

the idea is itself the product of synthesizing. It must be, therefore, confirmed by practices. On the contrary, human practices are restrained socially and historically, and in class society restrained by class identity. The unity of the practices of proletariat and those of bourgeois is impossible."³⁸⁾

We find here the admirable fact that the directing idea (or the cause for recognition) as the essence of the recognizing subject's practice is denied (by labeling it as socio-morphism or dogmatic historical materialism); practices are seen as mediators between objective truth and mind, and their comprehensiveness is deliberated. What does it mean if one argues about the difference between one-sided mediating practice and comprehensive mediating practice not as a difference of the social-historical stage but as a difference of class in a certain social-historical stage? It means that the foundation of recognition is not the realistic practice-in-presence, human practice developing in the interrelations of classes, a whole sensuous world that is the product of such human practice, but the restricted human practice of a limited number of classes that nurture the future, highly-developed productive power; the future reality that is "wider" than that of today (i.e., not realistic) is the cause of recognition. We could say that the practices of proletariat are the foundation of the whole recognition, when the proletariat has reformed all the historical products of human activities, but then there would be no proletariat as a class. This observation reveals the essence of the practicing, recognizing subject, the historical-social realistic class and party as recognizing subject: the abstract, a priori, ideal presentation of some social being that is the cause of recognition or the subjective consciousness that grasps human practices as objective reality and makes itself the restricted foundation of recognition. However, this conception is contradictory to the realistic process of recognition: the objects of recognition stand directly before human consciousness as those of all human practices, and consciousness reaches them only through proper judgment and inference. The believers in "subject of recognition through practice" want, however, class and party oriented practices to work on objective products in order to grasp them. Although each class develops as a product of historical human practices and the whole products of human practice stand before human thought, they do not acknowledge the fact.

Mr. Nagata, Mr. Hunayama, and others want to add "the practices of the recognizing subject" in order to comprehend properly the objective world. These are the practices which belong to the recognizing subject but not to the objects of thought; the "social self" has objects but does not grasp itself in the objective (whole sensuous) world. This self is only the assumption of inference or the cause of recognition of directly given objects; it is the already acquired product of thought, which is the major premise for new knowledge by new experience, the minor premise. A practicing human being, who is social and historical, must be translated into thought as a recognizing subject in the recognition process. Because of this translation, however, this being would be a true or untrue reflection of acquired social reality, which is idealized in thought. This picture, which is reproduced by will, desire,

38) *Yuibutsuron Kenkyu* [Studies in Materialism], No. 6, p.26.

taste, and so on, is the imagination or the dogmatic idea that the recognizing subject has of non-objective and fictitious reality; or it indicates that practice, which should be the object of recognition, builds consciousness from the subject. In these ways, ideas lead to the recognition of objective reality in the reactionary preoccupation of the "practical copy theory of knowledge."

I would like to argue against the charge that "Mr. Kato has never understood the significance of practice in epistemology." I have never denied the significance of practice in recognition but only the significance of "practice in the recognizing subject." My critics conceive practice as the recognizing subject and equate it with biased ideas of consciousness (or the practicality of ideology), or they comprehend practice as the validation of recognition, which only admits the practice of the verifier. This view means that validation is not performed through real objective activity but as the task of a future recognizing subject. In reality, the validation is performed by the "social self" or "party-oriented subject." I have tried to extinguish such practice from epistemology, since it is not realistic but imaginary. When nature and historical practice are grasped realistically and objectively, only pure thought is left for philosophical science. The true nature of theoretical recognition is to take objective realities from relations as from all human practice; every nation, class, group, and individual present them in pure thought (pure "elements" of thought). This theoretical thought begins with eliminating mental enthusiasms that prevent objective realities from corresponding to those relations. It develops in accordance with the realistic practices of human beings. This is Engels' viewpoint. Kiyoshi Miki once exclaimed, "what a naturalism!" and criticized Engels' statement about the end of philosophy, but those who do not understand the meaning of theoretical thought do not understand him. Because they do not conceive of practice objectively, they see it as an idealistic abstract reflection, that is, "philosophically"; thus, "philosophy" as "consciousness" controls the recognizing subject.

Mr. Yamagishi says something very odd about this theoretical thought. He remarks, "According to Mr. Kato, the most important task of scientists is to achieve a mastery of the materialistic dialectic and the development of all scientific studies from it."³⁹⁾ He must be joking. Why does Mr. Yamagishi view theoretical thought as completed truth, since it has been building itself with the development of human history? If we can use scientific theory as a certain historical product, why do we not begin our study of science with the use of the product? In affirming that "recognition begins with practice, develops through practice, and is verified in practice," Mr. Yamagishi mentions one class and faction as the recognizing subject and disregards the whole practice of the human being. Furthermore, he grasps it not objectively or in its historical and social restriction, but as completely general "practice" so as to confer onto it a high (or low) value of ideality. Mr. Yamagishi thinks, therefore, that recognition by practice as a criterion should be "led" by ideality in such "practice" and that scientific studies should not begin with the facts given directly by real practices, but with the idea of "general and inevitable practices." My point is that to make practices that are, in reality, restricted and denied,

39) *Yuibutsuron Kenkyu* [Studies in Materialism], No. 24, p.206.

totalized (Mr. Nagata), or generalized (Mr. Yamagishi) the ideality of recognition produces a truth that is independent of reality and self-sufficient. It is this ideality that these persons esteem as the cause of dialectic epistemology or materialistic dialectic. Mr. Yamagishi could be a lover of prose poetry: he would like to place his own defects on someone else to hide them.

I am the last person to think that dialectic materialism is the completed truth. My point is that the whole practice of the human being or of direct realistic objects are grasped in theoretical thought (or pure thought) and held in order to reach or develop dialectic materialism. I just do not accept the idea that “practices,” which are generalized, totalized, idealized, and turned into the recognizing subject, are moments of materialistic recognition. My critics should make the social being of idealized “practice” attain real “human society,” which is concrete, general, and not self-denying but shaped by objective conditions that are verified in objective social reality. Theoretical thinking is the consciousness that always corresponds to reality, reflects objective practice and its product, and continuously builds itself. This pure thought can be abstractly investigated (for example, in formal logic and dialectic). However, in its realistic form, it is nothing but positive empirical or materialistic science. It is scientific as long as it comprehends objects in their own relations as revealed in practices. Philosophy explores not, as generally affirmed, the general principles of the world as a whole but the form of science or moments of pure thought that are left after the contents of science are removed. It is a science of the principles of thought which thought must follow in grasping actual objectives.

Advocates of the recognizing subject through practices do not grasp objective practices; therefore, they never reach scientific thought and consciousness. As with Mr. Hunayama’s interpretation of the first thesis of Feuerbach, Mr. Nagata’s objects of recognition signify direct objective being that exists outside practices and that is put before the recognizing subject. Mr. Nagata theorizes practices in their abstract, intuitive, and trans-historical forms and describes them as “essentially human activity of this objective world”⁴⁰⁾ or abstract human labor in general. We must, however, draw attention to the fact that this abstraction of practices makes it difficult to distinguish the proletariat from the bourgeoisie. It is the practice of mankind in general. Mr. Nagata evaluates the bourgeois-subject in the labor process as acting one-sidedly and the proletarian-subject as acting totally, which is child’s play in his mind. In reality, the bourgeoisie and proletariat commonly act on objective being not as different subjects but as human society. These two classes are socially split by the historical development of the product of these activities but not in the activities themselves. However hard my critics may emphasize the significance of class- and party-identity in recognition, they talk about the practice of mankind in general (the labor process as “independent of all forms of human living”), as long as they conceive of practice as act of objective being. They only obtain future reality or present ideality, the “human” in intuitive materialistic meaning, by making some class practice or party-oriented practice universal and general. This approach is not different from that of Kiyoshi Miki, who once called the

40) *Yuibutsuron Kenkyu* [Studies in Materialism], No. 6, p.27.

human being the have-not who stands in interaction with nature through labor. The present ideality of practice as a reflection of future reality cannot be a criterion of “materialistic” recognition, and so the advocates of “practice as recognizing subject” are inevitably intuitive materialists. Intuitive materialism places the subject that recognizes the object beyond practice and puts it before the object itself as a practicing idealist; thus, it is meaningless to emphasize the intuitive existence of the objective world to such an idealism of practice. Mr. Nagata says, “But those who emphasize the social and the one-sided historical restriction on recognition would make relativists, like advocates of Bogdanov or Miki. We must also acknowledge that recognition is a reflection of the objective world,”⁴¹⁾ and wish to avoid the idealistic elements of the previous “materialistic dialectic.” However, what he says is a silly mixture of “Lukács’ viewpoint” and the “objective being independent of the human”; it reveals that he does not understand the point of materialism and that he is still an intuitive objectivist, who gets caught up in a blend of practicing materialism and intuitive materialism.

The totality of recognition consists not in the ideality of “general and universal practice,” but in real human activities as a whole. Only pure thought that objectively grasps all human activities and their products and the total sensuous world as they are (i.e., empirical and positive science) can reach the standpoint of totality of recognition. This type of science is not restricted by any practicing subject; on the contrary, it grasps the practicing subject in reality. This scientific recognition has the historical restrictions of human practices as realistic restrictions.

The advocates of the recognizing subject in practice are not concerned with the human recognition process at all and grasp the practicing subject not as an historical being with objective (sensuous) activities, but as idealistically and abstractly (the first thesis, the second sentence). The view is especially clear in Mr. Nagata’s *Rekishi ni okeru Shukanteki Joken no Igi* [*The Significance of Subjective Conditions in History*].⁴²⁾ Mr. Nagata refuses the objective explanation of history; accepts Lukacs’ view, which sees subjective practices as a specific dialectic; and cites Lenin when emphasizing the dialectic side of materialistic historiography: “Materialism includes, so to speak, party-identity, requires openly to take the standpoint of a certain social group to evaluate all events and things.”⁴³⁾ Mr. Nagata does not think that “taking the standpoint” of some social group is a problem of practice or of participating in the practice of some group; rather, it is a problem of epistemology or “judging from the standpoint of ‘some group.’” However, a standpoint does not mean a perspective for recognition. It is a practical foundation. Lenin remarks that the “Materialist is an objectivist, and he develops objectivism seriously and completely to grasp not only intuition of history but also objective activities. He finds the social groups which make the process inevitable, and decides his own standpoint by that.”⁴⁴⁾ A materialist is not an objectivist who restricts himself to intuitiveness; rather, he is a

41) *Yuibutsuron Kenkyu* [*Studies in Materialism*], No. 6, p. 27.

42) *Yuibutsuron Kenkyu* [*Studies in Materialism*], No. 26.

43) *Yuibutsuron Kenkyu* [*Studies in Materialism*], No. 26, p. 15.

“radical” objectivist who grasps practice objectively, as a process outside of the consciousness of recognition. Epistemologically, such a radical materialist finds or is obliged to find his standpoint or practical foundation in a social group that is discovered thorough objective comprehension.

Mr. Nagata reads the above quotation of Lenin in an opposed manner: “Party-identity includes materialism.” He interprets it to mean that the viewpoint of “a social group determines the (probably materialistic) evaluation of events,” rather than as materialism obligating people to belong to a social group. Materialism which see all events as objective process independent of the recognizing subject, understands human practices objectively in their developed forms (as objective activities)” that is, materialism includes, so to speak, party-identity in itself. We must, therefore, understand that this materialism evaluates events not only from its intuitive and natural-principle side but also evaluates human activities or the mutual relationship of social groups that restrict events, in order for us to be seated in a group and practically criticize events from the practices of this group. We are required to understand the significance of the critic by practices (the fifth sentence). Mr. Nagata makes the “standpoint of some social group” a cause of recognition, which leads recognition and is, therefore, the controlling idea; it calls recognition under evaluation of events dialectic materialism. If Mr. Nagata interprets Lenin’s phrase “party-identity includes materialism,” then how should we comprehend what Lenin wrote before this phrase, that the materialist develops objectivism to grasp human activity objectively and determine his own standpoint by it (in summary)? I would like to leave this work to Mr. Nagayama and Mr. Hunayama (and also Mr. Tetsuo Ishihama⁴⁵⁾) to move on to another theme. We have already understood that the theory of the subject recognizing through practices is actually nothing but the idealization of objective practices and no materialistic theory of recognition.

Section 4

Reviewing the first thesis on Feuerbach, I have reconfirmed that it is Lenin alone that correctly understood Marx and Engels and developed their theories. Those who read “Tactics of the Class Struggle of the Proletariat” in *Karl Marx*⁴⁶⁾ comprehend this point. However, Lenin’s interest was restricted to grasping objective activity (the subjective understanding of the object and the active side as realistic sensuousness) and the significance of practical critical activity; he had no intention of deriving an epistemological conclusion from the thesis. We can, however, draw an epistemological conclusion from it, although the theory of the subject recognizing through practices is, for example, out of the question. This is the standard of practice in epistemology. *Materialism and Empirio-criticism*

44) Cf. The end of the session 2 of this article.

45) *Yuibutsuron Kenkyu* [Studies in Materialism], No. 10, p.99.

46) Lenin, V. I. (1974) Karl Marx. A Brief Biographical Sketch With an Exposition of Marxism, in Lenin, V. I. (1962) *Collected Works*, Vol. 21.

browses this theme, which should be developed further in the future. However, what this book glimpses apparently contradicts the theory of the subject recognizing through practices. The phrase “the criterion of practice, i.e., the course of development of all capitalist countries in the last few decades,”⁴⁷⁾ exemplifies how “the criterion of practice” in Lenin differs from the criterion of “practice of the recognizing subject.” Lenin apparently comprehends practice as objective activity or something outside of subjective consciousness.

To conceive object (reality, sensuousness) subjectively as practice means to see objects as practice, “practice as the foundation of the whole sensuous (objective) world,” or to think “what our practice confirms is the sole, ultimate and objective truth.”⁴⁸⁾ Idealism, which considers objects, reality, sensuousness, and practice only in consciousness, denies reality outside of human (consciousness) or turns it into unrealistic “existence in general” and the “thing-in-itself.” Moreover, the idealists interpret the first sentence of the thesis to correspond to their ideas about reality. Previous intuitive materialism (e.g., naive [common-sense] realism and natural scientific [or naturalistic] materialism) thinks that intuitively grasped objects exist outside of given human practices. Materialistic and empirical-scientific thought that grasps direct sensuous reality as it is, once separated from its own intermediary (the historical practice of human beings as the groundwork of sensuousness), appears as intellectual intuition in rationalistic philosophy. In this way, the world outside us never changes itself and moves for all eternity, and we must perceive it with intuitive intellect. The excellence of comprehending the world depends solely on creativity and the intuition of intellect. In this way, thought is seen as something beyond nature or, at most, in parallel with nature (Spinoza). The spirit of metaphysical rationalism embraces materialism in its view of the grasped product and idealism in its view of intuitive thought. We must bear in mind that when scientific thought tries to grasp objects outside consciousness as it is, it does so by means of practices: it affirms no absolute truth. Mr. Nakajima gave me a good advice about my translation of the *Dialectics of Nature*: “Not only nature itself, but also the change of nature by the human . . .” (vol.1, p. 101 of the Japanese translation). This could be a mistranslation, and I must admit that the following should be corrected: “*Nicht die Natur als solche allein*” should be translated as “not simply nature itself.” There can be no changed nature, if there is no nature itself. Although, in that sense, nature itself can be indirectly the foundation of thought, nature that has been never altered and given to the human senses cannot be the object of recognition and the basis of thought. Natural science has shown the natural history before human beings, that is, the natural existence without human-related elements. We cannot, therefore, confirm the idealism that sees sensuousness and reality only in consciousness, and we cannot talk about the

47) Lenin, V. I. (1962) *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism: Critical Comments on a Reactionary Philosophy*, in Lenin, V. I. (1962) *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, p.143.

48) Lenin, V. I. (1962) *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism: Critical Comments on a Reactionary Philosophy*, in Lenin, V. I. (1962) *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, p.143.

reality of objective being that stands outside of human practices and beyond sensuousness (i.e., absolute truth). Natural being which precedes the human and is superior to the human can be a realistic object of thought, as long as it is a sensuous object of human activity.

On the contrary, we have no reason to deny any kind of being beyond sensuousness. Our practice continuously enlarges our sensuous world and advances elements that do not come from our consciousness. We could imagine beings that would come into this world through the enlargement of our practices but remain beyond our sensuousness. Such beings cannot have any further determination. At this point, the idealism of Hume or Kant, which denies the world outside of sensuousness or sees it as the imperceptible thing-in-itself, places a kind of limitation on natural scientific naïve materialism or rationalism: We should not speak of the world separated from subject and practice. This idealism unfortunately explored the practices of subject as facts of consciousness in ideality and dismissed the real external world, which real practices confirm as existing beyond consciousness or the human being. We can verify the real objects outside of consciousness or outside the human body. However, we cannot argue anything realistic outside of practical human activities. Human thought can recognize only the objects made sensuous by practices. The objects of recognition or the sensuous world as a whole must be recognized as practices, subjectively, or within human activities. These activities mediate "nature as such alone," sensuously to human thought, and confirm realistically and concretely something independent of activities within activities. This side of the world is the real nature outside of society. Human practices have grasped the nature and enriched its determination. When we clear the natural from our sensuous world as a whole and grasp the human elements over the natural elements in the real world, our thought grasps practices objectively, realistically, sensuously, or materialistically. We can separate the natural and the human in the objective world, but both elements make one objective reality in human practices.

When I translated the *Dialectics of Nature* with my valued friend, Yujiro Kako (1905-1937), I inevitably emphasized recognition as the objective reality of nature and society, as I had said above. It is very interesting that Mr. Nakajima had to defend intensely objective natural principles, the reality of nature independent of society, and natural science as the empirical and positive recognition of nature, when the dialectic of nature again recently became an issue. His view this time is consistent and right. I would like to endorse it. As for Mr. Nakajima, he says, in accordance with Mr. Yamagishi, that Kato, who "has never understood the significance of practice in epistemology," "emphasizes self-righteously 'theoretical thought', and blindly defends and generalizes natural scientific materialism."⁴⁹⁾ He separates himself from me and declares that he follows Mr. Hunayama in the interpretation of the first thesis. What does it mean to defend natural scientific materialism blindly? What does it mean to defend it critically?

Those who equate the idealistic grasp of human activity with epistemology declare that Engels'

49) *Yuibutsuron Kenkyu* [Studies in Materialism], No. 29, p.104; No.35, p.59

belief in natural science as empirical and positive science makes the *Dialectics of Nature* superficial. However, both Marx and Engels, as I have explained in the Section 1, take their materialism as an empirical science of nature and history. Actually, those who analyze the development of natural science as empirical natural recognition must agree with Engels that it is the only way to recognize nature and that it needs no philosophical cause to complement, revise, and lead its method of recognition. How most natural scientists themselves understand natural science or how a variety of philosophical schools interpret "critically" natural science is not so important to me. It is much more important for me to reveal the essence of natural scientific recognition and to criticize the philosophy which would like to restrict and instruct natural science from the outside of it. Mr. Nakajima, who has written two articles to defend natural scientific materialism, would restrict it to "the unaware materialistic belief which most of the natural scientists commonly have" but, at the same time, "would not like to defend natural scientific materialism uncritically." What, then, is critical defense? As for Mr. Nakajima, he does not analyze the essence of materialism as natural science but criticizes the materialistic belief mentioned above as intuitive materialism from the stand point of the practical copy theory of knowledge, the practicing subject of recognition, and Mr. Hunayama's interpretation of the first thesis. Students of this school—Mr. Nagata, Mr. Yamagishi, and Mr. Nakajima—do not reveal the logic or dialectic within but outside or above empirical science, since they have not actually analyzed natural and historical empirical science from the stand point of the copy theory. Mr. Nagata contrasts each genre of science with philosophy which treats the general summary of its products or general principles of the world as a whole. Mr. Yamagishi is more ridiculous. He contrasts objective being and its direct individual copy, which has no logic,⁵⁰⁾ with generalizing philosophy, which has logic. However, the logic is in the content of the "practice of the recognizing subject." They suggest that totality (Mr. Nagata) or universality and inevitability (Mr. Yamagishi) have practical party-identity, which "can produce a materialistic dialectic as most universal and correct logic." Such practical logic as the leader of science and cause of recognition must lead to natural science. The "Priority of Methodology," which comes from the beginning of the Showa Era (1926-1989), appears again here in modified form.

In reality, the human being has no other realistic knowledge than the empirical science of nature and history. This science, put simply, takes empirical data into thought. The contents of it are objective being, and its form is the pure or theoretical elements of thought. Former philosophies, especially early modern philosophies, all appear as the reflection of natural science from the theoretical and epistemological standpoints: rationalism, empiricism, transcendentalism, and even the logic of the absolute idea are no exception. Later cultural philosophies have not paid much attention to the rational innovation of these philosophies in their analysis of natural science, have

50) "It leads to failure to argue if concrete knowledge belongs to formal logic or dialectic." (*Yuibutsuron Kenkyu* [Studies in Materialism], No. 24, p.211)