

THE EASTERN BUDDHIST

To discover how this can be done and who can do it is the object of the Zen quest.

Society today, with free sex, abortion, murder, war, pollution of the environment, discrimination of various kinds, seems almost oblivious to human ethics. Robert Aitken's book is a laudable effort to call readers' attention to the social problems we face today and to show a way of rectifying them through Zen-type ethics. In this sense, it has a significance that most books on Zen do not have. Ninety-nine per cent of the literature that appears on Zen in Japan today ignores these social aspects and concentrates only on the aspect of mind. The mind Aitken talks of is a "mind of clover," nurtured in the soil of the earth. Japanese Zennists like to use the image of the lotus flower rising in purity out of the mud. The idea of a plant such as clover has never occurred to us.

I only hope that Aitken's beautiful image of clover will prove apt. I have been saddened in recent years to hear reports about scandals in Zen centers in the West. Something must be wrong within the communities themselves. If such goings-on are allowed to take place in the name of Zen, we cannot have much hope for the future of Zen in its new home. I noticed that Aitken dwells on the merit of male and female Zen students living and practicing together in Western Zen centers, a situation which he says results in a deepened understanding of the other sex. It may be that I am wrong and simply behind the times, but I feel obliged as a Japanese student of Zen to say that I personally find it hard to believe that true Zen practice is possible under such circumstances.

On this note I will stop my irresponsible criticism of others, lest I be charged with breaking the sixth of the Grave Precepts.

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A ZEN LIFE: D. T. Suzuki Remembered. Edited by Abe Masao with photographs by Francis Haar. New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1986; pp. xix + 250. ISBN 0-8348-0213-9

This fine volume fulfills a long overdue need: an evaluation and tribute to the life and spiritual task undertaken by D. T. Suzuki. As Abe Masao states in his editor's introduction, the deepest significance of Suzuki's achievement lies not in his extensive research into Buddhist-related fields and the resultant voluminous publications, but in the fact that his research, writing and lectur-

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ing sparked a radical change in Western ways of thinking, and promoted a fresh reevaluation of traditional spirituality for his fellow Japanese countrymen.

The book is divided into four parts. Part one presents the personality of D. T. Suzuki as expressed in his own writings. It consists of two autobiographical sketches, available only in this volume, and a chapter entitled "*Satori*" from his book *Living by Zen*. Part two contains essays discussing Suzuki's works by Shimomura Torataro, Christmas Humphreys, Luis O. Gómez, Larry A. Fader and Abe Masao. Part three brings personal memories and reminiscences of Suzuki by Thomas Merton, Erich Fromm, Ernst Benz, Wilhelm Gundert, Hisamatsu Shin'ichi, Nishitani Keiji, Mihoko Okamura, Furuta Shokin, Kondō Akihisa, Alan Watts, Richard DeMartino, Philip Kapleau, Gary Snyder, Robert Aitken and Abe Masao. Part four includes a chronology of events in Suzuki's life and a bibliography of his works.

In the scope of this brief review it is not possible to discuss such a wealth of material. I shall therefore restrict myself to a few remarks on four of the many pieces written by a distinguished array of scholars. The first piece is the non-autobiographical one by Suzuki himself mentioned above entitled "*Satori*." Comparing Buddhism and Christianity, Suzuki states "the Christian view of the world starts with 'the tree of knowledge', whereas the Buddhist world is the outcome of Ignorance (*avidyā*). . . . Ignorance is the beginning of knowledge, and the truth of things is not to be attained by piling knowledge upon knowledge, which means no more, no less, than intensifying Ignorance. From this Buddhist point of view Christians are all the time rushing into Ignorance when they think they are increasing the amount of knowledge by logical acumen and analytical subtlety. . . . Logic and rationality are all well, Buddhists would say, but the real spiritual abode according to Buddhists is found only where logic and rationality have not yet made their start, where there is no subject to assert itself, no object to be taken hold of, where there is neither seer nor the seen—which is 'seeing into one's own Nature' " (p. 48). This is a remarkably lucid statement of a, if not the, fundamental contrast between Buddhism and Christianity: the Christian seeks salvation through attaining knowledge (and, it must be added, through faith); the Buddhist seeks salvation through getting rid of ignorance (all of our so-called highly prized "knowledge") and seeing our own "original face" before we were born (and even before our parents were born).

Suzuki states that there are generally two kinds of knowledge in Buddhism: *prajñā* or transcendental knowledge and *vijñāna* or relative, discursive knowledge that bifurcates into subject and object, regardless of whether the object is concrete and particular or abstract and universal. The Zen master's life-efforts are concentrated on awakening this *prajñā* or unconscious con-

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sciousness. Hence their laconic utterances such as "What is this?" (Seppō). This is not, however, the dark consciousness of the brute or child which is waiting for development and clarification. It is, on the contrary, that form of consciousness which we can attain only after years of hard seeking and hard thinking. The thinking, again, is not to be confused with mere intellection; for it must be, to use the terminology of Kierkegaard, "existential thinking and not dialectical reasoning" (p. 56). This emphasis on a radically different kind of thinking from our ordinary objectifying and conceptualizing is of supreme significance. Otherwise we are prone to some sort of dead, quiescent stupefaction, which can hardly be said to constitute the "goal" of Zen. This differentiation of kinds of thinking, for example, finds expression in the following *mon-do* not originated, but developed by Dōgen.

After sitting, a monk asked Great Teacher Yueh-shan Hung-tao: "What are you thinking of in the immobile state of sitting?" The master replied: "I think of not-thinking." The monk asked: "How can one think of not-thinking?" The master replied: "By nonthinking."¹

All thinking (*shiryō*) objectifies. Not-thinking (*fushiryō*) objectifies and negates the process of thinking itself. Nonthinking (*hishiryō*) alone is without reflective objectification, and allows things to presence as they are in their suchness.

Finally, Suzuki turns to his main topic, *satori*. With reference to time, *satori* shows itself as the interpenetration of time (differentiation and determination) and eternity (all that is not *shabetsu*, *byōdō*). *Ekakshana* (Sanskrit) and *ichinen* (Japanese) mean both one instant and one thought. When time is experienced as an instant with absolutely no duration, it is "absolute present" or "eternal now." Eternity cuts into time. "Eternity to be alive must come down into the order of time where it can work out all its possibilities, whereas time left to itself has no field of operation. Time must be merged into eternity when it gains its meaning. Time by itself is non-existent very much in the way eternity is impotent without time." One of the major obstructions to our experiencing Reality as it truly is is our serialistic and durational conception of time. "*Satori* does not perceive eternity as stretching itself over an infinite number of unit-instants but in the instant itself, for every instant is eternity" (p. 62).

"*Satori* is not a higher unity in which two contradictory terms are synthesized. When a staff is not a staff and yet it is a staff, *satori* obtains" (p. 61). In

¹ *Flowers of Emptiness*, trans. Hee-Jin Kim (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1985), p. 157.

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other words, the "contradiction" in *satori* is not a realization and resolution of Hegelian opposites, not a synthesis, which is thoroughly based on durational, serialized time.

The second piece to be briefly discussed is entitled "D. T. Suzuki's Place in the History of Human Thought" by Shimomura Torataro, a friend of Suzuki. Shimomura reflects on the fact that in the beginning of Western culture philosophy was Greek philosophy. When a Christian philosophy arose, it then assimilated and transcended Greek philosophy. The task now is to gain an even more universal philosophy, a world philosophy that includes the Zen thought of the Orient. True philosophy can only be universal, a world philosophy transcending the categories of East and West. Suzuki was truly such a worldwide philosopher. Shimomura also lauds Suzuki's emphasis on the meaninglessness of the psychological approach, thus opening up a path to a positive understanding of Zen.

The third essay is entitled "The Influence of D. T. Suzuki in the West" by Abe Masao, a disciple of Hisamatsu Shin'ichi and Nishitani Keiji, friend of Suzuki and editor of this volume. Abe addresses himself to some of the misunderstandings that have arisen among some scholars in the West as to the real significance of Suzuki in intellectual history. Some have said that "Suzuki was a popularizer, but not a scholar. Those who subscribe to this view are, of course, speaking from their own perspective concerning the meaning of 'scholarship' and 'scholar'. In most cases, it is historical research and textual scholarship, or, put broadly, an 'impartiality', as prescribed by the positivistic method, which constitute the standard of judgment" (p. 113).

The other two misunderstandings raised as objections are that Suzuki was a kind of Zen missionary working to spread Buddhism in the Western world and that he was a Zen thinker, but not a certified *rōshi*. In contrast to all three of these misunderstandings, Abe comes out with the only genuine assessment of Suzuki: "It was nevertheless not merely a sense of mission, or pride as an Asian, or even scholarly drive, which provided Suzuki Sensei with his real internal motivation. I believe that behind his activities there resided a religious Awakening. As a youth, under the guidance of Zen Master Shaku Sōen, he had become deeply realized through penetrating into the root-source of the universe of life-and-death. His 'motivation' derived from no other than this realization. It was what he later referred to in his writings variously as 'No-Mind', '*prajñā*-intuition', 'cosmic unconsciousness', 'spiritual perception', *nin* (true Man) or *myō* (wonder). This awakening functioned within Suzuki Sensei as an overwhelming Buddhist spirit of 'vow', aimed at bringing everyone to awaken to this same Reality. In this quest, there was no distinction between East and West. *His scholarly study of Buddhism was undertaken in order to further this work; it was not the other way around*" (p. 115; em-

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phasis added). Abe concludes his essay by emphasizing the importance for us all, Easterners and Westerners, to share in the spirit of that "vow" and to try to realize it in our own way.

This is somewhat reminiscent of Dōgen's emphasis on utterance (*dōtoku*).

That is why Po-chang said: "*To preach that sentient beings have Buddha-nature, is to disparage Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. To preach that sentient beings have no Buddha-nature is also to disparage Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Therefore, whether it is 'have Buddha-nature' or 'have no Buddha-nature', both end up disparaging the three treasures (Buddha, Dharma, Sangha). Despite such disparagement, however, you cannot go without making an utterance.*"²

And to quote Suzuki's favorite Western philosopher, Meister Eckhart:

Whoever has understood this sermon, let it be his. Had no one been here, I would have had to preach it to this poor-box.³

The same point is brought home to us in Suzuki's own words, quoted in the fourth piece entitled "Wondrous Activity" by Mihoko Okamura, private secretary and personal assistant to Suzuki. She quotes Suzuki as having said: "The essential thing is not to be found in academic study itself. Study is to make clearer a basic peace of mind. If it can do that, that's more than enough" (p. 170). Okamura's piece is perhaps the most moving one in the volume as she describes her daily and sometimes playful association with Suzuki.

What emerges from this volume is the task of rethinking the question of what a philosophical thinker is and what he is to do. In helping us to understand what the life of D. T. Suzuki was, this volume leads us to realize more and more profoundly that we cannot stop at a Greek philosophy, a Christian philosophy or a Buddhist philosophy. The spirituality that we need to develop and cultivate must not be arrested by such separatist barriers but must speak to all human beings. That kind of universal spirituality was truly operative in D. T. Suzuki. As Abe Masao aptly put it, "something was indeed at work here" (p. 116).

The book is much enhanced by the sensitive photographs by Francis Haar.

JOAN STAMBAUGH

² *The Eastern Buddhist*, vol. IX, no. 2. *Shōbōgenzō Buddha-nature (III)*, trans. Norman Waddell and Abe Masao, pp. 75-6.

³ *Deutsche Predigten und Traktate* (Munich, 1955), p. 273, Predigt 26.