



ZEN AND **JAPANESE BUDDHISM**

Daisetz T. Suzuki

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ZEN and JAPANESE BUDDHISM

by Daisetz T. Suzuki

164 pp., 61 photographs

Of all the many sects of Buddhism, it is Zen, with its roots so deeply embedded in the soil of Japanese history, that has made the most vivid and enduring impression upon the character and culture of Japan, and has also most aroused the interest of the West. And yet, with its teaching of its "vast emptiness," its "satori-awakening," and its riddle-like "kōan," Zen is probably the most difficult of all Buddhist beliefs to interpret. Certainly only such an author as Daisetz Teitarō Suzuki, the world's leading authority on Zen, could have achieved what he so successfully does achieve in the few pages of this book, which is a distillation of his profound knowledge of the subject: a masterly and easily understood summation of this

(Continued on back flap)

Jacket Illustration: the Zen patriarch Bodhidharma, by Keishoki, famous 15th-century Zen painter.

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JAPANESE BUDDHISM**

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2. Father Thomas

With the regards of

the author

Sincerely

**ZEN AND
JAPANESE BUDDHISM**

BY

DAISETZ T. SUZUKI



**JAPAN TRAVEL BUREAU
TOKYO**

ZEN AND JAPANESE BUDDHISM

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Nirvana, however, is no more than a state of mind or consciousness when we actually transcend relativity—the world of birth-and-death.

Therefore, nirvana is not a special world set above this world of opposites. If it is so we are creating a new pair of opposites, with nirvana on one side and birth-and-death on the other. There would then be no transcendence. Nirvana is birth-and-death and birth-and-death is nirvana. When this identification is reached there is a transcendence. This is called *anābhogacaryā* from the psychological-metaphysical point of view. *Anābhogacaryā* means a life of purposelessness, a life of filling up the well with snow.

When Buddha was about to pass away after forty-nine years of missionary activity in the northern parts of India, he is recorded to have declared: "All these forty-nine years I have not spoken a word on the Dharma*." This is Buddha's life of *anābhogacaryā*, given expression from what we may call a dialectical point of view. As a matter of fact Buddha's life was full of giving oral or verbal instructions to his numerous disciples, who later compiled what is known as the *tripitaka*, "three baskets of Buddhist literature": *sūtra*, *vinaya*, and *abhidharma*,** which according to Chinese estimates comprise more than five thousand volumes. If this

* Truth, Reality, the Absolute. From the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra*.

** (1) The *sūtra* is the collection of Buddha's sermons, discourses, dialogues, etc., compiled by his immediate disciples after his death. (2) The *vinaya* is the collection of moral precepts given by Buddha to his disciples and lay devotees. (3) The *abhidharma* contains mostly philosophical works written by Buddha's chief disciples explaining his teachings.

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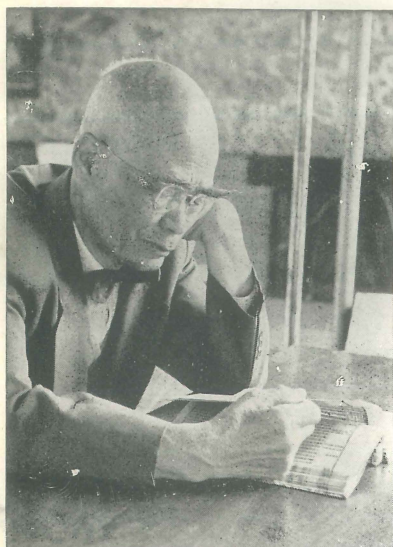
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(A list of JTB publications is given at the end of this book)

(Continued from front flap)
seemingly simple yet profound religion.

The aim of Zen, explains the author, is to discard all the external impedimenta with which the intellect seeks to weigh down the soul, and to see directly into the inmost nature of man's being. He shows how this is accomplished through Zen practice and, in explaining Zen monastery life, makes clear the important role that manual labor and alms begging play in the eventual liberation of the mind-body. Tracing the history of Zen from its beginnings in India and China to its full flowering in Japan, he presents many short Zen stories and episodes to illustrate the central tenets of this teaching. In the latter part of the book the author treats of the history and characteristics of Japanese Buddhism in general, elucidating one of the world's most vital religions and making clear the place of Zen within this larger whole.

Lending added interest to the excellent text are numerous photographs concerning Zen and Buddhism. The series showing life in a Zen monastery, taken especially for this book, well illustrates the role of simplicity and austerity in Zen.



Daisetz T. Suzuki

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Zen Buddhism has of recent years been arousing the keenest of interest both in the United States and Europe. And it is the author of the present volume, DAISETZ TEITARŌ SUZUKI, who has contributed greatly to this Western awakening to one of the Orient's ancient and profound religions.

Now nearly ninety, the author is certainly the most celebrated and eloquent interpreter of Zen anywhere in the world. After teaching at several of Japan's leading universities, he enlarged his activities to a truly international scale. Beginning with a visit to Great Britain in 1936 as an exchange professor, he has lectured at various universities in America and Europe. He has also written more than a hun-

dred works on Zen and Buddhism both in Japanese and in English, and a number of these works have been translated into other Western languages. Recent books in English include *Introduction to Zen Buddhism*; *Living by Zen*; *Manual of Zen Buddhism*; *Studies in Zen Buddhism*; *Zen Buddhism*; *Mysticism: Christian and Buddhist*.

While a young man, the author lived as a lay Buddhist disciple in the Engakuji, Kamakura's great Zen monastery. After diligent and strenuous training, he experienced *satori*-awakening and received from his master, the renowned Shaku Sōen, the Zen name of "Daisetz" in recognition of his attainment of Zen understanding. For his outstanding contributions in the field of religion and in the promotion of Japanese culture abroad, he was decorated by the Emperor of Japan in 1949 with the Cultural Medal and was elected as a member of the Academy of Japan. In 1954 he was awarded the Asahi Cultural Prize.

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