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Notes and Fragments

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Introduction

THESE fragments were culled from miscellaneous notes made by Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki (1870–1966), the founder of the Eastern Buddhist Society, over the last fifteen years of his life. The majority of them were written in the fifties, during the time he was lecturing at Columbia University in New York, although a few may date from his last years in Japan.

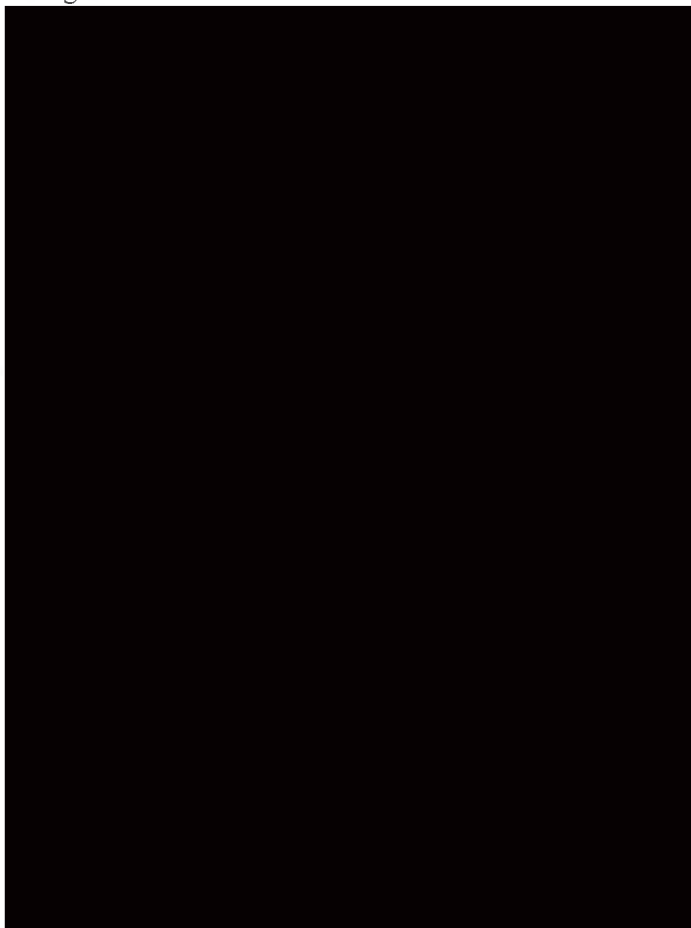
For five of these years in New York, Dr. Suzuki lived with my family on Amsterdam Avenue, and it was my job as a young girl to straighten up his room. He was in the habit of getting up during the night to jot down his thoughts. I can remember many times seeing notes of one kind or another by his bedside. I later discovered they contained many of the thoughts he would further develop in his longer, more studied writings. After he had used them, many of these fragments were discarded or lost, and I got into the habit of collecting such scraps of paper. He also used scratchpaper as a kind of blackboard in explaining his ideas, and I managed to salvage some of these fragments as well, as I found them to be helpful for my own understanding.

An interesting footnote to Dr. Suzuki's way of life is seen in the kind of paper he used for these jottings. Clearly his favorite vehicle was the backside of a used envelope, from one of the many letters that came every day in the mail. Since it pained him to see paper of any kind wasted, he would sequester in his cabinets and drawers all the paper napkins and other reusable paper and string he would not be using right away. It was a private protest against the wanton waste of the modern world, especially the irresponsible destruction of our forests. I often heard him voice his protest in this regard, as well as his warning that humans would pay dearly for their senseless ways. When

we were living in Kamakura, I can recall him admonishing a visiting bureaucrat from city hall. Dr. Suzuki had heard that the city was intent on cutting down a beautiful forest to make yet another golf course. In trying to make his concern clear to the man, he said, "A single tree lost means that ten people will go insane."

Although Dr. Suzuki is best known for his writings on Zen, he was essentially non-sectarian, and wanted to promote non-sectarianism in *The Eastern Buddhist*. His primary concern was the future of humanity, and he was criti-

Fragment 1

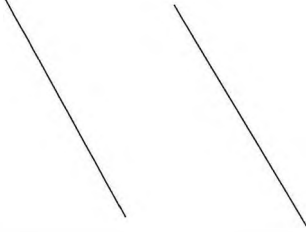


cal of the Buddhists of his day for concerning themselves too much with the past. These concerns are reflected in all his writings.

The fragments presented here run the gamut from Zen to Kegon, Shin to Meister Eckhart. Despite their brevity, I believe they have a special interest of their own. They are the immediate expression of Dr. Suzuki's inner experience and in their spontaneity reveal his thought with even greater clarity and directness, offering us something not found in the more carefully written books and essays.

Mihoko Okamura

Fragment 1: Transcription



*The answer is in the question itself.
That is to say, the questioner himself gives
the answer to his question. He does not
get it from anybody else.*

*Advaitism leads to śūnyatā –
Śūnyatā is unattainable
unthinkable, etc.*

*This is negativistic. It never brings
us something positive, we live on affirm-
ation, not on negation.*

安心 is a positive concept.

*The unattainability must become
"I rest here", "your mind is pacified".*

This is an experience.

Whatever is experienced is what happens.

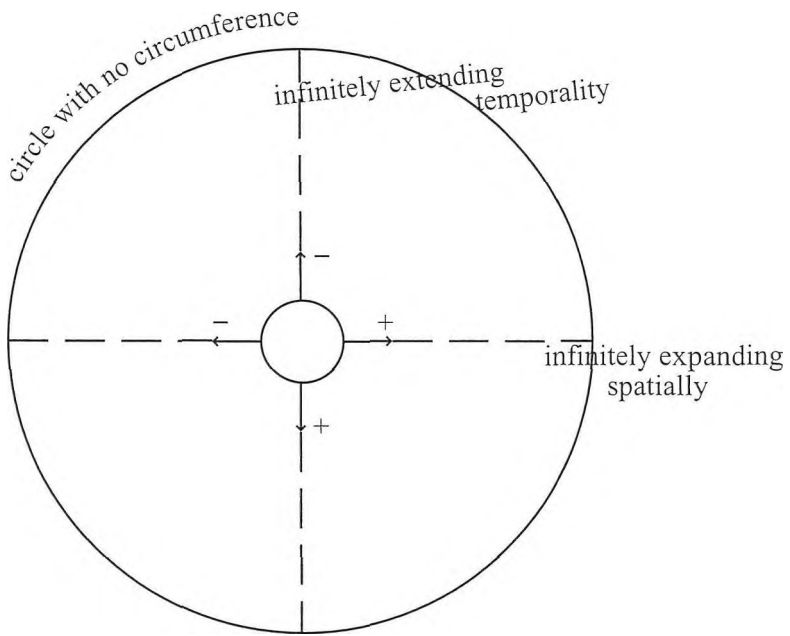
*Experience is an event, a happening, a
reality.*

Mere nothingness is not śūnyatā.

Fragment 2



Fragment 2: Transcription



事事むげ and the principle of correspondence

事事 = one to one

無碍 = correspondence

1, 2, 3 - - - - - cardinal numbers.

they are also ordinal numbers,

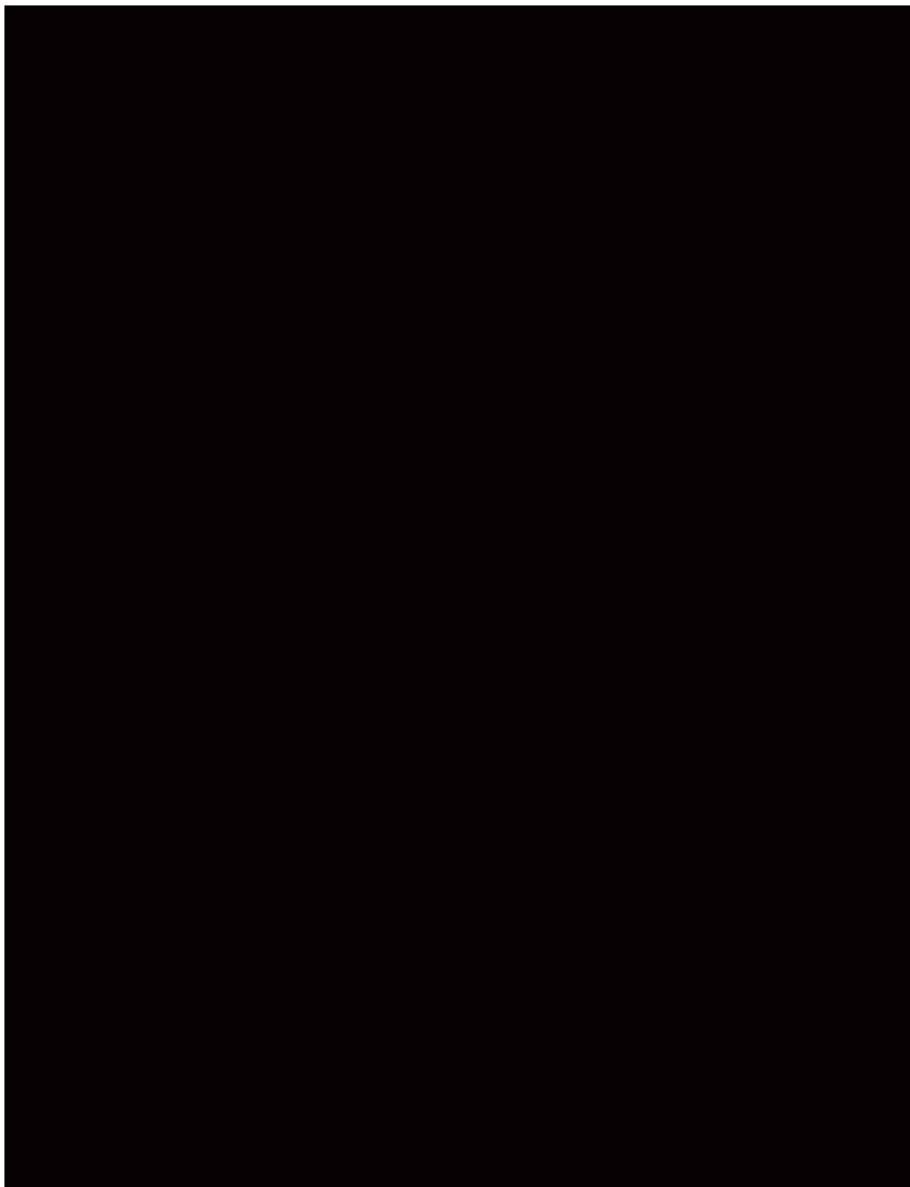
cardinals are ordinals.

When we pick up any one of numbers, 1, 2, 3, 4, - - -

the picked number falls into an order of numbers.

This order is 主伴.

Fragment 3



Fragment 3: Transcription

Eckhart—God is naught.

Dionysius —God is void, stillness

*God is even before naught, meaning
that God is absolute naught.*

(guna)

There is power in this naught.

Naught is filled with infinite possibilities.

Naught is creative.

generative.

*God wants to see Jesus born in every
one of us, not once but every minute.*

God is zero

Zero is creative.

0 → 1,

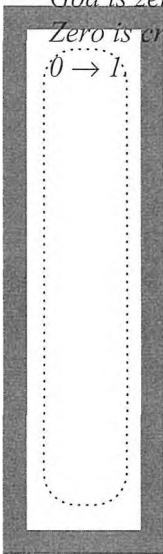
1 → n + 1, -----

*each number has infinity
in it.*

*That is why each number
wants to be its successor,
that is, to be n + 1*

0 = ∞

∞ = 0



← [blurred silhouette of the window of the envelop]

Fragment 4



Fragment 4: Transcription

Original Sin } *nothing to*
Innocence } *do with*
 moral
 values

Original Sin corresponds to
 Bud(dhist) Ignorance
Innocence to Primary
 or Original Enlightenment
 本覚 - or Enlighten-
 ment in itself.

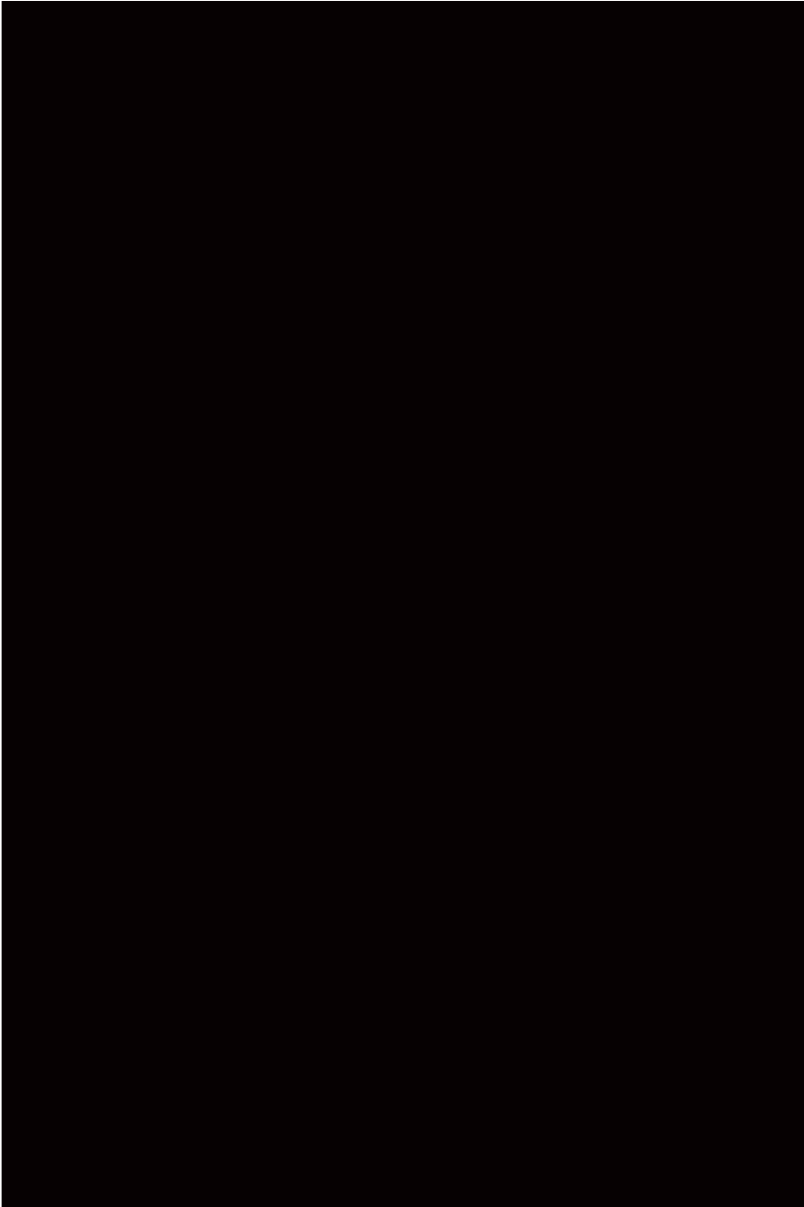
—————
The idea of sin demands
"atonement" hence
 crucifixion.

Ignorance is epistemological
 hence Enlightenment
 or pratyātma-ārya-
 jñāna

氏 名 [Name]
住 所 [Address]
氏 名
住 所
氏 名
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[from his pocket notebook]

Fragment 5



Fragment 5: Transcription

The just sees God —

To be just is sono-mama—

to see things as they are.

to see things in their suchness

to see things in their is-ness.

to see God as he is —

to see God in his is-ness.

To be just is to be just so

is not to be understood in the

legal sense.

righteousness tends to be interpreted

too moralistically.

To do justice is to see things as they are.

to see facts as facts, with

no subjective judgments.

to see flower as flower -

to call a spade a spade.

To be just means jinen hōni 自然法爾

or 如法

to enter into the thingness of a thing,

which is see the mindness of a mind which

is no-mind-ness.

For when one sees the mindness of a

mind, it ceases to be a mind as dis-

tinguished from other substances.

“A” identifies itself with itself.

“A” then is no “A”.