

Zen and the Modern World

– D.T. Suzuki on the Eastern Way of Seeing Things

By Ueda Shizuteru

“Be broad outwardly, deep inwardly” — so said D.T. Suzuki, the well-known author of such works as *Essays in Zen Buddhism* (three volumes, 1927-1934), *Zen Buddhism and its Influence on Japanese Culture* (1938; later as *Zen and Japanese Culture*, 1959), *Living by Zen* (1949), and *Mysticism: Christian and Buddhist* (1957).

A man who walked the path of Zen, Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki (1870-1966) was the embodiment of the Eastern spiritual traditions, such as Mahayana Buddhism and Taoism. Living nearly a quarter of a century abroad and through being married to an American woman, he presents us with a rare man of the world in whom East and West intermingle on the most intimate of terms. As a person who stood at the interface of cultures East and West, the life aspiration that blossomed in him in a vast career embracing East and West was a search for ways to present the world with the significance that the East truly held for the world. Regarding himself as “a Japanese aspiring to world citizenship” and a Japanese seeking to come to terms with the world, Suzuki dedicated his entire life to demonstrating the Orient’s meaning for the world, with the West as a target audience. His words extolling human truth, while bringing a fresh breeze into the world, issued out of the still center of a world in which he stood as he rose to the occasion. This amazing career of D.T. Suzuki came to an end on July 12, 1966, when he succumbed to complications arising from an intestinal blockage at the age of 96. “No, nothing, thank you,” were the final words he spoke. These words he spoke as the end was approaching were in response to a question, “Would you like something?” posed by his American-born and-raised secretary, Okamura Mihoko, who was with him from the time he was a visiting lecturer at Columbia until his final years. A life had lived itself out, it had spent its course, and having drawn out its pittance

to span a life of 96 years, it had dwindled down to this final “No, nothing, thank you.” It had become this Zen-like “Nothingness” expressive of gratitude, and then vanished like a fragrant breeze.

Once, late in life, someone asked Suzuki, “Sensei, don’t you ever wonder what would become of you after you die?” Suzuki replied, “Yes, but what about here and now? Would it not be too late after death?” Having lived out his life by creatively responding whenever and wherever the challenge presented itself to live in the here and now, he departed this world with the words, “No, nothing, thank you.” To posterity he left behind over 30 works in English and a 32-volume *Suzuki Daisetz Zenshu* (collected works of Daisetz T. Suzuki) in Japanese (Iwanami Shoten Publishers).

What essential qualities characterize the life he lived? From the time he began to use the name “Daisetz,” there were two major determining factors in his life. The first was the Zen experience of doing intensive one-on-one interviews with Zen masters; the second was his experience of living in America on his first journey lasting more than ten years.

Daisetz Suzuki was born in Kanazawa to a family that traditionally served as physicians to the Kaga clan. His original name was Teitaro. At the age of six his father died and the family fell into poverty, forcing him to leave without completing middle school. (It was here that he met Nishida Kitaro whom he would become close friends with in later years.) After gaining experience as an English teacher, he set out for Tokyo in 1891. No doubt with much to ponder, Suzuki took his first serious steps along the Zen path under the guidance of the old Zen *roshi* Imakita Kosen of Engakuji temple in Kamakura. He was 21 at the time. The following year the old *roshi* died, and he continued his Zen practice under Zen *roshi* Shaku Soen. “Daisetz” was the name that Suzuki received from

Soen *roshi* as a lay practitioner. The kanji for “-setz” usually means humble, stupid, or clumsy. However in Zen, this quality — sometimes translated “simplicity” — describes the ultimate end of spiritual training, i.e., to be free of artfulness, deliberateness, or calculating mind in general. The “Dai-” means “great,” not just great as in things great and small, but absolute. “Dai-setz” is thus comparable to the Christian idea of the Holy Fool. In the course of his training with Zen masters, Suzuki must have shown himself to Soen *roshi* as a person having this Daisetz quality. Or perhaps it was Soen *roshi* who discovered in Suzuki this Daisetz-ness. Thus the trajectory of the path he plied under these two superb Zen masters later became, via a lengthy sojourn abroad, the path of his life rooted in “living Zen.”

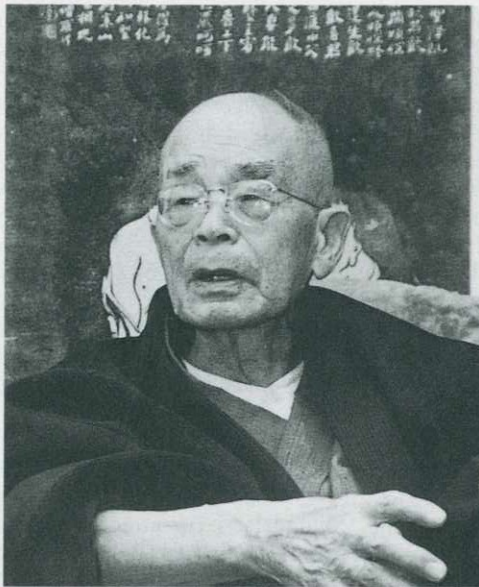
Zazen and sanzen

To tread the path of Zen practice consists mainly of doing *zazen*, or “sitting in meditation,” and *sanzen*, or interviews with a Zen master. Let me make a few observations in this regard. *Zazen* is to sit with straight posture in a state of composure. You do not use your hands, you don’t look at anything, you don’t think anything. (Note that ever since human beings have stood erect with hands swinging free, they have been able to fashion the world to their own tastes; if we consider the impact that this development has had on the world — environmental destruction being merely one such manifestation — we can glean something of the significance that sitting and doing nothing holds.) And as you sit there quietly, ever so quietly, you start to open up inside, you start to open up to a boundless dimension transcending the world. It then becomes clear to you where that place is where you come into the ground of your own being and what it is to simply be as such. But this does not mean that one who treads the path of Zen does nothing. In that mode of being one

must scramble to one's feet again and step out into the world afresh, the first thing on the agenda being the sanzen interview with the Zen master.

Sanzen is essentially a question and answer session with the roshi as soon as you get up from sitting meditation. As one gets up from sitting in zazen and is on the verge of returning to the world once again, one has to learn the basic attitude with which to engage the world "out there." Sanzen basically is answering questions like "What are you?" and "What is it you do?" But to respond to these questions adequately, you have to be a person who can field them. Ultimately the problem one has to answer is — What does it truly mean for a person to be free?

It was this D.T. Suzuki who, at age 27, would cross the Pacific Ocean to America in 1897 to live abroad for more than ten years until 1909 (the final year he spent in Europe). In those days a foreign country had the image of literally being a strange land beyond the seas. However, Suzuki's purpose in going to America was not sightseeing or inspection tour or foreign study, but to live and work in this strange land as his homebase. This opportunity presented itself through the recommendation of Shaku Soen. In 1893 Soen attended the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago, where he made the acquaintance of Dr. Paul Carus who lived in LaSalle, a town on the outskirts of Chicago. It was through Soen's recommendation that Suzuki went to assist Carus with his English translations of Chinese classics. Suzuki's job at the Open Court Publishing Company, Chicago, which Carus ran, was to help out with the editing and proofreading of their journal. The content of Suzuki's work may have mainly involved Asian classics, but the work he was doing was being done in America and he was conducting his daily affairs in a purely American setting. It was through those ten years of life abroad that Suzuki learned how to conduct his life in Western culture. One telling change that took place was that English was no longer a foreign language to him. (In everyday life, for instance, he would talk to the cat in English.) Thus, rather than see the



Daisetz T. Suzuki introduced Zen to the West through his own life

Photo: The Mainichi Newspapers

challenge to adapt himself to life in the Western world as a step down from the basics of "living by Zen," it became a determining factor that brought out the true grit in his life.

One event that well determined the direction his life would take was his decision to marry an American woman. In 1911, Suzuki was united in marriage to Beatrice Erskine Lane (1878-1939), whose acquaintance he had made in America and with whom he shared many common interests. In the eyes of those around him this was a definitive statement of the independent tenor of his life. For Suzuki, this not only meant that English would be the language he would use as he went about his daily life, but also that, as the intimate human partners in an I and Thou relationship, it would be the medium with which they would exchange the deepest sentiments of the heart. To the extent that language can be used to convey one's understanding of oneself or explain a certain experience or grasp the world, for English to be used as the medium of transacting daily life, as well as the language of one's deepest thoughts, has enormous implications for Suzuki's Zen thought and the history of Zen thought that he authored. (Indeed, Suzuki achieved a first when he showed how Zen could be

talked about in English and how things spoken of in English could be seen to have Zen content. This cornerstone achievement of putting Zen texts written in Chinese *kambun* and Japanese into the entirely different language base of English, may be seen to stand on a par with Dogen's *Shobogenzo* [The Dharma Treasury of the True Eye] in which Zen is expressed in a Japanese syntax for the first time.) For the next ten years after his return to Japan in 1909, Suzuki served as a professor on the faculty of Gakushuin University, then known as Peers College. In 1921, at the age of 51, he became a professor at Otani University, Kyoto, where he founded the Eastern Buddhist Society, and began publishing *The Eastern Buddhist*, a journal in English of Buddhist thought which he edited jointly with his wife Beatrice Lane.

Zen and the Western cultural sphere

It was thus in this rather unique situation of "Zen and the Western cultural sphere" that Suzuki began his career. On the one hand, there was the Western cultural sphere, and on the other there was Zen. "In the West, people think about things basically by dividing them into two (dualism). The East is just the opposite; they approach the problem from a point prior to the division (nondualism)." This Eastern mode of existential awareness is Zen. In the Western way of dualistic awareness, for instance, a flower or a tree or a stone exists as an object outside of the person perceiving it. In contrast, in the Eastern mode of awareness, "when a person sees a flower or a tree or a stone, unless that flower or stone sees us as well, this is not true seeing. The seeing hasn't taken place" (*Toyoteki-na mikata* [The Eastern way of seeing things], Shunjusha Publishing Co., 1963, when Suzuki was 93; p. 15). "The Western mind will dismiss the idea saying, 'That's unthinkable.'" The Eastern mind takes that 'unthinkableness' and uses it as its starting point" (*ibid.*, p. 7). Suzuki experienced where the fundamental difference lies between East and West, each tradition having developed its own formulation of reality. Here, Suzuki's concern was not to contrast or distinguish, such that "East is East and West is West."

For him, the distinctive situation he found himself in could not be adequately dealt with merely by contrasting the two cultures. As the Western cultural sphere was already a part of his life, the problem that truly concerned him was how to integrate the two into a whole expressive of the depths of life. In his situation it was somehow possible for him to work out a resolution of the ostensible differences between East and West that he keenly experienced to reach a higher level where the potential cultural differences existing throughout the world could be accommodated. This higher potential not only worked to the advantage of someone living in a foreign culture like D.T. Suzuki. It explored, rather, a positive new link between East and West where the possibility of a single world loomed on the horizon. As a world that ought to exist, it would be a new testing ground for the broadening and deepening of the different cultural potentials existing in the human world. This theme was one that Suzuki drew up out of the well of his own experience as he answered his life's calling.

This theme was not concerned with the vigorous combination or synthesis of Eastern and Western elements. It was a theme that penetrates to the level where the question religion poses confronts us straightway. It was a theme that forces us to confront our basic thinking determining the kind of life we pursue in this world. The "Zen and the Western cultural sphere" situation that Suzuki found himself in demanded of him on the one hand "to think carefully and act practically," and on the other "to stop dillydallying, leaving those hairsplitting thoughts behind." This presented him with a new and rather special challenge to try to accommodate these separate and inconsistent demands. Suzuki was a person who had deep roots in traditional Zen, and yet he was seeking to live by Zen in a new world that knew nothing of Zen. More concretely, the Western cultural sphere was a world where the notion of living by Zen basically was not a received and self-evident truth. This was a great problem to which Suzuki would devote his entire life. It can be said that, when modern Japan encountered the West, new landmarks were established in

world history by Natsume Soseki (1867-1916) in literature, Nishida Kitaro (1870-1945) in philosophy, and D.T. Suzuki in religion, this by the themes they took up.

Four years after the end of the war, for a ten-year period beginning from June 1949, when Suzuki was 79, until November 1958, Suzuki was in the United States. He began at the University of Hawaii. This was followed by a tour of several universities at the invitation of the Rockefeller Foundation. Later, he was at Columbia University where he lectured on such topics as "Zen Buddhism," "Japanese culture and Buddhism," "Asian thought and culture," "Hua-yen philosophy," and "Zen philosophy and religion." During that period, in 1953 and 1954, he was also in Ascona, Switzerland, to attend the Eranos conferences, the first Japanese ever to be invited. In May 1958, he gave a lecture as Far Eastern representative to the Religion section of the Brussels World's Fair, taking in various sights in Europe along the way. This second long journey abroad undertaken late in life, which was a feat in itself, gave him occasion to delve his thoughts once more into this unique situation of Zen and the Western cultural sphere. Thus, at those very first encounters between the history of the Western world and the history of Zen, those historical points and geographical sites mark the places where Suzuki lived out his career.

In the pursuit of this theme, the notion of Zen as a philosophy or thought system has a special place in Suzuki's thoughts, and I think it is important to make note of it here. Thought systems map out the "space" linking different cultures, and bring us to realize that "space" is where we must aspire to live. In the eyes of the world, Zen has to have "a solid philosophical system" to back it up, or so Suzuki would say (*Hisamatsu Shin'ichi e no shokan* [Letter to Hisamatsu], dated January 13, 1954). If we recall that traditional Zen has always taken a rather negative attitude toward any sort of thought system, the freshness of Suzuki's view becomes apparent. For Suzuki, however, Zen was not a philosophy. Once, to demonstrate his point, he grabbed the table before him and rattled it, saying, "Zen is like this." This primordial sound,

as if intimating the destruction of the old world and the arising of the new, is said to have had a direct impact on Nishida Kitaro who happened to be there. But does this say everything there is to say about Zen? And, at the same time, if we ask what this kind of Zen means for someone like Suzuki living in a world embracing East and West, this question has to be clarified in order for such a person to truly live in that world. Here we must turn to the workings of a philosophy or thought system for an answer. The workings of that thought system would also articulate the crux of Suzuki's own understanding of himself as a person living in a world embracing East and West. Zen is not a philosophy, but, in view of the circumstances, Zen has to espouse a philosophy for the sake of the world.

Suzuki's Oriental way

And so what kind of philosophy are we talking about? In 1963, three years before his death, Suzuki put out a book for Japanese readers called *Toyoteki-na mikata* (The Orient's way of looking at things). In the Introduction he writes, "I believe this book in a sense represents a thought system I have arrived at only most recently." That is, if we were to ask for one word that would describe the basic character of Suzuki's philosophical system, that word would have to be *Toyoteki*, the Orient's way. Here we must caution the reader to respond directly to what Suzuki means by *Toyoteki*, putting aside what they generally assume to mean by the term.

Even then, Suzuki was a person who rejected the sentimentality of the Oriental heart and urged that we learn from the practical mindedness of the West. He was a person who criticized various aspects of Japanese society. He was a person who even criticized traditional Zen, saying, "Don't be so smug." If so, why does he especially go out of his way to stress this Orientalness? Why does it have to be this Oriental way? And what does this Orientalness mean to Suzuki? It was not because he himself was Asian that he spoke highly of the Oriental way. It was, rather, a mode of being that the Japanese had lost sight of. In this work, what Suzuki was emphasizing was not Orientalism vis-a-vis Westernism; he was

urging the Japanese reader to grasp themselves globally. This grasp of themselves was not simply that of themselves as Japanese. The theme of the book was to probe "the contribution of the Orient to the world culture that is sure to come into existence," thus the theme from the beginning was that of the world. It was the theme that the significance of the Orient should not be allowed to be lost on the new world. Suzuki himself thought of himself "as a Japanese aspiring to world citizenship." (A Japanese pretending to be a Westerner was not a world citizen. Nor is a Westerner as a mere Westerner a world citizen.) What Suzuki meant by world citizen is not the so-called international person. What made the Japanese known as Daisetz Suzuki a world citizen is not simply a matter of his having lived abroad or having been married to an American woman. The defining character of his role was that he demonstrated the path we had to take in order for us to become world citizens. In order to achieve this, there has to be a fundamental opening up of ourselves. Toward that end what made this possible for Suzuki was Zen, as captured in the Zen phrases, "Originally, there is neither East nor West," and "That thing called the Self has no shape 'out there', yet it penetrates the universe in every direction." In this mode of being, what does Suzuki, our Japanese aspirant to world citizenship, mean by being Oriental? I will here cite a passage that would suggest the character and range of the world in his usage of it.

" 'In the middle of the desert in Central Asia where I had pitched a tent, I peered out of the opening to see the vast firmament filled with thousands of stars, and in that moment I experienced satori.' This is the story of an Englishman that I once heard fondly recalled by the very person himself. In the midst of an age full of vengeance and strife where materialism runs rampant, it is wonderful that such an Oriental as this should appear. Shouldn't this be a dimension that the Japanese ought to aspire to?"

These words appear toward the end of the chapter "The aspirant to the Oriental way" (*Toyoteki-na mikata*, p. 131). In the passage he says of an Englishman that here is a sterling example of "such an

Oriental," a person who embodies the virtues of the Oriental way. In this living example of the Oriental way, Suzuki says that it would be well for the Japanese, who are themselves Oriental, to "aspire... to that dimension." The reason why he cites this Englishman as especially noteworthy is the mode of being he evinces. While there is something called "the Oriental outlook" of traditional Asian culture, aspiring to this "Oriental way of looking at things" is a possibility that is basically open to all people, even for a Westerner, as we have seen in the case of our Englishman. When we turn our heart and eye from this world to gaze upon the starry sky, we can with that same heart and eye look again upon this world in a new light. Once we truly accomplish only this much, it ushers in a sea change in the way we live in this world qualitatively. By experiencing this change in oneself inspired by the Oriental way, we cut off at the root the heated breath feeding armed conflict and economic struggle, and breathing easily in today's age, we stand at the starting point of a path that will lead to the salvation of the world — this was D.T. Suzuki's deepest wish. When it comes to the theme of salvation, the world is in a peculiar state of affairs. Shortly after the war, Suzuki reportedly said, "Cutting down all these trees will cause people to go insane" — a statement of shockingly penetrating insight. What Suzuki saw was not so much the environmental destruction that anyone of us now living fifty years later can see taking place all around us, but the horrible change that had come over people.

We might think of Suzuki's Oriental way as a sort of counterculture for humankind taking place on a global scale. This is not to take one thing and replace it with another. Rather, it is to provide us with what we must never lose if we hope to truly live. For the life force of that counterculture, Suzuki regarded Zen as second to none as the source of this anti-culture impulse vis-a-vis culture. So saying, it is important to note that what Suzuki pointed to as being Zen often went beyond the fixed views on Zen that people hold. For instance, he once took up this short exchange between mother and child that appeared in a review of an American

book. "Where did you go?" "Out." "What did you do?" "Nothing." That's all the conversation consists of, but Suzuki finds Zen herein and cites this not as a lead-in, but as a full-blown Zen exchange. "This is very interesting! He said that he had been outdoors, but that he had done nothing. In actuality, of course, he did all sorts of things that playing children always do: he ran and he jumped, and after playing all morning he went home for lunch. How interesting! For him, doing all these things was the same as doing nothing. Running and jumping are marvelous activities, but in the eyes of a child there is nothing special about them — they are nothing. This is what unobstructed freedom is." At the heart of living, we have to have this dimension to our lives, and this is what Suzuki's "Oriental way of looking at things" is all about. For world citizen D.T. Suzuki, it was not imperative for Zen to close itself off as Zen. In the child's saying "Nothing," Suzuki perceived the "Nothingness" of Zen. Seeing Zen's "Nothingness" in the child's "Nothing," he brings that "Nothingness" to life. But what Suzuki intended here went beyond this. In reconstructing the child's day, he could show how the child was actually living out of himself in many different ways. "That's what Suzuki enjoyed about this passage. This is very interesting!" he says. Only Suzuki could pick up on this kind of incident and give it a Zen twist. And this he would do whether the incident was Western or Japanese.

As a living example of a person who instilled Buddhist values in others through his life encounters, there were occasions when Suzuki's responses could be rather piercing. For instance, late in life, just after he returned to Japan having completed a lecture tour of American universities in the postwar period, he was surrounded by former students from the time when he was a professor at Gakushuin University at a dinner in his honor. On that occasion, someone asked, "Did the Americans understand your Zen talks?" "Sensei replied curtly, 'By which you mean that you would have understood them?' — this remark flashing back without an instant elapsing. I'll never forget the rapid parrying which took place

at that time" — these words being set down by the person who posed the question. Suzuki had a knack for adapting himself to each situation in a way that truly made it an occasion where an encounter could take place. Thus, the talks that Suzuki gave in America were not engineered in such a way that only Japanese could understand or only Americans could understand.

In the three examples cited above, Suzuki positively bursts beyond the limits of our fixed notions of "the Orient," thus when we wish to understand what he means by the Oriental way, we must always consider the issue in light of the qualities these examples introduce.

There is one more important point that we must also consider, and that is Suzuki's clearly voiced criticism, rejection and denial, in other contexts, of things Oriental. For Suzuki the Oriental way of seeing things represented an irreplaceable quality for the world as far as our subjective sense of being was concerned. At the same time, he was a harsh and unrelenting critic of the sentimental strain of Japanese and Oriental culture as seen in the so-called ethnic mentality, and he was equally critical of the ambiguous and impractical customs of Japan and the Orient. "What would immediately catch our eye as a weak point in the Japanese mind is their apparent inability to discriminate matters thoroughly. This shortcoming appears time and again in their emotional and indiscriminate response to the situation." "The Japanese are prone to well up with such emotion that they are dragged away by the tide. They are not able to apply their minds to think for themselves. It would seem their powers of logical reasoning have yet to develop to the full." For Suzuki who had lived in the Western cultural sphere, this was clearly a shortcoming that had to be addressed. "Were this the West, we would first think through the matter completely and then act." In these contexts, Suzuki repeats over and again the need to learn from the practical mindedness of the West. "The tawdry show of sentimentality put on by those who aspire to the Oriental way has to be in large part tossed out. Here we must learn from European and American practical mindedness. Such

sentimentality has to be replaced." "As proponents of the Oriental way, we must learn from the [Western tradition of] dualistic thinking how to penetrate to the heart of the matter."

So saying, he then goes on to point out that while "we can never resolve the problem of life merely by applying dualistic means" and that "[dualistic means] is not the ultimate tool," it is surely possible to achieve this in our aspiration to live as human beings. This matter Suzuki points to directly when he uses the unassuming word "Toyoteki," the Oriental way. We must learn from dualistic means, but at the same time it is not the ultimate tool. Where it falls short is indicated by his saying, "Dualism breeds such undesirable traits as exclusivism and egotism as aspects of its character." This is something that has to be overcome. While dualistic thinking is something unavoidable in human beings, in the discrimination of the world into two, we must look to the margins of the "two" and seek to reinforce the sense prior to the "two" (nondiscrimination). (This way of dealing with the problem is what Suzuki expressed philosophically as the "discrimination of nondiscrimination." I will touch on the subject once more later on.) In the place where people exist there has to be a boundless margin to the world, there has to be a bottomless path that passes between the lines. It is here that we find the eye hinge to the Orient's way of seeing things.

When we examine Suzuki's usage of the word "Toyoteki," or the Orient's way, we find it a radical incorporation of two poles of meaning. On the one hand Toyoteki bears the significance of something irreplaceable, on the other hand it is something to be refuted. In this case, it is not a matter of the two meanings being parallel to one another. Under certain conditions or situations, the former is antipodal to the latter and works to the latter's undoing, thus enabling a sea change to occur. In the passage cited above, what might be called "sentimental nondiscrimination" is emblematic of the surmounting of this shortcoming. Nondiscrimination is originally a basic term in Mahayana Buddhism. In the wisdom of nondiscrimination, one

transcends the discrimination of being bound to a substantial self (that is, attachment to the idea of a substantial self, the "I" in "I think"), and so nondiscrimination is associated with words of higher import such as the wisdom of liberation (Awakening). Suzuki's basic meaning follows along these lines, except that, in Suzuki, "nondiscrimination," in its role of being nondiscrimination, works to turn over discrimination by removing the duality of discrimination and transforming it into this so-called sentimental nondiscrimination. That "undesirable Oriental way" overcome, the true Orient's way comes to surface in reality. Writes Suzuki, "We must not let the sudden outburst of sentimentality of the people be in vain. On the one hand this has to be tempered by intellect, on the other hand we must probe that affective side even more deeply." In order to present to the world the Orient's way of seeing things, the imperative of having the Japanese learn how to control their emotions through reason, knowledge, and intellect (this being a sort of intellectual exercise) largely assumes that their affective side will concomitantly deepen and become more spiritual (this being achieved through religious praxis). Suzuki himself manifested to the world a living example of this dimension.

The Orient's way of seeing things that Suzuki proposed was not a way of seeing that was limited to the Orient. It appeared historically in the traditions of the East, but that quality itself was one basic potential accessible to all people everywhere. As far as the present world is concerned, however, the Orient's way of seeing things takes on the sense of a certain, special potential that should never be lost sight of. When explaining what it means philosophically, Suzuki would use the term "the nondiscrimination of discrimination," but when he wished to point out what it means to live as such, the word he was most fond of was the rather poetic-sounding term "*myo*." (The word *myo* has long been used in Zen from ancient times, but it was a great challenge for Suzuki to put it into English. Rendering it as "wonderful," or "mysterious," or "beyond thinking" was close but did not quite fit the bill. Once he

came across a phrase from Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, Act 3, Scene I, that he thought fit myo to a tee, and he wrote it up as a hanging scroll: "O wonderful, wonderful, and most wonderful wonderful And yet again wonderful.")

The nondiscrimination of discrimination

There is a Zen phrase that Suzuki loved to quote. "When not a thing has yet disclosed itself, when not the slightest whit has stirred, that's where you stand on the Fundamental Ground. But once a sign appears, once a spring stirs, everything starts to divide (into distinctions such as subject and object, or mind and matter, and so and so on without end)." The former expresses the undivided, nondual state of nondiscrimination; the latter is the duality of discrimination. While traditional Zen has always placed emphasis on the former, in the process of living in the world and travelling back and forth from East to West, Suzuki sought a fundamental ground that would bring all of the basic distinctions between East and West into conformity with one another, and thus placed equal emphasis on the latter and the former. It is in this dynamic movement between the two that we can perceive a true mode of being for humankind. Leaping from duality to nonduality, and then returning back from nonduality to duality. "First, you have to leap into it, and then, once having cut off the world of language and thought, you must start anew." Or, more simply, "Discriminate without discriminating." "This is the discrimination that attends nondiscrimination." "You're like an utterly bewildered person born again as an adult baby." More concisely, this is the discrimination of nondiscrimination. Put in so many words it tends to have a paradoxical ring to it, but when dealing with problems, discrimination is a necessary and relative dimension we cannot dispense with so easily, a fact which tells us something about how people really are.

"The discrimination of nondiscrimination" is not a traditional Oriental term. It is through Suzuki that it became a new Oriental term to the world. "Nondiscrimination," expressive of higher wisdom, and "discrimination," are important terms in Buddhism, and both have

been used from ancient times. From that ancient lexicon he wrought a new word, "the nondiscrimination of discrimination," giving birth to a new basic term. This came about through Suzuki who, from the still center of the world, while maintaining a relation to this world, grasped Zen anew. In that he takes into consideration the Western world of which Suzuki would say, "The Western mode of thinking begins with duality," as well as the world inclusive of the Western world, this would have to be called a new chapter in Zen. Thus, in the "discrimination" of the nondiscrimination of discrimination, subtle contact is being made with the various kinds of duality seen in Western thought, such as subject and object, mind and matter, being and nonbeing, existence and value, monastic and lay, and so on. When we compound this duality with discrimination, this is called "the discrimination of nondiscrimination." At that time, when the duality of the "Discrimination of nondiscrimination" is relativized so as to undo the poison of duality, paradoxically the "twoness" concretely becomes "the discrimination of Nondiscrimination." In this way Suzuki, from the still center of the world, brought forth the vibrant idea of the Orient's way, expressing it as "the discrimination of nondiscrimination." And so, while he challenged the Western world with the statement, "Not discrimination, but the discrimination of Nondiscrimination," he stressed for the Eastern tradition, "Not nondiscrimination, but the Discrimination of nondiscrimination." In this way Suzuki could dispense criticism to the respective party of the East-West dyad using the same term, "the discrimination of nondiscrimination." By speaking of "the discrimination of Nondiscrimination," he threw open the windows to the musty world of discrimination, and by saying "the Discrimination of nondiscrimination," he laid down the groundwork for a path of nondiscrimination passing through the present world.

Although Suzuki was able to come up with a new word "the discrimination of nondiscrimination," he did not stop just at the lexical level. As a person who moved back and forth between East and West, he articulated this word as a term emblematic of an awakening to a new world. This

dynamic movement back and forth between East and West is what this word connotes. Its movement can be described historically as follows. In brief, through the collision with the Western world, the traditional world of the East was awakened from its slumber, and while responding to the Western world (this being the kind of response that the Western world might pay heed to), at the same time it was tentatively testing the waters as far as responding to the problematics of the Western world. Further, the notion of East and West forced people to existentially reinterpret the perceived dimensions of their lives, and in its tentative answer, can be said to have contributed to a deepening of human awareness with regard to the world. In that sense, Suzuki's movement, while exploring the awareness of multicultural societies with mutually divergent elements such as in East and West, or North and South, can be said to be a pioneer effort to give voice to the global nature of the world in the present age, and the method of his movement can be said to suggest a sort of model. Moreover, (if we go one step further), the rapid proliferation of multicultural societies with mutually divergent elements at a global level seems intent on repainting human demographics into a superstandardized world. In this light if, as Suzuki points out, there is meaning to the difference between East and West, this could well serve as a guideline for the wholesome restoration of depth to the one world. Or could it be that the advent of a superstandardized world has forever whisked the very problem of East and West into the past? If it has been forever swept into the past, then it is incumbent upon us to ask what it was that was swept away, what it was that we should be aware of having lost. In this situation, Suzuki's Oriental way of seeing things may well become a profile mirror into which a powerful beacon can be thrown. **UJI**

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