

Department of Philosophy
Dissertation Defense Announcement

THE CONCEPT OF EKSTASIS IN THE MODERN JAPANESE PHILOSOPHY OF NISHITANI KEIJI

Nishitani Keiji's 宗教とは何か (1961) (translated as Religion and Nothingness) is a major work of modern religious philosophy. The first aim of this dissertation is to show that Nishitani's concept of 'ekstasis' bridges 'existentialism' and 'mysticism.' This bridge serves also as a place for dialogue between Christianity and Buddhism, tradition and modernity, and religion and science. The second aim is to develop, in the course of a discussion of 'ekstasis,' a philosophical reading of Religion and Nothingness. Compared to other works by Kyoto School associated writers, such as Nishida and Watsuji, Nishitani's book has been relatively neglected within English-language philosophy. This project aims to defend the philosophical significance of Religion and Nothingness and suggest new paths for further research.

Ben Hoffman is a PhD Candidate at UH Mānoa and an Assistant Researcher at Columbia University / The New York State Psychiatric Institute where he supports research concerning religious and mystical experiences. His interests include ethics, aesthetics, Japanese philosophy, and religion.



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Time: 3:00-5:00pm

Location: Sakamaki Hall, D-302