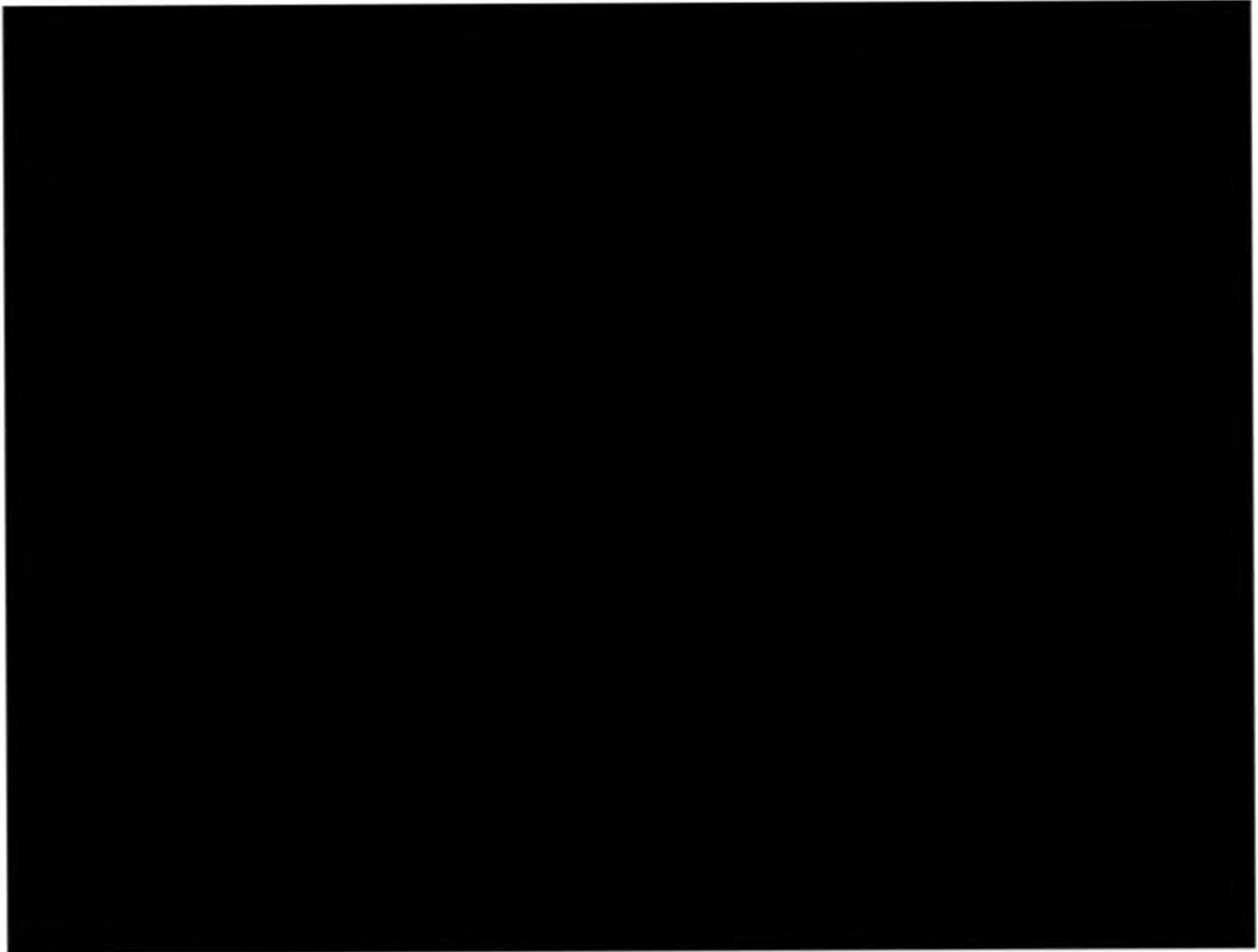


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## **In Memoriam**

**Frederick Franck**



**In 1971 I happened to attend a small gathering at Kyoto's NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions where Professor Nishitani spoke. I could not understand what he was saying, for he spoke in Japanese, but as I sat there observing him, I was so touched by what he radiated, by that extraordinary aura of humanness, gentle humor and wisdom, that I could not help but do this little drawing surreptitiously under the table.**

**Shortly afterwards, in his essay on "Sunyata and Time" I read: "On the field where observance is truly observance, the man moving his limb, the cloud floating across the sky, the water flowing, the leaves falling and the blossoms scattering, are all non-Form. Their form is a form of non-Form. To adopt this Form of non-Form as the Form of the Self is precisely what is meant by the standpoint of observance."**

## REMINISCENCES

This was perfect counsel for the artist-within, not to be forgotten! Expressed as Nishitani expressed his *prajñā*, so poetically, so musically, it was closer to a Bach Fugue in transmitting the unsayable than to a professorial promulgation.

His remark on observance came to mind when by that strangeness of fate we call coincidence I was in Kyoto last November, grateful that I was privileged to pay profound last respects to the man who exemplified so poignantly what it implies to be a *werdender Christ*, a *werdend geworden Buddhist*.

### Dirty Water, Clear Thinking

James W. Heisig

I will always remember Nishitani Keiji as the soul of dialogue. For him reason was at the fullness of its powers in *διαλέγομαι*: The struggle of the philosopher to see things as clearly as possible meant gleaning ideas and pulling them apart in different dialects; it meant arguing, discussing, and making up one's mind in words read and heard, spoken and written. Nishitani saw in Plato's dialogues a model for thinking precisely because the interlocutors spoke freely, without a schedule of items for debate. "Dialogue begins," he wrote, "not from an undisputed object of faith, not from any central dogma or 'I,' but from a letting go of the ego and a submission to reasonableness, from an ascent from a standpoint of ego to a standpoint of reason."<sup>1</sup>

I last visited Nishitani at his home three years ago. He was eighty-eight years old at the time. Graham Parkes of the University of Hawaii and I had just finished an intense ten days of reworking the final draft of the English translation of *Nihirizumu*.<sup>2</sup> The book had been written some forty years before, and the translation raised several unresolved problems that we felt only he could clarify. Nishitani would have none of it. Each time we brought up an item on the little agenda we had prepared, he laughed his inimitable silent laugh and began to talk about something else. After nearly an hour of this cat-and-mouse game, we finally gave up and closed our notebooks. With that act of renunciation, the discussion began in earnest. For the better part of the next

<sup>1</sup> *Nishida Kitarō* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 43.

<sup>2</sup> Published as *The Self-Overcoming of Nihilism* (New York: SUNY Press, 1990).