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### **Summary of Nishida's philosophy in easy English**

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Ms Maximiliane Demmel-Bullock has written a doctoral thesis. A doctoral thesis is a book. This book deals with finding something out.

This is what she wanted to find out:

What has the Japanese man called Kitarô Nishida thought about the pure experience? The pure experience is a name for a special experience.

We will explain later what it is exactly.

Kitarô Nishida lived from 1870 to 1945.

He worked at a university in Japan.

Kitarô Nishida worked as a professor of philosophy at a university. In philosophy, people answer important questions by thinking about them.

In religion, this is different.

In religious systems, people answer important questions by believing in certain things.

1. Kitarô Nishida answered important questions by thinking about them.  
This is why he was a philosopher.
2. Mr Nishida thought a lot about the Pure Experience.  
He also thought about many other things.  
And found out a lot of things.  
However, he said the Pure Experience is the most important thing.  
Therefore, Ms Demmel-Bullock first explains the Pure Experience.  
After this, she describes further thoughts by Kitarô Nishida.  
Because only if we know all important thoughts by Kitarô Nishida, can we understand him correctly.

## **The Pure Experience**

The Pure Experience is a special way of perceiving something.

To perceive something means: To feel something with all your senses.

This is what Pure Experience means:

You only feel something and you don't think about it.

For example:

Somebody eats an ice cream. He feels something sweet and cold in the mouth. He doesn't think: "This is an ice cream." He only concentrates on his feelings.

Normally, philosophy is only about thinking. Pure Experience is not about thinking at all. It's only about feeling.

However, a lot of philosophers say: Pure Experience is a part of philosophy nevertheless.

Some people say: Pure Experience has to do with religion. Because Pure Experience is a part of Zen Buddhism. Zen Buddhism is a religion.

A lot of people in Japan, China and Korea believe in Zen Buddhism. These people often go to temples and meditate there. They often meditate at home too.

They want to get an empty head by meditating. This means: They don't want to think about anything anymore. By doing this, they want to live more intensely. They only want to feel.

Mr Nishida believed in Buddhism too. But he still had a lot of questions.

He wondered: What is reality? What is real in the world and what is only made up? He has found out: By Pure Experience, we human beings can find out what is real in our life.

About this, he wrote a book. The book's title is: An Inquiry into the Good or a Study about the Good. Nishida became famous through the book.

### The first part of the Pure Experience

The Pure Experience consists of two parts.

In the first part, it is about the right way of perceiving things and the right way of feeling things.

This is how we should feel:

An example:

When we wash the dishes, we should feel the water and the crockery at our hands.

We should not think: I am washing the dishes.

We should not think either:

I am washing the dishes well. I am washing the dishes badly.

We should not think of other things either.

Then there are too many thoughts in my head.

This is how we can get stressed.

We should not think of anything and just feel.

Then we can enjoy life better.

Then we can also work better.

Mr Nishida said:

Nobody should only feel.

Sometimes we must think too.

For example, when we think what we should buy at the supermarket.

Or when we think about something we have read.

However, most time we should only feel.

### The second part of the Pure Experience

The second part is about the things which are around us.

In Zen Buddhism, they say: Everything is part of god.

This means:

All people and all animal are a part of god.

All plants and all things are a part of god.

And the air and the earth are a part of god.

Regarding the Pure Experience, it is said:

We should form a whole with everything around us.

Then we and everything around us are a god-like jelly.

The god-like jelly flows through everything what is.

Everyone and everything is connected through the god-like jelly.

Jelly is transparent custard.

If we are a part of this god-like jelly,

then the energy in our body flows well.

And there are no blockages in our body.

In this way, we get a lot of power.

This power helps us to find what is good for us.

Then we find our way in life.

Then our energy has a good flow.

And we can work well.

Mr. Nishida said:

It is more important to do something than to think about something.

Information:

This opinion is very popular at Japanese schools.

Pupils learn there how they can make and do things very well.

However, at these schools, they don't speak as much about thinking about something than in Western schools.

This is how the two parts of the Pure Experience are connected:

At first, we are in a god-like jelly.

There we learn what our way is.

Then we go our way very consciously.

By doing this, we pay attention to us and our feelings and thoughts.

## The Absolute Nothingness

At the end of his life, Kitaro Nishida further developed his thoughts about the god-like jelly:

He thought:

The god-like jelly can be a sea too.

This sea is called:

The Absolute Nothingness.

The Absolute Nothingness has no boundaries.

It is endlessly large.

The sea is the god-like thing.

In this sea, there are all people.

And all animals.

And everything else.

The water in this sea makes everything god-like.

Kitaro Nishida says: This sea is empty.

Because in this sea, everything moves.

And everything changes.

Therefore the sea is empty.

In Buddhism, the word „empty“ means:

Everything is changing.

In Europe, the word “empty” means:

There is nothing in it.

Nishida said:

If you make a lot of Pure Experience, you have special thoughts.

He called these special thoughts **understanding feeling**.

**Understanding feeling** is a name for a special eye-opener.

Through the understanding feeling, we learn something about ourselves and about the world.

Then we know something, although nobody has explained it to us.

In Europe, one calls this intuition if one knows something without having heard an explanation.

The understanding feeling is a kind of intuition.

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All of a sudden, we understand a lot, and in our inside, we know about everything.  
Then it is very empty in our head.  
And our mind can relax.

Through understanding intuition, we can understand some things better.

Mr. Nishida and other philosophers from Asia say:  
An empty head is a good thing.  
It is good when you don't have any thoughts.  
And when you don't want to understand anything anymore because you have understood  
the most important thing.

The philosophers in Europe don't agree to this point.  
The German philosopher Friedrich Schelling said:  
"If I can't understand a certain thing, I am afraid.  
If my head were absolutely empty, I would die."

The German philosopher Immanuel Kant said:  
"An empty head can't be explained.  
If something can't be explained, I won't think about it."

### To be a good person

Mr. Nishida thought:  
Through the Pure Experience, we will become good people.  
This means:  
Then we are good to other people too.  
Then we are also good to animals and to nature.

Mr. Nishida Nishida explained it like this:  
Everything is good in the god-like jelly. So we are good too.  
In this god-like jelly, we are happy too.

This is what Mr. Nishida said about happiness:  
We should be happy.  
And we should wish that we are well and fine.

We will become happy if we do good things.  
For example, if we help people.

We will get happy if we try new things.  
And if we develop personally.

Mr. Nishida thought:  
Every human being is something special.  
We are happy if we find out what makes us special.

Wanting something by any means and showing off with it doesn't make us happy.  
We only get happy if we do things which really suit us.  
And which do us good.

Kitaro Nishida said:  
We are only free if we want only this which suits us and which does us good.  
For example, if we manage only to drink as much alcohol as is good for us.  
Then we are free.  
If we have to drink more alcohol than we can handle, then we are not free.

## 2. The logic of place

Kitaro Nishida has thought about other things too.  
For example, about the logic of place.  
This is what the logic of place means:

In the god-like jelly, there are different places.  
These places are people, for example.  
Every place is a central point in the god-like jelly.  
A central point is a point in the middle of a circle.  
This means the god-like jelly has many, many centres.  
These centres are connected with each other.  
Everyone of us is a centre in this god-like jelly.  
If we reach out to other people, this is good for us all.  
If we distance ourselves from other people, this is bad for us all.

## 3. This is what other people say about Kitaro Nishida's thoughts

Some people say:  
The Pure Experience has nothing to do with Zen Buddhism.  
Because Kitaro Nishida doesn't write anything about Zen in his book.  
Kitaro Nishida said: The Pure Experience has in fact something to do with Zen Buddhism.

Some people also say:

The Pure Experience is not a philosophy.

Because the Pure Experience is also about psychology.

Psychology is about feelings.

However, philosophy should only be about thoughts, not about feelings.

Ms. Demmel-Bullock says about this:

The Pure Experience is a philosophy.

But it is a special philosophy.

This philosophy is also about religion.

The Pure Experience is a philosophy of religion.

Ms. Demmel-Bullock says:

This is what we can learn from Kitaro Nishida.

1. When we try the Pure Experience, we live more consciously.  
Then maybe we have less stress.
2. When we believe in the god-like jelly, we feel safe.  
At the same time, we maybe feel freer.