

# Mutō Kazuo's Theology of Religions

## — An Introduction<sup>(1)</sup>

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Mutō Kazuo's Theology of Religions (Repp)

Professor Mutō Kazuo's theology of religions deserves considerable attention for a number of reasons. First of all, it represents a rather unique position in the Japanese Christian academic world which during the 20th cen. was dominated by Barthian theology.<sup>(2)</sup> His position is characteristically different from their Christological overemphasis within the system of theology. This means not only a neglect of creation theology or natural theology, but implies also a negative attitude towards the indigenous religious traditions of Japan. Second, Mutō's theology of religions also deserves attention because it informs about his own peculiar religious, theological and philosophical position, namely that of a Christian student of philosophy and eventually that of fully recognized Christian member (i.e., also teacher) of the predominantly Buddhist Kyoto School of Philosophy.

Still, our approach may be problematic because of the important question: Is "theology of religions"<sup>(3)</sup> really an appropriate subject for a philosopher so that in the end, we would receive the wrong answer for a mistaken question?! Once when I asked Professor Mutō how he would describe his peculiar place within the Kyoto School's philosophy, he replied: *Kyoto gakuha-teki na shingaku-sha de aru,*<sup>(4)</sup> which may be rendered literally as a "Kyoto-School-philosophical theologian". The reverse combination of the two disciplines as

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“theological philosophy of religion” is also adequate for characterizing his position, as the title of his three volumes *Shingaku-teki — shūkyō-tetsugaku-teki ronshū* (Collected articles on theology and philosophy of religion. 1980; 1986; 1993) indicates.<sup>6)</sup> The formulation of such a title is highly significant for his Japanese-Christian philosophy of religion.

Just as in case of theology and philosophy, Mutō very often dealt consciously with tensions in his whole academic work. One reason for such peculiarity is, of course, his position at university that he taught “Christian Studies” as a philosopher of religion at a state university, and not theology at a Christian university. This chair at Kyoto University<sup>6)</sup> required solid philosophical and theological clarifications. But he dealt with this and other tensions also because they personally concerned him deeply. Therefore, many titles of his publications connect different, antagonistic or even contradicting matters. In order to relate them to each other, initially he used the simple conjunction “and” (*to*).<sup>7)</sup> Since the early 1960’s he also coined the term “(in) between” (*[to no] aida*) for his position in between philosophy and theology, as in his *Shingaku to shūkyō-tetsugaku to no aida* (Between theology and philosophy of religion. 1961).<sup>8)</sup> He also applied dialectics as well as methodological models from the Kyoto School, such as the “inverse correspondence” (*gyaku taiō*). In general, his discourses move forward in such “energy fields” of antagonisms or contradictions in order to eventually achieve solutions which maintain tensions while preventing them from falling apart.

Quite early, already he characterized his work as “apologetics”,<sup>9)</sup> thereby positioning himself into the proximity of this early church

tradition and, as his later research showed, also into that of Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard and Tillich.<sup>(10)</sup> Thereby he marked also his distinction to the theological trends of this time. But this thinking within the energy field of tensions is not only characteristic of Mutō's academic work, it also signifies an important personal trait. Already at a young age, he had the inclination and courage to venture into new cognitive realms. When he was a high school student, he read Marx secretly which was strictly prohibited at that time.<sup>(11)</sup> When he studied politics at Tokyo Imperial University, he chose a professor who criticized the imperialist and military politics as well as nationalist philosophy and ideology.<sup>(12)</sup> Eventually, when he studied under a philosopher at Kyoto Imperial University,<sup>(13)</sup> who moved back and forth between Buddhism and Christianity, he liberated himself from a narrow form of Dutch-Reformed faith which had nurtured him in his family from early on.<sup>(14)</sup> In one of his homages to his philosophical teachers, Mutō stated:

"I myself have been led to the Christian faith from my early days on, and at present, I am engaged in the study of Christian thought, something which will undoubtedly be my work till the end of my life. Still, the philosophy of Nishida and Tanabe makes me aware of the narrowness of the theological viewpoint (at least of present-day theology), and has become a constant stimulus to emulate the strict discipline of the philosophical enterprise." (Mutō 2012: 205 f)

First it was the religious "narrowness" which he had inherited in his family, and then it was the "narrowness" of the theology which was the dominating trend during the 20th century, namely the Dialectical Theology of Karl Barth, which also exerted great influence on Japanese theology. What characterizes both, the 19th cen. Dutch-Reformed mission theology as well as Barth's 20th cen. reformed

Dialectical Theology, is their exclusivist stance towards other religions. Hence, Nishida's and Tanabe's philosophies not only deepened Mutō's *Problembewusstsein* of such kind of exclusivist faith and theology, but also became a "constant stimulus" to venture into wider spiritual realms; in other words, they constituted the stimulating challenge with which he struggled all his life. His deep sympathy for Nishitani Keiji, for example, is summarized in the characteristic title "*Ama no jaku*" (Contradictory person; 1992) of his obituary for his close friend and colleague.

We may formulate such "energy field" also in the following way: what is the relationship between Christianity and Buddhism, which each of them claims to constitute an "ultimate concern" for their followers? This situation creates fundamental religious and cognitive conflicts which pose the challenge for "philosophies of religion(s)" as well as for "theologies of religion(s)." As Mutō states:

Whether Christianity is the absolute religion which transcends other religions or even religion itself,<sup>(15)</sup> or whether Christianity remains as one among other major world religions, such as Buddhism or Islam, and thereby is not able to avoid being relative, is the crucial problem. This problem was once raised by the school of religious history (*Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*) in Germany and thereafter has always been an unavoidable question in the fields of history of religion, systematic theology and philosophy of religion. At the present time, the whole problem is becoming more and more important, requiring new thought and reflection. (Mutō 2012: 70)

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In this study, we shall see that Mutō launched several attempts to solve such conflicts which we shall trace here. Before embarking on this path, we first have to consider briefly his pre-understanding (*Vorverständnis*) in order to get a better grasp of our subject.

## Pre-understanding: Western Christianity vs. Japanese culture

At the very beginning, we have to consider the basic precondition of Mutō's discourse, namely his self-consciousness of being a *Japanese* Christian, who has to face the "problem of the relationship between Christianity and other religions" on the basis of his own culture. As he writes:

For Christians, especially for Japanese Christians, the issue is *not simply a theoretical problem, but is a very practical and existential one*. For the solution of this problem, we Japanese Christians are conditioned by our particular situation. However, having been living under this particular situation, we may be rather privileged to *open new horizons* with the possibility of completing this task, which was impossible before because it could not go *beyond Western perspectives*.<sup>(16)</sup>

In another article, Mutō's (2012: 129–131) ironically characterized Christianity as a "Western world religion"! During the 19th and 20th cen., foreign missionaries had introduced Christianity to Japan not only in its Western forms, but they also followed the principle "gospel *contra* indigenous culture" in their practice. Among Japanese Christians, this caused to certain degrees an estrangement from their traditional culture, or splits between Western religious identity and Japanese cultural or national identity.<sup>(17)</sup> Mutō now drew the connection of this problem with the question of Christianity's relation to other religions in Japan. Since most foreign missionaries pursued a hostile attitude towards Japanese religions<sup>(18)</sup> — which were basic for the formation of Japanese culture —, the problem of Japanese Christians relating to their culture deepens to the question of a necessary revision of their relationship to the religions of their

country.<sup>(19)</sup> Hence, the subject of a “theology of religions” in Japan becomes an utmost existential issue for its Christians, theologians and philosophers, as Mutō clearly states. This existential precondition differs considerably from the approaches of contemporary Westerners to theology of religions since they grew up in a (to a certain degree still) Christian culture and now face immigration and mission by non-Christian religionists. Hence, their challenge is more a social one than an existential quest. Hence, such basically different preconditions produce also very different kinds of discourses about the theology of religions.

In his article “Problems Facing Japanese Christianity Today” (1967) Mutō treated the problem of the relationship between Christianity and other religions from his own Japanese position as follows:

We all recognize that religions such as Shintō and Buddhism have important significance in terms of being the most fundamental spiritual basis and constructive elements of the so-called Japanese traditions. For the purpose of Japanization or indigenization of Christianity, no matter how difficult a task it may be for us today, we Christians cannot just think of them as pagan religions<sup>(20)</sup> which should be confronted by Christianity and viewed impersonally in a cold, objective way. Rather it is necessary for us to understand their religious truths as they relate to our own problems and to accept sincerely the questions raised by them. And having done this, we may regain deeper answers and more existential understanding of the Gospel of Christ. (Mutō 2012: 69 f)

This very existential basis of Mutō’s theology of religions also indicates his strong inclination to, and emphasis of, interreligious dialogue, as we shall see below.

During his professional career, he used different models of theology for religions to interrelate Christianity and other religions which show

his continuous struggle with this topic. On the one hand, he took up theological terms traditionally applied in this discourse, such as “natural” and “revealed theology”, or the more recent expressions “general” and special revelation”. Then he introduced Kierkegaard’s model “religiosity A” and “B” into the contemporary discussion, probably for the first time. Further, on the basis of Emil Brunner’s expression “religionism” he coined the term “theologism” as its correlate in order to discuss our problem. Finally, he ventured into the realms of pneumatology and trinitarian theology in order to find solutions for this challenge.

### 1. “Natural Theology” and “Theology of Revelation”

Based on Biblical and Patristic sources, Scholastic Theologians developed the so-called “natural theology” in order to designate the teaching that human beings possess a natural knowledge of God because they are his creation. This they distinguish from contingent revelations which had occurred to Moses or through Jesus Christ. Luther had severely criticized the natural theology altogether with Scholastic Theology. Referring to such criticism, Mutō states in his article “‘Immanent Transcendence’ in Religion”:

Leaving aside the question whether Luther’s view is adequate or not; in fact, it is for us modern people a very important problem whether Paul affirms or negates natural theology. Although it is a simplified statement, one can say that in general Catholic theology leans toward the affirmation of natural theology, while Protestant theology tends toward its negation. I cannot enter here into a discussion of this problem, but shall mention only my conclusion that natural theology must have the meaning of being affirmed through the mediation of its negation. (Mutō 2012: 122)

By treating Luther’s negation of natural theology in a dialectical way, Mutō tries to overcome the contradiction between affirmation and

negation by arguing philosophically as follows:

Since Luther could not have affirmed “natural theology” in an unmediated way, the statement that his concept of the “hidden God” is determined by natural theology can only mean that “natural theology” — while being mediated through the *negation* by “revelation theology” as theology of the cross — is still preserved inside that theology of the cross as sublated moment; and that as an ever *remaining moment* (*bleibendes Moment*) it is never simply obliterated, but is alive as effective power. And this is not different from the fact that Luther’s concept of the “hidden God” signifies the limit of theological cognition (*ninshiki*) of God and, at the same time, also its eschatological limit (Althaus). (Mutō 2012: 122)

As mentioned above, for Mutō as a Japanese Christian, the critical attitude of Christianity towards other religions must be supplemented, at the same time, by a fundamentally positive stance.

## 2. “General” and “Special Revelation”

In his article “A New Possibility for a Philosophy of Religion” (1970/71) Mutō struggles with the radical criticism of the philosophy of religion by the Dialectical Theology which exerted considerable influence in Japan. By that time, Protestant theologians had replaced the Scholastic term “natural theology” by the notion of “general revelation”, which now was supplemented by its correlate “special revelation”. Such new terminology derives from the abstractions and generalizations typical for the Enlightenment Philosophy and Idealism.<sup>(21)</sup> He writes:

... “general revelation” (*allgemeine Offenbarung*) or “original revelation” (*Uroffenbarung*),<sup>(22)</sup> as set over against special revelation, ought not to be presupposed (particularly in the case of [Karl] Barth). Nevertheless, we can find the location of true religiosity not within religiosity as a positive “possession” (*Besitz*), but rather as a negative “need” (*Bedarf*). This religiosity obviously is at work in the midst of “anxiety” (*fuan, inquietatio, Unruhe, Angst*), as in the case of Augustine’s prayer “You created us towards yourself. Our soul is restless until it rests in you!” Here we can detect the *contact point of inverse correspondence*



(*gyakutaiō-teki setten*) between ultimate human and ultimate theological concerns. From an anthropological perspective, if one wants to call this point of contact a 'natural human predisposition' (*Naturanlage des Menschen*), then it must be a natural predisposition as a complete negation of itself.<sup>(23)</sup>

By referring to the famous saying of St. Augustine, Mutō suggests to basically affirm the negative contents of the general revelation as being instrumental to lead towards receiving the special revelation. Whereas in the previous section he had used dialectics to clarify the relationship between the polar elements, here he applied Nishida's logical figure of "inverse correspondence" for this purpose.

### 3. "Religionism" und "Theologism"

In the same article, "A New Possibility for a Philosophy of Religion," Mutō used additionally to the previously mentioned pairs of terms the rather unusual expressions "religionism" und "theologism". The word "religionism" had been applied by Emil Brunner in order to categorize the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* of the late 19th and early 20th cen., the main adversary of the Dialectical Theology. Its representatives researched the Old and New Testament in the light of the historical context of surrounding religions and thereby relativized claims for the superiority of the Bible. Mutō now took up Brunner's term, but supplemented it with his own expression "theologism,"<sup>(24)</sup> thereby denoting, and relativizing, the Dialectical Theology for its denial of the validity of other religions and for its absolutistic claim of Christian faith versus "religion". He states:

... the ebb of philosophy of religion after Dialectical Theology and Barth's theology can be said, in a simple way, to be caused by this theology's reaction against "religionism" (*Religionismus*). In Emil Brunner's words, the theology of the Word of God must be the "critical sublation of any religionism" (*kritische Aufhebung alles Religionismus*).<sup>(25)</sup> Thus, we can say that the main tradition of

philosophy of religion since Schleiermacher, together with the science of religion (*Religionswissenschaft*) and philosophy of religion (*Religionsphilosophie*) based on Troeltsch's historicism, came to be radically criticized. (Mutō 2012: 94 f)

In 1988, Mutō dedicated a whole article to this model titled "Theologism and Religionism". Also here he attempts to solve the problem through a dialectical way of arguing as follows:

If it is true that one cannot be a Christian if one does not listen faithfully to the "word of the cross" of which Apostle Paul speaks (I Cor. 1: 18) and does not confess that "there is salvation in no one else" than in Jesus Christ (ActS. 4: 12), we have to become adherents of Barthian *theologism*. Barth himself, for instance made the extreme statement that "religion is unbelief,"<sup>(26)</sup> and Emil Brunner said, for example, that the "revelation in Christ stands outside the history of religion,"<sup>(27)</sup> and that the "theology of the Word of God is the critical sublation of any *religionism*" (...).<sup>(28)</sup> ... However this may be, I think that the antagonism between theologism and religionism, as construed by the Dialectical Theology, must be sublated in one way or another. As already said, on one hand, we must steadfastly preserve the truth or truth moments in Barthian theologism as far as it is supported by the Bible but, at the same time, based on the recognition of the present-day plurality of religions we have to accept the truth moment of religionism. (Mutō 2012: 74 f)

By relativizing the conflicting truth-claims into "truth-moments", the contradiction between theologism and religionism becomes solvable. With the next model Mutō envisages a similar mediation in order to tackle our problem.

#### 4. Kierkegaard's "Religiosity A" und "Religiosity B"

九五 In articles such as "Theologism and Religionism" and "A New Possibility for a Philosophy of Religion," Mutō introduced a model derived from Kierkegaard's terms "religiosity A" und "religiosity B" in order to solve the problem of the theology of religions.<sup>(29)</sup> "Religiosity A" denotes a general religiosity to be found in all religions (including

Christendom), and “religiosity B” signifies the specific, paradoxical Christian faith in Jesus Christ. First, Mutō formulates the following choice:

If one radicalizes the chasm aspect of the relationship between ‘religiosity A’ and ‘religiosity B,’ one would probably arrive at the Barthian theologism. On the other hand, when the organic, mutual relationship between the two is affirmed, it becomes possible to consider ‘religiosity A’ (general religiosity) as indispensable precondition, preliminary stage, or (to use Bultmann’s term) the “pre-understanding” (*Vorverständnis*) of ‘religiosity B’ (Christian faith). (Mutō 2012: 87)

Mutō proceeds to bridge the gap between Christianity and other religions also through another methodological procedure:

As already mentioned, on the one hand, the fact that ‘B’ negatively breaks through ‘A’ has to be maintained. On the other hand, as also Eduard Geismar says, it cannot be denied that there is an inner organic bond (...) between ‘A’ and ‘B.’<sup>(30)</sup> If we regard all existing religions (*positive Religionen*), including Christianity, as having the character of ‘B’, the main trend of the nineteenth-century philosophy of religions was to reduce all religions having the character ‘B’ to ‘A’, or to base them upon ‘A’.<sup>(31)</sup>

On the one hand, Mutō introduces here a philosophical differentiation which categorizes also non-Christian religions as specific “religiosities B”, and on the other hand, he argues, if all the other religions may be generalized as “religiosity A”, there is no sufficient reason to exclude Christianity from such treatment. Thereby the simple contradiction between the “unique” Christian faith and other religions is methodologically dissolved, and a positive relation of Christianity to other religions facilitated. By arguing in such a way, Mutō counters both at the same time, the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* with its tendency to dissolve Christianity into the general history of religion, and the Dialectical Theology claiming Christian “absoluteness”. As he explains:

Rather than lumping non-Christian religions together in a general study of the

history of religion (*allgemeine Religionsgeschichte*) or categorizing them all as 'religiosity A,' not only Christianity, but also Buddhism, for instance, has to be recognized as religion B. In the case that Christianity as 'B' encounters other religions as "thou," these religions rise as bearing the same 'B'-character as Christianity. In such a case, probably each of the religions can appear as B1, B2, B3, etc. (Mutō 2012: 104)

By treating all religions equally as "positive religions" it becomes necessary for Mutō to respect them as subjects in their own rights, which means, as a "thou". Consequently, this implies to engage in dialogue with other religions. We shall return to this topic later again.

### 5. Pneumatological or Trinitarian Theology of Religions

In his "Theologism and Religionism" Mutō considers Karl Rahner's approach to be a solution for the challenge of the theology of religions since his "position is neither exclusive theologism nor a direct, unmediated affirmation of religionism." (Mutō 2012: 75) Instead, Rahner deliberates "religion as being mediated by Christian pneumatology." Without going here into detail, Mutō states briefly "that in Rahner's thought can be found a strong lead for the overcoming of the antagonism of theologism and religionism, and that I am deeply impressed and stimulated by the idea that this overcoming is most probably based on its pneumatological viewpoint." (Ibid.)

Whereas a Christological approach leads to religious exclusivism and that of creation theology to religious inclusivism or pluralism, a pneumatological access could strike a proper balance between the two. In his "Watch Your Step" (1984) Mutō himself developed such a pneumatological theology of religions by stating:

Paul himself wrote: ... "I have become all things to all men." (I Cor. 9: 22) And this, he said, was for the sake of preaching the Gospel as widely as possible. It is clear at least for Paul, the apostle of the gentiles, that the *ecclesia* (church) was

not the closed and self-satisfied community of a new chosen people. (Mutō 2012: 177)

By referring to ActS. 17, Mutō continued to write:

It seems that Paul (or Luke) perceived in the religiosity of the Athenians, who worshipped the “unknown god” (the hidden God), the working of the “Holy Spirit,” and thereby tried to detect something that would connect their religiosity with the Christian faith. The fact that this sermon on the Areopagos was not convincing to many Athenians in the audience, as the end of chapter 17 shows, does not do away with this. If such understanding is possible, could we not perceive in Paul the figure of a theologian, who certainly practiced kerygmatic theology to the full, but nevertheless wanted to work as an “apologetic theologian” at the same time? In fact, it can be considered that without containing such apologetic-theological motive, Paul’s mission to the gentiles of nearly the whole Mediterranean region would not have been so successful. (Mutō 2012: 178)

Here, Mutō takes “apologetics” up again which he had treated already in “The Place and Task of Apologetics in Theology” (1959). He continues to elaborate:

While “apologetic theology” bases itself firmly on the truth of salvation proper to the “field of theology,” it attempts to *immanently transcend* this field and to stand also outside this field. Seen from the perspective of a topological logic of the Holy Spirit, it can be said to detect its own standpoint, by emptying itself, in the place where the Holy Spirit is omnipresent. The Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ, as the “one Spirit,” are called the Holy Spirit (...), because the former is immanent in the latter. However, as said before, if the “Spirit of Christ” is entirely understood in a *Christological-ecclesiological* way, that is *within the limits of a kerygmatic theological comprehension*, it can harbor a kind of closure that never allows it to be a truly open space. Such closure must be immanently transcended — which then implies an immanent transcendence of the theological field.<sup>62)</sup>

Since the Holy Spirit constitutes the common bond between Christ and God, pneumatology overcomes possible contradictions between the specific faith in Jesus Christ and the general belief in God’s universal creation while preserving their tension at the same time. Hence, we may conclude here that Mutō’s pneumatological theology

of religions, in fact, turns out to be a trinitarian theology. This is of utmost significance.

Moreover, behind Mutō's scholarly discourse we have to see also his personal aversion against any narrow and closed theological positions, as mentioned in the beginning. This is obvious also in his subsequent reference to the young Schleiermacher's *Speeches about Religion* where he does not consider "the holy scriptures (...) or the Bible as a 'closed codex of religion' (...). For, he argues, we should *not impose any limits on the free flight of the Holy Spirit*."<sup>33</sup> Since here is no sufficient space to introduce Mutō's more detailed treatment of Schleiermacher's theology of religion according to his *Speeches* and his *Christian Faith*, the reader is referred to his article "Theologism and Religionism."<sup>34</sup>

## Some Conclusions

Mutō dealt with the problem of the relationship between Christianity and other religions throughout his professional career, and hereby he applied a variety of terms and methods in his treatises. Thus, we may conclude that "theology of religions" played a crucial role in his philosophy of religion, even though he did not use that term. Moreover, we observed that this subject posed an utmost *religio-existential challenge* for him as a Japanese Christian. In comparison, Western theologians during the era of the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* around 1900 responded *intellectually* to the relativization of Christianity through the studies of the history of religions. This challenge then was pushed into the background by the Barthian

theology during most of the 20th cen.<sup>(35)</sup> During its last decades, however, large scale immigration of different peoples and religions in Western countries forced theologians to react in one way or another. Some developed theologies of religions only in response to the *social* problems caused by a sudden religious pluralization. There were also a number of theologians who attempted to tackle the challenges practically through interreligious dialogue; however, since this is a completely new endeavor, it rather follows the most elementary mode of learning through “trial and error.”

Compared with such theological and, *in parallel*, practical attempts, Mutō's approach constitutes an intrinsic interaction between his theoretical deliberations and his practice of dialogue.<sup>(36)</sup> This dynamic field is kept together by the mediation of his ultimate religio-existential concern. Here we may discern a significant difference with those Western theologians who were mainly motivated by new academic or social challenges. Mutō was engaged in a lifelong continuous interreligious communication with his teachers, colleagues and students of Buddhist and other religious commitments. His peculiar combination of the theoretical and practical, the abstract and the concrete, the philosophical or theological and ethical, consistently appears throughout his work and seems to be very characteristic of him, as can be seen most impressively in his master work “Christianity and the Notion of Nothingness.”

#### Notes

- (1) This article is a shortened and considerably revised version of a chapter in my book *Der eine Gott und die anderen Götter. Eine historische und*

*systematische Einführung in Religionstheologien der Ökumene.* Leipzig 2018: 357–377.

- (2) Hatano Sei'ichi and Ariga Tetsutaro also belong to this “minority”.
- (3) For an overview of the emergence and formation of this term, see Repp. 2018: 23–40.
- (4) See my reminiscences “Shinikata — ikikata. Mutō Sensei no omoide” in *Naki ga gotoku ni arite iku — Mutō Kazuo sensei go-fūfu tsuoku bunshū* (Living as if not being — Anthology of reminiscences of Prof. Mutō and his spouse), published by Mutō Kazuo sensei go-fūfu tsuoku bunshū henshū i'in-kai, Kyoto (private print) 2000: 251.
- (5) See also his article *Shingaku-teki shūkyō-tetsugaku ni tsuite* (1983). For this and other titles mentioned in this study, see the bibliography in Mutō Kazuo, *Christianity and the Notion of Nothingness*. Ed. by Martin Repp and transl. by Jan Van Bragt. Leiden 2012: 211–220. In Vol. I (p. 2 f) of his collected articles he explains that he had taken over the terms “theological” and “philosophical philosophy of religion from Kan Enkichi (1895–1972), however Mutō (2012: 96) was critical of his Barthian theology.
- (6) See my preliminary overview in Mutō 2012: 9–17. Still, this important Chair for Christian Studies and their professors urgently need proper and extensive research to be published.
- (7) See titles in the years. 1942, 1948, 1950, etc. in Mutō's (2012) bibliography.
- (8) 1961. Cf. “*Shūkyō to dōtoku no aida*” (Between religion and morality. 1964). For more titles see his Mutō's (2012) bibliography.
- (9) “The Place and Task of Apologetics in Theology” (1959). Mutō (2012: 178) referred to it later as well.
- (10) Tillich understood his work from early on as “apologetics”.
- (11) See my reminiscences “Shinikata — ikikata. Mutō Sensei no omoide” in *Naki ga gotoku ni arite iku*. 2000: 252.
- (12) 1934–1937 he studied political science at the Faculty of Law under Professor Nanbara Shigeru (1889–1974), an expert in the history of political science as well as political philosophy.
- (13) 1938–1941 he studied philosophy under Professor Tanabe Hajime (1885–1962) in the Faculty of Letters at Kyoto Imperial University.
- (14) Mutō's grandfather from his mother's side belonged to the first generation of Japanese who had converted to Christianity already during the early Meiji Period (1868–1912).
- (15) He refers to Karl Barth und the Dialectical School.
- (16) Mutō 2012: 70; italics marked by author.
- (17) This differed fundamentally from the early Jesuit mission to Japan during



- the 16th and early 17th cen., because the civilizational gap with Europe was not as huge as in the 19th cen.
- (18) Among the few exceptions were the German speaking "Allgemeiner Evangelisch-Protestantischer Missionsverein" (later "Ostasien Mission") and the Scandinavian "Mission to Buddhists".
  - (19) This confirms the principle that (inter)cultural communication constitutes the basis for interreligious communication. Cf. Repp. 2018: 396 f.
  - (20) Hans Haas, a missionary in Meiji-Japan and later professor for the History of Religion in Leipzig, criticized already hundred years ago the use of "heathen" and "paganism" in mission as well as in contemporary scholarship. *Ostasien-Jahrbuch. Jahresbericht des AEPM*. Berlin 1921: 100-102.
  - (21) Cf. Repp. 2018: 23-34. One reason for this change was the rejection of "supra-naturalism".
  - (22) The Lutheran theologian Paul Althaus had substituted the term "general revelation" through "original revelation".
  - (23) Mutō 2012: 107; italics marked by author of this article.
  - (24) During our translation work of his book in English, I had suggested to Mutō to replace these unusual terms through "religious pluralism" and "religious exclusivism" which had become the popular expressions in the 1990s. However, since he did not agree with such a revision, his longstanding critical *Auseinandersetzung* with the Dialectical Theology remains clearly documented.
  - (25) Cf. Emil Brunner, *Die Mystik und das Wort*. Tübingen 2nd ed. 1928: 192.
  - (26) Karl Barth, *Kirchliche Dogmatik* Bd. 1/2. Zollikon-Zürich 5th ed. 1960: 324-356.
  - (27) Emil Brunner, *Religionsphilosophie evangelischer Theologie*. München 2nd ed. 1948: 66.
  - (28) Brunner, *Die Mystik und das Wort*, 192.
  - (29) See *Unwissenschaftliche Nachschrift* Ch. IV Section 2 B.
  - (30) Geismar, *Sören Kierkegaard*. Göttingen 1929: 319.
  - (31) Mutō 2012: 95; cf. *Shingaku to shukyo-tetsugaku to no aida* Vol I: 130-132.
  - (32) Mutō 2012: 178. For the expression "immanent transcendence", see Mutō 2012: 111-127.
  - (33) Mutō 2012: 76; cf. Friedrich E. Daniel Schleiermacher, *Werke. Auswahl in vier Bänden*. Bd. IV. Edited by Otto Braun and Johannes Bauer. Aalen 1967: 305.
  - (34) See Mutō 2012: 76-85.
  - (35) One of the very few theologians who consistently held against this

predominant trend, was Prof. Dr. Carl Heinz Ratschow (1911–1999), who was also an expert of religious studies and of philosophy of religion. He founded the *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* and edited (with Paul Althaus) the *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* for many years. His research of Luther, Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, etc. as well as his friendship with Tillich also show the proximity with Mutō and other professors of the Chair for Christian Studies at Kyoto University.

(36) See also his “*Kirisuto-kyō to bukkyō to no taiwa no kanō honkyō ni tsuite*” (On the possible basis for dialogue between Christianity and Buddhism). 1978. For the connection between dialogue and theology of religions see Repp. 2018: 391–394.