

CHARLES MORRIS

A Tribute

My first meeting with Daisetz Suzuki was on October 1, 1948, at the Engakuji Temple in Kamakura. I was brought there and introduced to him by Professor Shunsuke Tsurumi, who had been one of my students for a few months at Harvard University.

At that time I was exploring the traditions about Maitreya (*Miroku*), and that was one topic of our conversation. I remember also his statement that the social task is now the integration of the Russian emphasis upon the community with the Western emphasis upon individuality. I expressed the hope that Japan might contribute greatly to the fulfillment of that task. A report on this conversation appeared in *Sekai Hyōron (World Review)* in February 1949.

Both Dr. Suzuki and I were members of the Second East-West Philosophers' Conference, held in Honolulu during the summer of 1949. In later years we were together a number of times at the University of Chicago (where he lectured and held conferences), and in New York City during his teaching at Columbia University.

The contact with Dr. Suzuki was an important event in my life. It deepened and strengthened my interest in Buddhism which had begun when I was a young man of about 20. I treasure this friendship and this influence. It reassured me in the direction my own thinking was taking.

Let me repeat what I wrote in my article in *Buddhism and Culture*¹ concerning the importance of Dr. Suzuki's transmission of Zen Buddhism to the West in general and to the United States in

¹ Dedicated to Dr. Suzuki in commemoration of his ninetieth birthday, edited by Susumu Yamaguchi.

A TRIBUTE

particular:

Daisetz Suzuki will in historical perspective stand alongside the Indian scholars who carried Buddhism to China and the Chinese scholars who carried it to Japan. He has lived and worked among us many years and over a long period of time. Both as a person and as a writer he has had considerable influence, and this influence continues to grow . . . His has been a great and devoted act.

In my opinion the mutual understanding and active cooperation between Japan and the United States is of the greatest importance in the present world situation. Here more than anywhere else lies the richest possibility for the fruitful interaction of Asian and Western cultures, an interaction which can have momentous consequences for each culture and for future world history. No one has done as much to prepare Americans for this interaction as has Daisetz Suzuki.

Here is a tribute that I wrote to Dr. Suzuki after a talk with him in Chicago in 1951:

Daisetz Suzuki

You of the singular humbler men:
Others spoke their youth through you:
Gotama, Kegon, Shin, and Zen.
Sheer man: unyoked; humanly true.