment" of the weak. Certainly, it is undesirable to blindly believe in God and to abandon the idea of thinking about the meaning of our birth.

However, it is true that Christianity has saved many people and that various cultures have been born. It is good to be independent of God, but it would be a thoughtless idea to deny God entirely. In my opinion, human history is similar to the life of a person. Just as children become independent from the parents who raised them, so too will mankind

become independent of God. Nietzsche's time was a period of rebellion in a man's life. This is probably why the radical idea of "God died," that is, to deny one's parents and become independent, came about. Sartre, on the other hand, said that existentialism is not atheism in the sense that it tries to prove to the best of its power that God does not exist, but rather it declares that even if God exists, nothing will change, and that is our point of view. We do not believe that God exists, but the problem of God's existence is not the problem.

L'existentialisme n'est pas tellement un athéisme au sens où il s'épuiserait à démontrer que Dieu n'existe pas. Il déclare plutôt : même si Dieu existait, ça ne changerait rien ; voilà notre point de vue. Non pas que nous croyions que Dieu existe, mais nous pensons que le problème n'est pas celui de son existence ;<sup>(7)</sup>

It doesn't matter if there is a God or not. Sartre is trying to convey that the important thing is to form oneself subjectively. He also recommends everyone for *engagement* (social participation) after creating a meaning for life. The theories of Nietzsche and Heidegger give the impression that in order to establish one's true self, one leaves the mundane world and lives in solitude, but Sartre is different. He declared that he should choose to live in a secular society, influence society, and remake society. Also, in the process of getting involved with society and interacting with others, it will be good for a person to incorporate various opinions. Looking at this mechanism by which people with diverse values gather and influence each other to form a society, it seems as if Hegel's

"dialectic" rejected by Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard has been revived in a different form in this period.

However, Sartre's theory of human subjectivity was later criticized by the concept of the *unconscious* advocated by the Austrian psychiatrist Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and the French anthropologist, Claude Lévy-Strauss (1908-2009), who advocated *structuralism*. In addition, the French philosopher, Jean-François Lyotard (1924-1998) called the philosophies of Hegel and Marx, whose themes had been the structure of the world and ideal countries, "grand narratives." Lyotard rejected the search for such universal truths as leading to totalitarianism, and conflicts and disputes may arise. He argued that in the coming era, "little narratives" that think about the way of life and righteousness of each individual human being are appropriate.

At the age of three, Sartre was almost blind in his right eye, and at the age of 68 (1973), he became blind in his left eye and completely blinded in both eyes. He died in 1980, at the age of 74.

## Conclusion

The beginning of ancient Greek philosophy was a question of God. Until then, they had not thought of an answer to the question because they believed that anything they did not understand in the world was created by God and was God's will. But now that they could afford it, the citizens of Athens began to search for answers to the question on their own. And so began the history of philosophy, which built up universal truths one by one. At first, Thales said, "Everything in the world is made of water." Then Pythagoras appeared. Philosophy later developed into the natural

sciences. Then came Christianity, and in medieval Europe, ancient philosophy was sealed and the center of medieval scholarship became theology. The university originally began as an educational institution attached to a medieval Christian monastery. European universities subsequently developed on the basis of four faculties: theology, philosophy, letters (literature), and medicine. But at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the exception of some universities, theological and philosophical faculties were absorbed into the Faculty of Literature. Novelists have come to be touted around the world as a glamorous profession, but what supported the popularity of novelists was the echo of the existentialist idea that, in the context of philosophical history, “the meaning of human life is not to seek the answer to it in the Bible, not to seek the words spoken by the pastor of the church, but to think for oneself, by your own strength”, and the novel was like a report of the practice of that idea. Each novelist wrote their own experiences, created historical figures and fictional heroes, and interpreted them in various ways to know what it means to live, and to tell readers the fact. Writers’ works functioned well in society as a whole. Reading novels was an ethical and moral education for those who stopped going to church. Instead of reading philosophical books, people read literary works. However, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Faculty of Literature becomes unpopular, and the names of the Faculty of Foreign Languages, the Faculty of Humanities, and the Faculty of International Liberal Studies are popular now. Novels become mere entertainment, squeezed by comics, anime and manga. Who will replace the role played by novelists in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

The philosophy has developed over a long

period of history through the repetition of the denial of conventional conclusions. Through Nietzsche, Sartre, a structuralist, Lévy-Strauss, and the standard-bearer of postmodernism, Lyotard, the mainstream of philosophy has led to a conservative view that overly prioritizes the individual rather than grasping society as a whole. Structuralism dwarfed individuals by claiming that human beings are dominated by something invisible and unconscious, that is, by some hidden structure, the surrounding environment, and the social structure, that individuals can never decide anything freely by their own will. However, it is inconceivable that this point of arrival will be forever correct. Once again, there will be progressive philosophers who will argue “grand narratives.” Hegel and Marx said that humanity progresses whenever contradictions arise in history. In other words, when there is no contradiction, there is no change, and human history is a repetition of maintaining the status quo and breaking the status quo. So, the time of the progressive philosophers, Marx and Sartre did not last forever. However, to put it another way, if the era without change continues, it means that the time will come to change society again. However, Marx had the radical idea that social change would occur through class struggle. In the novel *Crime and Punishment* by the Russian novelist Dostoevsky (1821-1881), a contemporary of Marx, the protagonist, Raskolnikov murders a Jewish old usurer with the idea that a chosen one with the talent to rule the country in the future can commit crime. Both were dangerous ideas that were willing to sacrifice for the sake of human progress. Unfortunately, looking back on history, it is true that many great men who have made great contributions

to humanity and so-called heroes have taken the lives of many people. However, this may have been unavoidable in the days of Marx and Dostoevsky, and in today's world where freedom of expression is guaranteed, at least in a liberal state, it is possible to peacefully reshape society. In fact, Sartre was a reformer, but he did not commit crimes and did not incite violent revolution. I think that the philosophy of the future will be a mixture of "little narratives" and "grand narratives", in which people think about the meaning of their lives with their own power and put them into practice, albeit in a small way. At the same time, each person participates in society and eventually makes a grand narrative. It is important to pursue both, not just one. And we will create our own great stories for the future.

Today, we often hear the word "diversity". I think it is a trend to acknowledge values that cannot be understood, but it is a mistake to admit anything unnecessarily. Isn't that where chaos and disorder are going? After all, at first, it may seem like something completely different, but there is actually a common universal value at the root of it. We don't just need to acknowledge different worlds, but we need to constantly seek for common concepts and people resonate with each other and the world will be a little better.

#### Notes

- (1) David Hume, *David Hume Collection: A Treatise of Human Nature, An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, and Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, (Independently published/Amazon.co.jp, 2020), p.39.
- (2) Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phänomenologie*

*des Geistes*, (Nikol Verlagsges. mbH, 2021), pp.535-536.

- (3) Hegel also published other important books, such as *Wissenschaft der Logik (Science of Logic)* between 1812-1816, and *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts (The Outline of the Philosophy of Right)* in 1821, etc.
- (4) Friedrich Nietzsche, *Also sprach Zarathustra*, (Insel Klassik, 2011), p.315.
- (5) *Ibid.*, p.96.
- (6) Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'existentialisme est un humanisme*, (Gallimard, 1996), p.26.
- (7) *Ibid.*, p.77.

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