VIEWS AND REVIEWS

Four Theological Negotiables*

Gleanings from Daisetz Suzuki's Posthumous Volumes on Shin Buddhism

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D. T. SUZUKI's two posthumous volumes on Shin Buddhism—his *Collected Writings on Shin Buddhism* and translation of *The Kyōgyōshinshō*[1]—have "opened yet one more treasury of Buddhism to the Western world," as Nishitani Keiji rightly observes.[2] Alfred Bloom has already reviewed the set for this journal,[3] and qua review his statement needs no supplement. My object is different: to look, not so much at these books as through them into man's religious consciousness generally, for the books have helped me see things about that consciousness I had not heretofore noticed—not, at least, as clearly. If the view I report proves helpful to others, Dr. Suzuki will have helped to open to the world another treasury not just of Buddhism but of the human spirit.

In the West Daisetz Suzuki will probably always be remembered as the man who singlehandedly, it almost seemed, brought Zen Buddhism to America, this being the side of himself which, in the English writings that appeared in his

* I am indebted to Louis Nordstrom and Richard Pilgrim, my colleagues, for reading this essay in the course of its preparation and for their helpful comments. Neither, of course, is responsible for what remains.

[1] Kyoto: Shinshu Ōtani-ha, 1973.

[2] Foreword to *The Kyōgyōshinshō*. Professor Nishitani served as supervising editor of the impressive project that brought these sumptuous volumes to print, a project that required seven years and a considerable staff of whom Emyō Itō and Mihoko Okamura deserve special mention.

[3] Vol. VIII, no. 2 (October, 1975), pp. 163–69.

lifetime, he turned in our direction. But his *Japanese Spirituality*[4] which he wrote for his own people joins the two volumes here in focus to show that his full concern was in fact polar. While he was interpreting Zen to the West he was quietly sounding, deeper and yet more deeply, the Pure Land schools of Hōnen and especially Shinran who "took Pure Land Buddhism to its highest point" (Nishitani, p. ix).[5] But more. It was not just that he was determined to neglect neither of these superlative expressions of the Japanese spirit. He wanted to fathom their relation. Professor Bloom puts the point precisely when he writes: "Through all his work, Dr. Suzuki's purpose in expounding both Zen and Shin Buddhism was to show the essential *oneness* of Mahāyāna Buddhism" (*op. cit.*, p. 164).

There Dr. Suzuki's interest in convergence stopped; when he alluded to other traditions, chiefly Hīnayāna Buddhism and Christianity, it was usually to show how they differed from Mahāyāna. For my part I wish to suggest that the convergence Dr. Suzuki so perceptively spotted in Mahāyāna Buddhism can serve as paradigm for tempering four controversies that have dogged theology in general:

I. Is God personal or transpersonal?
II. Is he without (transcendent) or within (immanent)?
III. Is he substance or process?
IV. Is he realized by grace or self-effort?

That says abstractly what I want to do, but my project will be more graphic if I link it to a concrete image, and one is at hand. This essay, as it happens, is being written on an ocean voyage. Considering its subject it is appropriate that the passage is from Japan to America, but the immediate point is another one. When I boarded this ship in Kobe my thesis was at best hazy, but I came upon an item that brought it to sharp relief: a freak of navigation that was recounted in the "Welcome Aboard" folio that greeted my wife and me as we entered our cabin.

It seems that at the exact turn of the last century—Daisetz Suzuki would

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[4] English translation by Norman Waddell. Japanese National Commission for UNESCO, 1972.

[5] Those who knew Dr. Suzuki only through his Zen writings will be surprised to find that as early as 1949 he had written: "Of all the developments Mahāyāna Buddhism has achieved in the Far East, the most remarkable one is, according to my judgment, the Shin teaching of the Pure Land school" (*Collected Writings on Shin Buddhism*, p. 36, hereafter designated as *CW*).

then have been a young man nearing thirty—an Australian passenger steamer, the *Warrimoo*, found itself in interesting waters. Recognizing that fact its captain managed with a bit of maneuvering to set his ship precisely astride the intersection of the Equator and the International Date Line. The consequences of this bizarre position were interesting. The date in the forepart of the ship was January 1, 1900; in the stern it was December 30, 1899. Passengers in the front were in the southern hemisphere in the middle of summer, while those behind were in the northern hemisphere in the middle of winter. Thus the passengers were not only in two different hemispheres, two different days, two different months, two different seasons, and two different years, but in two different centuries. Yet the differences were experienced simultaneously and on the same ship.

The moral for my thesis is obvious. However different the theological alternatives I listed above may seem—and in ways are—those who are divided by them are on the same ship; in the same boat, we might say. The differences are negotiables in the sense that it is possible for passengers at either end of the ark to understand and respect the alternative positions even if they are not their own. In pursuing this claim I shall, as I have said, be using Dr. Suzuki's posthumous volumes as my map, and their author as my guide.

1. *Are We Saved by Self-Effort or Grace?*

In introducing the four theological alternatives I listed this one last because unlike the others it focuses not on God himself but on man's approach to him. In examining the "negotiables" through Dr. Suzuki's eyes, however, it should head the list, for it is the one he treats most explicitly.

Is man saved through grace or works? Every religion runs up against this question; all agree that both are necessary;[6] and all contain strands that veer toward one side or the other—the way of the monkey whose young must cling to their mother's neck, or the way of the cat whose kittens simply dangle from their mother's mouth. But Buddhism is especially interesting on this point because its strands are so clearly divided. The Buddha appears to have allowed no room for grace, while the largest surviving sects of his followers—Pure Land (J., Jōdo) Buddhism and especially Shin—seems to allow for nothing else. T. I.

[6] "The winds of God's grace are always blowing, but you must lift your sail" (Vivekānanda). I once heard a New Testament scholar epitomize St. Paul's theology in language that can be excused because it makes its point vividly: "You have to work like hell because it's all been done for you."

Stcherbatsky's account of the transformation has become classic:

> When we see an atheistic, soul-denying, philosophic teaching of a path to personal final deliverance, consisting in an absolute extinction of life and a simple worship of the memory of its human founder—when we see it superseded by a magnificent High Church with a supreme God, surrounded by a numerous pantheon and a host of saints, a religion highly devotional, highly ceremonious and clerical, with an ideal of universal salvation of all living creatures, a salvation not in annihilation but in eternal life—we are fully justified in maintaining that the history of religions has scarcely witnessed such a break between new and old within the pale of what nevertheless continues to claim common descent from the same religious founder.[7]

Dr. Suzuki acknowledges the change: "There is no doubt that . . . in the beginning there were no indications in the teaching of the master which betrayed the 'other-power' (*tariki*) elements of later Buddhism" (*CW*, 15). His originality consists in arguing more systematically than anyone else I know that "the two systems apparently contradicting each other [are] really working in unison" (*CW*, 12).

The grounds for his arguments are both historical and logical. Beginning with history, he grants that "we have no mention of . . . the idea of praṇidhāna[8] . . . in Pāli literature" (*CW*, 17); even so, he argues,[9] the founders of the Pure Land school were quite right in believing "that everything they had in the way of 'tariki' faith came from the teaching of Śākyamuni himself" (*CW*, 10). The reason is that the teachings of a founder cannot be limited to his words. "There is no doubt that Buddha was a wonderful personality: there must have been something in him which was superhuman, impressing his immediate disciples with a supernaturally overwhelming and entirely irresistible power" (*CW*, 38), and central to this power was his example.[10] Resisting the tempta-

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[7] *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvana* (Leningrad: Bulletin of the Academy of Sciences, U.S.S.R., 1927), p. 36.

[8] Literally vow, but by extension Amida's vow not to enter enlightenment until all beings are saved, and by further extension the concept of the transfer of merit (*pariṇāmāna*).

[9] In the etymological sense of *arguere*: to clarify, or literally, "make silver."

[10] In turning to Buddha's example rather than his words for the origin of the Pure Land emphasis, Dr. Suzuki is conceding that the basic Jōdo sutras—*The Larger Sūtra of Eternal Life*, *The Sūtra of Meditation*, and *The Amida Sūtra*—cannot be ascribed to Gautama

tion to proceed directly from his enlightenment into parinirvāṇa, he chose instead to devote forty-five arduous years to sharing with his followers the yield of his disciplined labor. However discontinuous this example may seem from his counsel to "be . . . lamps unto yourselves" and "work out your own salvation with diligence," both the words and the example emanate from the same person and can be shown to be inseparable. Practically, his words could not have had a fraction of their impact had they not been backed by his example, while in principle his central teaching—*anatta* (no substantial soul) in its negative formulation; *pratītya samutpāda* (dependent co-origination) when expressed positively—precluded the possibility of an enlightenment that is self-contained. Enlightenment is not of the intellect only; it includes the will. And

> according to Buddhist interpretation, the first thing the Will as embodied in an individual being wishes to achieve after . . . release is to do to others what it has done for itself. As enlightenment has made it known to the Will that there is no real and impassable gap between oneself and others, the Will feels now no need of asserting itself blindly, that is, following the dictates of the principle of individuation. [On the contrary,] the efforts of an enlightened consciousness are to lead others to the realisation of a similar state of release (*CW*, 20).

If the Buddha did not spell all this out in so many words it must have been because of circumstance, not principle. He repeatedly stressed the need for *upāya*: knowledge must be shaped to the vessel that is to hold it. He also ex-

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himself. Their teachings are *presented* as coming from his lips, but that was only to insure their status.

Though this reading of the matter runs directly counter to Jōdo's claims, it is unchallenged by modern historians of Buddhism. Enough of me sides with these historians to bar me from challenging their reading outright, but I do think we should continue to keep in mind that the later *date* of the Pure Land texts does not close the door on the possibility of their having come from the Buddha's lips. To the Hīnayānists' citing of Śākyamuni's denial of any "closed-fistedness in the Buddha"—i.e., he held nothing back—Mahāyānists have always answered: "Granted, but did everyone understand all he taught?" Memories were good in those days and the Pāli sutras are voluminous, but need we conclude that they comprise everything, even everything of importance, that the Buddha said? Why may we *not* believe with *The Larger Sūtra of Eternal Life* that once on Vulture Peak Śākyāmuni did indeed tell King Bimbisāra's despairing widow the story—true, whatever we think of the garb in which it was cast—of a certain Amitābha Buddha whose merit availed to save even the conspirator-in-assassin that she had been?

plicitly stated that the teachings he imparted were but a handful of leaves compared with those of the forest. If we accept HInayāna as primitive Buddhism, Mahāyāna obviously follows it chronologically. But it also follows it in the sense of adhering to its trajectory. It discloses the full, though partially unrecognized, implications of what was present at Buddhism's start.

This is Dr. Suzuki's historical argument for his claim that Shin's stress on other-power is as genuinely Buddhist as HInayāna's stress on self-power. Turning to logic, he argues the dialectical interdependence of self-power and other-power themselves.

Obviously there are times when only one of the two is in view: times when it seems that if anything is to come our way it must be through our own doing and other times when we simply sit back and ride the Glory Train—Shinran's image is taking a boat ride; it is so easy and pleasant. But these are isolated episodes. No one can live durationally without alternation. Life is subject to rhythm: we wake and we sleep, we stretch our legs and relax. In the soul as in the world, things proceed in waves. And even without getting into time, if we look deeply into action and passion, giving and receiving, we find that each *in principle* involves its opposite. The whole thrust of Jodo is from self-power to other-power, but to take effect this other-power must be received and this reception is itself a kind of doing.[11] As the reception requires faith, indeed absolute faith, it "is not . . . easy" (*CW*, 117). It is not *dolce far niente*—pleasant relaxation in carefree idleness; literally, sweet doing nothing. "There has to be a strong effort to obtain it. So in the end it may be as difficult as the efforts of Self-power sect believers" (*ibid.*). But quite apart from ratio, the point is that both components must figure to some degree. Even Shinran who carried other-power to its logical limit conceded that a supplicant had to pronounce the *nembutsu* at least once, and if we pick up the stick from its Zen end we find that it leads to the same middle. Zen stresses *jiriki* (self-power), but a clear giveaway shows this self-power to be planted in other-power soil.

> There is much bowing in Zen training [and] bowing the head is an age-old gesture of laying down 'I' . . . in respect for something perceived as greater than 'I'. . . . In the training, so much depends on one's own

[11] "Even a passivity which does nothing but receive has to have some active element" (D. T. Suzuki, *Japanese Spirituality*, p. 20). Or again: "A purely passive spiritual attention is quite impossible; there is always at least an incipient response on the part of man" (Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Prayer*, New York: Paulist Press, 1967, p. 98).

> effort that there is an ever present danger of 'I' getting a swollen head. Hence . . . bowing . . . is indispensable.[12]

There is one more step to be taken. Beginning at the most superficial level with (a) discrete experiences in which self- and other-power *feel* completely sealed from each other, we introduced time to show (b) that sequentially they must alternate. But having used time as an entré, we stepped back and found it dispensable. Our initial atemporal reading was superficial and therefore one-sided. Even without introducing time, (c) self- and other-power prove under inspection to entail each other in principle: other-power must be received, and self-power rides on a supportive context which the self did not create. The last step is taken when (d) each component is sensed to be its opposite.[13] The Shin believer pronounces the *nembutsu* and yet he doesn't: Amida pronounces it using the believer's lips while being simultaneously the faith/compassion that rises in the believer's breast. The Zennist mirrors this gestalt. He discovers that he *is* the universe that supports his finite ego.

This may be the last step but it is not the last word, for partisans of either side can still claim that the *feel* of the two approaches are different: in Shin the self is nothing and Amida everything, whereas in Zen the self is it-Self everything.[14] This is so; the difference is real, which is why there are two paths, not one. Dr. Suzuki never wished to obliterate differences, only to soften them—or better, to understand them as deriving from a common ground. He couched his basic point abstractly in what he called the logic of prajñā-intuition (*soku-hi*): "A is not-A, therefore A is A."[15] In present context, tariki is not-tariki, there-

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[12] Irmgard Schloegl, *The Wisdom of the Zen Masters* (New York: New Directions, 1976), p. 25.

[13] "Amida's will to help us out of the ocean of birth-and-death is no other than our faith in Amida. In Amida faith is the will to help and in us this will becomes faith; his will and our faith are consubstantial as it were, hence a perfect correspondence between the two terms of Reality" (*CW*, 69).

[14] "When my life opens up very clearly, I can't help, from the depths of my heart, wanting to bow. When the mind that wants to bow to enemies and friends and demons and gods and evils and Buddhas and good friends and bad people—when this feeling comes tumbling out of my deep life, then *I am already master of the whole world, I control the entire world*, I become friends with all human and other beings" (Haya Akegarasu, *Zen Notes*, XXII, 1 January 1975, p. 3).

[15] See his *Studies in Zen* (London: Rider & Co., 1955, 1957), pp. 119 ff; *The Eastern Buddhist* New Series, vol. II, no. 1, p. 80; and *Japanese Spirituality*, p. 57.

fore it is tariki. That is, only to the extent that we succeed in seeing tariki as not set off from what we normally assume is other-than-tariki, in this case, jiriki, do we understand tariki's true nature. We can see, I think, why Thomas Merton wrote in his Introduction to *The Shen Hui Records*: "The religious genius of the Far East, China and Japan, is the *only one* that has so far achieved . . . perfect resolution of any possible conflict between action and contemplation" (italics in original).

II. *Is God Without or Within?*

This question is closely related to the preceding one, for if God is outside us his power will come to us as tariki, whereas if he is the deepest stratum of our selves we will sense that power as our own. There is a difference in angle, however. The jiriki/tariki question asked from whence we experience God's power as coming, whereas the present one asks what the God/man relation is. Both questions are posed in spatial terms, but space of course is not the issue. In the realm of the spirit space figures only symbolically.[16] The question is not whether God is literally located inside or outside the human frame, but whether in last analysis the two must be distinguished.

With rare exceptions—Dionysius the Areopagite and Meister Eckhart come at once to mind—Western theology insists that the distinction must hold to the end. The Christian treatise I happen to have read most recently is one I have already cited in a footnote. Titled *Prayer*, it is by a Jesuit theologian, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and I shall quote him as representative on the point at hand.

Father Balthasar recognizes, of course, that as the ground of our being, God is not set off from us in the excluding way in which an apple, say, is demarcated from an orange or from the bowl that contains them both.

> The Son . . . is no finite Thou marked off in contradistinction to us, but the origin and ground in which our whole being with all its roots is fixed, from which it draws its sustenance and derives all the best characteristic features. . . . "I in them and thou in me" (John XVII. 23). The person who contemplates has not to strive laboriously to enter a region wholly alien to him. . . . In a profound, supernatural sense, he enters into himself. (God's) eternal word of love . . . is more interior to me than I to myself (pp. 49–50).

[16] See Chapter Two, "Symbolism of Space," in my *Forgotten Truth: The Primordial Tradition* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976).

This shows emphatically that the West's God/man distinction is no simple-minded one. God "is no mere Other; he is the eternal Thou, who spans the dreary barrier between me and the not-me" (*ibid.*, 54). Yet even in a formulation as discerning as this, a distinction remains. "The pure soul is, indeed, a mirror, a resplendent image and symbol of the eternal Spirit but only a mirror" (*ibid.*, 207).

In Shin, of course, the distinction likewise figures; if anything, it is more pronounced than in the Christian formulation I have just quoted, and for rank and file Shinnists it is doubtless final. For Dr. Suzuki, however, it is only provisional. The "ego is called by Shin philosophers *ki*," he points out (*CW*, 159), as contrasted with *hō* which "is 'Dharma,' 'Reality,' 'Amida,' and 'the other-power'. This opposition appears to our intellect as contradiction" (*Kyōgyō-shinshō*, 284; hereafter cited as *K*), but at the deepest level of spiritual awareness the contradiction is resolved. "[In] 'Namu-amida-butsu' . . . the oneness of *ki* and *hō* is embodied: 'Namu' is *ki* and 'amida-butsu' is *hō*. . . . The *hō* is the absolute self while the *ki* is the relative, conceptual self. Shin teaches that the *hō* and *ki* are one" (*CW*, 160, 156). To those who might object that this conclusion is more Dr. Suzuki's than Shin's, we have already admitted that not all Shinnists would accept it. But this does not make it idiosyncratic, or even confined to Shin esoterism. Myōkōnin are a class of Shin devotees whose simplicity and near-illiteracy align them closely to the common people, and one of the best loved modern myōkōnin concluded exactly as Dr. Suzuki does. "*Ki* and *hō* are one" (from a song by Asahara Saichi, quoted in *CW*, 161).

As Zen begins where Shin thus ends—in Zen's words, with the not-twoness of small mind and Big Mind—"there is . . . a difference metaphysically between Zen and Shin in this respect. While Shin [normally] regards . . . the Other [as] standing in opposition to 'I', Zen merges the 'I' in the Other" (*CW*, 97). This difference gives us a provisional line-up of Zen and Suzuki's Shin on one side and Christianity and conventional Shin on the other. But if we have watched Shin span this divide, reflection shows that Zen does so as well. With all its efforts directed toward having us realize experientially that we *are* the Buddha-nature, Zen stands emphatically on the "God-within" side of the divide that is now before us. But the Self which it equates with the Buddha-nature is obviously not the self we normally experience—in Shin vocabulary, it is not the *ki*. So in both schools we find distinction and indistinction. In Zen and Suzuki's Shin the distinction is between the apparent self and the Self that is finally real; in conventional Shin the distinction is between karmic mortals

and Amida—the element of indistinction in both camps we have already noted. Here as before we must add that these similarities do not conform Shin to Zen. Differences remain, but they are now traceable to differences in spiritual personality-types rather than views of reality.[17] They are negotiable.

III. *Is God Personal or Transpersonal?*

All of the dichotomies I am considering are sharper in the West than in Asia, which makes it not surprising that it is from an Asian source that I think I find clues for tempering them. In the West the personhood (personal nature) of God is axiomatic. The Christian Creeds proclaim God in three persons, and when pronouns are used to refer to the deity, personal ones are almost always employed. But whereas in the West, use of the pronoun "it" for God is likely to bring charges of pantheism, Dr. Suzuki alternates between "he" and "it" freely; casually, we might almost say. Most of the time he uses "he" to refer to Shin's Amida Buddha and "it" for Zen's Buddha-nature, Big Mind, and Dharmakāya, but this usage is not inflexible.

God is the most worthful of all realities—about this there can be no two opinions. As persons are the most worthful realities we tangibly encounter, it is logical that the most worthful object we can conceive should be an extension in their direction. Take all that makes persons the noblest of God's creatures that we know concretely—their sensitivity, their responsiveness, their capacity to love and create. Purge these human virtues of their attendant all-too-human limitations, elevate the cleansed remainder as far as mind can reach, and the

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[17] Shinran's formulation of this point is as follows: "What Buddhas teach and what Buddhas tell us to practice are as infinitely varied as the sands, or as particles of dust. Beings are . . . varied in disposition and mentality, . . . and the karmic situation in which Buddhas find them are . . . so varied that they are to be instructed in the most varied ways" (*K*, 98).

Dr. Suzuki applies this point to Zen and Shin in these words: "Zen is richer in intellectual elements and Shin in the affective or emotional" (*CW*, 97). Converted into Hinduism's most precise of all spiritual characterologies, this says that Zen is jñānic, Shin bhaktic. On pages 62, 64, and 73 of *Collected Writings* Dr. Suzuki explicitly correlates Shin with bhakti, but in keeping with his statement in *K*, 260, that "Zen . . . is . . the practice of mental concentration, in which the reasoning process of the intellect is cut short," he might better have characterized Zen as meditative or concentrative, which would link it more to raja than to jñāna yoga.

object in which these exalted perfections converge is God. The God that emerges from this approach is personal or he is nothing.

The approach is so plausible that we have to work a bit to realize that there are some who cavil. What these objectors fear most obviously is the slough of anthropomorphism into which personalism can readily slide. The concept "person" originates with a human referent: can it move beyond that referent without carrying finite human baggage with it? We need not join the Greek satirists and imagine Being Itself itching or The Nature of Things tippling in the wine bowl at off moments—we have said that the concept of a personal God begins by screening out human impurities. The problem is that even human virtues fall so short of God's that it seems presumptuous to class the latter under human labels. Knowing is an almost miraculous capacity, but compared with the divine omniscience human knowing is almost nothing. A knowing that comprehends everything—the entire past and future in a single incandescent sweep—is so removed from the way persons know that we may well wonder if the term "personal" should be applied to it.

This is the first consideration that can cause minds to balk at the idea of a personal God. A second runs deeper. Persons are social creatures. As social psychologists like Charles Cooley and George Herbert Mead gave their lives to demonstrating, they are created by a dynamic context of exchanges, an unending series of give-and-take interactions. Feral children who are deprived of this interpersonal exchange do not grow up to be persons; their minds and "personalities" are arrested at a sub-human level. All this adds up to the fact that personal implies interpersonal. And the concept "interpersonal" encounters difficulties when applied to God because it violates the divine unity or simplicity, for in Father Balthasar's words, "in . . . the . . . Infinite . . . there is no . . . quantitative multiplicity" (p. 210). If there is nothing outside God; if (to take the case most immediately at hand) I myself am not outside him, he being "more interior to me than I to myself" (*ibid.*, 51), where, for God, is the other on which the notion of interpersonal builds? What it would be like to be a person and have nothing outside myself to work on and deal with, eludes me completely.

In the face of these objections Western theologians continue to insist on the personhood of God because, I should like to suggest, the West's alternative to "person" has become "thing"—a brute, inanimate object such as a stone or magnetic field which, having no sentience whatever, is emphatically *sub*human. But this, as I say, is a Western opposition. Buber's dichotomy between I-Thou

and I-it relations was born of a tradition which, on the trail of modern science, progressively "disqualified" nature until apart from man—or animals in general if you think Descartes went too far—nature came to be seen as housing primary qualities only.[18] A Japanese Martin Buber is scarcely conceivable, and despite Japan's admiration for German philosophers I have not heard that he has much of a following there. For to repeat, the "it"—the spectre of "dead matter" deriving from what Whitehead called "the fallacy of misplaced concretion"—has never haunted the Orient. A Japanese visitor once presented me with a *kakemono* (that is, a vertically hanging scroll) which has become one of my most treasured possessions. I have less than an amateur's knowledge of Chinese, but in this case I could make out that its first three characters 天地有

[18] Since writing these words I have come in quick succession upon two disparate sources that point up how aberrant this modern Western notion is. Describing the outlook of pre-civilized man, Stanley Diamond writes: "Personalism . . . is the most historically significant feature of primitive life and extends from the family outward to the society at large and ultimately to nature itself. It seems to underlie all other distinctive qualities of primitive thought and behavior. Primitive people live in a personal, corporate world, a world that tends to be a 'thou' to the subject 'I' rather than an 'it' impinging upon an objectively separate and divided self. Consciousness for the primitive is the most common condition in the universe" (*The Search for the Primitive*, New Brunswick, N. J.: Transaction Books, 1974, p. 145).

Having all but forgotten that, far from being confined to primitives, this intuition informed all civilizations including our own, until a mere 200 years ago ours was the first to lose our grip on it, we will do well to read Philip Sherrard's reminder: "The Platonic hierarchy of forms is a structure of participations stretching from the highest supersensual realities down to those of the visible world. It is this structure of participations which constitutes the great golden chain of being, that unbroken connection between the highest and lowest levels of life. In this structure, there is nothing that is not animate, nothing that is mere dead matter. All is endowed with being, all—even the least particle—belongs to a living, transmuting whole, each thing is a revelation of the indwelling creative spirit. It was not until the end of the eighteenth century, with Lavoisier and his peers and followers, that the scientific intelligence in Europe became so blunted and whittled down that it lost its sense of the mysterious numinosity of all things, reduced everything either to phenomenon (fact) or to mathematical hypothesis (or, in less polite language, fiction), and conceived the physical world to be no more than so much inanimate dead matter whose chemical changes were mechanical processes based upon the so-called law of the conservation of mass" (*Sophia Perennis*, II, 1, Spring 1976), pp. 42–43.

added up to "Heaven and earth have . . . ," or "The entire universe is embued with. . . ." When I asked the meaning of the remaining character 情, my friend groped for an English equivalent and finally resorted to the German "gefühl" (feeling, sentiment, consciousness).

In Part Four of *The Kyogōshinsho* Shinran writes: "Because the Dharma-nature is tranquillity (*nirvāṇa*), the Dharmakāya is formless. Because it is formless, it assumes every possible form. Therefore, the Dharmakāya provides itself with form." To which Dr. Suzuki adds: "Now the Dharmakāya is a person" (*K*, 190). Thus casually is the question of God's personhood handled in Shin. God is personal in that, like us, he is aware. Infinitely so; in the Hindu ternary *sat-chit-ānanda* he is *chit*. At the same time he is not personal insofar as that term implies human limitations (anthropomorphism) or relationality, for as we have seen, in the final analysis there is nothing outside God for him to relate to. One is free to come down on either side of the ledger he pleases.

IV. *Is God Substance or Process?*

Like the preceding question this one has a Western ring, for it is in the West that Process Theology has emerged as a movement to challenge the substance theology of classical Christianity. Not having been implicated in this controversy which has grown lively only since his death, Dr. Suzuki does not address it directly, but here again I find his writings suggestive.

They bear importantly if only indirectly on the process/substance debate because of their Buddhist base.[19] The doctrine of *anicca*—impermanence, or in Whitehead's phrase, "perpetual perishing"—is fundamental in Buddhism; so fundamental in early Buddhism that it gives the flavor of process, flow, and becoming to its entire perspective. But we know that Buddhism did not stop with its earliest formulations—Theravāda may have, but not Buddhism as a

[19] Process philosophy derives basically from Whitehead, and "for some years scholars have been suggesting that Whitehead and Buddhism have much in common" (John Cobb and Jay McDaniel in their introduction to the proceedings of the conference on "Mahayana Buddhism and Whitehead" that was held at the University of Hawaii in November, 1974)—a section of those proceedings appear in *Philosophy East and West*, XXV, 4 (October 1975). More recently Professor Cobb has written that "Whitehead's . . . creativity . . . is remarkably like the ancient Buddhist dependent co-origination" ("Buddhist Emptiness and the Christian God," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, XLV, 1, March 1977, p. 16).

whole. Whitehead's challenge to the substance thinking of mainline Western philosophy has marked parallels with Gautama's challenge to Vedantic substantialism,[20] but in the Asian instance 2500 years have afforded time for the pendulum to return closer to the mean, the Buddhist, middle-way-balance between the two extremes. Specifically, there has been time for the Mādhyamika to appear.

To this Mādhyamika I shall return almost immediately, but to conclude the present brief section the point is a simple one. As a Buddhist Dr. Suzuki harks back continuously to *anicca*, the fleeting skandhas, and the dharmas' never-ending flow. All the while, as a Mahāyāna Buddhist, he freely interposes terms that refer to things that at some level of existence have every appearance of being substances. "Dharma," "dharmakāya," "bodhisattva," "Amida," "*ki*" and "*hō*"—all these are nouns. To describe things that behave sometimes like waves and sometimes like particles physicists have coined the word "wavicle." Lacking a philosophical counterpart to this word we can imagine Dr. Suzuki invoking again his "logic of *soku-hi*": "Substance is not-substance, therefore it is substance." Translated into the present context: "Only if we see substance as not set off against things other than itself—most importantly here, process—do we understand its true character as substance." And vice versa.

Conclusion

I have indicated some ways in which Dr. Suzuki's two posthumous volumes on Shin Buddhism have helped me toward kneading four theological opposites into dialectical negotiables. If I ask in conclusion why they do so, the answer that comes to me runs something like this:

Buddhism issued from the Buddha's enlightenment. That enlightenment pierced to a depth of truth so far beyond the normal that it defied verbal description and accentuated the "two levels of truth" thesis, intimated in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and *Īśa Upaniṣads*, to an extent that made it pivotal for all sub-

[20] Dr. Suzuki describes the latter challenge as follows: "The Indians . . . indulged too much in the static side. [Their] way of thinking is to be immersed in . . . sameness. [Following the Buddha's lead,] the Chinese practical mind sees [that] the 'becoming' aspect is not neglected. . . . The Buddha's way of thinking is that . . . sameness is . . . the infinite series of consciousness-waves" (*The Field of Zen*, London: The Buddhist Society, 1969, pp. 19, 75).

sequent Indian thought.[21] This thesis throws all conceptualizations into a supporting role. As *upāyas*—provisional means, instrumental devices—they can be important, even decisively important inasmuch as, skilfully employed, they can awaken enlightenment. But not being enlightenment itself, they are second-order truths and therefore always relative—for Buddhism Nāgārjuna and the Mādhyamika worked this out exhaustively and probably definitively. In Frithjof Schuon's image, these second-order truths are "celestial mirages" designed to catch as in a golden net the greatest possible number of creatures plunged in ignorance, suffering, and darkness.[22] But they are not absolute. They are negotiable.

As for first-order truth, in what is perhaps the most widely read text in modern Japan, *Tannishō*, this truth is located in the nembutsu whose "reason is where it transcends all reasonings, because it is inexpressible, indefinable and inconceivable" (*CW*, 211). If truth of this order seems to our Western minds to be slippery if not amorphous, this may be because of the degree to which our minds have been structured by Aristotle, it being, as Dr. Suzuki says, "impossible in the world of *dualistic logic* for beings to have a connection to the highest reality without the intervention of some intermediate condition," be it a conceptual representation or a symbol of some other sort. "Yet Japanese spirituality," he adds, "accomplishes this connection directly, without any difficulty" (*Japanese Spirituality*, 21, italics added). It is as if the Japanese could accept without surprise and as a matter of course that the passengers on the *Warrimoo* were cheated out of their New Year's Eve party because December 31 dropped out of their lives forever. It had vanished in the Void.

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[21] See Mervyn Sprung (ed.), *The Problem of Two Truths in Buddhism and Vedanta* (Holland: D. Reidel Publishing, 1973).

[22] *In the Tracks of Buddhism* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1968), p. 128.