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CROOKED CUCUMBER: The Life and Zen Teaching of Shunryu Suzuki

by David Chadwick

Best known for the little book *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*, Shunryu Suzuki was considered the father of Soto Zen in America. This first biography of Suzuki is a delightful portrait of the man by a San Francisco Zen Center student who knew him well. Based on a thorough review of Suzuki's notes and lectures and over 150 interviews with family, friends, colleagues, and students, as well as his personal knowledge, Chadwick paints a very human, very candid portrait of this "little" teacher who was so important to the awakening of America to Eastern spirituality. Nicknamed "Crooked Cucumber" by his boyhood Zen master on account of his absentmindedness, Suzuki demonstrated with his life how those who appear unsuccessful, not of the ordinary, even not quite "with it," may hide great strength beneath a humble exterior. Wonderful accounts of the Zen scene in the 60s and many previously unpublished sayings and teachings fill out this delightful book. AM