

ZYOITI SUETUNA

## *In the Field of Kegon*

On the morning of July 12th, the morning paper reported that Dr. Suzuki had been rushed by ambulance to St. Luke's Hospital in Tokyo in critical condition. Greatly shocked at the news, I went straight away to the hospital, but alas I found he had already succumbed.

It was in the beginning of May 1945, just before the termination of the last war at the time Dr. Kitarō Nishida passed away at Kamakura, that I had the honor to meet Dr. Suzuki for the first time. In the summer of 1947 when I accompanied him to Komatsu city in the Hokuriku district on a joint lecture tour, he told me on the train to pay special attention, among other things in Buddhism, to Avatamsaka thought. From then on, I took to the study of Avatamsaka thought and at the same time acquired the habit of reading Dr. Suzuki's works.

Whenever I visited him, various topics would come up, not only Zen Buddhism and Avatamsaka thought, but also numbers, infinity, continuum, and the like, about which he would speak with much interest. It was on April 24th, 1966 that I met him for the last time. Although he then seemed to have more difficulty in hearing than before, he looked quite fine and I felt he was assured of living to a hundred. It is truly to be profoundly regretted that he so suddenly passed away of an illness which assaulted him so unexpectedly.

On various occasions he referred to Avatamsaka thought. He even published the collated Sanskrit text of the *Gaṇḍavyāha* Chapter 入法界品 of the *Avatamsaka Sutra* 華嚴經. This shows how he was especially interested in the philosophy in this chapter of Avatamsaka thought. Moreover, he seemed to have a particular interest in the

passages about Maitreya, in which are found a variety of interpretations of *bodhicitta* 菩提心. On the other hand, he referred only once, in his *Kegon no Kenkyū* ("Studies in the Avatamsaka," 1955), to the *Dasabhami* Chapter (Chapter on the Bodhisattva's Ten Stages) which is generally regarded theoretically as the core of the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*. It seems to me that although Dr. Suzuki considered the Avatamsaka philosophy consummated by Fa-tsang 法藏, 3rd patriarch of the Avatamsaka school, as the highest philosophy born in the East, he did not take much interest in the structure of Avatamsaka philosophy itself. Even in China most Zen masters showed little interest in the systematized Avatamsaka philosophy. Dr. Suzuki scarcely referred to the *Wu-chiao-chang* 五教章 and the *T'ang-hsüan-chi* 探玄記, Fa-tsang's main works. (The *Wang-chin huan-yüan-kuan* 妄盡還源觀 was quoted by him in the above-mentioned "Kegon no Kenkyū" as well as in his thesis, "The Significance of Avatamsaka Thought in the Present Age," which is contained in his *Sensha* (Selected Works) and the *Hua-yen-ching-chih-kuei* 華嚴經旨歸 was also quoted elsewhere.) And he only referred to *Jagen*<sup>1</sup> 十支 and *Rokusō*<sup>2</sup> 六相 when he explained the *Jagen* by introducing the *Suvarṇasimha* (Golden-lion) Chapter 金獅子章 of the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* which is quoted in his *The Essence of Buddhism*,<sup>3</sup> a work made as a result of his lecture given in the presence of the Emperor. This Golden-lion Chapter came into being as a result of Fa-tsang's lectures on Avatamsaka thought delivered in the presence of Tsê-t'ien Wu-hou 則天武后 (684-705) of the Tang Dynasty, and it seems to me that it was not a coincidence that Dr. Suzuki quoted this Chapter at his own Imperial lecture. When I was told for the first time by Dr. Suzuki about Avatamsaka philosophy, he recommended that I read this Golden-lion Chapter and Tsung-mi's<sup>4</sup> *Commentary on Hua-yen-fa-chieh-kuan-mên* 註華嚴法界觀門. *Hua-yen-fa-chieh-kuan-mên* is

<sup>1</sup> The ten characteristics of the world in which phenomena are interdependent; this term was first used by Chih-yen 智嚴.

<sup>2</sup> The six universal characteristics: the whole, the parts making the whole, unity, the variety making the unity, entirety, the fractions making the entirety.

<sup>3</sup> 佛教の大意 *Bukkyō no Tai-i* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1947; Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1942).

<sup>4</sup> 宗密. J., Shūmitsu.

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regarded as the only work left by Tu-shun 杜順, founder of the Chinese Fa-yen Sect, and it is, in effect, an exposition of the Kegon philosophy of *jijimuge*.<sup>1</sup> I consider that it is this philosophy of *jijimuge*, adopted from the Kegon thought, that constitutes the basis of innumerable expositions of Zen Buddhism that Dr. Suzuki made in the past. For instance, in the Zen and Swordsmanship Chapter of his book *Zen and Japanese Culture*, after writing, "Fluidity and emptiness are convertible terms," he adds in a footnote:

"Fluidity" is an important idea in Oriental thought structure. Enō (Hui-nēng), the sixth patriarch of Chinese Zen, states that Tao is to flow unobstructedly, and the swordsman urges us to keep the mind from "stopping" at one point, to have it in a state of constant mobility, so that the sword loses no time in hitting the opponent as soon as he betrays the least sign of relaxation (*suki*). This is a *tomaranu kokoro* ("non-stopping mind"), that is, "fluidity." In Kegon philosophy it is known as "Reality in its aspect of *jiji muge*" (cf. my *The Essence of Buddhism*, pp. 50ff.). The *jiji muge* may be interpreted as the metaphysical counterpart of the psychological *tomaranu kokoro*.

It is my conviction that the fact he had something sharp within his personality which outwardly looked mild derived from his penetrating *ken* 見 (*darśana*, insight). The late Dr. Kitarō Nishida remarked of Dr. Suzuki that he was "a person full of erudition and insight."<sup>2</sup> "Insight" in this case is none other than *darśana*. Dr. Suzuki himself says: "*Darśana*, indeed, is wisdom on one hand, and working on the other."<sup>3</sup> Again he says: "*Sraddha* (faith) is to see oneself."<sup>4</sup> Dr. Suzuki's *ken* manifests itself in his presentation of "person" 人 as the core of the *Lin-chi-lu* 臨濟錄 as well as in his choice of the philosophy of *jijimuge* as the essence of Avatamsaka thought. While he explains *kenshō* 見性 tentatively as "seeing into

<sup>1</sup> 事々無礙. The philosophy that all forms of phenomenal existence in the world blend with each other without impediment.

<sup>2</sup> Preface to 禪と日本文化: Japanese translation of his *Zen and Japanese Culture* (Tokyo: Iwanami-shoten, 1940; Shunjūsha, 1942).

<sup>3</sup> In Japanese 臨濟の基本思想 "The Fundamental Thought of Rinzi" (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron-sha, 1949; Shunjūsha, 1953).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* (1949 ed.), p. 55.

one's own nature,"<sup>1</sup> he emphasizes the identity of *ken* and *shō* (nature) when he asserts: "Zen is to experience that *ken* is no other than *shō*, and *shō* is no other than *ken*; that is to say, there is no *shō* apart from *ken*, and no *ken* apart from *shō*, and that there is an absolute identity between *ken* and *shō*"<sup>2</sup> In view of the fact that there is an insistence on the identity of *ken* and *shō* in Tai-chu Hui-hai's<sup>3</sup> *Tun-wu-yao-mên* (*Essentials of the Abrupt Awakening*) 頓悟要門, Dr. Suzuki's insistence to the same effect was not a revolutionary view, and yet it was highly persuasive when the same view was set forth by Dr. Suzuki who was so penetrating in *darśana* himself.

He says: "A man *works* and at the same time *sees*. He works while seeing and sees while working—this is how a man is."<sup>4</sup> In this statement the notion, which is called in Nishida's philosophy the *intuition by action* 行為的直観, is clearly reflected. Although the idea of this *intuition by action* has so far been criticized in many ways, it constitutes one of the most important ideas of Nishida's philosophy since 1934, and I myself have also repeatedly emphasized that this *intuition by action* is also at work at the basis of mathematics. In his earlier works Dr. Suzuki himself often used the phrase, *intuition by action*.<sup>5</sup> It is interesting to note that the idea is clearly expressed, though not in identical terms, in the preface to his *Tōyō no Kokoro* which was mentioned above. Parallel with the idea of *intuition by action*, Nishida's philosophy since 1936 has expounded the idea of *self-identity in absolute contradictions* 絶対矛盾的自己同一, which is also one of the most important ideas in Nishida's thought. Dr. Suzuki always stressed the logic of *sokuhi*<sup>6</sup> upon the basis of *prajñāpāramitā* philosophy, and frequently employed the phrase, *self-identity in absolute contradictions*, on varied occasions.

<sup>1</sup> *Living by Zen* (Tokyo, 1949), p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> 文化と宗教 "Culture and Religion," *Zoku Suzuki Daisetsu Senshū*, V (Tokyo, 1953), p. 216.

<sup>3</sup> 大珠慧海, J., Taiju Ekai.

<sup>4</sup> 東洋の心. "The Oriental Mind," (Tokyo, 1965).

<sup>5</sup> 禅思想史研究. "Studies in the History of Zen Thought", (Tokyo, 1943). See also Additional Volume of *Suzuki Daisetsu Senshū* III (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1957), 104-170.

<sup>6</sup> The formula is: A is A, because A is Not-A; or A is Not-A, therefore A is A.

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It must be extremely difficult to understand the meaning of *self-identity in absolute contradictions* in a broader perspective from the standpoint of Western philosophy. It is easier for us, however, to do so naturally, without difficulty, and with wider scope, from the standpoint of Avatamsaka philosophy which holds that all *dharma*s are what are in fact fashioned by One Mind, and that they are mutually interpenetrated and interrelated to one another without obstructions. As a matter of fact, unless this idea is accepted most of the *mondō*s (questions and answers) of Zen Buddhism will forever remain an enigma.

Throughout his lifetime lasting nearly a century, Dr. Suzuki endeavored to make Zen Buddhism fully appreciated by people all over the world. His central philosophy seems to me to consist in the Avatamsaka idea of *jijimuge*, the interpenetration of all *dharma*s without obstruction, which can be tersely expressed in terms of Nishida's philosophy as *self-identity in absolute contradictions*. We deeply regret that one of Dr. Suzuki's long-cherished desires, the full exposition in English of Avatamsaka philosophy, was not completed.