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Aged 71. 1971.

In Memoriam 1900-1990

On the 24th of November, 1990, Nishitani Keiji's life of ninety years came to a peaceful end in the small Japanese-style house in Kyoto which had been his home for over half a century. Widely recognized as one of the great thinkers of twentieth century Japan, Nishitani Keiji was also for the last twenty-five years of his life the chief editor of the *Eastern Buddhist*, holding the position from the start of the New Series in 1965 until the time of his death. This special issue is dedicated to his memory. It contains reminiscences and appreciations by his friends, students, and admirers. We are grateful to them for their contributions.

The appreciation and understanding of Buddhism in the West has moved a long way in the past quarter century. During that time the *Eastern Buddhist* under Dr. Nishitani's editorship has attempted to stimulate interest in Buddhist thought and culture by presenting the works of representative writers from the Buddhist tradition. A number of those writers, Dōgen, Shinran and other figures of the Pure Land tradition, and religious philosophers of the Kyoto School, are now part of the spiritual and intellectual movements of our time. In his concern with making basic sources of eastern wisdom better known in the West, Dr. Nishitani was following in the footsteps of Daisetz Suzuki, his predecessor as chief editor. Like Suzuki, Nishitani had little concern to defend a particular point of view or to propagate a set of beliefs. He was interested above all in pointing to the importance of the religious life itself which he felt was beyond such distinctions.

A number of translations of Dr. Nishitani's own writings are now available. Publications and conferences dealing with the philosophy of Nishida, Nishitani, and others of the Kyoto School increase by the year. There seems little doubt that the current interest in their thought will continue to grow and spread. It has been said that we live in times that would have sent the Greeks to their oracles. Surely we fail at our peril to consult our own. Although knowledge of Buddhism has made great strides in the West, there is still much to be learned. One suspects that not only in the West but in Japan as well people are nearer the beginning than the end of their understanding of Nishitani Keiji and the principles he embodied. We will miss him deeply.