(18)　A STUDY OF THE CONCEPT OF ENVIRONMENT
- IN VIEW OF 'IN-DER-WELT-SEIN' BY M. HEIDEGGER

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ABSTRACT; In this present paper, toward the coming age of our symbiosis within the environment, we tried to consider the concept of environment from the aspect of Being-in-the-World, the structure of our existence, coined by M. Heidegger("Being and Time", 1927). The contents are as follows; (1) We are apt to think our environment from the viewpoint of humanism. What is the meaning of our living environment from this anthropocentric point of view? How do we see the natural environment? (2) Looking back over the history of modern thought, we can easily see that in modern ages man and nature stood in opposition to each other, as if man could exist beyond nature. It is quite recently that man has really become aware of being in nature. (3) In order to consider the significance of being-in, we refer to M. Heidegger, who aimed at overcoming of modern ages. His analysis of In-sein (Being-in) seems to teach us what our environment is, and how we can find out again the place wherein we should live.

1. The meaning of environment in environmental problems

　　We shall begin with paying attention to the meaning of environment seen in environmental problems. We seek today to improve 'our environment'. There may be an environment for animals and plants. However, as a whole, any other life than human beings is actually forced to live within a human environment. So we must confirm that the environment in environmental problems is principally a human environment, or surroundings which have no significance without human beings. The extinction of a certain species, a firefly for example, is only a barometer which gives us a warning of the aggravation of our natural environment.

　　Since Germany (former West Germany) reported the forestry damage by acid rain for the first time in the world in 1982, it has been generally understood that the milieu for human beings is getting worse. We, human beings, are anxious about our own milieu before everything else, not about the environment for oak, beech and pine in the first place. We are also anxious about these plants, to be sure, but it is only because they are our surroundings.

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It can be said that the question how we can improve the environment means how we, human beings, can improve our own environment. Air and water pollution caused by human beings is the pollution in the human meaning. So we think we should remove the human causes for the survival of ourselves. Here we can see the modern and subjective human understanding of environment. Environmental problems are grasped from the view-point of humanism, or anthropocentrism.

2. The subject-object dichotomy

In order to clarify where the substance of environmental problems lies, we brief-ly look back over the history of modern thought. Generally speaking, from 17th cen-tury downward modern people have partially succeeded in transforming their way of life by means of science and technology. Because of the appearance of engineers with scientific knowledge, nature has become not only an object of scientific study but an object of development. The environment became for a man of technique 'an object (Gegenstand)' which man is confronted by and could transcend. So believed man and this is precisely why the modern people are classified as 'homo faber' by typology M. Schelers. By grasping the environment as an object, and transforming it drastical-ly, science and technology have brought wealth and happiness to us. To be sure, but it was already in the latter half of 19th century that everywhere in Europe un-happines of modern ages began to be recognized.

For example, at schools where pupils are taught to take an objective view of a matter, they are also evaluated objectively. At hospitals where a doctor and a pa-tient sit opposite to each other, he is examined, as if he were an object. At zoo-logical gardens animals, at botanical gardens plants and at museums image statues of gods, everywhere everything is objectively observed as an object. In this sense the split of subject and object can be said to be the scheme of modern thought. When man felt here, so to speak, unhappiness of modern ages, then started our present age.

In the field of philosophy, as mentioned above, since the latter half 19th cen-tury, several thoughts of the present age have started with their tasks to overcome modern philosophy. The point of 'overcoming of modern ages' in short, to overcome the scheme of modern thought, in which man always observe and try to grasp the world only as an object.

Considering the development of thought from modern ages to our present age, we can say that the essence of environmental problems lies also in 'overcoming of modern ages', because they teach us to become aware of something that cannot be grasped ob-jectively. Our environmental problems, although they are remarkably the present ones, have not appeared suddenly. They have been brought about by the miscalculation of modern subjective-objective technology, and so they can be considered as an extreme of the fatal problem of 'alienation', which means in short that the result of modern technology was not only happiness but also unexpected unhappiness.

3. Being-in-the-world as the structure of our existence

In order to make clearer the substance of our environmental problems, we should like to proceed with our argument by referring to M. Heidegger, one of the greatest

philosophers who aimed at overcoming of modern ages. In his main work "Being and Time"(1927) he named the essential structure of our existence 'In-der-Welt-sein'.

According to Heidegger, it is the theme of the present age to overcome humanism ("Über den Humanismus" 1949), and it is realized when man is 'in-the-world' as that place (da-) where Being (Sein) is cleared. The world in Heidegger's meaning is the place wherein man dwells. Although his thinking is too profound for us to understand in itself, yet we can here ask him about our fundamental concern at the moment.

Where are we now, when we research our problems? When we observe nature, when we measure the amount of CO_2 or NO_x in the atmosphere, where are we? It is true that we can observe nature as an object from the outside. The ozone vanishes, the greenhouse effect, the destruction of rain forests, they are all confirmed from outside the earth. So far as the earth itself is researched as an object, man and nature stand opposite to each other. So as is often the case with us, we are apt to think as if we were outside of nature. But nevertheless, or therefore we are in nature. We are in nature, as if we were outside of it.

Heidegger's concept 'Being-in-the-world' does not signify that we are inside the world just so as some water is in a glass. When atmospheric CO_2 and NO_x level is reported by the scientific research, anyone cannot deny the exactitude of such objective data. But we are not inside the objective data, though we are confused into thinking as if we were. We are originally in-the-world, therefore it is possible that we stand outside the world. The essential structure of our existence is not like that man (subject) stand opposite to the world (object), as is seen in the humanistic comprehension.

We cannot escape from the environment itself. Even if we could escape from an environment, we are already in another environment. Environment is a concept of limitation which teaches us Being-in. The more we get objective data from scientific research, from outside, the more we have to realize that we are not so great, but so small, so limited as to try to stand outside.

According to Heidegger, the technical revolution begun in Europe during the 17th century has brought about a new relation between man and world, as mentioned above. Technological man stands not only in his world but also over against it and works at gaining the power to achieve mastery over the world in which he is. Heidegger terms the contemporary world situation 'homelessness'. Man is no longer at home in his essence, because of the opposition between subject and object.

4. Conclusion

With such words as 'Only One Earth' or 'Friendly to Earth', we are making every effort to deal with Earth friendly. Earth is not only an object any more because Earth appeals to us for friendship, without which we can no longer be alive. It seems that man has finally become aware of the importance of recycling of nature in which we live. The concept of environment has shown us that our environment itself is something that neither can nor grasped objectively. We arenow waiting for the coming age of our co-existence within the global environment.

This relationship of co-existence between man and nature is, so to speak, that

between one personality and the other personality, namely that between you (the second person) and me (the first person). That is to say, we each exist 'in' the other person. The personal relationship would be realized, when you live in me and at the same time I live in you. Nature lives in us while we live in nature. We can by no means live inside an object which is grasped rationally and abstractly.

But if this friendship is only our humanistic pretensions, we will have no other way than to live homelessly and go to ruin. In order to find out again the place wherein we dwell, we need to perform a historical turnabout from the way of anthropocentrism to the way of co-existence.

Can we find out home again in this homeless age? 'It is the time of the gods that have fled <u>and</u> of the god that is coming. It is the time of <u>need</u> because it lies under a double Not; the No-more of the gods that have fled and the Not-yet of the god that is coming'. (Heidegger, "Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry")

(This paper is based upon Yamada's draft, which Hiratsuka summed up in English. Yamada is responsible for the final wording.)