Spreading Indra's Net in Manhattan: D. T. Suzuki's Columbia University Seminars 1952–1953

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Good afternoon, everyone. I am honored to have been nominated for and awarded the Kanazawa International Prize for 2023. I want to thank Moriya Tomoe-sensei for nominating me and to the members of the Prize Selection Committee for having bestowed upon me this award. I am particularly pleased to know that the research and publication concerning Suzuki Daisetsu that I have been doing since 2001 is known and appreciated in the city of his birth, Kanazawa. Over the years, my work on Suzuki has benefitted enormously from the support of the Matsugaoka Bunko, especially Ms. Ban Katsuyo, and the help of the late Okamura Mihoko, as well as from many other Japanese academic colleagues. I thank Professor Suemura Masayo for skillfully translating this lecture from English to Japanese. Finally, I thank all for you in the audience for coming to hear my lecture concerning Suzuki Teitarō Daisetsu, better known outside Japan as Daisetz Suzuki or D. T. Suzuki.

This is, I know, a rather somber season in Japan. On August 6 and August 9, we commemorate the 78th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It is very clear that we all must work together to ensure that such catastrophes do not occur again. Suzuki Daisetsu, in New York City on September 11, 1955, spoke about the nuclear attacks and the growing menace of another nuclear war. In a speech dedicating a statue of Shinran that had been sent to the American Buddhist Academy from Hiroshima, Suzuki said,

> The present state of things that we are facing everywhere—politically, economically, morally, intellectually, and spiritually—is no doubt the result of our past thoughts and deeds we have committed as human beings

> through the whole length of history—how many years we cannot count—through eons of existence, not only individually but collectively. As such, we are, every one of us, responsible for the present world situation filled with awesome forebodings. The bombing of Hiroshima was not after all the doing of the American armies, but the doing of mankind as a whole, and as such, we, not only the Japanese and Americans but the whole world, are to be held responsible for the wholesale slaughter witnessed ten years ago in Japan.[1]

It is appropriate that I begin my lecture on this day with this quotation from Suzuki's 1955 speech. The Shinran statue dedication speech actually played an important role in my decision to focus on Suzuki, which I have been doing for the last two decades. I had long known about Suzuki's work on Zen Buddhism for much of life. By chance, a summer camp counselor had given me a paperback copy of *Zen Buddhism: Selected Writings of D.T. Suzuki*, edited by William Barrett, in the summer of 1967 or 1968. The United States was still in the midst of the Zen boom and both the Rochester Zen Center in New York and the San Francisco Zen Center in California had recently been founded. At the age of 14, I could not understand most of Suzuki's essays. I would, of course, read some of Suzuki's writings as a college and PhD student in religious and Buddhist studies. When I first began studying Zen Buddhism in the 1970s as a college student, there was not much to read in English about Zen apart from Suzuki's books. By the time I began my graduate studies at Yale, Suzuki's work on Zen once again drew scholarly attention. Towards the end of the twentieth century, Suzuki's work was severely criticized in US and European academic circles for its supposed Nihonjinron-like characteristics and

anachronistic understanding of the history of Chan/Zen Buddhism in Tang and Song China. Like many of my scholarly peers, I accepted this view of Suzuki without taking the time to carefully read his numerous essays and books.

In 2000, however, as I began working on what would become my second book, *Seeking Śākyamuni: India in the Formation of Modern Japanese Buddhism*, I was by luck given an opportunity to reappraise Suzuki's career and body of work. One of the Japanese Buddhists I studied for *Seeking Śākyamuni* was Suzuki's Zen master, Shaku Sōen. Sōen, as you may know, spent approximately three years in Sri Lanka and Siam studying Theravāda Buddhism. My search for documents and photos concerning Sōen's travels in South and Southeast Asia brought me to Tōkeiji, the temple in Kita-Kamakura, where Sōen had retired. At Tōkeiji I had the opportunity to interview one of the last people alive who knew Sōen directly, the late Inoue Zenjō-rōshi, who died in 2006 at the age of 95. Inoue-rōshi shared with me a number of photographs, calligraphies, and manuscripts that related to Sōen's time in South and Southeast Asia. Inoue-rōshi kindly met with me on three occasions, for several hours each time to talk about Sōen and Sōen's student, Suzuki. Born in 1911, Inoue-rōshi was young when he met Sōen and was only 8 years old when Sōen died. As a result, Inoue-rōshi had few direct memories of Sōen. On the other hand, Inoue-rōshi did have many things to say about Suzuki, whom he got to know well after Inoue-rōshi became *jūshoku* of Tōkeiji in 1941. At that time, Suzuki was living at Shōden'an at Engakuji and, following the end of the Fifteen Years' War, Suzuki would live on Tōkeiji grounds at the Matsugaoka Bunko. Our conversations about Suzuki greatly intrigued me. In particular, Inoue-rōshi's firm conviction that Suzuki had a deep understanding of Zen

stimulated me to reread Suzuki's work and consider focusing on Suzuki for my next scholarly project.

After speaking with Inoue-rōshi several times, I began doing archival work concerning Suzuki's career back in the United States. Much of that archival research took place in New York City, where Suzuki had resided from 1951–1958 while he was affiliated with Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University. As part of my research in New York, I visited the American Buddhist Academy, which is affiliated with the New York Buddhist Church, a Jōdo Shinshū temple, now located on the Upper West Side of New York City. One of the centers for the Japanese and Japanese-American community in New York in the post-World War II era, Suzuki had spent a good amount of time lecturing at the American Buddhist Academy, attending the movie nights at the Church, and other activities. While I was at the American Buddhist Academy, the head, Seki Hoshina, shared with me the audiotape recording of Suzuki's September 11, 1955 speech at the dedication ceremony for the statue of Shinran that still stands outside the New York Buddhist Church and the American Buddhist Academy. Sitting on the floor of the Academy, I remember listening to a somewhat poor tape recording of the lecture. When I first heard the lecture at the American Buddhist Academy in 2000 or 2001, I was so deeply impressed by Suzuki's sincerity, insight, and skill as a Zen "preacher" that I decided to devote myself to studying Suzuki's career and trying to make English-language readers aware of his importance as a 20th-century ambassador of Japanese culture and Buddhism. Now, twenty-two years later, after overseeing the publication of four edited books of Suzuki's writings and writing several articles about him, I have begun work on a biography of Suzuki. This scholarly work, thanks to my

colleagues in Japan, has brought me back to Suzuki's birthplace, Kanazawa, to receive the Kanazawa International Award.

Today I will focus my presentation on Suzuki's seminar lectures at Columbia University, which served as a platform for Suzuki's leap to global attention in the 1950s and 1960s. Although many people have written about the Columbia seminars as part of the history of Buddhism in North America, up until recently we have not had access to the lectures themselves, so we knew very little about the content. For the past several years I have been working on an edited version of the revised Columbia lectures that probably was intended for publication. (Matsugaoka Bunko has published a bilingual edition of the lectures in Japan.) Tonight I would like to present some of what I have uncovered at Matsugaoka Bunko in the process of working with this manuscript material and provide an overview of the lectures as a significant event in 20th-century global intellectual history.

Today, many people in the United States and, perhaps, Japan, are not very familiar with D.T. Suzuki. By contrast, in January, 1957, when he started his last semester teaching at Columbia University, Suzuki was the face of Buddhism around the globe, much like the Dalai Lama today. At that time, Suzuki quite literally was in *Vogue*, when his seminar was mentioned in the "People are Talking About" section of the fashion magazine. There, sandwiched between mentions of the latest novels and films, one of the correspondents noted, "The Columbia University classes of the great Zen Buddhist teacher, Daisetz Suzuki, who sits in the center of a mound of books waving his spectacle with ceremonial elegance while mingling the philosophical abstract with the familiar concrete: "To discover one is a great achievement; to discover zero a great leap"; or another time; "Have no ulterior purpose in work, then your are free."[2]

Seven months later, just after he resigned his adjunct appointment at Columbia, Suzuki again figured prominently in the New York magazine world, when in August, 1957, Winthrop Sargeant wrote the long biographical article, "Great Simplicity"—the English translation of "Daisetsu 大拙"—about Suzuki for the *New Yorker*. Having spent time with Suzuki in the seminars and interviews, Sargeant concluded his article, "Yet even the most skeptical visitor, when under the spell of Dr. Suzuki's soft-spoken, earnest but humorous words is apt to find himself believing—for the moment at least—that zero is in fact equal to infinity, that the timeless and eternal instant of perception is all there is to the real world, and that 'emptiness' is the thing."[3]

Like many other Asian spiritual teachers who found a home in the United States in the first half of the twentieth century, the combination of American spiritual searching and philanthropy drew Suzuki to the United States. The five-year period teaching at Columbia in the 1950s was not Suzuki's first time at the university nor, when he arrived in New York City, was Suzuki a stranger to life in the United States.[4] Born here in Kanzawa, Japan, in 1870, Suzuki forged his career as a scholar and practitioner of Zen Buddhism as the Japanese Empire and the United States, facing each other across the Pacific, grew increasingly powerful and contentious. The projection of Japanese imperial power into Hawaii and mainland America created communities of Japanese-descended immigrants who provided an important audience and institutional infrastructure for Suzuki's dissemination of Buddhism. At the same time, the growth of US industrial might and victories in the two great world wars generated the wealth that subsidized each of Suzuki's three extended visits in the United States. At the turn of the nineteenth–twentieth century, Edward Hegler's zinc mining-generated income allowed Suzuki to

spend eleven years in La Salle, Illinois, working at Open Court Press. Then, in the 1930s, the great fortune of the Chicago-based Crane Manufacturing Corporation brought Suzuki back to the United States for a several-month lecture tour that was sponsored by Charles Richard Crane, a scion of the company's founder. In the winter of 1936, Suzuki crossed the United States, delivering a series of lectures that would form the basis for one of his best know works, *Zen Buddhism and Its Influence on Japanese Culture* (republished in revised form in 1959 as *Zen and Japanese Culture*). Although the death of Suzuki's beloved American wife, Beatrice Erskine Lane and the outbreak of the Pacific War temporarily halted Suzuki's visits to the United States and Europe, within years of the end of hostilities, such US foundations as Rockefeller and Bollingen Foundations and another member of the Crane family, Cornelius Vanderbilt Crane, once again once again made possible Suzuki's nine-year stay and his Columbia University salary.

Within a few years after World War II, Suzuki resumed his participation in international conferences and, for the first time in his career, began extended formal teaching overseas at universities in the United States. Following his participation in the Second East-West Philosophers' Conference at the University of Hawai'i, Suzuki spent time lecturing at the University of Hawai'i and Claremont Colleges. Suzuki's appearance at the Philosophers' Conference brought him to the attention of program officers for the humanities at the Rockefeller Foundation in spring, 1950.[5] After interviewing Suzuki in March, 1950, program officers of the Foundation decided to support Suzuki's request for funding to support a three-month speaking tour in the eastern United States with a $2,500 grant.[6] Arrangements were made by Foundation officers for Suzuki to be based at Union Theological Seminary, an institution closely tied with Columbia at the graduate level.

While at Union Theological Seminar in fall 1950 and winter 1951, Suzuki had a dizzyingly busy schedule of public lectures and meetings with a wide range of people interested in Zen. From September, 1950–May, 1951, with logistical assistance from program officers at the Rockefeller Foundation, Suzuki gave visiting lectures at numerous elite universities, colleges, and other institutions on the East Coast of the United States. In addition, in early March, 1951, Suzuki gave three high-profile lectures on Kegon Buddhism, sponsored by the Taraknath Das Foundation, in Butler Library at Columbia that drew audiences ranging from 150–300 in number. These three lectures, which covered the development of Chinese Buddhism, Kegon (in Chinese, Huayan) philosophy, and the relationship between Kegon and Zen, set out in broad strokes the subjects that Suzuki would explore in his Columbia seminars.[7] In addition to subsidizing the lectures on Kegon, the Rockefeller Foundation gave Suzuki a grant to work on an English-language introduction to Kegon Buddhism. The Foundation provided Suzuki with $1,500 to work on the book at Claremont Colleges in the spring 1952 semester. That grant augmented support from the Japanese Buddhist community in Southern California. In addition, the grant was extended with an additional $500 in the summer of 1953, after Suzuki had completed his first two semesters teaching at Columbia.

Suzuki wrote to the Rockefeller Foundation that this work on Kegon would add, "…a great deal to the stock of knowledge the West has with regard to the East. Kegon philosophy has never been explored by any European scholars as far as I know and the knowledge of this philosophy helps the Western people to understand the Eastern way of thinking and feeling. Besides, the Kegon itself marks the culmination of Buddhist thought as developed in China. The Kegon is a kind of synthesis of Indian and Chinese thought." Suzuki added that this was a most

difficult task, particularly because "when we realise that the gap between the Western way of thinking and that of the East being in many cases fundamental, the rendering of some key terms is extremely difficult."[8] Writing and lecturing at a time when there were few English-language translations of fundamental Chinese and Japanese Buddhist materials, Suzuki was faced with the daunting task of constructing appropriate ways of communicating extremely abstruse Sino-Japanese and Sanskrit Buddhist philosophical concepts.

During his time at Union Theological, Suzuki also began discussing with members of the Columbia faculty the possibility of teaching a course at Columbia, provided that funds for his salary could be arranged. Columbia University claimed it did not have the funds to support Suzuki's salary and the Rockefeller Foundation declined to fund Suzuki's salary at Columbia. Fortunately for Columbia, however, a wealthy philanthropist, Cornelius Crane, was willing to pay Suzuki's salary for teaching one course per semester at Columbia. Cornelius Crane was the nephew of Charles Richard Crane, who had funded Suzuki's travels in the USA in 1936.[9] Cornelius also was a psychoanalytic patient of Karen Horney, who, along with Cornelius, had become interested in Zen through reading Suzuki's books.[10] When Suzuki was in New York in 1951–1952, they began meeting with Suzuki regularly in New York, at the Crane's summer home in Massachusetts, and, in the summer of 1952, on a group trip to Japan. Hearing of Suzuki's desire to teach at Columbia, Cornelius volunteered to fund Suzuki's salary with gifts to Columbia University. Cornelius would continue to support D. T. Suzuki for the next decade, providing a salary to him even after Suzuki retired from Columbia in 1957. Cornelius's monetary support for Suzuki only ended when Cornelius died in 1962.

Once the funding had been arranged with Cornelius Crane, faculty members at Columbia interested in philosophy and religious studies arranged for Suzuki to teach the seminar on Buddhism.[11] Initially Suzuki was appointed as visiting lecturer in Chinese, but by June, 1952, he was reappointed as associate in Religion, a position he continued to hold until he stepped down from Columbia at the end of June, 1957.

Convened for the first semester in a capacious classroom, 401 Low Library at Columbia University, the room was filled with students and curious faculty members on February 5, 1952 on the first day of class. In the description of the course, Chinese 128, "Chinese Philosophy." Suzuki announced that he would be teaching about the "development of Buddhist thought in China and especially its culmination as contained in the Kegon (Hua-yen) formulation."[12] According to one student, A. W. Sadler, Suzuki began the class by introducing Kegon with these words: "This will be a course on a philosophy of timelessness and spacelessness, which have no beginning. Therefore the course will have no beginning."[13] To understand Kegon, Suzuki asserted, one must see who was "at the back of Kegon."[14] According to Suzuki, this was none other than the Buddha himself. And to understand the Buddha, it was necessary to comprehend the nature of the Buddha's awakening, which is the basis of the Kegon philosophy.

Suzuki would continue teaching his seminar at Columbia each semester, apart for one semester of leave in Japan in the fall of 1954, until the end of the spring term, 1957. Intended to be a "graduate lecture course," for the first semester Chinese Philosophy was taught on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 5:10–6:00 pm. The bi-weekly, mid-week scheduling may explain why, as the semester progressed, according to Sadler, the faculty presence diminished, leaving just graduate students in attendance.[15] In the fall 1952 semester the course was moved to a

smaller seminar room, 716 Philosophy Hall. The new course time, Friday afternoons from 4:00–6:00 pm, and then, for the spring 1953, and future semesters, to Fridays, 5:10–7:00 pm, proved more appealing for non-Columbia attendees. As word about Suzuki's course on Buddhism spread through New York's artistic, literary, and intellectual circles, the number of non-student attendees grew. Arthur Danto, a PhD student and, later, professor, at Columbia, attended some of the lectures. He recalls that the seminar room in Philosophy Hall was filled each week with students and a diverse group of auditors that at times approached forty in number.[16] Suzuki would deliver his lectures softly, while covering the blackboard with diagrams and Sino-Japanese characters. He then would entertain questions from the attendees. Contemporaneous accounts of the seminars make clear that Suzuki, in Japanese professorial style, read at least portions of the lectures, while also entertaining questions from the attendees.

John Cage, the famous composer, remembered on one occasion sitting in the classroom at Columbia with the windows open on a warm evening. As Suzuki lectured, a plane from LaGuardia Airport heading west passed overhead, drowning out his soft voice. Suzuki, Cage writes, continued on lecturing, although his voice was inaudible. After the plane had passed, he continued speaking and no one asked him to fill in the gap in the lecture caused by the plane's noise.[17] Suzuki would often spend considerable time explaining Chinese terms that he had written on the blackboard to the students. On one memorable occasion, Dr. Albert Stunkard describes a young attendee having a heated exchange with Suzuki. Stunkard thought at the time with a degree of envy and remorse, this was a sort of dharma exchange that Stunkard had never had with Suzuki. After class, however, when Stunkard asked about the dialogue, Suzuki responded that he himself was perplexed by the man's comments, leaving Stunkard relieved that

after working with Suzuki for some time, he was not lacking some insight that the outspoken student had grasped so quickly.[18]

The audience came from a wide range of backgrounds. Each semester a small number of Columbia students would take the classes. In addition, perhaps because Suzuki's salary was payed by Cornelius Crane, a non-Columbia affiliated donor, the seminar classes were open to non-Columbia auditors. Word spread about Suzuki's classes amongst a large swath of the literary, artistic, religious, and intellectual elites of New York City, drawing an extremely diverse, talented group to his classes.

Unlike major cities in Europe and Asia, post-World War II New York City was unscathed by wartime destruction. Instead, New York City had become a refuge for many fleeing the disruptions of war, thus turning the city into one of the world's most vibrant cultural, artistic, and intellectual cosmopolitan centers. The diversity and vibrancy of intellectual life in post-World War II New York City helped ensure that Suzuki's lectures were filled with people who approached his talks from many distinctive angles. As news of the seminars at Columbia spread, individuals from several different intellectual, cultural, and religious circles found their way to the classes. The groups included artists, academics, psychoanalysts, writers, and spiritual seekers from a wide range of mainstream and non-mainstream traditions. Some members of the New York Nikkei community, which had increased considerably following the end of the incarceration camps in 1944 also joined the classes.

An interest in religious or spiritual search also drew many to Suzuki's seminars. By the 1940s in the United States, religious book clubs and related reading lists had "legitimated a culture of spiritual seeking" for liberal Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. The inclusion in the

selections of the Religious Book Club of such authors as Aldous Huxley and Gerald Heard, as well as the run-away popularity of Thomas Merton's autobiography, *Seven-Story Mountain* in 1947, were indicators of how mainstream the notion of spiritual searching had become by the time Suzuki arrived in New York.[19] The involvement with spiritual seeking of one form or another was typical of many of the individuals who attended, whatever their field of interest.

This evening I do not have time to go into great detail about the all the individuals who attended the lectures. To summarize, the attendees included academics, artists, composers, dancers, philosophers, psychoanalysts, scientists, spiritual seekers, and writers. Many of these auditors were among the elite pioneering new approaches in their disciplines. The participants include such well-known people as William Barrett, John Cage, Sari Dienes, Erich Fromm, Philip Guston, Abraham Kaplan, Max Knoll, Ibram Lassaw, Dorothy Norman, Robert Rauschenberg, and Alan Watts. Suzuki also held an almost endless succession of meetings—lunches, dinners, and coffees—with members of the New York intelligentsia, as you can see on the PowerPoint slide.

In 1952, most of the attendees would have had little background in Buddhism, so the material Suzuki taught would have been foreign to the students, in every sense of the word. The six chapters of the revised manuscript Suzuki presents the Buddhist understanding of awakening/enlightenment and the relationship between the untainted ontological ground of all being and the world of delusion. Having analyzed how enlightenment occurs, Suzuki then turned to analyzing the nature of awakening, enlightenment and absolute time, the etiology of delusion, and enlightened compassion as a function of awakened mind. Suzuki bases his analysis on the *Daijō kishin ron* 大乗起信論 and the portrayal of the quest for awakening in the *Gandavyūha* (*Nyū*

hōkkai bon 入法界品), the long, concluding chapter of the *Kegongyō*.[20] In the lectures Suzuki delved into the nature of this awakening and its meaning from a variety of perspectives. In the course of doing so, he returned again and again to his interpretation of the initial awakening experience of Śākyamuni, as well as the enlightenment experiences of numerous well-known Zen masters.

Suzuki relied upon Hōzō's commentaries on the *Daijō kishin ron* to interpret the *Kegongyō*, which Suzuki saw as the apogee of Chinese Buddhist thought.[21] As Suzuki noted, "When Zen expresses itself in thought form, and when it tries to express itself in more and more advanced thought, it goes to this Kegon Sutra and thought system more than any other. In fact, the Kegon may be said to be the highest expression of Buddhist philosophy—and of Zen philosophy insofar as Zen is philosophical."[22] (p. 197/ST, p. 228.[23]) In the lectures, as in much of his work, Suzuki presents Buddhism as a monistic system in which fundamental, pure mind—absolute reality—is the ontological foundation of all existence, subsuming both delusion and awakening. In the revised lectures, Suzuki wrote of the relationship between awakening and delusion or, unity and multiplicity, as follows. "From the point of enlightenment, experience is the way we have to think. And this world of multiplicities, just as it is—dog is dog, cat is cat, all individuals are retained just as they are—this aspect of Reality just as all things are is oneness. Manyness remains as manyness, not a particle of this manyness changes, yet this manyness just as it is is oneness. This is the most important thought needed to explain Reality. The idea of duality is so contaminating that it is very difficult for us to comprehend that one is many, many is one." (p. 262/STp. 298.) In order to illustrate the interplay between awakened and deluded mind, a process that was so profound that, according to the author of the *Awakening of Faith*, only a

Buddha could understand it, Suzuki turned to the stories—*mondō*—of the Zen tradition. By using the *mondō*, the stories of "questioning and answering" that pepper his seminar talks, Suzuki tries to nudge his readers and listeners to a fuller understanding of the abstruse concepts presented in the *Daijō kishin ron* and the *Kegongyō*, while demonstrating how Buddhist philosophy was embedded in the Zen tradition. Throughout the manuscript, Suzuki raised and explained the oftentimes paradoxical doctrinal explanations concerning time, being, delusion, and awakening, only to conclude with one or more Zen *mondō* to prod his audience towards a fuller existential understanding of what he is trying to convey. Suzuki also interlaced numerous references to contemporary issues, Euro-American philosophers, poetry, Christian mystics, scientific notions, and mathematical theory comparing and contrasting these diverse perspectives with the points he was making about Buddhism.

In the 1950s, most of the attendees were unfamiliar with Buddhist doctrine and practice. Consequently, many of the points Suzuki made in the lectures must have been difficult for them to understand. Nonetheless, many in the audience were extremely intelligent, cultured, curious, and innovative leaders in their fields. They found the lectures stimulating and the juxtaposition of Buddhist and non-Buddhist concepts provocative and evocative. Over the course of his lectures, Suzuki presented the notions of non-dualism, the sentience of the material world, awakened mind, and what it meant to be a fully realized person. The lectures made a lasting impression on the attendees, stimulating them to think differently about the world and their place in it. A. W. Sadler, who went on to teach religious studies at the University of Vermont, remained interested in Japan for the rest of his career. For the abstractionist sculptor, Ibram Lassaw, the presentation of Buddhist ideas led him to rethink the relationship between spirit and matter in light of non-

dualism. The experimental composer, John Cage, who was one of the most loyal attendees at the lectures, concluded that "…each being whether sentient as we are, or nonsentient as sounds and rocks are, is the Buddha: and that doesn't mean anything spooky. It simply means that it is at the center of the universe. So that what you have in Kegan [sic] philosophy is an endless plurality of centers, each one world honored."[24] Emigré artist Sari Dienes, who hosted post-Suzuki lecture soirées at her Manhattan apartment for many of the attendees, when commenting on the nature of reality for a documentary about her art, quotes almost directly from Suzuki's lectures stating, that art expresses reality, which, according to an old Zen saying is "…a circle without circumference where the center is everywhere." (ST, 238 「周辺がなく中心が至る所にある円…」) I will leave it to art and music historians to hold forth on how these ideas were worked into the creations of Cage, Dienes, and Lassaw, but it is evident that they served as touchstones for them. For others, like Philip Kapleau, who went on to found the Rochester Zen Center in 1966, the lectures proved frustrating. Suzuki's highly abstract and philosophical lectures were tantalizing but did not yield for Kapleau the existential answers he sought from Buddhism. Frustrated by the lack of concrete methods for achieving the profound awakening Suzuki described time and again, Kapleau, with Suzuki's help, I should add, returned to Japan to engage in years of Zen practice.

To conclude, I think it is clear that Suzuki's Columbia University seminars had wide-ranging and significant impacts on New York and US religious, cultural, and intellectual life. The seminars became a must-attend event for cultural and intellectual leaders in New York in the 1950s. As Jane Iwamura has written in her book, *Virtual Orientalism*, at least part of the attraction of the Suzuki seminars must have been that Suzuki fit the stereotype of the gentle, wise

Zen teacher. Any number of the attendees quoted above spoke of Suzuki in the same manner, including comments by many on his striking eyebrows. More than just the allure of the exotic was involved, however. Suzuki also was offering something new to those who gathered in Philosophy Hall each week to hear him speak about Kegon and Zen. Judging from the fragmentary accounts I have gathered, many of the attendees were searching for a new way to experience the world. The presentation of material from the *Awakening of Faith* and the Kegon tradition, presented a different way to think about mind, the world, and awakening. Suzuki, although criticized by many for facilely juxtaposing Zen teachings, Christian mystics, poetry, Einstein, and mathematics, tantalized his audience with those comparisons. Such ideas as the non-dual nature of reality, monism, and the sentience of the material world were generative for the artists, composers, philosophers, seekers, and analysts who found their way to the seminars.

The philosopher, Arthur Danto, who attended some of the lectures as a graduate student before joining the Department of Philosophy at Columbia, compared Suzuki's Columbia seminars to another pivotal intellectual event: Russian emigré, Alexandre Kojève's lectures on Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, which he delivered in Paris during the 1930s. "I think Suzuki's course played a role in New York much like Kojève's did in Paris. It helped redirect the way those who were thinkers actually thought." Kojève's lectures, attended by Luis Althusser, Raymond Aron, Georges Bataille, Jacques Lacan, and Jean-Paul Sartre, among others, proved inspirational for those who attended because, as one intellectual historian has written, "…Kojève captivated students with his ability to make connections. Using complex diagrams and graphs, he presented a reading of Hegel that drew from Einstein's physics, Bergson's intuitionism, Husserl's phemenology, Heidegger's ontology, and Marx's politics. For the young French intellectuals,

everything Kojève gave them seemed new." In much the same way, Suzuki, weaving together Kegon/Huayan Buddhist philosophy, tales of the Zen masters, writings of Christian mystics, existential philosophy, science, and mathematics, played an important role changing the trajectory of intellectual and cultural life in New York in the 1950s.

On this anniversary of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, the world situation is as precarious as it was when Suzuki taught at Columbia in the 1950s. Suzuki was acutely aware of the threat of renewed violence in the world when he wrote his 1946 essay,「現代における華厳思想の意義」, as the Cold War was beginning. In his New York lectures and in Japan, Suzuki asserted that human survival depended upon recovering the Buddhist perspective of the *Kegongyō*. At the conclusion of his 1946 essay, Suzuki wrote that only by transcending the world of dualisms and letting the light of the *dharmadhātu* 法界 shine through the world could humanity avoid catastrophe. In words that were appropriate in the 1950s and on this 78th anniversary of the destruction of Nagasaki, when we watch the horrors of war unfold again in Ukraine and tensions rise on the Korean peninsula and in the Taiwan Straits, Suzuki's concluding words to his 1946 essay remain appropriate.

> 法界が世界に映り、浄土が娑婆に映るのとすれば、華厳の法界観は直ちに 吾等の世界観でなくてはならぬ、菩薩の道行は直ちに吾等日日の生活経験でなくてはならぬのである。民衆が君主と対立し、国家が世界と対立して、その間に円融自在の交渉も徧容も摂入もないとすれば人類の滅亡は必至である。原子爆弾の落下して来る罅隙（かげき）は実に華厳思想の欠けてゐる人間の心そのものの中に見出されるのである。華厳思想が二元論的論理的世界観をその根底から崩潰（ほうかい）させることになりて、真実の意義における世界の太和と平和とが成就するのである。今日吾等が原子爆弾の下で戦

慄　（せんりつ）してゐるのは何故かと云へば、近来の唯物論・征服欲・科学第一主義など云ふものの流行にも拘はらず、近代人の心の奥の奥には、尚ほ未だ消し尽くされぬ、華厳的直覚の一点光が在るからである。この一点光を菩薩の大悲願と云ふ。願はくは、吾等の何れもがこの光をして天地を煌燿（こうよう）せしめざれば止まぬと云ふ決心を抱くようにしたいものである。

Thank you very much for your kind attention today.

終わり

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1. Suzuki, D. T., *Selected Works of D.T. Suzuki*, Vol. 2: Pure Land, edited by James Dobbins. Oakland: University of California Press, 2015.

2. “People Are Talking About.” *Vogue*, January 15, 1952, 98.

3. Winthrop Sargeant, “Great Simplicity,” *New Yorker*, August 31, 1957.

4. For a brief, but detailed chronology of Suzuki’s life, see James Dobbins, “D. T. Suzuki,” *Oxford Biographies Online*, 2022, and Suzuki, Daisetz Teitaro. *Selected Works of D.T. Suzuki. Volume 1*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015, xix–xxxvi.

5. See the letters from Charles Moore to Charles W. Morris, January 17, 1950, and from Chadbourne Gilpatric to Charles W. Morris, March 21, 1950 in RAC, Subseries 200r, Box 430, Folder 3702.

6. Chadbourne Gilpatric Interview with D. T. Suzuki, March 8, 1950; Letter from Chadbourne Gilpatric to D. T. Suzuki, March 21, 1950, in RAC, Subseries 200r, Box 430, Folder 3702.

7. Suzuki, "The Development of Buddhist Thought in China" (Columbia University, March, 1, 6, and 8, 1951), unpublished manuscript A97, Matsugaoka Bunko.

8. Suzuki to Chadbourne Gilpatric, April 27, 1952, RAC, Subseries 200r, Box 310, Folder 2875.

9. On the dedication of *Zen Buddhism and Its Influence on Japanese Culture* to Charles Richard Crane, see Jaffe, "D. T. Suzuki and the Two Cranes," 133–55.

10. These events are detailed in a letter from Cathalene Parker Bernatschke to Ruth Shipley in the U. S. Passport Office, May 22, 1952. Boston Psychoanalytic Society and Institute, Karen Horney Papers, Box 11, Folder 5. Cathalene, who had remarried and taken the surname Bernatschke, wrote to Shipley to help Horney obtain a passport to travel to Japan with Suzuki, Cornelius, Horney's daughter, Brigitte, and herself. The quotation of Suzuki's book is in Horney, Karen. *Our Inner Conflicts: A Constructive Theory of Neurosis.* 1st ed. New York: Norton, 1945, 163.

11. Horace L. Friess to Chadbourne Gilpatric, March 23, 1953, RAC, Subseries 200r, Box 310, Folder 2875.

12. Columbia University Central Archive, "Goodrich L. Carrington," Box 394, Folder 18.

13. A. W. Sadler, "In Remembrance of D. T. Suzuki," *Eastern Buddhist*, *New Series* 2, No. 1 (1967), 198. Note that Sadler's notes concerning the lectures differ slightly from the manuscript version of Suzuki's lectures which are cited in Footnote 3.

14. Richard M. Jaffe "D. T. Suzuki's Columbia University Seminar Lectures Manuscripts: February 5 and February 7, 1952." *Matsugaoka Bunko kenkyū nenpō* 36 (2022): 8.

15. Horace L. Friess in the Department of Philosophy at Columbia described the course in a letter to Chadbourne Gilpatric, May 23, 1952. In Rockefeller Archive Center (hereafter, RAC), Subseries 200r, Box 310, Folder 2875. Sadler, "In Remembrance of D. T. Suzuki," 198–200.

16. Arthur C. Danto, "Upper West Side Buddhism." In *Buddha Mind in Contemporary Art*, edited by Jacquelynn Bass and Mary Jane Jacob, 49–59. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004, 54. Danto received his PhD in Philosophy in 1952 and began teaching at Columbia that same year. He does not, however, state when his observations about Suzuki's seminar were made.

17. Cage, John, and Kyle Gann. *Silence : Lectures and Writings.* 50th anniversary ed. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 2011, 32; 262. Kindle edition.

18. Interview with Albert Stunkard, in Goldberg, Michael. "D. T. Suzuki Documentary Project Collection, 2003-2010," http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/rbmscl/suzukidt/inv/.

19. Hedstrom, Matthew. *The Rise of Liberal Religion: Book Culture and American Spirituality in the Twentieth Century*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. Kindle edition. (No pagination.), Chapters 2, 3, & 4.

20. The title of the text, *Dasheng qixin lun,* supposedly translated into Chinese by Śikṣānanda, was translated into English by Suzuki as *Açvaghosha's Discourse on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* in 1900. Multiple variant English translations of the text have been published since Suzuki's early translation, most of them based on the supposed Chinese translation that was attributed to Paramārtha. The *Gandavyūha* circulated separately before being incorporated into the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*. In the most widely used Chinese translation of the composite text of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, the *Gandavyūha* became the "Ru fajie pin 入法界品," that is, "Entering the

Dharma Realm" chapter. The chapter describes the monk Sudhana's visit with 53 Buddhist teachers in his quest for awakening.

21. A useful translation and thorough introduction to this text is John Jorgensen, et. al, *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith*, Oxford Chinese Thought, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019). https://login.proxy.lib.duke.edu/login?url=https://academic.oup.com/book/32223, 7–8. See also, Peter Gregory, "The Problem of Theodicy in the 'Awakening of Faith,'" *Religious Studies* 22, no. 1 (1986): 63–78.

22. For a complete English translation of the *Huayan jing*, see Thomas F. Cleary, *The Flower Ornament Scripture* (Boston: Shambhala, 1993). Cleary translated Śikṣānanda's Chinese translation of the text, *Dafangguang fo huayan jing* (T. 279), which is the most complete version of the text in Chinese.

23. ST refers to pages in the Japanese translation of the seminar lectures translated by Shigematsu and Tokiwa.

24. Kostelanetz, *Conversing with Cage*, 53.