

## *Foreword*

The present volume of collected papers is the product of an international academic project which aims at successive development of the late Dr. Izutsu's philosophic inquiries into the structural relationship between consciousness and reality. Dr. Izutsu had been in pursuit of this inquiry for a long time through the fields of Islamic studies, as well as philosophy of language and comparative philosophy. Both overseas and Japanese scholars who had enjoyed academic relations with the late professor Izutsu joined this project and submitted papers with subjects related to Dr. Izutsu's theme for the present volume. Together they have produced this international academic collaboration which has great importance for future actualization of "real dialogue" among various cultural traditions.

As I shall state in my paper which is submitted below, professor Izutsu's outstanding ability allowed him to master more than twenty foreign languages, and after that he investigated various cultures of the world and elucidated especially the substance of the religious and philosophical systems of many peoples by making free use of these languages. In the present day when learning tends to be increasingly specialized, it is certainly surprising that the sphere of his research activities is so extensive that it contains within it the principal cultures of the world.

The sphere of professor Izutsu's research activities is so extensive as to be unimaginable, stretching, for example, from Ancient Greek philosophy and the philosophy of the Western Middle Ages to Islamic mysticism of Arabia and Persia, Jewish philosophy, Indian philoso-

phy, Chinese thought of Confucianism and Taoism, to the philosophy of Zen. However, the true genius of his research activities does not consist only in the extensiveness of his work. Instead, whatever of these diverse domains he may have chosen as his object of investigation, he pursued at all times the problem under the basic theme of the relationship between philosophical thinking and mysticism, which arises from an awareness of the problem of contemplative experience lying concealed in the depths of philosophical thinking. And this theme did neither occur accidentally, nor was it discovered as the result of mere theoretical research. It was uncovered through the contemplative experience of Zen training, which he had practiced since the days of his youth, and at the same time through many years' efforts of his strict philosophical thinking.

And it should not perhaps be ignored that in the heart of the whole matter there lies a unique philosophical stance of his own, the Oriental "metaphysics of language" as a hidden methodology.

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