# DAISETZ SUZUKI

The evenings that I spent in his cell with Hiranuma were intriguing, and more, and they helped to introduce me to modern Japanese history, and to Zen Buddhism. But they awakened a longing for something more, and I gradually came to realize that I wasn't going to find it in this old man. I found it, however, soon afterwards and, ironically, in the man to whom Hiranuma had offered to introduce me. He was Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki. I met him in February of 1947 and for the next 18 years, until his death at the age of 96, he was a central figure in my life.

## Getting Acquainted

I first learned of Dr. Suzuki soon after I arrived in Japan. It was during a trip to Kyoto during which I visited a man to whom I had a letter of introduction. He was a professor at the Otani Buddhist College and the date was memorable -- December 7, 1946. At the time I thought then back to all that had happened since December 7, 1941 when I had been awakened from a nap to hear the radio announcing that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor. I remember thinking that Pearl Harbor was in Alaska, confusing it with Dutch Harbor, and it was some time before the radio set me straight. Then there was the march to downtown New Haven where we overturned a streetcar and went to the house of the President of the University to hear some homely remarks.

Later I learned of another association to December 7th, which is December 8th in Japan. It is the date ascribed by the Japanese to the Buddha's Enlightenment. When a monk told me this, he went on to say, "You are a very lucky person, Dr. Stunkard, to be introduced to Buddhism on this date."

During that visit to the professor I saw a book in his house on "Zen Buddhism and its Influence on Japanese Culture" by Daisetz Suzuki and it sounded as if it were the kind of book that would help me understand this strange culture. But when I returned to Tokyo I wasn't able to find the book. I had forgotten the author's name and remembered Zen as being spelled Xen.

The next time that I heard about Zen was from Baron Hiranuma. After his initial efforts to teach me about Zen had foundered on our language difficulties, he suggested that I seek out a philosopher in Engakuji monastery in Kamakura where he had studied Zen as a young man, and offered to write me a letter of introduction. As it turned out, it would have saved time in getting to know Dr. Suzuki if I had taken his suggestion. Instead I accepted the offer of an introductory letter from of Graf Durckheim, a German prisoner, whom I had gotten to know soon after my arrival at Sugamo. As it turned out, it was not as well received as one from Hiranuma would have been.

Not long afterward, on a lovely, warm Sunday afternoon, when I was off duty, 1 arrived at the quaint little semi-rural railroad station at Kita Kamakura, North Kamakura - a small suburb of the seaside resort, Kamakura, notable for its ancient Buddhist temples, walked to the other side of the tracks and up the ancient stone steps, worn down by years, perhaps centuries of monks and sightseers. I made my way between the huge dark cryptomeria trees and under the massive "Mountain Gate" with its thatched roof. Soon I found myself by a bamboo fence that enclosed a small house and garden, largely surrounded by foliage. In the garden stood a small, bald man in a brown kimono, pruning shears in hand. He looked up from his work and then came toward the gate in the fence, quizzical, smiling faintly.

Dr. Suzuki welcomed me, took the letter from Graf Durckheim and led me inside his house where he adjusted his spectacles and read it. As he was reading I had the opportunity to study him. I was struck by how small he appeared, slender and a bit frail in appearance. His face was dominated by his eyebrows which were long and curved upwards and outwards. Beneath the eyebrows his face radiated kindness and intelligence. Even in this brief encounter he projected a sense of wisdom and serenity.

When he had finished reading Durckheim's letter, Dr. Suzuki looked up and thanked me. He was impeccably polite, asking after Durckheim and how the prisoners at Sugamo were faring, speaking briefly about Hiranuma and saying that he was pleased to learn that I was interested in Zen. Then the meeting was over.

Only later did I learn that in this brief encounter he was far less forthcoming than usual and only much later the reason why. He didn't really like Durckheim. He didn't dislike him; I never heard Dr. Suzuki express dislike of anyone. He just didn't like him and presumably had reservations about someone whom Durckheim had recommended.

Since Dr. Suzuki had invited me to come back, I did and the next meeting was longer and warmer. It gave me a chance to look at the inside of his house, one of the first Japanese houses that I had seen. At the time in Tokyo there was not a wooden house left standing in the areas that I had visited. The only thing that rose above the ground were the tall, thin chimney-like structures called "go-downs"-- tiny warehouses that had been used to store valuables and extra household materials.

Dr. Suzuki's house was a small wooden structure in the Japanese style with straw mats for the floor and sliding paper-covered doors that constituted the walls of the rooms. In a bright area near glass doors that faced the garden was a low desk with a typewriter on it and a cushion on the floor in front of it. In future visits I would often find Dr. Suzuki seated on the cushion, wearing a green eyeshade and hunched over the typewriter.

On this occasion, however, he pointed to a Western style section of the house with a few low chairs, offered me one and sat down on another. After a while he asked me if I would like some tea. I said that I would. He went into the next room and brought out a large irregular glazed bowl, wiped it carefully and set it on a low table beside him. Then he produced a small lacquer box which he opened. He inserted a thin bamboo strip and scooped out a deep green powder, which he tapped into the bowl. Then he poured in steaming hot water from a kettle that had waited on a hot plate beside him and took a little whisk with which he beat the tea into a foamy green broth. At this point he handed the bowl to me with the same grace that he had shown throughout the preparation. During all of this time he had said not a word.

The tea was terribly bitter and unlike anything that I had ever drunk. Even though I hardly understood what Dr. Suzuki was doing, I was struck by the quiet intensity with which he had prepared the tea. Later, after having received tea from Dr. Suzuki's hands on other occasions, I realized that in his quiet, unpretentious way, he was showing me the essence of the tea ceremony.

## Satori

Soon after I met him, perhaps on that same afternoon, Dr. Suzuki began to speak about Zen and, shortly, about "satori", a major concern of his thought and of his writing at the time. "Satori is the Alpha and Omega of Zen Buddhism" was how he put it and "without Satori there is no Zen Buddhism." It sounded bizarre but also strangely appealing. And it was clear that Dr. Suzuki could talk about Zen in a way that went far beyond Hiranuma's earnest efforts.

But what was this Satori? Today it is far from the mystery it had seemed in that faraway time and college students identify it as "Enlightment." But Dr. Suzuki was not to be tied down by definitions and explanations. Satori was Satori and it had to be experienced to be understood.

Dr. Suzuki had translated old Zen stories that described persons "attaining" Satori by such improbable means as hearing the click of a stone brushed against the trunk of a bamboo tree, or the sound a frog jumping into an old pond. These old stories were about as far as he would go in talking about Satori and I was torn between thinking, on the one hand, that he was purposely holding back and obscuring something that had a simpler explanation and, on the other hand, thinking that he was talking about something so profoundly different that a

Western mind could never hope to understand it. It seemed bizarre and also strangely appealing.

Part of the appeal and of the sense that this was not complete nonsense lay in Dr. Suzuki's understanding of Western thought. It was clear that, if he were retreating into an obscure Eastern mysticism, it was not because he didn't know what Western philosophers had taught. But he had a special place in his heart for mystical writers, East or West, and he never tired of talking about Meister Eckehart and Martin Buber. One of his favorite quotations was Eckehart's "The eye with which I see God is the same as the eye with which God sees me.".

Intrigued but also puzzled and even a little troubled by such a completely new experience, I got in touch with my good friend Dr. Theodore van Itallie who was then serving in the Medical Corps at the Naval Base further down the coast, at Yokosuka. I told him about my meetings with Dr. Suzuki and asked him if he would come up from Yokosuka to Kita Kamakura to see what he thought of all this. He came and we were soon listening to the old Zen stories and Dr.Suzuki's thoughts about life, and - Satori. Then the afternoon was over and we walked silently through the Mountain Gate and down the weathered stone. steps. Ted didn't speak for a while and, impatient, I finally asked what he made of it all. When he didn't reply at once, I volunteered, "It sounds like schizophrenia to me."

Ted smiled and replied in an assured way, "Well, if it is schizophrenia, I'll buy it."

## Sunday Afternoons at Engakuji

During the next few weeks I had the chance to tell another friend, Richard De Martino, about Dr. Suzuki and ask him to join Ted van Itallie and me at Dr. Suzuki's on a Sunday afternoon. De Martino had gone to the Japanese Language School at Boulder, Colorado, during the war and had an enviable command of the Japanese language and access to many aspects of Japanese culture. He began to attend the Sunday afternoons at Dr. Suzuki's and soon brought his friend Philip Kapleau, who was then working as a court reporter at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East. We were soon joined by a young Englishman, Richard Crewdson, whose career as a Junior Officer in the Grenadier Guards had been marked by the death or disability of the other officers in his company not once, but three times. Crewdson either had, or quickly developed, a strong interest in the kind of religious matters about which Dr. Suzuki talked with us and planned on embarking on a life devoted to promoting such interests. Whether he ever did or not I never knew. But for a period of months we spent wonderful Sunday afternoons in Dr. Suzuki's little house, listening to him talk, asking him questions and being encouraged in our efforts at understanding. "Yes, yes, that is very good. Not quite. But very good."

Occasionally we were joined by the poet R.H. Blyth who had spent the years of World War II interned as an enemy alien in Japanese prison camps. He eschewed the chairs that the rest of us were only too happy to use and would sit quietly on his knees, listening to Dr. Suzuki with evident awe and occasionally venturing a comment. His comments seemed impressive to me, but, in fact, they didn't hit the mark any more than those the rest of us made. Dr. Suzuki would nod, smile benignly and say, "Very good, not quite, but very good."

Very occasionally we were joined by Faubion Bower, a distinguished Japanese scholar who had served as an interpreter for General MacArthur during the War. At the time, he held the enviable position of a kind of cultural judge of the Japanese theater, deciding which pieces were militaristic and not to be performed and which were acceptable and were to be encouraged. His position made it possible for him to provide very real help for the Japanese Kabuki Theater at that time and he found very few pieces to be unacceptable. As a result of his years of study in Japan before the War, Bower knew a great deal more about Zen and about Suzuki than we younger men. But unlike us, he approached these visits with a measure of detachment, more from the perspective of a culture historian than that of a seeker after Buddhist wisdom.

The Sunday afternoons had a magic quality, and, I believe, not only for us young men. Dr. Suzuki seemed to enjoy them, too, perhaps particularly after the isolation of the war years. I was, however, surprised to read in the preface to his 1948 book "Living by Zen" what our meetings had meant to him. "Since the end of the War the author had frequent occasions to meet several young American and English inquirers concerning the teaching of Zen. Their approach was more or less characterized by the modern scientific spirit. This made him go over anew the ground which he had been accustomed to cover in a rather old-fasioned traditional way..."

Dr. Suzuki rarely talked about himself. It wasn't that he held back, but more that such things didn't come up... When they did, it was usually in response to our questions.

We used to spend the Sunday afternoons drinking tea and asking questions, intrigued and frustrated, trying to understand what he was talking about, and also wondering about his deep tranquility. One of the questions was how Zen affected a person's experience of suffering. After enlightenment, we asked, did a person still suffer?

"Oh yes", Dr. Suzuki quickly replied, "a person still suffers; he can suffer a great deal."

Had he himself suffered? "Oh, yes." When? "When my wife died."

"How did you feel then?"

Without a moment's hesitation, Dr. Suzuki replied, "I cried bitter tears."

Well, what is so great about Zen, we asked. How was his experience different from that of someone who has not practiced Zen?

Dr. Suzuki nodded and there was a long pause. Finally he said quietly, "My tears had no roots."

**Reminiscences**

Once when we were alone Dr. Suzuki surprised me by talking about the emotional turmoil that he had experienced as a young man during his Zen training. He had always seemed the soul of equanimity and it was hard to imagine him in turmoil.

Dr. Suzuki had begun his Zen training at Engakuki, much as had Hiranuma, during his summer vacation from Tokyo Imperial University and with the same teacher, Kosen Imagita Roshi. Kosen had died not long afterwards and Dr. Suzuki seemed impressed that Kosen had fallen to the ground with a loud noise and that when they reached him he was already dead.

Dr. Suzuki then began Zen study with Kosen Roshi's successor, Shaku Soyen Roshi. Some time thereafter Shaku Soyen was invited to speak at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893, at what has since been recognized as an historic event, the First World Congress of Religions. He asked Dr. Suzuki to translate his talks into English and to accompany him to Chicago.

Dr. Suzuki told me that he had not "had" Satori at that point and felt that it was impossible for him to accompany Shaku Soyen to Chicago unless he had. He said that, as the months passed, he became increasingly uncomfortable and dropped out of his studies at the University and spent more and more of his time at Engakuji working on his Koan, "What is the sound of one hand clapping?"

As the time to leave for Chicago came nearer, the tension became unbearable. It was hard to see in this serene old man the desperate youth and the fateful decision that he had made:

if he had not "had" Satori by the time he was to leave for Chicago, he would kill himself.

Then, suddenly, he experienced satori. It had occurred as he walked up the old stone steps to the Mountain Gate of Engakuji, between the rows of huge old cryptomeria trees, which I had come to know, and love, even before this revelation.

"As I walked up, I became aware that I was the same as the trees at which I was looking. It was not that I had ceased to be myself, but I had become the trees as well."

Much later, Dr. Suzuki commented on this account that I had included, quite without telling him, in a paper on "Some Interpersonal Aspects of an Oriental Religion." After reading the paper, Dr. Suzuki referred to the description of his Satori. He said that he had not been in the habit of talking about such things, that he had not thought that they were of interest to other people. He didn't seem to be rebuking me though he had every right to do so. I think that instead he was just surprised that I had found his experience interesting enough to write about it. I was impressed with this reticence. It was a striking contrast to the publicity given to the intimate dissection of every psychological state of the young Americans who were establishing the "Zen boom" of the 1960s.

## Sitting at Engakuji

Some months went by, enlivened by the wonderful Sunday afternoons and reading books on Zen. The books were just becoming available in two exciting bookstores, Kyobunkwan and Maruzen, purchased from old libraries and sold at bargain prices. Then there were the discussions with Ted Van Itallie. It all fed my growing preoccupation with Satori and how it might be, as it seemed, "obtained." Dr. Suzuki spoke about being alert all of the time and helped to create an atmosphere at his Sunday afternoons, an expectation, that lightning might strike at any time. This was a period, as I learned later when he believed that Zazen was not necessary to understand Zen. He may, in fact, have believed that it would interfere with an understanding of Zen. I don't know what he thought was necessary for lightening to strike, but, after some time, I became convinced that, although lightning might strike other persons, it was not likely to strike me. If I were going to "get" Satori, I was going to have to do more than read about it.

So I started to practice Zazen. Graf Durckheim had already shown me how to sit, imperfectly, in the lotus position and I had begun to do so. When I asked Dr. Suzuki how to go further, he was kindly and receptive, as he was about everything, but, to my disappointment, he gave me no advice and even seemed quite uninterested in my attempts at Zazen. At the time, as I was to learn, he believed that Zazen didn't help in understanding Zen and that it might, in fact, interfere with it. How he had come to this belief, and how it changed over the years, was another fascinating aspect of this old man.

My experience of Zazen was primarily one of aching muscles and unpleasant salivation that led either to incessant swallowing or, when that became intolerable, drooling. Gradually I sat longer and longer up to 30 or 40 minutes at a time, but Satori seemed no closer at hand. When I told Dr. Suzuki what I had been doing, he received the news without comment. Concerned with what seemed like a lack of progress, I asked him if Zazen could be made more effective if I worked on a Koan but he was non-committal. I waited for some time to see if he would say anything more and, when he didn't, I screwed up my courage and asked him to recommend a Koan. He thought for some time and then suggested, "Why don't you work on my old Koan - what is the sound of one hand clapping?".

I continued this practice for some time and would come to him with answers that I knew were meaningless. He would acknowledge them in a kindly manner and let it go at that.

Clearly something more was needed. So I asked Dr. Suzuki if it would be possible to attend a "Sesshin" at Engakuji, one of the week-long periods of intense meditation undertaken by Zen monks who sit in Zazen from early morning until late at night. He said that he thought that it would be possible and soon made arrangements for me to spend my next three-day pass at a Sesshin. He felt that it would be too strenuous for me to take part in the full schedule of the Sesshin, which began at four in the morning, and arranged for me to join the monks in the meditation hall at the beginning of their afternoon Zazen. In the meantime, I stayed at his library across the small valley, sleeping there at night, eating K rations and walking in the countryside in the morning, and doing Zazen.

Dr. Suzuki took me to the meditation hall for the first time. It was a long, weathered wooden building, open at the front and back and lined, on the sides, with low platforms covered with straw mats. They were the standard straw mats, three by six feet long, now well known as `tatami'. Each monk was assigned one mat where he ate, slept and practiced meditation. Behind each mat on the sides of the hall were curtains that covered small shelves containing all of a monk's belongings. Toward the rear of the hall was a stand on which was placed, not a figure of a Buddha but, in fine Zen tradition, a small dark figure riding on a curious mythical creature. I later learned that this was the Bodhisattva Manjusri riding a tiger and carrying the sword that cuts off delusion and folly. Manjusri symbolized the "wisdom," Sanskrit *prajna,* that the monks sought in their meditation.

I believe that I was the first Westerner to sit in Zazen at Engakuji after the war. Since I was in uniform, I was particularly concerned not to disgrace it or myself. To minimize the ignominy of not moving myself during the sitting still periods, I took a codeine pill that lessened the pain and enabled me to avoid disgrace. My concentration, however, was less on my Koan than on the pain in my legs and the anticipation of the bell that ends the sitting period.

After the first night I went to Dr. Suzuki's house where he was waiting for me. It was a wonderful moment, the pain behind me and his warm, welcoming face in front, and very shortly tea and cookies.

These two experiences, of Zazen and of cookies, embody to the two virtues of Zen, wisdom and compassion, represented by its two Bodhisattvas. In the meditation hall, it was Manjusri and wisdom; in the evenings it was Samantabhadra, the twin of Manjusri, riding on an elephant and symbolizing compassion. In Zen, Manjusri and Samantabhadra are supposed to be venerated equally. But, in practice, Manjusri often takes precedence and Zen monks strive desperately for the wisdom that Koan study can bring. Dr. Suzuki often spoke of this dichotomy, sometimes in a less than even-handed manner. It was clear that, of the two virtues, he favored compassion and, of the monks and their single-minded striving for wisdom through Koan study, he once said, reflectively,

"Those monks are very good at solving their Koans, but sometimes they seem to forget Samantabhadra."

One night in the meditation hall with my friend Dick Demartino, I saw them forget Samantabhadra, as I describe below.

After the tea and cookies with Dr. Suzuki, I walked slowly in the darkness through the Mountain Gate, down the steps and across the valley to sleep under the futon on the floor in the building that housed his library. Dr. Suzuki seemed pleased with my effort and arranged for me to continue this schedule. So I spent my three-day pass each month sitting with the monks at Engakuji. It was a golden period, sitting in Zazen in the mornings at Sugamo, waiting for the Sesshins and feeling that I was doing everything that I could to work towards the Satori that was so important to Dr. Suzuki. Then I went to China and learned a lot more about Dr. Suzuki, and why he had become so skeptical of Zazen.

## A Trip to China

About a year after I arrived in Japan, I took a trip to China. It wasn't hard to arrange for a leave or to hop aboard an Air Transport Service plane for China and spend some time in Beiping, today's Beijing. You sent back word to your outfit that you couldn't get out. The maneuver had a certain face validity but at the time there was a truce in the Civil War, and you could get out if you really wanted to. But there was an understanding that a trip to China was a kind of perk of life in the Occupation and I decided to take advantage of it and arranged to go to China late in 1947.

Preparing for the trip was a welcome break from my usual duties and I read everything that I could find about China. For practical purposes, the comic strip "Terry and the Pirates" was the best guide to the rough and ready country emerging from years of Japanese occupation into a bitter Civil War. But I read a good bit of Chinese philosophy and was impressed with the writings of a contemporary philosopher, Hu Shih. He had been a student of John Dewey at Columbia in the early years of the century. His book, "Development of the Logical Method in Ancient China", was an imaginative attempt to see John Dewey's pragmatism in the ancient records.

I asked Dr. Suzuki about Hu Shih and he said that he knew him and thought that it would be a fine idea for me to meet him. He wrote me a letter of introduction and said that, as busy as Hu Shih was, he was sure that he would see me and it would be well worth the effort.

Dr. Suzuki gave me the letter with a request. Would I bring back some sandalwood incense? It hadn't been possible to obtain sandalwood incense since the war began and the Chinese made very good sandalwood incense.

Hu Shih was busy indeed. At the time he was the President of the Peking National University, but his responsibilities extended far beyond even that prestigious office. He was in the middle of critical negotiations between Chiang Kai Shek's

Nationalists and Mao Tse Tung's Communists. A truce between the two parties had been arranged and General George Marshall, the former Chief of Staff of the American Armed Forces, among others, was trying to establish a compromise government under someone who would be a highly respected and non-political President. Hu Shih was the foremost candidate.

When I arrived in Beiping I sent Dr. Suzuki's letter to Hu Shih and not long afterward received an invitation to meet him at his office at the University. After a bitter cold ride by pedicab, I found Hu Shih's office pleasantly warm, as was the tea that he served, and at first, he, too. But after what seemed to have been an indecently brief period of pleasantries, he began to speak of Dr. Suzuki. He knew Dr. Suzuki, all right, they had similar academic interests and he had no use for the man.

Suzuki was a Japanese spy, he said, and he was bitter about the Japanese and what they had done to his country.

"Spy?",I asked,perplexed.

"Yes, spy" was the answer.

Hu Shi then told me about a time when his ship had docked at Yokohama harbor during the Japanese occupation of China.

"Suzuki came down to my ship to invite me to visit him."

"Dr. Suzuki is a hospitable man," I ventured, but was promptly cut off.

"This wasn't hospitality. He came because the militarists sent him. They wanted me to get off the ship in Japan. But I was determined never to set food on Japanese soil while the Japanese were occupying my country. The militarists knew that they couldn't get me off the ship so they sent their spy to try to do it."

There was a short pause and then Hu Shih began again.

"And he's a bad scholar, too."

How was he a bad scholar?

Hu Shih then told me about the thousand year old manuscripts, discovered fairly recently in caves, which described the early history of Cha'an (Zen in Japanese) Buddhism.

"These manuscripts." Hu Shih went on, "show that the traditional history of Cha'an was a fabrication, that it was based on forgeries. Suzuki knows this; he worked on these manuscripts, too. But in his writing he ignores all this and goes on presenting the old, traditional history of Cha'an, as if it were true."

I knew something about the early history of Zen and asked Hu Shih what it was that Dr. Suzuki had ignored.

"It would take too long to explain it all to you", he said, but when I persisted he said that Suzuki had ignored the fact that Cha'an is an important part of the history of Chinese philosophy.

I said that I was sure that Dr. Suzuki realized that and asked again what, specifically it was that he had ignored.

Uncertainly, Hu Shih asked me, "Have you heard of Hui Neng?"

I had. Dr. Suzuki had often written about him. He was a seventh century monk who was known as the Sixth Patriarch of Zen in China. That meant that he was the sixth person in the line of succession to have had received the esoteric Zen teachings from the Indian monk, Bodidharma, who was believed to have brought Zen from India to China.

"Suzuki continues to peddle the traditional history of Hui Neng as the Sixth Patriarch, when he knows perfectly well that this is untrue, that the whole story is based on a forgery. In fact, Hui Neng was an illiterate peasant. He never wrote anything and there is almost no mention of him in the authentic records."

After listening to more denunciation of Dr. Suzuki, I thanked Hu Shih and left on to spend two fascinating weeks in Beiping. Sandalwood incense was hard to find, however, and when I finally found some, it was of poor quality.

When I returned to Japan I gave Dr. Suzuki the incense, with apologies. He accepted it graciously, how graciously I didn't realize until much later, when I found high quality sandalwood incense and realized what it was that he had hoped for.

Regarding Hu Shih, I felt even more apologetic. Dr. Suzuki asked me if I had met him and I said that I had.

"Was it a good meeting?"

"Yes, a good meeting," I replied uneasily. It didn't seem appropriate to ask about espionage. But I needed to find out more.

"He told me about some old manuscripts that had been found in a cave."

"Yes, the Tun Huang manuscripts. They were found in a cave in China where they had been undisturbed for hundreds of years."

"Hu Shi said that they raised questions about the history of Zen," I ventured.

"Yes, they did", Dr.Suzuki observed and did not go on.

"They raised questions about Hui Neng. That he hadn't been the Sixth Patriarch. That this was a later fabrication."

"Yes," Dr. Suzuki replied smiling, "there has been some disagreement about these matters."

"Hu Shih said that Hui Neng was an illiterate peasant and hadn't written anything."

"Well, there is some disagreement about these matters. Hui Neng certainly didn't have much education."

But I wasn't satisfied. Turning to a book that we had discussed, I asked, "But could he have written 'The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch' if he had been illiterate?"

"Yes, there is some question about how authentic that essay is," Dr. Suzuki replied. "It may have been written by someone from his school, not by Hui Neng himself". And there the matter rested as far as I was concerned until, years later, I read the account of the debate between Hu Shih and Dr. Suzuki in the journal "Philosophy East and West."

## Hu Shih versus Daisetz Suzuki

What I had heard from these two men earlier had only partly prepared me for what they said about each other in print.

Hu Shih began the argument, not with accusations of espionage but "as a friend who has never concealed from him (Dr. Suzuki) my disappointment in his method of approach".

This was just a warm-up. "Any man who takes his unhistorical and anti-historical approach can never understand the Zen movement or the teachings of the great Zen masters. The best he can do is to tell the world that Zen is Zen and altogether beyond our logical comprehension."

Hu Shi went on to describe the discovery of the eighth century manuscripts from the Tun Huang caves and the editing of these documents, which he carried out together with Dr. Suzuki. He then went over, in greater detail, the same accusations that he voiced during our meeting in his office. He was adamant about the lack of authenticity of Hui Neng.

"What do we know about the illiterate monk, Hui Neng, the established Sixth Patriarch?" he asked and proceeded to answer his question -- precious little. "He was born of a lowly family in an area where aborigines lived in peace with Chinese people...he was called a Ke lao, one the aboriginal peoples of the Southeast."

During Hui Neng's lifetime another monk had been recognized as the Sixth Patriarch. According to the Tun Huang manuscripts, Hui Neng came to prominence only years later, when a disciple of his, Shen Hui, attacked the teachings of the original Sixth Patriarch. Over a period of many years, Shen Hui was able to supplant these teachings with ones that he attributed to Hui Neng. In the process, he helped to rewrite history and establish what became the traditional view of Zen succession, and himself as the Seventh Patriarch.

Hu Shih acknowledged that Shen Hui's teachings were revolutionary. To understand the nature of this revolution, it helps to consider some aspects of Buddhist history.

It is believed that a school of Indian Buddhism characterized by reliance on meditation, *dhyana* in Sanskrit, came to China in the fifth century, where it was recognized as Cha'an, a corruption of the word *dhyana*, which, corrupted in turn, became Zen in Japan.

Shen Hui's teachings were revolutionary, Hu Shih said, because "he condemned the *dhyana* practice" that made meditation the central feature of Buddhism, called it "a hindrance to Enlightenment" and "swept aside all form of sitting in meditation as unnecessary." The result, Hu Shih proposed, was a Chinese reformulation, or revolution, within Buddhism.

In his response to Hu Shih, it was hard to recognize the Dr. Suzuki of our Sunday afternoons. He began with his "conviction that Hu Shih...is not qualified and equipped to discuss Zen as Zen". Ignoring Hu Shih's account of Zen history, he proceeded to argue for the traditional view, accepting {Hui Neng} as the author of the ideas that Hu Shih had attributed to Hui Neng's disciple. He agreed with Hu Shih that these ideas are "truly revolutionary" and saw them as embodied in the message that "*dhyana* (meditation) and *prajna* (wisdom) are one". He went on, "Before Hui Neng, the two were regarded as separate, which resulted in emphasizing *dhyana* at the expense of *prajna*. By his emphasis on *prajna*, Hui Neng revived the Enlightenment experience."

Dr. Suzuki tried to explain what this experience meant, and our Sunday afternoons came back. He began by distinguishing between two kinds of knowledge, *vijnana,* discriminative knowledge, and *prajna*, which is "wisdom-knowledge." As the term is generally used, knowledge refers to discriminatory knowledge, "public knowledge", which is the relationship between subject and object. When there is no distinction between subject and object, this kind of knowledge is impossible. Instead, there is "consciousness in its deepest sense," or *prajna*, "a result of an inner experience, wholly individual and subjective."

This kind of explanation was familiar from the Sunday afternoons. What followed in Suzuki's essay was not.

"The strange thing about this kind of knowledge is that the one who has it is utterly convinced of its universality...the uniqueness of *prajna* intuition consists in its authoritativeness, utterly convincing and contributive to the feeling that `I am the ultimate reality itself, I am the absolute knower".

Reading these words brought back the memory of Dr. Suzuki. He never spoke to us in that way, but it was the way he acted.

Returning to a more familiar tone, and reflecting on Hu Shih, Dr. Suzuki continued, "The Zen Master, generally speaking, despises those who indulge in word - or idea - mongering, and in this respect both Hu Shih and myself are great sinners, murderers of Buddhas and patriarchs; we both are destined for hell."

Then, sounding like Sunday afternoon, "But it is not a bad thing to go to hell, if it does some good to somebody."

It wasn't until I read this essay that I understood, at least partly, Dr. Suzuki's lack of interest in Zazen, which he had himself employed on the way to his Enlightenment experience. Knowing the intensive training that he had undergone as a young man, his lack of interest had perplexed me. Now it seemed clearer why he had been so uninterested - it came from his study of the early Zen Masters. But even as I was beginning to understand Dr. Suzuki's views on Zazen, he began to change them.

Dr. Suzuki's lack of interest in Zazen did not extend to its radical repudiation that Hu Shih had attributed to Hui Neng's disciple, and Dr. Suzuki to Hui Neng. I don't believe that he viewed Zazen as a hindrance to Enlightenment, although for a time he seemed to think that it was unnecessary. But he was unfailingly generous to me in my efforts, helping me to participate in Sesshins and making sure that things were not too difficult for me. Then, one day he went further.

"Dr. Stunkard, when you are sitting in Zazen, how do you keep time, how do you know how long you have been sitting?" Dr. Suzuki asked one day.

When I told him that I used a clock, he said that that was a good way and then asked if I would like to try another way.

"It is very pleasant to use incense to keep track of your Zazen. That is the way I used to do when I was a young man. Perhaps you would like to have the incense burner that I used in those days?"

With that he produced a small figure of Bodhidharma, the man who had brought Zen from India to China. The figure, with a cape over his head, was sitting in meditation and in front of him was a small empty cylinder in which to insert incense sticks.

"I hope that this will encourage you in your Zazen."

Over the years Dr. Suzuki took a more and more positive attitude toward Zazen. Particularly during the 1950s when he taught at Columbia University and experienced the first American reaction to Zen, the "Zen boom" of the 1950s. It may have been this experience that led to his reevaluation of Zazen that took place about this time. Even Zazen must have seemed preferable to the endless talk about Zen by people whose only experience had been reading books about it, perhaps particularly books by Dr. Suzuki. If they were practicing Zazen perhaps they wouldn't have so much time to talk about it. Whatever the reason for the change of heart to view Zazen as an important path to the understanding of Zen during this time, Dr. Suzuki came to accept Zazen as a reasonable part of Zen thinking.

## Two Friends

To my surprise, none of my friends at the time seemed interested in practicing Zazen, either by themselves or at Engakuji. For two of them, however, our Sunday afternoons were formative.

Two Friends

One of them was Richard Demartino, who later became a Professor of Religon at Temple University, where he specialized in Buddhist thought. After I had taken part in one or two Sesshins I invited Dick to join me during an evening sitting at

Engakuki. He wasn't keen on the idea but he agreed and came with me with no apparent misgivings. The monk in charge led us towards the back of the meditation hall where he assigned us seats not far from the open door through which the monks went out for their periods of walking meditation.

Dick and I settled down on our cushions in the lotus position and soon the pain filled my consciousness and I began to look forward longingly to the bell. Out of the corner of my eye I could see Dick and he seemed to be holding up well for a time. Then I sensed rather than saw the restlessness and fidgeting that I knew so well from my own experience. "Just hold out", I thought, "it can't be much longer". But it was.

The monks were not above hazing newcomers and this was a time when they decided to let the newcomer have it. I don't know how long they kept us sitting. Clearly it was not a problem for the professionals, but it became a growing problem for Dick as I could tell from the rustling at his place. Then out of the corner of my eye I could see him bend forward and crawl on his hands to the front of the platform and then, headfirst, wriggle down the two or three feet to the floor. Once on the floor he crawled out the back door and disappeared into the night.

We never spoke of the incident and, to the best of my knowledge, Dick never sat in Zazen again. He became an expert on Zen literature of the T'ang period and could speak at length and with passion about Zen. But I have always wondered about whether I should have invited him to sit during the Sesshin and about the games of the monks that night. For this experience may have deprived him of the most precious fruits of the Zen to which he devoted his life.

A very different kind of life followed the Sunday afternoons' initiation into Zen of another friend, Philip Kapleau. As he recounts in his pioneering "Three Pillars of Zen," he continued his interest in Zen after his return to the United States and attended Dr. Suzuki's lectures at Columbia. But he found himself increasingly dissatisfied with his life and with the solace that an intellectual Zen could offer. Accordingly, in the finest Zen tradition, he gave up his job (as court reporter) and returned to Japan to enter a monastery where he spent three painful years. A friend who saw him at that time told me that she had been worried about him, he was so thin and drawn, so apparently malnourished. But he stuck it out and eventually underwent the kind of intense Enlightenment experience that Dr. Suzuki so favored and that featured so prominently in his writings. Returning to the United States, Philip Kapleau established a Zen Center in Rochester, New York, and spent the rest of his life as a teacher and Zen Master.

The lives of these two friends are wonderful examples of the two directions that a Zen life can take. Dick Demartino became the scholar who taught Buddhist philosophy and Buddhist lore to his students in the classroom. Philip Kapleau became the Master who taught Zen to his disciples. The Zen chronicles of 10th century China told of these two directions of Zen life. A thousand years later the Sunday afternoons created by a kindly teacher pointed in these same directions.

### Dr. Suzuki in America

There was always something sweet and appealing about Dr. Suzuki and it came with him when he arrived in the United States to teach at the Union Theological Seminary. I was by now fully immersed in my psychiatric training at the Johns Hopkins Hospital, trying to put in perspective all that had occurred in Japan. The news of Dr. Suzuki's arrival brought with it an intense sense of anticipation. How would this little man seem to me in America, in my home, so far from Engakuji and all of the strange and wonderful things that now seemed so far away?

It turned out that Dr. Suzuki in America was not so different from Dr. Suzuki. The biggest change was in his dress. He wore a well-fitting tweed suit with a shirt and tie that somehow made his small frame appear even smaller. It was the first time that I had seen him not wearing a kimono, but he had the same warm manner and lovely smile, brightened now by the even set of dentures that filled the partially edentulous mouth that I remembered from Japan. But appearances aside, he had not changed; always the teacher, he was soon back at his old profession.

Dr. Suzuki held small classes, during the year that he taught at the Union Theological Seminary and later at Columbia. They were held in a small conference room; we sat in chairs facing him while he spoke and answered questions. He would often get up from his chair and go to the blackboard to write a Chinese word and then to comment on it, frequently at great length. These words and these comments were usually enigmatic and intriguing and seemed to serve as a kind of framework for talks that seemed to have no formal outline. But Dr. Suzuki's lectures, as they were called, were not really different from the Sunday afternoon discussions at Engakuji. There were the same old Zen stories, talk of Satori and encouragement. It would seem as if we were almost there and then, "Very good, yes, very good. Not quite, but very good".

One day there occurred an event that was perplexing and, as it turned out, instructive. Part way into the class an intense young man sprang to his feet and loudly challenged something that Dr. Suzuki had said. To Dr. Suzuki's quiet response he shouted out another challenge, sounding like a character in the "Dharma battles" between Zen masters and their disciples that Dr. Suzuki had described in his books. Dr. Suzuki again responded quietly, his answer as enigmatic as the challenge. This went on for another interchange or two and then the challenger sat down and Dr. Suzuki resumed his homely discourse.

I was greatly impressed with this interchange and, as I thought about it, reproached myself. I had been trying for years to understand something about Zen and had never gotten close to this kind of give and take. What was the matter with me? So I was glad to have the chance after the class, to ask Dr. Suzuki what the young man had meant in his challenge. What had he been talking about?

"I don't really know," Dr. Suzuki replied, "He seemed to be a very earnest young man but I don't really know what he was talking about".

Perhaps Dr. Suzuki was guarding the sanctity of some privileged Zen communication but I think not. I was content to believe that the intense young man did not have some special insight that had eluded me. There was something reassuring about Dr. Suzuki's quiet, undramatic approach.

## Dr. Suzuki as a Patient

Over a period of years I had the unusual, and at times unsettling, opportunity to serve as Dr. Suzuki's physician. It began back in Japan while he was living at Engakuji. One day, after green tea and a conversation about Zen, Dr. Suzuki told me that he was having difficulty with his tongue and asked me if I could give him medicine for it. He seemed surprised when I asked to examine his tongue. At the time I didn't think much about his surprise, except to be a little surprised about it.

myself. Later, as I became more familiar with Japanese medical practice, I realized that his reaction was quite in keeping with this practice. Japanese physicians often prescribed medication on request without what we would have considered adequate examination and diagnosis. Prisoners often appeared at sick hall at Sugamo, holding out their hand, saying simply "kusuri", medicine. Some of them seemed surprised when I would ask what was the problem for which they wanted the medicine. It was Kano, the interpreter, who helped me to recognize that medicine might serve as a kind of penicillin for any and all ills, even as a kind of preventive medicine for whatever illness might come along.

Although surprised by my question, Dr. Suzuki readily told me the reason for his request. For some time he had felt burning in his tongue. It seemed to be getting worse and was becoming painful.

I asked Dr. Suzuki to open his mouth and, when I looked in, my first reaction was one of shock. Very few teeth remained, discolored and ragged, protruding almost haphazardly from his gums. His tongue showed clear signs of trouble. It was enlarged, with reddened, smooth, inflamed edges. It was clear why it was painful.

The picture was a classic one of vitamin D deficiency. I told that Dr. Suzuki that he needed vitamins and that I would obtain some for him. He seemed grateful and insisted that I go to no special trouble on his behalf.

Since prisoners returning from the South Pacific frequently suffered from vitamin deficiencies, we usually supplemented their diets with vitamins during their first few weeks in the prison. Accordingly, we had a large supply of vitamins at Sugamo and during my next visit to Engakuji I took a bottle of them to Dr. Suzuki. He accepted them with a gratitude that seemed more than was warranted by this simple gift.

The outcome of my first treatment of Dr. Suzuki was better than I could have hoped. He soon reported that the burning in his tongue had subsided and then that it had disappeared. He was, again, very grateful. I was pleased that things had worked out so well but I was left thinking that Dr. Suzuki didn't need to have been so grateful; I was just doing my job.

Some time after this occasion, Dr. Suzuki asked me if I would see if I could help "that old woman" who seemed to be in poor health. She was a small, elderly woman in an inconspicious dark kimono who was often in the background when I visited. I don't believe that Dr. Suzuki ever introduced us and it was some time before I gathered that she kept house and cooked for him. When I would meet her she was always on her knees on the straw floor mats and she would bow deeply, almost to the floor. Those of us who spent Sunday afternoons with Dr. Suzuki used to wonder about this shadowy figure, who was always available when something was needed. There were a number of rumors about her. For example, she had been a noblewoman, who had been in love in Dr. Suzuki from an early age and had given up her family to serve as his housekeeper.

The medical history that she gave was largely unrevealing. She said that she had been in good health until recently and that her health was still reasonably good but that she seemed to be more tired than usual. When I performed a physical examination I found a thin, elderly woman with no readily apparent physical problems. Her abdomen seemed clear as did her head, neck, arms and legs. Her chest, however, was another story. When I percassed it, there was an area of dullness in the upper chest that suggested a past or present infection. When I listened there, I heard the unmistakable rales, or small crackles that spoke of infection. The most likely cause was tuberculosis, which was widespread in the country after the deprivation of the war and postwar years. Without an x-ray the diagnosis was uncertain and there were some favorable signs: her temperature was normal and she was not coughing. But getting an x-ray was a problem. American Army facilities were not available to Japanese nationals and it was not clear how to obtain the services of a Japanese x-ray unit.

As Ted van Itallie and I considered the situation, it seemed as if the lack of an X-ray was not as important as it would have been at home. Medications for tuberculosis were still years away and in the States treatment consisted of little more than bed rest and good nutrition, usually carried out in a sanitarium. Time in a sanitarium was measured in six-month intervals and few patients left within a year; long-term hospitalization was the rule.

The situation in Japan was quite different. It was not clear that there were any sanitoria for tuberculosis in the country and, if there had been, they would hardly serve a therapeutic purpose. Adequate nutrition was very difficult to obtain and patients were better off staying out of the hospital and earning enough money to buy food. As Ted and I considered the status of our patient, we reluctantly made a decision: it would be best for her to stay where she was, living in a sheltered environment with adequate food. We did not feel comfortable with this decision and it was not one that would have been acceptable in the United States. But, all things considered, it seemed the best that we could do.

There was the problem, however, that "that old woman" might transmit the disease to Dr. Suzuki. So we spoke to both of them about this possibility, about the importance of the patient not having close contact with him and taking special precautions when preparing his food. They both understood the situation and put into practice whatever they could to prevent transmission of the disease. And we comforted ourselves and Dr. Suzuki and our patient with the possibility that she might not have tuberculosis at all.

Some weeks after these events, Dr. Suzuki told me that "that old woman" wanted to give me a present.

He handed me a small wooden box. I slipped back the top to find a piece of brocaded silk that covered a small dark metal figure. Dr. Suzuki said "This is this old woman's Kannon", the Bodhisattva of Compassion that he had often spoken about. I set it down on the low table. It was about 2 inches tall with a small round wooden pedestal. The tiny graceful little body was standing in the traditional pose with a large lotus leaf behind her head. A hint of gold suggested that the statue had once been gilded.

"She wanted you to have this in gratitude for what you have done for us".

I have kept it ever since, beside Dr. Suzuki's Bodhidharma figure.

I was not the only one to attend to "that old woman's" medical care. Ted van Itallie examined her eyes when they caused her trouble and discovered that she was suffering from glaucoma. So he raided his medical supply closet at the Naval Station and , as it was then termed, "liberated" medication for glaucoma. It turned out to be effective.

During my remaining time in Japan, I looked after Dr. Suzuki from time to time for small medical problems; once I brought him some cough syrup. I didn't really consider myself his doctor, but more a friend for whom I was doing a favor. I don't know whether Dr. Suzuki had a Japanese doctor at this time but Ted van Itallie also saw him for minor aliments.

When Dr. Suzuki arrived in New York I had moved to Baltimore and so I saw him less frequently. At those times we continued to talk about medical, and philosophical, issues but he received medical care from others, particularly Ted van Itallie, who was training in Internal Medicine at the St. Luke's Hospital, conveniently located not far from Dr. Suzuki's apartment. Ted's medical training made it appropriate for him to assume responsibility for Dr. Suzuki's medical care but even he, too, did not consider himself as his doctor and he never enrolled him as a patient at St. Luke's Hospital. Dr. Suzuki was in excellent health but, even so, Ted was concerned about caring for a man who was now in his 80s. Even in programs of Internal Medicine at that time ~~had~~ patients as old as Dr. Suzuki were rare. Geriatrics was yet to be born as a specialty and very few physicians knew much about the care of elderly persons.

One problem that surfaced was Dr. Suzuki's blood pressure: 170/70 millimeters of mercury. The systolic pressure of 170 was clearly hypertensive, severely so. The 70, on the other hand, was not. Normal blood pressure is 120/80, with a so-called pulse pressure - the difference between the two numbers - of 40. Dr. Suzuki's pulse pressure was more than twice that. A pulse pressure this high was rarely encountered. It was presumably due to a rigidity in the arteries that did not expand to accommodate the pressure of the blood as it emerged from the heart. But knowing the mechanism didn't help in deciding what to do about it.

At the time there were only two specific treatments for hypertension and most patients received non-specific treatments such as mild sedatives. One was a major surgical procedure that damaged the sympathetic nervous system and left the patient with enormous disabilities. The other treatment was the rice diet, a radical regimen that had recently been introduced and was still being investigated. Neither treatment seemed appropriate and, in the end, this fact made the decision. Ted reassured Dr. Suzuki about his blood pressure, occasionally prescribed a mild sedative, and hoped for the best. As he had hoped, the best occurred: Dr. Suzuki never encountered any problems with his blood pressure.

Soon after Ted van Itallie began treating Dr. Suzuki he told me of a finding that had surprised and intrigued him.

"He has an enormous abdomen", Ted said and waited for this fact to sink in.

Then he continued, "But it isn't fat. It's as hard as rock".

Ted went on to say that it wasn't Dr. Suzuki's entire abdomen that was enlarged, but only the lower part, a part known in Japanese as the "tanden", that features strongly in Zazen. Zen practice places great importance on the tanden, as the site of abdominal breathing. Meditation teachers stress the importance of tightening this area to the greatest possible extent during the outbreath, pushing out every last breath of air. Ted and I speculated that these muscles might become highly developed in monks and other Zen practitioners who spend hours a day in meditation. But to find such powerful muscles in this old man was a real surprise. Perhaps they had been built up during his years of Zen training during his youth. But they could hardly have maintained the strong tone that Ted had found, if his exercise of these muscles had ended with his formal Zen training. We marveled over Dr. Suzuki's abdominal muscles and wondered about them. We finally concluded that Dr. Suzuki must be continuing into his old age the abdominal breathing that he had learned in the meditation hall in his youth. If this were the case, it was one of the more remarkable aspects of this remarkable man. For it meant that he was continuing this ancient Zen practice at a time when he was downplaying the importance of Zazen and meditation.

Dr. Suzuki looked to Ted van Itallie for much of his medical care. When he approached me, it was with a question that befit my psychiatric training, a question about psychedelic agents. The question arose about the time of the visit from Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg. It had been a short visit and had not apparently made a strong impression on Dr. Suzuki. However, it came at a time when psychedelic agents were receiving a great deal of attention in medical circles as well as in the popular press and Dr. Suzuki had been intrigued by what he had read about these agents. He was particularly interested in reports that the LSD experience was similar to the Satori, or Enlightment, experience.

He was sure, he said, that the LSD experience was different from Satori. The experiences might feel the same, he mused, but they were clearly different. And their consequences must be different. An LSD experience might leave people with a new outlook on the world but it would hardly transform them in the way that Satori did after the rigors of years of Zen training. But, even so, he felt that it would be very interesting to have this experience and to be able to compare it to what he called "a Zen experience". He shied away from the word Satori in describing his own experience. These concerns had been preoccupying Dr. Suzuki when he finally asked,

"Would you be able to bring me some LSD, Dr. Stunkard?"

I was impressed that this old man, now in his 80s, was so much in touch with current events. But it was not only his knowledge of current events that impressed me but his thoughts about LSD and his desire to undergo the experience.

"But should he?" Ted and I wondered. In these early days of the psychedelic revolution little was known about these drugs. There were reports of "bad trips" and we were concerned that LSD might damage his mind or his brain. There had been rumors of a Zen master who had experimented with LSD and had had a "bad trip". According to the rumor, he had lain down in a fetal position and refused all communication, frightening the people who had arranged for the experience. Eventually the effects of the drug effect wore off and the Zen master returned to the world no worse for wear. We could not tolerate the ideas of subjecting Dr. Suzuki to this kind of uncertainty.

In addition, there was the question of his blood pressure. There were no reports of the effects of LSD upon blood pressure at that time, even blood pressure of normal levels, let alone the 180/70 level that Dr. Suzuki showed.

We met with Dr. Suzuki over time and explained our concerns about the possible dangers of LSD in general and in someone of his age and we recommended that he not take LSD. He listened attentively, thought about what we had said and then agreed to forgo what he obviously wanted very much to do.

## Dr. Suzuki and My Parents

Soon after Dr. Suzuki arrived in the United States, I visited my parents in New York and told them that the man who had meant so much to me in Japan was now in New York. My mother asked me to invite him to dinner and he accepted. The visit turned out to be a kind of stage on which a drama of Dr. Suzuki and my parents played out.

I came up to New York from Baltimore and met my father, who drove us to the Union Theological Seminary. Dr. Suzuki was waiting for us, dressed in his little tweed suit.

We had not been driving for long after we picked up Dr. Suzuki when I became aware of tension. My father, customarily self-assured, even didactic, was unusually silent, and, perhaps out of deference, Dr. Suzuki had little to say. I felt awkward and tried to make conversation. I didn't succeed.

As we passed the Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center, I pointed it out to Dr. Suzuki as the place where I had gone to medical school. He expressed interest and then asked, "Do they practice vivisection?" Aroused, my father spoke out for the first time, once again didactic, sure of himself.

"Vivisection is necessary for medical progress. Without research on animals we would not know what we know today and we would not learn anything in the future." Having delivered this pronouncement he fell silent. Dr. Suzuki murmured "I see," and the painful silence returned. At least it was painful to me, and probably to my father as well. I later realized that it had probably not been painful to Dr. Suzuki.

During the day that Dr. Suzuki spent with us, my father said little to him and seemed to have little interest in what he said. He must have been curious about this little man, if only because he seemed important to his son and once he made an attempt in his awkward way to find out what it was that Dr. Suzuki was teaching. Fixing Dr. Suzuki with a firm stare and a stern manner, he asked, "Now, Dr. Suzuki, I want you to tell me just what this Zen Buddhism is all about."

Dr. Suzuki spoke for a while in a pleasant manner without any apparent effect on my father. When he had finished, my father said, with conviction, and not a little satisfaction, "Well, Dr. Suzuki, I don't understand a word of what you're saying". Dr. Suzuki nodded pleasantly and replied "No, Professor Stunkard, I'm sure that you don't". The words themselves sound confrontational but the message was not. Dr. Suzuki spoke in such a kindly manner that even my father could not take offense. It was just a kind of pleasant acknowledgment of the way things were.

It wasn't long after Dr. Suzuki's arrival at our house that my mother uncovered an improbable relationship. She was the kind of person who tried to put people at their ease and she was soon embarrassing me by gushing, "Dr. Suzuki, you speak such wonderful English. Where did you ever learn to speak such good English?" Dr. Suzuki thanked her and said that he had lived for some time in the United States as a young man; it was then that he had learned to speak English.

My mother promptly asked where he had lived and Dr. Suzuki replied, "I'm sure it wasn't any place that you know of, Mrs. Stunkard, just a small town on the prairie."

My mother exclaimed effusively, "Well, Dr. Suzuki, I come from a small town on the prairie. Which small town did you come from?"

Dr. Suzuki again demurred, and said that it was a very small town; it was called La Salle.

With even greater enthusiasm my mother exclaimed, "Well, Dr. Suzuki, so you lived in La Salle, did you," my mother exclaimed, "I know La Salle very well." She paused and then, "Did you know the Carus family in La Salle?"

Smiling, Dr. Suzuki said "Yes, Mrs. Stunkard, that's just where I lived; I lived with the Carus family in La Salle."

My mother immediately asked "Did you know Elizabeth Carus?" and Dr. Suzuki replied that, yes, indeed, he had known Elizabeth very well.

Triumphantly, my mother then said, "Then you probably met me. We lived in Champaign and every month or so my father used to take me over to La Salle to play with Elizabeth Carus." My father thought very highly of Paul Carus; he always said that he was a man ahead of his time.

Then my mother and Dr. Suzuki discussed the years when he had lived with the Caruses and the years when my mother visited them and it did indeed seem as if they could have met. In any event, Dr. Suzuki remarked that yes he now did think that he remembered a young friend of Elizabeth's who used to come from Champaign to visit her and that that must have been my mother. My mother did not pretend to remember Dr. Suzuki but since her visits must have taken place about 1900 or before, when she was five or six, that is not surprising.

My mother asked Dr. Suzuki how he had happened to come to stay with the Caruses. He told of his visit to the United States in 1893 with his teacher, Shaku Soyen, to attend the

"World's Congress of Religions" at the Chicago World's Fair. Dr. Suzuki spoke warmly of that occasion and of the impression made by the representatives of different religions, dressed in their resplendent costumes. Mr. Carus had been impressed with Shaku Soyen's talk and realized that Buddhism might offer an opportunity to help resolve the conflict between religion and science that was then raging in the United States. Indeed, his Open Court Publishing Company had been founded in an effort to resolve this conflict and he invited Shaku Soyen to come to La Salle and to help him in his publishing efforts. Shaku Soyen told Mr. Carus that he was unable to leave his responsibilities at Engakuji but that he could recommend his young student and translator.

"So that is how I came to La Salle, Mrs. Stunkard."

A recent biography of Paul Carus cites a letter he wrote to Shaku Soyen from this period, "We are all very much pleased with Mr. Suzuki and with the gentleness of his character".

After lunch, for which Dr. Suzuki thanked my mother and complimented her on her cooking, we went into the living room. We had been there for only a few minutes when Dr. Suzuki announced, to no one in particular, but clearly meaning my mother, "Now I would like to lie down. It's time for me to rest." There followed a period of some confusion and my mother asked Dr. Suzuki if he would like to go upstairs to bed.

"No," he replied, "here is quite suitable."

He was sitting on the couch and clearly he thought that this was the place to lie down. My mother asked if he would like a blanket and, when he said that he would, she hurried off to get one. Dr. Suzuki took off his shoes and jacket, laid them down carefully, and then lay down, just as my mother was appearing with a blanket. She covered him with it. He thanked her and promptly went to sleep.

During this time my father was watching these activities from his old easy chair with what may have been curiosity, or more likely, disbelief. While Dr. Suzuki took his nap, what conversation there was, I could sense my father's growing irritation. When Dr. Suzuki awoke after a brief time, he sat up and my mother and I engaged him in conversation from which my father was notably absent. Instead, he sat silently, masking his emotions to some degree, but, to an experienced eye, glowering at this presumptuous visitor who had thrown his household into disarray.

We spoke for some time and then it was time for Dr. Suzuki to leave. My father drove him and me down to the Union Theological Seminary where he was staying. My father didn't say a word on the way to the Seminary or back. Later I had a chance to see Dr. Suzuki work his magic on a family beset with tension. He may not have had enough time with my father, or perhaps my father was too tough a case.

**"High Noon"**

I was continually surprised by Dr. Suzuki's ability to relate to different situations. A poignant occasion involved our going to the movie "High Noon." I had been moved by this Western, which tells the story of a sheriff (Gary Cooper) who has resigned his position and is leaving on his honeymoon when he learns that a "deadly killer", he had sent to prison years before has been released and is returning to kill him. After a fruitless effort to recruit townspeople to help him face this deadly killer and his three friends, the sheriff goes to his office, signs his will, and walks out to meet his fate.

The character of the lone man of integrity, abandoned by his friends, who chose death over dishonor made me think of my father. I persuaded my father to see "High Noon" with me, hoping to convey to him something of my boyhood admiration for him. But it didn't work. He didn't like the film. He said that it was just a lot of violence and shooting and he didn't have any use for that kind of thing.

Sometime after the misadventure I asked Dr. Suzuki to see the film with me. I hadn't thought of him as the sheriff but I hoped that he would help me to understand what it was that had moved me so deeply. We went along with Dr. Suzuki's ward, the young Count Otani, the future head of one of the Shin Buddhist sects. Young Otani was also intrigued with the film. Later he talked about it so much that we began to call him "Two Gun" Otani.

Dr. Suzuki watched the film with rapt attention and afterwards threw himself into a lively discussion of it. It was a wonderful film, he said, and it had moved him. He said that he had particularly liked the point when the sheriff, having been abandoned by his friends, wrote his will and went out to die. "That was a very important moment for that sheriff. That was the moment at which he had already lost his life, had lost his self. After that moment, he was no longer concerned with living or dying. He was just performing the duty that lay before him. At that moment the sheriff was a true Zen man."

### Auras and Personal Influence

One of the things that impressed me about Dr. Suzuki was his ability to calm the tides of human passion. I had had little chance to see this ability during his solitary life at Engakuji but when he visited the United States opportunity abounded.

After his period at the Union Theological Seminary, Dr. Suzuki returned several times to teach at Columbia University. During this time he lived with the Okamura family on the West Side of Manhattan. Visiting him at the Okamuras brought back all of the old magic and it was some time before I became aware of tensions in the family. The family consisted of the parents, first-generation Japanese, and their two daughters. Mr. Okamura worked at the Japanese Garden at the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens and free-lanced in the construction of Japanese gardens, including one that he helped me construct in Philadelphia. Mrs. Okamura, together with her male partner, ran the Aki Dining Room, a superb Japanese restaurant that was a favorite haunt of Columbia faculty. Although the Okamuras kept their marital difficulties largely hidden, they would flare up from time to time, even in the presence of a guest, and it seemed clear that the tensions between them ran deep.

Dr. Suzuki was sometimes asked to intercede in the quarrels between the Okamuras and he would do so, but his influence seemed manifest in other ways. His presence somehow led to a quality of calm among those around him. It was difficult to say how he exerted this effect but it seemed to result from his total lack of retaliation to any intrusion on his self. No matter what unpleasant thing happened around him, he simply did not respond. It was striking to watch this influence on an angry exchange. The parties simply stopped responding themselves and the atmosphere became quiet. At the time I remember thinking that this influence could be conceived as an aura that spread out from Dr. Suzuki to the people surrounding him, soothing and calming them. The interpersonal explanation, however, seemed adequate.

I had a chance to see this calming influence during a meeting that Erich Fromm organized at his home in Cuernavaca in Mexico on the topic of "Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis". During the previous winter I had taken a course on psychoanalysis from Fromm at the New School and was impressed with how frequently he referred to Zen Buddhism. After one of the lectures I asked him about his interest in Zen Buddhism and he told me that it came from books, mostly those of D.T.Suzuki, and he would like to learn more about it. So I offered to introduce him to Dr. Suzuki and shortly we were spending a very pleasant evening at the Okamuras. Shortly afterwards Fromm proposed the conference in Cuernavaca.

The conference took place at Fromm's elegant villa at the edge of town. The villa was situated just above a large swimming pool on which the servants cast petals each morning and below which peacocks strutted on the sumptuous lawns. The warm summer sun was a pleasant contrast to the cool mountain air. Sitting on the porch, looking off into the distance, Dr. Suzuki commented, "In an atmosphere like this there really doesn't seem to be any need for Zen."

If Dr.Suzuki had not felt any need for Zen, the same could hardly be said for the participants, primarily psychoanalysts, in the conference. The began with a lively display of their knowledge of Zen literature and their ability to one-up their colleagues with arcane Zen stories. They had all read a great deal about Zen.

Then there occurred a magical transformation in the people attending the conference. Over the course of the week the egotism lessened and then just seemed to go away. It was not clear what had caused this change and how much of it was due to Dr. Suzuki, but his presence clearly had an effect. Perhaps it was his radical non-response to affront. Here the affront was not so much anger as it was the pompous self-assurance of the participants. Dr. Suzuki simply listened to their explanations of Zen Buddhism, smiled, said, "Very good", and went on to other things.

An interesting interchange during the conference was that between a leading Mexican dramatic actress and Dr. Suzuki. He asked about her experience while acting and she said that when she entered a role on stage or screen she lost all thought of herself and became the person whose role she was playing. She was emphatic about this total absorption, this total lack of self. She was a beautiful woman, no doubt accustomed to attention and she went out of her way to attract Dr.Suzuki's attention. She fully succeeded and Dr. Suzuki seemed entranced with what she reported. Returning to the old Satori question, I asked him if she were experiencing Satori during these periods. "Yes," Dr. Suzuki said, "it is Satori, but it is a limited Satori that does not extend beyond the realm of her acting. Nevertheless, it is a wonderful ability to experience this kind of Satori. She is truly a remarkable woman."

The one person whose striving seemed not to have been eased by the wonderful days in Cuernavaca was Erich Fromm. He continued to comment on the meaning of Zen Buddhism and devoted much of the closing session to his understanding of Zen. He pointed out the importance of Zen Buddhism for our contemporary culture. It was exemplified by the image of the angel with a fiery sword who stood guard at the edge of Eden after Adam and Eve had been expelled. This symbolized, he asserted, the imperative that man continue his journey into maturity, and the impossibility of ever returning to the conflict-free Eden where we had been babies at our mother's breast. That way, Fromm cautioned, lay madness; that way lay regression to an infantile state.

In his closing remarks Dr. Suzuki thanked Dr. Fromm and the participants for the fine meeting and for the fine images. He had been impressed, he said, by the image of the guardian with the fiery sword preventing man from regressing into the infantile state. Then he went on somewhat whimsically. He said that he had been thinking about the infantile state and that it might be nice to regress into it. Extending his arms as if holding a baby, he said, "The baby must be very happy lying in its mother's lap" and then changing the position he continued, "or maybe lying like this in its mother's lap." "Yes, that must be a very pleasant way to live. I think that I would like to live like that."

**Modesty and Assurance**

The assurance that Dr. Suzuki displayed in Cuernavca served him well as he became more widely recognized. It was joined to a becoming modesty.

Not long after the Cuernavaca conference Dr. Suzuki addressed a far larger psychiatric audience. It was at a joint meeting of the American and Japanese Psychiatric Associations in Tokyo. By this time Dr. Suzuki's writings had attracted widespread interest among mental-health workers in the United States and the Japanese hosts realized that he would make an ideal keynote speaker.

The large audience was eagerly awaiting his lecture on "The Meaning of the Unconscious in Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis." They watched as tiny figure ascended the podium, took out his prepared text, adjusted his spectacles and looked out. Then he removed his spectacles, paused, and began to speak.

"My lecture today is entitled `The Meaning of the Unconscious in Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis.' This is clearly a topic of great importance. But as I was walking up the steps it occurred to me that it might be of greater interest to you if I tell you how I spend my day."

He began by telling how he got up in the morning, proceeded through the day and ended by how telling how he went to bed. And he ended the lecture on time!

During his last years in America Dr. Suzuki attracted increasing attention, and not only among psychiatrists. One of them was the daughter of Albert Einstein who became impressed with Dr. Suzuki and invited him to meet her father. I met him soon after his return from the visit in Princeton.

"How did it go?"

Dr. Suzuki said that he had very much enjoyed meeting Dr. Einstein and found him to be a very pleasant man.

"And what did he think of Zen Buddhism?" I asked.

"Well, Dr. Stunkard, I don't think that he was very interested in Zen Buddhism. I think that he met me because his daughter asked him to. But he didn't seem to be interested in Zen so we talked about other things."

I had regrets about this meeting but Dr. Suzuki didn't share them. For him it had just been a pleasant afternoon.

Another encounter, of sorts, was with Dag Hammerskjold, who was then Secretary General of the United Nations.

Dr. Suzuki had been invited to Belgium to address the opening session of the Brussels World's Fair in 19__ and flew there with the Okamura's daughter, Mihoko. According to Mihoko, when they arrived at the airport there was a Receiving Committee together with a military band. Dag Hammarskjold, who had been on the plane, strode to the exit, greeted the Receiving Committee and delivered a short talk that expressed his gratitude for this generous reception.

When he had finished, the Belgian officials, embarrassed, told the Secretary General that the reception had, in fact, been planned for a Japanese philosopher who, they believed, was on the plane. When they entered, they found Dr. Suzuki sitting quietly, looking out the window, watching the reception. They asked him why he had remained in his seat.

"He didn't want to interfere with the ceremony," Miss Okamura told them and the officials then led Dr. Suzuki to the exit where they repeated the welcome.

When Dr. Suzuki returned to New York, I asked him about the event. He didn't say very much. "There was some kind of mix-up at the airport," he said, "but they got it straightened out."

## Buddhist Scholarship

Over the years Dr. Suzuki's approach to Zen changed. He spoke less about Satori and the dramatic Enlightenment experiences that had so intrigued him and more about living in harmony with nature and with the world. As I have noted, he came to view Zazen in a more positive light. But he must have retained some lingering uncertainty about it, for he never persuaded, or perhaps even attempted to persuade, his students to undertake formal Zen training. Scholarship was always foremost in his interests. And these interests continued to the end of his life.

Dr. Suzuki was about 90 years old when he began to explore the relationship between Zen and Shinshu, the "Pure Land" sect of Buddhism. Traditionally these two sects had been viewed as having nothing in common, standing at opposite poles in the Japanese classification of religions. Zen, at one pole, represents the ultimate in salvation by personal effort; at the other pole, Pure Land represents the ultimate in salvation by grace. Not only did they differ in their positions in the classification of religion, but also in their perceived philosophic depth.

Zen scholars had traditionally viewed Pure Land skeptically, as a religion of undisciplined emotion and cautioned against its reliance on faith and on the mantram "Namu Amida Butsu" -- veneration for Amida Buddha, a Buddha yet to be born who resides in the heavenly "Pure Land." They saw no comparison between the pieties of Pure Land devotees and the long, rigorous philosophical tradition of Zen.

Another critical difference between the sects lay in their differing origins within the highly structured social class system of Japan. Zen was the religion of the samurai, the elite warrior class that had dominated the cultural life of Japan for centuries; Pure Land was the religion of the peasant class. It was the rare samurai and the rare Zen scholar who concerned himself with this religion of the peasants.

But Dr. Suzuki did concern himself with Pure Land and saw in it the compassion that he believed had too often been slighted in Zen by the overriding quest for wisdom.

Dr. Suzuki's understanding of Pure Land arose from his understanding of Zen. In his studies of Pure Land as an old man one can see the young student, desperate to solve his Koan, walking up the stone steps to the Mountain Gate of Engakuji. For he saw the Namu Amida Butsu as far more than a mantram, or device. Commenting on the writings of a Pure Land Shin, an uneducated carpenter named Saichi, Dr.Suzuki wrote "As soon as the 'Namu Amida Butsu' is pronounced, he, as Namu, melts into the body of Amida. What has taken place is the identification of Amida and Saichi." Reflecting his own Enlightenment experience -- "it was not that I had ceased to be myself" -- he went on, "But the identification is not Saichi's vanishing. Saichi is still conscious of his individuality."

## A Last Visit

The last time that I saw Dr. Suzuki, I found him still working hard, and smiling about a discovery he had made a few days before. I met him at his home in Kamakura, which was now the library where I had stayed during Sesshins years before. He was 95 years old and he was feeling his age. "Old age, Dr. Stunkard, is such a problem. Eyes no good, so a need for artificial eyes. Ears no good, so a need for artificial ears. Teeth no good, so a need for artificial teeth. And it is no longer possible for me to work the way I used to. After two hours I must stop working and take a rest. Then I start to work on a different book. It helps me to maintain my interest." At the time he was working on three different books.

Then he returned to his discovery. He had been working on a commentary to the calligraphy of Sengai, a Zen Master of the 18th century. Sengai had left behind a collection of sketches that looked a lot like comic strips and that was how they had been regarded until recent years. Then they attracted the interest of Mr. Idemitsu, a wealthy insurance company executive. He collected them and began to publish them in long scroll-like printings, as advertisements for his company. For some time Dr. Suzuki had written brief commentaries that accompanied the calligraphies and now he was trying to expand these commentaries into a book on Sengai's art. It was during this task that he had made his discovery.

Dr. Suzuki explained that one of the characteristics of Sengai had been that he was "always laughing" and that even during his lifetime he had been criticized for his laughter. "People would say how can a Zen priest be laughing when the world is so full of suffering. Doesn't Buddhism deal with suffering? With all of the suffering in the world, it doesn't seem right for a Zen priest to be laughing."

Dr. Suzuki went on, "I had been trying for some time to explain why Sengai was laughing but it was such a difficult task. I would say that Sengai's laughter was life-affirming, or Sengai's laughter was positive and not negative. But it just didn't seem to be right. Then I remembered that at some time in the past I had read something about laughter that had impressed me. I thought that, if I could only remember what it was that I had read, it would help me to explain why it was all right for Sengai to be laughing. Well, for quite some time I couldn't remember what it was that I had read and then, all of a sudden, a few days ago I had a surprise. I remembered the name of the book. It was called "Le Rire" by Henri Bergson and I remember how much I had enjoyed it when I read it. So now I am reading it again and enjoying it just as much. And it is having a beneficial effect on my writing; it is helping me to explain why it was all right for Sengai to be laughing". "Le Rire" was published in 1903, which meant that 62 years had elapsed between the reading and the recollection. I think that I must have been just as pleased as this old man.

Dr. Suzuki died soon afterward.

He was stricken during the night with severe abdominal pain and was taken to a hospital in Tokyo where he died the next day. As he was being carried down the steep steps from his home, he kept saying to the stretcher bearers, "Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you.."