

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

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# Affirmation via Negation: Zen Philosophy of Life, Sexual Desire, and Infinite Love

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### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will examine whether or not “Zen philosophy” is life affirming, and if so, how? Here “Zen” is understood as a path of spiritual awakening developed within the Mahayana Buddhist tradition, but also defined more broadly to include a certain nondualistic intellectual posture accompanied by the practice of mindfulness, meditation, and cultivation of compassion by embracing the insight into radical contingency, non-substantiality, and freedom of being. Moreover, this term “Zen philosophy” should be taken as an expedient grouping of thinkers and not as a rigid category.

I select three thinkers under the rubric of “Zen philosophers” or “Zen-inspired philosophers”—Hiratsuka Raichō (1886–1971), D. T. Suzuki (1870–1966), and Nishida Kitarō (1870–1945)—based on the common subject matters they addressed. It is my hope that this approach to bring them in “dialogue” with each other will deepen our understanding and appreciation of these thinkers. It is my hope, also, that the present approach adopted in this chapter crosses the tenuous boundaries that have separate religious thinking or feminist philosophy from “philosophy” in general. Nishida once wrote to a young philosophy student: “Daisetz is in the field of religion, and I in philosophy, but our views are the same.”<sup>1</sup> Again, Suzuki and Raichō seem to overlap in their social and political concerns, especially the post-Second World War problems of how to secure peace, and the place of spiritual awakening needed for the reconstruction of the world, in order not to repeat the horrendous mistakes that had been committed in the last war. Sometimes Nishida’s otherwise recondite expressions are made more concrete and accessible when we think of Raichō’s experience as an example, especially in terms of the self-determination of the individual and the world.

To ask a question of if “Zen” teaching is life affirming may come as a surprise to some, for, after all, religious traditions should consist in their salvific message. But the popular perception of Zen (Buddhism) is sometimes associated with the way of the medieval Japanese *samurai*, for whom how to embrace death was the primary concern. Again, the images of austere monastic training, often portrayed in commercial films and documentaries, may show that Zen training extols strict discipline above everything else. Furthermore, in the philosophical writings of Nishida Kitarō and Nishitani Keiji, for instance, one finds such expressions as “absolute nothing” (*zettai mu*) and “emptiness” (*śūnyatā*) to occupy a significant place.

These impressions, however, must be placed under critical scrutiny, especially when we delve into the philosophical writings of Zen philosophers, that is, those thinkers whose worldviews and philosophical views are formed and informed by their awakening (*kenshō*) experience and fostered through their practice of *zazen* and their contemplative posture in life. Their philosophical views are usually holistic and nondual. Daisetz expressed it in terms of “*fuitsu funi*” (not one, not two), and Nishida “*mujunteki jiko dōitsu*” (contradictory self-identity), while Raichō preferred to employ poetic imageries, most famously the sun and the moon. We discover in their writings that the affirmation of life is as fundamental as “dying” to one’s ego. Attainment of “satori” or spiritual awakening makes no sense unless “life” is fundamentally affirmed. But in what way?—this is the question.

When dealing with the writings of Zen philosophers, especially of those related to the “Kyoto School of philosophy,” we need to exercise our hermeneutical caution as to the style of their discourse. Nishida for instance, repeatedly emphasized that what he designated by “absolute nothing” is at once “absolute being.” What is behind in his adopting the negative expression, which I call “apophatic strategy,”<sup>2</sup> can be seen as an effort to defy the linguistic trappings that lead us to reify concepts into some objectified “thing,” while dynamic and fluid reality ultimately eludes conceptual objectification. For this reason, “*zettai mu*” may be translated as the adverbial phrase “absolutely nothing” rather than into “absolute nothingness,” which renders it into a substantive. The use of the negative expressions by Nishida, and the Kyoto School thinkers in general, has two aspects: (1) as a *linguistic device to point to the dynamic reality* (i.e. a symbolic use of the language), which is related to (2) the description of the unobjectifiable, non-substantializable nature of all things alive. On this point, the following statement by Nishida may be of interest:

Because being *qua* eternal life that embraces all beings within it cannot be objectified as being, I called “the One” of Plotinus (which is “absolutely being”) as “absolutely nothing” (*zettai mu*). The world of creative monads, that I have discussed in my most recent essay,<sup>3</sup> can be considered a world that contains the entirety of unlimited life.<sup>4</sup>

## 1. THREE ZEN THINKERS, A SHORT INTRODUCTION

Hiratsuka Haru, or better known by her penname of “Raichō,” is generally considered a seminal pioneering figure in the women’s rights movements in

pre-Second World War Japan, and in the post-Second World War period she was known as the voice of the abolition of nuclear weapons. She called for the solidarity of women on a global scale to stand up for lasting peace. Roughly from 1906 to 1912, while in her twenties, she underwent serious Zen practice, first under Shaku Sōkatsu (1870–1954), the dharma heir of Shaku Sōen (1860–1919), at Ryōmō’an (a Zen practice place for university students and lay Buddhists led by Sōkatsu). When Master Sōkatsu left for the United States to disseminate Zen teaching, she continued her practice under a few different masters, before eventually settling on Nakahara Nantenbō (1839–1925). Both Sōkatsu and Nantenbō acknowledged her awakening (*kenshō*), at two different times—making her a unique case—which moreover testifies to the authenticity of her understanding. In her writings, however, she consciously avoided the mention of the word “Zen,” based on her personal experience that “Zen” was generally misunderstood by the public. For this reason, most readers do not associate her writings with her Zen practice. Zen breakthrough, however, had a profound impact on her life. In fact, towards the very end of her life, reminiscing about her past, she uttered *en passant* these words which were duly recorded by her assistant: “Had I not practiced Zen, my life would have been something completely alien to social activism.”<sup>5</sup> In her case, her spiritual awakening (*kenshō*) unleashed untapped energy that had been latent in the shy, reticent young woman. Her social activism was fueled by her self-awakening.

Suzuki Daisetz began his formal Zen practice under Master Imakita Kōsen at Engakuji in Kamakura in 1891, when he was twenty years old. After the master’s sudden death in 1892, he continued his practice under Shaku Sōen, the dharma-heir of Master Kōsen. During Suzuki’s sojourn in the United States and Europe, 1897–1909, Sōen remained his spiritual teacher, confidant, and close friend. After his return to Japan, he resumed his practice under Sōen until the latter’s death in 1919. For Suzuki, his daily life was so deeply entrenched in his *zazen* practice that it is impossible to speak of his life as scholar-teacher divorced from it. Zen meditation was seamlessly integrated into his being. In one word, he lived to pursue the Zen ideal of *bodhisattvahood*, according to which a person dedicated himself or herself to saving all other sentient beings before entering into “*nirvāna*.”

Nishida Kitarō sat *zazen* from his mid-twenties for a decade (1897–ca. 1906), at Senshin’an in Kanazawa, under Master Setsumon Genshō (1850–1915). His practice led him to curb his youthful selfish ambitions, and he became appreciative of the preciousness of most mundane everyday life. Nishitani Keiji, Nishida’s student and a Zen adept, observed that “through Zen, Nishida’s otherwise untamed life force became his finely honed will, and through this will he purified himself. This process culminated in a union between his self and the law of the universe.”<sup>6</sup> Nishida early on resolved that his philosophical engagement had to be rooted in his life (*jinsei*), if it is to be relevant and meaningful at all. As the self-appointed “inquirer of life,” he proceeded to build his philosophical system based on the concrete life-experience (rather than on abstract theories), as a “thoroughgoing empiricist.” In his case, Zen practice added “agility” to his natural mental tenacity—what Dōgen called “*jūnan’shin*”—and aided him to “see reality as is”

(*genjitsu chokushi*). He also said that Zen practice, if anything, would foster the attitude of “utter sincerity.”

## 2. THE QUESTION OF RELIGION AND SEXUAL DESIRE

For these Zen philosophers their reflection on life naturally included sexual desire as its built-in aspect. For instance, Raichō in her autobiographical accounts took it as a theme of her self-development and wrote about her awakening as a woman in its several stages.<sup>7</sup> In her case, the reflection on sexuality was aided by her study of the Swedish thinker Ellen Key (1849–1926), who wrote on romantic love, marriage, and motherhood, among other issues.

Sexual desire, as D. T. Suzuki saw it, is closely connected with the primary instinct of the preservation of species, but it is also the source of creative human cultures, which, however, could easily tilt to destruction and aggression if the primary instincts are left unchecked by reason (*prajñā*).

Nishida’s view on sexual desire is cast in the larger context of how an individual exists corporeally as a being-in-the-world. Desires arise as the individual “reflects” the outside world on its self-consciousness, which simultaneously means that the world is given shape by the individual’s action elicited by desire. For Nishida, life is a “historical condition” and “history-making” at the same time, and it unfolds through the mutual reciprocal interactions of the individuals and the world.

Even from this short exposé, we see that these Zen thinkers bring different strengths to the discussion of life, sexual desire, and the body. This nicely demonstrates that “Zen philosophy” is not a monolithic entity but embraces a wide spectrum of approaches and interpretations. Moreover, Suzuki and Raichō spoke about the essential need for each person’s self-awakening and self-transformation as the key to creating a fairer and more just and harmonious world, while Nishida engaged in a philosophical investigation into life. The present investigation into the philosophy of life may pave the path to sketching what “Zen philosophy” could contribute to the philosophy of peace, *philosophia pacis*, as this chapter shows.

## 3. THE SEMANTIC SCOPE OF “LIFE” AND THE RIVER AS ITS IMAGERY

Before going into the main body of this chapter, it may be good to have a cursory look into the meaning of the word “life,” so that we are aware of its semantic scope.

In every language, I would imagine that there are many words for “life.” Kimura Bin, who bridges the fields of philosophy and psychology, finds the distinction between “*zoe*” and “*bios*” as laid out by K. Kerényi, full of insight. Kimura summarizes that Kerényi viewed life in terms of the universal life-principle and individuated life represented by two Greek words, “*zoe*” and “*bios*.” “*Zoe*” stands for the collective life of all living beings, and denotes life in general, without any particularity, while “*bios*” is an individuated, particularized form of life. The awareness

of oneself as distinct from others belongs to the realm of “*bios*” and not to “*zoe*.” “*Zoe*,” according to Kerényi, is the immortal undying life force, rejecting *thanatos* (death) as antithetical to it. Whereas “*bios*,” individuated in a physical body, does not exclude death; death is part of life.<sup>8</sup> (Note: Zen thinkers would voice their concern in the exclusion of death, *thanatos*, from life, *zoe*. They see life and death as inseparable—to cite Nishida: “death is essential to life.”)

In the Japanese language, a similar but not complete distinction can be drawn between *zoe* and *bios*. “*Inochi*” (いのち, 命) and “*seimei*” (生命), both mean life force and correspond to “*zoe*,”<sup>10</sup> as they denote biological life force, both beyond births and deaths of individual beings, as well as one’s very life. For instance, if someone says “*anata no ichochi wa mō nai*,” it means, “You don’t have much longer to live.” In contrast, the word, “*jinsei*” (人生 life of an individual) nicely corresponds to “*bios*,” laden with the inner significance of a personal life, which can be written into a “biography.” Another word, “*shōgai*” (生涯), although similar to “*jinsei*,” has an existential reflective connotation, as denoting one’s “entire life,” or “throughout one’s life”—and thus slightly more universal in nuance than “*jinsei*.” One can say “*jinsei no han’ryo*” or “*shōgai no han’ryo*” to refer to one’s companion for life, but “*inochi*” or “*seimei*” cannot be used in that way, because they are not individuated life.

“*Isshō*” (一生) is a word that denotes “throughout one’s life,” and this corresponds to “*bios*” or “*zoe*”; this word can be used as an adverb, indicating “as long as I live.” It can be used in a statement such as “I shall never forget your kindness *as long as I live*.” (“*Shōgai*” can also be used in this sense, especially in its variant form, “*ishshōgai*.”) This word, *ishshō*, could also occur with “companion” but more as an adverb as in “*ishshō no han’ryo*” (a lifelong companion). The assumption behind the word *ishshō* is that one’s life has the beginning and the end; it refers to the duration of one’s life.

The word “*seikatsu*” (生活) is the generic word that refers to “everyday life” or “daily living,” and corresponds to *bios*. Interestingly, however, this word can be used to refer to the “lives of animals” as well, such as “*mori no dōbutsu no seikatsu*” (lives of animals in the forest). In this sense, the semantic scope of this word is probably wider than the Greek “*bios*.” This word can occur in numerous phrase and compounds. For instance, “*seikatsu no chie*” means the “wisdom gained or accumulated in the experience of life,” or “*seikatsu no shitsu*,” the “quality of life.” This word can be attached to another noun to form a compound, such as “student life” (*gaku-sei-seikatsu*), “married life” (*kekkon-seikatsu*), “dietary life” (*shoku-seikatsu*), “living environment” (*seikatsu-kankyō*), “ability to earn one’s living” (*seikatsu-nōryoku*), and so on.

Other “functional equivalent” to “life” is “spirit” (Greek *pneuma*) or “breath” (*prāna* in Sanskrit), which sustains life. In Japanese it would be “*ki*” (気 as in “*genki*”—“in good spirits”) and “*iki*” (息 breath). The Greek “*psyche*” (ψυχή), which signifies “vital principle,” adds the intellectual and spiritual dimensions to the reality of “*zoe*” and “*bios*.”<sup>11</sup> In Japanese it is “*tamashii*” (魂) or “*rei*” (霊 as in “*reisei*,” spirituality). The semantic scope of Japanese “*inochi*” or “*seimei*” extends to contain the element of “*psyche*,” the principle of animation. “*Eien no inochi*” or “*eien*

*no seimei*”—“eternal life”—indeed has the religious connotation, bringing up the aspect of the “sacred and mysterious” quality of life. In this way, the copiousness of words indicating “life” reveals its complex multifaceted reality.

Among the contemporary Japanese philosophers, and not just among Zen-inspired thinkers, a philosophy of life has been a robust field, variously developed, especially in relation to the body and more recently in relation to the environment and the dire issue of care giving and care ethics in a society that is rapidly aging. Notable thinkers in this area are Washida Kiyokazu, Kimura Bin, Nakamura Yūjirō, and the late Yuasa Yasuo—just to name a few. The underlying framework of their investigation is that nature is experienced in its “nurturing” aspect (*natura naturans*). Nature gives birth to all things; the life-principle animates the entire cosmos—perhaps echoing the deep-seated sensitivity cultivated by the native religious tradition of Shintō in its emphasis on “*musubi*” (“fecundity” or “production” by the coming together of male and female sexes in nature). In any event, “life” is perceived as something far removed from a private possession or an object of human manipulation (and this is where a new set of problems arise in the present-day advancement of bio-technology).

A favorite traditional metaphor of life in Japanese literature is a river. The medieval Japanese author Kamo no Chōmei famously began his celebrated essay *An Account of My Hut* (or *Hōjōki*, written in 1212) with these words: “The flow of the river is ceaseless and its water is never the same. The bubbles that float in the pools, now vanishing, now forming, are not of long duration: so in the world are man and his dwellings.”<sup>12</sup> The modern novelist, the late Endō Shūsaku (1923–96), also described the great Mother Ganges as the transcultural “deep river” that “swallows up the ashes of every person,” rejecting no one, and flows along silently.<sup>13</sup> But the image of majestic river is more than a metaphor—from time immemorial, human civilizations sprang up along major rivers. Moreover, today we are painfully aware that these mighty rivers are essential arteries of the earth’s ecosystem.

#### 4. ZEN PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE: AFFIRMATION VIA NEGATION

In Zen philosophy, the affirmation of life must be mediated by the moment of “negation,” the radical turnabout of the ego-consciousness toward its deeper root. This realization has at least two aspects: one is to see the essential importance of “religious practice” (*shugyō*) to transform one’s base instinct into compassion, as Daisetz advocated; the other is the ontological recognition that negation and affirmation are built-in realities of life, as Nishida’s thought most clearly demonstrates. Adding to this, the third aspect would be the one advanced by Raichō: one must affirm life in order to improve the plights of the poor and the underprivileged, to raise them out of negative conditions of life.

Unlike early Buddhism, which taught to annihilate “clinging” or “thirst” in order to stop suffering, D. T. Suzuki sees a positive reality in this blind life force (be it desire or libido). Instead of condemning it as something detrimental to spirituality, he sees in it the seed of great compassion, the infinite love. The originally crude but unfettered life force must be accepted and “purified” into compassionate love. When the Zen

thinkers speak of “life” (“*inochi*”) (Raichō), or the primordial driving force “*trishnā*” (D. T. Suzuki), or the “historical life” (*rekishiteki seimei*) (Nishida), they talk about this reality of life that animates all things, and is the very source of all “ex-istence.”

Moreover, as briefly mentioned earlier, they do not see life to be antithetical to death, but life and death make up one unbreakable whole. Suzuki observes that to separate life from death and fear death is actually the cause of agony and anxiety. Moreover, to rejoice in life and abhor death came about as the result of the discriminating mind that divides life and death, the spirit and the flesh, the pure and the impure. Suzuki goes on to say, however, that the mind intuits beyond the discriminating mind itself and opens up our “mind’s eye” to the eternal. This is the reason why human beings do not cease to long for the realm beyond life-and-death.<sup>14</sup> Life is “unborn” (*fushō*), and therefore undying, Zen Master Bankei said. This spiritual recognition of death is certainly not unique to Zen, as, for instance, St. Francis of Assisi has said it in his “Simple Prayer” that “it is in dying that we are reborn into eternal life.”

## 5. PHILOSOPHY AND KENSHŌ, THE EXPERIENCE OF INITIAL AWAKENING

In and through the awakening experience of kenshō, one comes upon the greater source of “life” that is beyond the ego-centered attachment to life, and this kenshō experience is “life-changing.” Moreover, each individual’s kenshō experience differs in content from that of others. This “personal variance” seems to explain that the kind of kenshō experience is tied to the kind of philosophy each thinker espouses and develops. Be it zazen (seated meditation) or kōan practice (mediation coupled with working through a Zen “question” given by the master), it aims at freeing the mind from its habit of concept building.

Thomas Merton, although neither a Zen master nor a Zen student, aptly captured the essence of the kōan practice. Himself so deeply steeped in the Trappist life of contemplation, he seems to have understood the point of kōan practice very clearly. He observed as follows:

[One] learns to “work through” the kōan, to live it as one’s master has lived it. In fact, the heart of the kōan is reached, its kernel is attained and tasted, when one breaks through into the heart of life itself as the ground of one’s own consciousness. It is then that one sees the “answer,” or rather one experiences oneself as the question answered. The answer is the kōan, the question, seen in a totally new light. It is not something other than the question. The kōan is not something other than the self. It is a cryptic figure of the self, and it is interpreted insofar as the students can become so identified with the kōan that it revolutionizes and liberates their whole consciousness, delivering it from itself. . . .

The Zen experience is first of all a liberation from the notion of “I” and of “mind”; yet it is not annihilation and pure consciousness (as Westerners sometimes imagine “nirvana” to be). It is, on the contrary, a kind of super-consciousness in which one experiences reality not indirectly or mediately but directly, and in which, clinging to no experience and to no awareness as such, one is simply

“aware.” This simple “awareness” or “awakeness” is in fact the true identity which the Zen student seeks.<sup>15</sup>

Merton does not fail to observe that this attainment of kenshō “is not the end but the serious beginning” for Zen students.<sup>16</sup>

As mentioned above, what constitutes the breakthrough experience of kenshō varies so much from individual to individual that it is best described as “to each his (her) own.” Not only that, each individual’s approach to kōan is also unique. Is there a prototypical “Zen awakening”? One must answer in the negative. In the following, we shall examine the kenshō experience of our three Zen philosophers.

### 5.1 Raichō’s case

For Raichō, her kenshō took place as she immersed herself in intense sitting and the “study” of kōan given to her by Master Sōkatsu—“What is your original face before your parents were born?” Years later she wrote about her initial approach to kōan to be overly intellectual: “When I started zazen at Ryōmō’an, I had approached the kōan about ‘my original face’ as an intellectual problem. At every interview [with the Master], I had been scolded for giving a philosophical explanation. I had put tremendous effort and exertion to understand it.”<sup>17</sup> Despite her “philosophical inclination,” during the July *sesshin* (the intensive meditation training period) of 1906—several months into her Zen practice—she was suddenly seized by an extraordinary experience of “tears as large as hailstones” streaming down her face. Those tears were the outburst of her experience of having “broken free” of her “finite self” and reaching a “state of pure awareness.” Her “whole being had exploded in a flood of tears,” she wrote.<sup>18</sup> Master Sōkatsu was then expounding on *The Records of Linji* (J. *Rinzairoku*), which talks about “the real person of no fixed rank” (*mui no shin’nin*), the meaning of which directly spoke to her:

The true source of the Buddha is none other than the person who is actually listening to this talk. Look at the person—the true man without rank—without shape or form, yet who truly exists. If you are able to discern this, you are no different from the Buddha. Do not ever release your grip on this. Everything that meets your eyes is this. There is no one among you who cannot attain enlightenment . . . *Upon this lump of reddish flesh sits a true man with no rank.* Constantly he goes in and out of the gates of your face. If there is anyone here who does not know this for a fact, look, look!<sup>19</sup>

The expression “the man of no fixed rank” (*mui no shin’nin* 無位の真人) became for Raichō the existential point of reference, which actually found its way into her inaugural essay for the *Seitō* magazine<sup>20</sup> as the “authentic person” (*shinsei no hito* 真正の人), in the opening line of her “manifesto”: “In the beginning, woman was truly the sun, an authentic person.”

Master Sōkatsu recognized her breakthrough and gave her the lay Buddhist name, “Ekun” (慧薫 fragrance of wisdom). Her kenshō took the form of a burst of deep consciousness breaking through the surface layers of conventional self; her philosophical thought bears the stamp of this warm, “affective” quality of elation, the joy



that came with liberation. As mentioned earlier, the experience of kenshō radically liberated her from her introverted personality, transforming her into an audacious, energetic social activist.

Her kenshō was further confirmed in December of 1909 at Kaiseiji in Nishinomiya, where she attended the December *sesshin* led by Master Nantenbō.<sup>21</sup> The kōan she was given to work through was “*Mu-ji*” (The letter Mu), otherwise known as “Jōshū’s Dog.” At the end of the *sesshin*, Nantenbō, in the acknowledgment of her kenshō, took one character from his dharma name, Zenchū (全忠 utter fidelity), combined it with Raichō’s given name “Haru” (明), and gave her the lay Buddhist name of Zenmyō (全明 utter lucidity). She never used these Buddhist names, however, preferring “Raichō” as her penname, for she found an affinity with the native wild mountain bird, ptarmigan (thunderbird), or “*raichō*.”

### 5.2 D. T. Suzuki’s case

Suzuki’s kenshō took place during the year-end *sesshin* at Engakuji Temple in Kamakura in December 1896—in his sixth year of zazen practice. He was scheduled to depart for the United States to begin his career with the Open Court Publisher as Paul Carus’s assistant in LaSalle, Illinois, in the February of the following year. Facing this “deadline,” he had to, and did, attain his kenshō during the December *sesshin*—a few months before his departure. Once in America, he realized that it was his kenshō experience that sustained him, when he had to cope with an unfamiliar culture so different from his own. His commitment to Zen practice deepened in this way in the small North-American town, far away from Kamakura.

Several years later, on a sleepless night in LaSalle, he wrote a letter to Nishida, reminiscing about his kenshō experience, and described it for the first time:

I had just finished my evening zazen and went out of the *zendō* (meditation hall) to return to my room in Kigen’in. It was a brightly moonlit night. As I descended the stone steps near the temple gate, suddenly I forgot myself. Ney, it was not that I forgot myself completely. The bright moonlight cast the shadow of tall trees on the ground like a painting. There, I found myself inside the painting, and there was no distinction between the trees and me. Trees were I, I the trees. This sensation pierced me through so vividly. It was crystal clear to me: “*This* is my original face!” Even after I returned to my quarter, my mind was limpid, clear, and there was not a cloud therein. I was filled with the sensation of joy.

Tonight, as I was reading [sections of] Professor [William] James’s Gifford Lectures, I felt as if he was describing my own kenshō experience, and it brought back my memory of it. I feel as if my mind is cleansed for the first time in a long while.<sup>22</sup>

In a much more colloquial manner, Suzuki also narrated this experience to an American friend of his years later: “I was taking the same old stone steps towards the temple gate, and all of a sudden, I had the conviction that I was the same as the trees on the side of the steps, and it wasn’t that I had stopped being myself but I was

the trees.”<sup>23</sup> Suzuki’s kenshō experience may be described as “natural,” “poetic,” and “visual.” It was accompanied by the sense of dissolution of physical boundaries. His experience comes close to what has been traditionally described as “natural mysticism.”

As for his Buddhist name, “Daiset” (大拙 great simplicity), it was conferred on him by Master Shaku Sōen sometime in 1895; he soon began to use it to sign his writings, preferring it to his given name of Teitarō.

### 5.3 Nishida’s case

For Nishida, zazen practice was by no means smooth going; he felt he was making two steps forward while retracting three backward. Earlier on, he resolved that merely passing one kōan after another was not the objective of his practice, and it was more important for him to get down to the bottom of Zen teaching. Master Setsumon, who guided him from the very beginning of his practice, recognized the maturity of his student’s practice, and in 1901—the fifth year into his practice—he gave him the Buddhist name Sunshin (寸心 heart of an inch).<sup>24</sup> Nishida fondly used this name to sign his calligraphy pieces.

Receiving the lay Buddhist name did not lessen his difficulty with his kōan practice. Seeing his student struggle, Master Setsumon changed the kōan in 1902 from the “Letter Mu” (i.e. “Jōshū’s Dog”) to the “Sound of One-hand Clapping” (*sekishu no onjō*).<sup>25</sup> His attainment of kenshō came during the summer practice of 1903 under Master Kōjū at Daitokuji in Kyoto. When the master acknowledged his passing the kōan, Nishida was not elated; there was neither a burst of tears nor the sense of euphoria. He wrote about it to Setsumon and expressed his skepticism that perhaps Master Kōjū was too benevolent. To this Master Setsumon wrote back and said: “Trust what took place. Do not doubt [the validity of] Zen teaching and continue with your zazen practice.”<sup>26</sup>

There is an interesting postscript to Nishida’s kenshō. Following Master Setsumon’s advice, he resumed his post-kenshō practice, and wrote about it to D. T. Suzuki, who in his typical candor observed a generic problem associated with overly intellectual minds (Suzuki seems to put Nishida in a different category, however, as he knew Nishida had a poetic mind):

I am more and more inclined to think that the more intellectual a man is, the more mental efforts are needed to overcome the mind in order to reach the attitude as required by the *dhyāna* practitioners. Inasmuch as *dhyāna* practice is a sort of mysticism, it must be of great difficulty for a mind of predominantly intellectual turn. To such minds, what might be called poetic intuition or imagination does not appeal very much. They are always inclined to look at things intellectually, that is, in their abstract phase, while there is nowhere in this concrete world anything that exists in abstract. Well, what is necessary in the beginning is an actual experience, concrete personal experience felt in the deepest recess of our consciousness. This mystic incommunicable experience, once attained, you can give any explanation to it.<sup>27</sup>

Although it is a slight digression, it is of particular interest here to note that Suzuki actually uses the word “mysticism” and “mystic” to describe the kenshō experience, because later he came to deny it vehemently. For instance, in his 1965 review of Heinrich Dumoulin’s *A History of Zen Buddhism*, Suzuki wrote somewhat pointedly:

The major contention of this book ... is that Zen is a form of mysticism. Unfortunately, some years ago, I too used the term in connection with Zen. I have long since regretted it, as I find it now highly misleading in elucidating Zen thought. Let it suffice to say here that Zen has nothing “mystical” about it or in it. It is most plain, clear as the daylight, all out in the open with nothing hidden, dark, obscure, secret or mystifying in it.<sup>28</sup>

Thomas Merton, acting as the arbiter between Suzuki and Dumoulin, who called Zen a kind of “natural mysticism,” settled the disagreement by pronouncing it “more a matter of semantics than anything else.”<sup>29</sup>

Going back to Nishida, his kenshō experience was something sober, and he was dissatisfied with it as his person was untouched by the experience of “passing” the kōan—or so it seemed to him at that time. This again, must be another kind of kenshō experience, and bespeaks Nishida’s philosophical bent, with which he proceeded to “dig” the philosophical vein like a miner every inch of the way. One could argue that in Nishida’s case the impact of kenshō matured slowly but steadily. His diary entry of July 3, 1927, reads that he “spent a quiet afternoon, alone, when a burst of jubilant experience of ‘rebirth’ came over” him. Indeed this is about a quarter of a century after his kenshō. From this we may surmise that a kenshō experience could continue to ferment and mature inside a person. Nishida’s emphasis on the concrete action rather than abstract thinking, for instance, can be seen to have its roots in his Zen awakening. He steadfastly maintained the following position:

The thinking self is not the real self. Even if I am thinking or feeling, it is not yet my self. My real self exists when and where I face the reality of taking action (*kōi*). The real self emerges in facing concrete situations (*ji* 事). The sense of the self we normally have is actually a “phantom” (or “imagined self,” *kūsōteki jiko*). My real self is known to me in my self-awareness when I act (*jissenteki jikaku*) ... I come to know my self in action. I become self-aware in action.<sup>30</sup>

The primacy of action that Nishida describes here seems to corroborate Raichō’s decision to get involved in the women’s liberation movement. Zen awakening can lead to a philosophy of action, rather than of indolence or armchair contemplation.

To conclude this section, I reiterate that each person’s kenshō experience is indeed different, as it touches the core of the person concerned. It appears that there is no set formula of the kenshō experience, and that the kind of kenshō experience is an expression of each individual’s psychological, intellectual, and emotional makeup. This is why Zen masters must wisely guide each student by taking into consideration the temperaments, the likes and dislikes, and so forth of the students who carry these things in their minds, before these notions and attachments are “voided.”

## 6. ON LIFE AND SEXUAL DESIRE

The initial Zen awakening allows one to come face to face with “the real self,” the source of one’s true self-identity. The question of sexual desire being an integral component of life’s experience, Zen thinkers do not eschew this aspect but rather work through it in order to “shed” the light of *prajñā*, or wisdom, onto it.

### 6.1 Raichō’s view

In her initial phase of Zen practice Raichō came to learn that “Zen does not deny sexuality, and no one practices zazen in order to get rid of physical desires; many Zen priests remain uncompromisingly celibate, but they have chosen that way of life entirely on their own, after having first affirmed the reality of sexual desire.”<sup>31</sup> In her effort to convince the incredulous, she brings up the *kōan* that has to be worked through for the advanced students before they can graduate from their *kōan* practice. It is called “*Bashi shōan*” (“An old woman burning down the hut”), which directly deals with the question of sexual desire and spirituality. The *kōan* goes as follows:

There was an old woman who supported a hermit. For twenty years she always had a girl of sixteen or seventeen years old to take to the hermit his food and wait on him. One day she told the girl to give the monk a close hug and ask, “What do you feel now?”

The hermit responded, “An old tree on a cold cliff; Midwinter—no warmth.”

The girl went back and told this to the old woman.

The woman said, “for twenty years I have supported this vulgar good-for-nothing!” So saying, she threw the monk out and burned down the hermitage.<sup>32</sup>

Now how are we to go about this *kōan*? First thing we learn from this *kōan* is that Zen practice does not aim at negating humanity, including sexual desire, so that the practitioner is not expected to become an insensible withered tree branch. How should the monk have responded to the girl’s hug? When that happened, did not the old hermit feel a surge of warmth? He might have said to the girl to hug him even more tightly. He might have said, “Wow, it feels good to be hugged again. It’s been a long time since I was hugged.” Then he could have politely but warmly accepted the tray of food and gently dismissed the young girl. The old woman would not have burnt down his hermitage then—perhaps.

This *kōan* demonstrates that the spiritual practice should aim at increasing one’s full humanity by purifying and elevating the base instincts into warm friendliness and compassion. Why did the old woman throw the hermit out of the hut and set it on fire? The point here seems to me that the old woman herself is “I,” as much as the withered poor monk is “I.” I must acknowledge the danger of wrong practice and also set on fire “my” comfortable hut, if “I” am becoming an old deadbeat monk with no human feelings left in “me.” “I” as the old woman is not afraid of burning down the hut. Thanks to this “old woman,” “I” can go back into the world with human warmth and treat others kindly, which is a way of sharing the benefit of “my” arduous religious practice of so many years. “Burning down the hut” means getting

rid of any residue of “my” dichotomous thinking (i.e. attachment to concepts) of purity and impurity. The fire has to scorch the idea of sexual desire to be base or mean. Now this kōan makes better sense: for the old woman (who is I), the hermit’s practice is inauthentic, consisted only of self-denial and repression of vital human nature, instead of working through it and to transform it. The monk (who is also I) may have failed to cultivate his compassion and wisdom, but now “I” am thrown out of my complacent comfort zone, and become aware that “I” must avoid falling into the pitfall of dichotomous conceptual thinking that “I” myself have create. How does *zazen liberate a person from sexual desire*? The key to the answer seems to be located in this very possibility of embracing it and working through it toward *transforming and channeling the sexual energy* into compassion. With this kind of practice, one will reach the state which Suzuki described as follows—if a person has no “hang-up,” there no “peg” to “hang” one’s “hang-up’s.”<sup>33</sup> That is the state of utter freedom.

Raichō admitted that it was premature for her to speak about this particular kōan, because she had yet to have the physical sensation of sexual desire. The *Seitō Manifesto*, “In the Beginning, Woman Was the Sun,” was colored by her youthful, and not fully mature, view on sexual desire. The passages like the following must be interpreted accordingly:

I shall seek my innate talent nowhere but in my mental-spiritual concentration.

This innate talent is mystery; it is the authentic person.

The innate talent has nothing to do with one being male or female.

In terms of mental-spiritual concentration, this sexual distinction of male and female belongs to the sphere of intermediate or lower layer of the ego, to the tentative “ego” which ought to perish. Sexual distinction of male and female does not apply in the highest sphere of the ego, in the “true ego” (*shinga* 真我) that is immortal and non-perishing.<sup>34</sup>

She initially interpreted her kenshō experience to mean that “the original face” or the real self was “neither woman nor man; I transcend such distinctions.”<sup>35</sup> This view was soon put to a test, which brought about much pain, confusion, fatigue, and self-reflection to Raichō.<sup>36</sup> In her resumption of zazen practice her sexed body may have become a kōan for herself. Even in her youthful reflection, however, she acknowledged that it was her own doing that created her suffering, and therefore it follow that she was in the position to rise above it. This Zen “affirmation” of subjectivity found itself into her manifesto, quoted above, wherein we read:

Although I lamented, I also knew that I was the master of my agony, losses, bewilderment, mental confusion, and self-destruction.

Thus, with the prerogative of the master of my own self, I came to settle on being satisfied as a free and independent person, in control of my own self. I no longer lamented over having allowed myself to plunge into self-destruction, and henceforth each time I faced challenges, I did not cringed. I have unflinchingly walked my own way.<sup>37</sup>

Raichō encountered an unexpected challenge when she found herself in a romantic love relationship, which eventually resulted in her cohabitation with Okumura Hiroshi and together creating their new family. At that critical moment, Ellen Key's work *Love and Marriage* came to her attention. She began translating it into Japanese as part of her study to learn new ideas. Key's conviction that marriage *should be based on romantic love* struck a novel cord. Years later she reflected on the significant impact of Key's philosophy on herself as follows: "If not for my encounter with Key, I would not have married my husband Okumura; instead I would have remained single and childless. The influence of Key on me was *that* revolutionary, even if not as fundamental as my *kenshō* experience."<sup>38</sup> In Raichō the traditional Zen teaching came to be blended with the philosophical outlook that affirmed romantic love, marriage, pregnancy, and motherhood. Perhaps unwittingly, Raichō opened a way for aspiring young contemporary Japanese women to embrace new possibilities of combining romantic love, spiritual life, and a career that may insure economic independence as much as circumstantially possible. In this way, she took Zen teaching into the arena of emancipation of women. Had he known about it, Thomas Merton would have appreciated her effort. Merton wrote in the 1960s of the dire need for traditional religions to shed their old shells to become relevant in the modern "secular" era. We read:

Zen offers us a phenomenology and metaphysics of insight and of consciousness which has extraordinary value for the West. But the cultural accretions and trappings of Zen, the customs and mores of the *zendō*, while remaining a special interest, no longer have the living power they had in the Middle Ages. Like the Catholic liturgy, Zen practice calls for an *aggiornamento*.<sup>39</sup>

Raichō's thoughts on romantic love deepened as she underwent the experience of pregnancy and childbirth. In her struggle to have both "her private space of contemplation" and "a family life," she realized that the liberation of women has to take into account women's physical reality, and not just the disembodied abstract notion of "women." Four years have passed since she wrote the "manifesto" for the *Seitō* magazine. We read:

Romantic love became something solemn and significant that I had to look at with completely different eyes. I had to think long and hard about what it means to live as a woman and what value there is for a woman to live a life of love. . . .

In the process I came to see the need to *liberate women not only as human persons but also as sexed women*. This was a totally new philosophical problem for me.<sup>40</sup>

Through pregnancy and the delivery of her first baby, Raichō came to see that great life force permeated her body as a woman<sup>41</sup> and this recognition became the vehicle to overcome her fear and anxiety to accept motherhood. In her 1917 essay "A Year as a Mother," Raichō noted that horizon of her world was enlarging with the unfolding of life. Here we have a more mature and well-rounded thought of Raichō:

It can be said that I lived the life of a mixture of "egoism" and "altruism" during the last year. I affirmed my romantic love initially in order to assert my individual

ego and develop it. But my love rooted in self-affirmation and self-development turned out to be gateway to the love of others, to the other side of life. In no time the whole panorama of love of the other unfolded in front of me, first through the love I bore my lover, and then through my love for my child. I ended up experiencing all sorts of contradictions in my life, but I can no longer dismiss them as mere life's contradictions.

I have rather come to think of them as gateway that opens out into a wider, larger, and deeper life. And the real harmonization of these two orientations [of private soul life and the family life] may well be the subtle and ultimate flavor of life itself.<sup>42</sup>

Her personal journey of wife and mother made her realize the lowly unprotected social status of young working mothers, which made her question whether such a treatment of women was just and justifiable in a modern nation.<sup>43</sup> In this way her feminist thought took shape, having her kenshō experience at the well-spring of her activism and Ellen Key's philosophy of social economic and political emancipation as the guide. She discovered the dialectic of love, in which her love for the others and her self-identity mutually interacted to ever more profound depths of altruistic love, which gave her the energy to tackle concrete social issues.

Raichō's postwar writing of "Know Thyself" (*Anata jishin o shire*, 1947), contains a cogent statement of her philosophy of life.<sup>44</sup> Therein she speaks to college age women about life (*inochi*), as the "original face," that is, the real self-identity, of the person. She explains that her kenshō experience consisted of coming face to face with the unquestionable presence of life force (*inochi*) that permeates the entire universe:

In my youth, . . . I agonized over the question of religion and took up *zazen* for some time. Zen people speak of "one's original face before one's parents were born." It refers to the reality of the self as this unceasing life. It refers to one's coming to know the true nature of humanity that is divine—be it called God or Buddha. . . . Probably you know that Christ said, "I am before Abraham was born" (John 8:58). This, too, speaks of the same intuition.<sup>45</sup>

Preceding the above passage is her exposition of life and the body. I quote this passage at length:

We must acknowledge that human beings, just as trees and plants, insects, birds and animals, were born of this great *life (inochi)* that permeates this universe and gives rise to all beings and nurtures them all. Without this life, nothing comes into being. Religious people call this great life God—the great life that gives birth to all things—and maintain that God has created human beings, and that human beings are God's children.

Just as this great *life (inochi)* that has given birth to you as a human being, permeates this universe; it also permeates you from within, although you may think that "you" are your own making. I suppose this all-permeating presence of life is the reason why sometimes it is said that the spirit of God dwells in each person. Yes, human beings originally reside in this confluence of inner and outer flows of

great life that plentifully fills the universe. You are embraced by God in the bosom of God; but God too is embraced by you and resides in your bosom.

You may think perchance that your young beautiful body is “you.” But in fact, you already know that your body is just an “organ” created and animated by life (*inochi*). And this life is actually the real “you.” Your organ may be young, beautiful, and looks very healthy right now. But soon in time, you will begin to have wrinkles on your face, just as they cover my face. Your jet-black hair will soon be mixed with grey streaks. Your eyesight will begin to dull, your mind will lose its sharpness, your limbs will start to become a little stiff, and whatever you will be doing, you will easily tire. However much you take good care of your body, it will not last for more than 90 or 100 years. This is because your body is but an organ and is not the same as this enduring life.

On the other hand, this life that is actually your real self lives on without fatigue or old age or death, regardless of what happens to your organ. It was there even before your body came into being from the womb of your mother; and even after your body perishes and only bones remain, life will continue to be. Life freely creates another body and gives birth to it. “You” are this eternal life.<sup>46</sup>

This in a nutshell is Raichō’s view of life. For her the zazen meditation, which she continued to do even after her intensive Zen practice had petered out, allowed her to tap into the source of indefatigable life, and provided her with the immanently transcendent perspective in her everyday life.<sup>47</sup> She spoke about it in her essay of 1931, “On Zen Practice” (*Shūzen ni tsuite*):

I sit and meditate whenever I am tired. When I get writer’s block, I sit. When my mind is not clear, I sit. When I am disappointed or at a loss as to how to come up with a solution to a critical situation or difficult problem, I sit. When I don’t know to whom to vent my frustration or with whom to share my sadness, I sit. When I’m mentally and physically exhausted, I sit. When I’m at my wits’ end as to how to get through a period of economic hardship, I sit. Whatever the situation may be, the more trying the circumstances, the more concentration I put into my lower belly, and sit, which has become my customary activity. Sometimes I may sit only for ten to twenty minutes, but sometimes I sit through several hours without stirring.

Indeed, have I never had done zazen, by now the well of my vitality (*seimei*) would have dried up, my strength would have been worn out, and I might have been suffocated by hackneyed and straitjacketed thinking. I am convinced that it is thanks to this activity of sitting that everyday my mind is refreshed; that hope, courage, and trust are bestowed on me; and that out of nature and my existence continue to well up abundant poems.<sup>48</sup>

## 6.2 Suzuki’s view

D. T. Suzuki began to reflect seriously on the question of sexual life, when a romance bloomed between him and a young American woman, Beatrice Lane, his future wife. He wrote to Nishida, communicating his personal thoughts:



I am neither an adherent of asceticism or puritanism. I do not see anything wrong in so-called worldliness. Life consists of hopes, struggles, dreams, sorrows, etc. Let us not escape them, but let us live in the eternal whirlpool of passions and sufferings and hopes.

Thank you for your kind advice concerning my possible marriage with the American woman. The matter is not yet settled. I know many difficulties accompany this affair. She is not unaware of them, either. We have talked about interracial marriage from various angles, that is, socially, biologically, economically, as well as from the individual standpoint. . . .

In connection with this matter, I have lately paid a great deal of attention to sexual life. I have thought of it sociologically as it influences our civilization. One of the great differences that divide the East from the West is our sexual life. Some day I want to write an article or a booklet on this very interesting subject. I have many things I would like to talk with you concerning this and other kindred subjects, but I cannot do that very well in a letter.<sup>49</sup>

Nishida, already a married man who had fathered three daughters and two sons, and just recently had twin girls born in April, but also suffered the death of his beloved four-year-old daughter back in the January of the same year (1907), was certainly interested in what Daisetz had to say about sexual life. In response, he wrote:

I would like to hear your thoughts on sexual life. As you say, the Western view may differ greatly in this regard from the Japanese. In the collected letters of Lafcadio Hearn, we find a passage by him which says that the Japanese appreciate the beauty of nature as it is, but the Westerners tend to see nature's beauty through the feminine beauty embodied in women. He also maintained that because the Japanese do not have a strong sexual passion, great profound literature has not been produced. Is it an overstatement to say that in the West sexuality occupies the essential place in the culture, while in the East it is nature?<sup>50</sup>

It appears it was finally in 1948 when Suzuki found an occasion to write about sexual desire, but by then Nishida was no longer alive to read it. Suzuki's essay "Religion and Sexual Desire" (*Shūkyō to seiyoku*)<sup>51</sup> makes fuller sense when read together with his another essay on "desire" contained in the *Mysticism: Christian and Buddhist*, wherein he describes his view on the indispensability of "thirst" (*trishnā*) as the very driving force of this universe, as briefly mentioned earlier.

Suzuki maintains that the Mahayana understands "*trishnā*" (or *tanhā*, "thirst") as the first principle of the universe, while the earliest forms of Buddhism had considered it as *the* cause of suffering, and therefore had to be rid of.<sup>52</sup> The formation of the body is activated by *trishnā*, which causes things to come into being. Destruction of "thirst" surely means the "annihilation" of human beings.<sup>53</sup> Suzuki maintains that "thirst" is "our being itself. It is I; it is you; it is the cat; it is the tree; it is the rock; it is the snow; it is the atom."<sup>54</sup> "Thirst" is different from the will in that the will "strives to live against death, against destruction," and as such it implies dualism. *Trishnā*, however, "remains still dormant . . . as in the mind of God." It was *trishnā* that "made God give out his *fiat*, 'Let there be light.'"<sup>55</sup> Suzuki also notes that "in

the beginning was *trishnā*,” in contrast to John 1:1 “In the beginning was the Word.” Let us turn to his writing:

Buddhist philosophy considers *trishnā* or *tanhā*, or “thirst,” the first principle of making things come into existence. In the beginning there is *trishnā*. It wills to have a form in order to express itself, which means to assert itself ... [W]hen it asserts itself it takes form. As *trishnā* is inexhaustible, the forms it takes are infinitely varied. *Trishnā* wants to see and we have eyes; it wants to hear and we have ears; it wants to jump and we have the deer, the rabbit, and other animals of this order; it wants to fly and we have birds of all kinds; it wants to swim and we have fish wherever there are waters; it wants to bloom and we have flowers; it wants to shine and we have stars; ... *Trishnā* is the creator of the universe.

Being the creator, *trishnā* is the principle of individuation. It creates a world of infinite diversity.<sup>56</sup>

Furthermore, Suzuki maintains that the later Buddhists understood by *trishnā* the power that transforms itself. Here, Suzuki comes to the heart of the matter to unlock the oft-misunderstood equation of “*bonnō*” (delusion) and “*bodai*” (spiritual awakening)—an idea analogous to “*samsāra* is *nirvāna*, *nirvāna* *samsāra*.” He writes:

The later Buddhist realized that *trishnā* was what constituted human nature—in fact, everything and everything that at all comes into existence; that to deny *trishnā* was committing suicide; to escape from *trishnā* was the height of contradiction or a deed of absolute impossibility; and that the very thing that makes us wish to deny or to escape from *trishnā* was *trishnā* itself. Therefore, all that we could do for ourselves, or rather all that *trishnā* could do for itself, was to make it turn to itself, to purify itself from all its encumbrances and defilements, by means of transcendent knowledge (*prajñā*). The later Buddhists then let *trishnā* work on in its own way without being impeded by anything else. *Trishnā* or “thirst” or “craving” then comes to be known as *mahākarunā*, or “absolute compassion,” which they consider the essence of Buddhahood and Bodhisattvahood.

This *trishnā* emancipated from all its encumbrances incarnates itself in every possible form in order to achieve a universal salvation of all beings, both sentient and non-sentient ... When *trishnā* comes back to itself, it is all-conquering, all-knowing, and also all-loving. It is this love or *karunā* or *maitrī* [friendliness] that makes the Buddha or Bodhisattva abandon his eternally entering into a state of emptiness and subjects him- or herself to transmigrate [i.e. incarnate] through the triple world.<sup>57</sup>

The crucial point of Suzuki’s view on the “thirst” is that “thirst turn to itself,” and purifies itself of defilements by means of higher wisdom (*prajñā*). Put in another way, under the light of spiritual wisdom libido purifies itself and turns into the principle of loving compassion. (Here we may recall the *kōan*, “The old woman burning the hut.”) Stating this more succinctly, he wrote: “The Buddhist training consists in transforming *trishnā* (*tanhā*) into *karunā*, ego-centered love into something universal, eros into agape.”<sup>58</sup> Here again, we may recall Raichō’s path of growth, which

moved from ego-perpetuation to the life of altruistic love by entrusting herself to the voice of nature embodied in her female body.

Thus understood, we see why Suzuki considers *trishnā* the foundation of the doctrines of universal salvation, as well as the foundation of Amitābha Buddha's "vows" (*pranidhāna*) and the Bodhisattva's action of *parināmanā* ("turning over the merit to others").<sup>59</sup> Radical purification of sexual energy is the key to Buddhist transformation, into an altruistic social self, and as such is the prerequisite for bringing forth social harmony and peace.

Now let us turn to Suzuki's *Religion and Sexual Desire*. We recognize the basic theme is expounded in this essay on spirituality and sexual life. Suzuki calls for the healing of the split of the flesh and the spirit, and writes about how the body is indispensable in the creation of human cultures:

It is precisely because of this physical body, despised and trampled [by some religious purists], that human beings have the opportunity to give birth to beautiful things. Consider, for instance, puppy love between young ones, or the feeling of oneness shared by a seasoned aged couple. These are the kinds of experiences reserved only for human beings. Romantic love by definition has a physical foundation, but for the young ones in love, this physical foundation is not within their purview. Theirs is a beautiful dream-like world. Again, the emotional bonding that grows in time between wife and husband is characterized by incomparable sense of inseparability so much so that when one of the partners dies the other often soon follows. This is why they say "the lotus flower, even though growing out of the mud, blooms beautifully." But actually, what is "beautiful" does not have its existence in the emotion (*kanjō*) of beautiful but in what gives rise to that emotion. A beautiful thing does not come into being by having something dirty as its source. A beautiful thing has something beautiful at its depth and simply reflects its beauty. A thing considered "dirty" gets purified by reflecting its source within it. A thing becomes "dirty" only when severed from this source.<sup>60</sup>

Suzuki's basic position is that the intellect in its discrimination dichotomizes life into two—the mind and the body, the spirit and the flesh, life and death. He sees that once the flesh is separated out of this primordial unity, everything becomes the source of constant worry and anxiety. In this dichotomized world an ideology such as dialectical materialism comes into being, claiming that consciousness emerge from the matter. But this claim is helpless in the face of the problems of human life. Again, if we were to give priority to the flesh as the principle of existence, we have nowhere else to turn to but to plunge into the abysmal void, for the flesh actually has no ground to stand on but the very edge of nihilism. In such a world romantic love would disappear, and spiritual freedom, too, would vanish altogether.<sup>61</sup> For Suzuki the cause of various modern mental illnesses is rooted in this separation of the spirit and the flesh, which was brought about by the very workings of the conscious mind. He wonders if a diabolical element is at work in the biological evolutionary process. But contradictorily, it is out of the diabolical that the spiritual arises.<sup>62</sup> This is why the deep source of self-consciousness is ultimately a religious question, and no science can clarify it.

Out of his reflection Suzuki asserts that only by uncovering the full capacity of “reason and religion” can we save humanity and the world from utter destruction. By “reason” (*risei*) Suzuki means discerning wisdom (*prajñā*), and by “religion” (*shūkyō*) he refers to the dimension of religious practice that leads one to the self-discovery and self-transformation. Moreover, “religion” shares in common with the human capacity to imagine and to generate ideals.<sup>63</sup>

### 6.3 Nishida's view

Nishida spoke about his view on sexual life in his letter to Mr and Mrs Watsuji Tetsurō, who were involved in the search for a suitable wife-to-be for Nishida's second marriage (several years after the death of his first wife). He wrote:

If I were a Zen monk or a Catholic priest, I suppose celibacy would be important, but for me, it is not so. Although I certainly have a deep-seated longing for a religious life, a merely formal religious life that denies humanity is not something that I would embrace. I don't even think that such is the ideal human existence. What I mean by “nothing” (*mu*) is more like the warm heart that Shinran possessed, which acknowledges everyone's freedom and embraces every sinner (although I don't know whether Shinran himself actually phrased it in this way).

While I appreciate Eastern culture as profound and precious, I cannot deny my longing for Western culture, which is a great development of rich and free humanity. Just as I derive pleasure from Sesshū's paintings, or poetry in Chinese, so I cannot help but be moved by the paintings of Rembrandt or the poetry of Goethe. Instead of deriding the old Goethe who fell in love with young Ulrike von Levetzow and desired to marry her, I am touched by the greatness of his humanity.<sup>64</sup>

Here, we observe that Nishida's view on sexual life closely parallels that of D. T. Suzuki (as mentioned above in his letter of 1907); it is also closely associated with the cultural life at large. At around the time of his courtship that resulted in his remarriage in December 1931, Nishida's thought increasingly added a “personalistic” overtone. To cite a passage from his work of this period, we read:

Love does not consist in the satisfaction of one's desire (*yokubō*), but it limits [i.e. curtails] such desire ... Self-loving human beings are embraced in the absolute love of God and determined *qua* the self-determinations of absolute love. Absolute love is the Eternal Now, in which numerous moments are determined—it is the space that embraces numerous moments and establishes them.<sup>65</sup>

He distinguishes *yokkyū* (desire, demand) from *yokubō* (greed, including carnal desire), and locates the origination of desire (*yokkyū*) in the ontological mode of human beings existing as corporeal beings in the world of things.<sup>66</sup>

His reflection on deep inner life (*fukaki naiteki seimei*) occupied an important place in his writings from 1929 through 1932,<sup>67</sup> and out of this line of thinking such notions as action-intuition (*kōiteki chokkan*), historical body (*rekishitekishintai*), and the overarching notion of historical life (*rekishiteki seimei*) were developed. In

his last years, he also reflected on the religious aspect of life in terms of “eternal life” (*eien no seimei*).

In line with his basic philosophical stance of staying closely connected with concrete life, he came to identify the body (*shintai*) as a key philosophical problem.<sup>68</sup> He had already seen the body as the principle of individuation from the very beginning of his philosophical investigation, and therefore, this is to be understood as a deepening of his thought. For we have a fascinating “fragment” from the very early period of Nishida, perhaps even preceding his first book, *An Inquiry into the Good*, on the role of the body in relation to the arising of subject and object. It reads:

A crow’s call “*kab!*” constitutes pure objectivity. There is no distinction between the self and the thing. Unified reality alone is present. It is only when I turn my consciousness back to my *physical body (shintai)* and perceive that I am here, the distinction between the subject and the object arises. These various mental operations compose subjectivity. That is to say, when the idea occurs that “a thing is out there, and I am here hearing it,” the subject-object dichotomy arises as something insurmountable.<sup>69</sup>

He came to see logic as the expression, or “logocization,” of life, and the body that “speaks and understands” to partake the nature of the logos (“logos-*teki*”).<sup>70</sup> As fascinating and intriguing an idea as it is, which guided his reflection and the formulation of the notion of “*topos*” (or *basho*), he rather paid close attention to the role of intuition in a bodily movement. He came to see that intuition and action always accompany the activity of making things (*poiesis*). He named this feature “action-intuition” or “*kōiteki chokkan*.”<sup>71</sup> This action-intuition, as the mode of any creative action, is an invariant feature, extending from the humblest everyday activity of cooking, for instance, to creating a work of fine arts, literature, films, performing a musical instrument, and playing sport. In any of these activities, one usually envisions a hint of the end product, and the body works toward realizing that end in a coordinated manner.<sup>72</sup> In Nishida’s “action-intuition” the body is being accorded the equal status with intuition; thereby it rehabilitates the original unity of the mind and the body. Far from referring to some esoteric action, the “action-intuition” refers to the fact that the mind and the body work together in the production of things in our everyday activities. Even writing a scholarly paper is a kind of action-intuition, as intuition (envisioning, thinking, musing) and the action of the body (holding a pen in a hand and writing, or typing, or dictating) are seamlessly coordinated. If one is hungry, one cannot concentrate on thinking or writing. If one lacks a good night sleep, one’s mind is foggy, and it is impossible to carry out good thinking; lack of sleep does not help the blurring eyesight, either. So, even a highly cerebral activity of writing a philosophical paper still requires the physical preparedness and its “cooperation.” Nishida usually gives the example of artistic production to explain the feature of action-intuition, because he finds this dynamism most pronounced in the artistic performance, such as making a calligraphy piece, playing a musical instrument, or playing sport, which requires a higher degree of physical and mental coordination as well as specialized skills developed and internalized over years of assiduous training.

By focusing on the reality of “life” (*seimei*), Nishida comes to advance his view that the primary mode of our being in the world is described in the movements of “from that which is created to that which creates” (*tsukurareta mono kara tsukuru mono e*)<sup>73</sup>—we are “born” into the world as that which is “created,” and yet we move on to give birth to things, to “create” things, and thereby give shape to the world. A thing made belongs to the public domain, independent of the one who created it.<sup>74</sup> This created thing comprises various meanings and appeals to the wider audience, who are moved or influenced by what they encounter (or remain indifferent to it). In this way our action of making things shapes the world positively (i.e. constructively), neutrally, or negatively (i.e. destructively). The idea of “historical body” (*rekishitekishintai*) refers to the same reality.

The adjective “historical” has a double connotation. Let us take the example of a newborn baby. It soon learns to respond “culturally,” as it begins to emulate the behavior of those around it, responds to their emotions, and acquires a language spoken around it. Why is that? It is because our body is already a depository of past experiences of the countless generations of thousands of years. The body is “historical” in this sense. The other meaning of “historical” is that it pertains to the “making” of history. The salient example would be the athletic feats, as one witnesses in the Olympic Games, for instance, wherein athletes break the old world-records and establish new ones. The “historical body” is “history making” in this sense. Each of us as a historical body creates and changes the shape of the world. But this is only the half of the whole picture. In the mutually determining dynamic relationship, we are also changed and affected by the changes we make to the world. The changed world on account of our action further interacts with us—we may just think of the climate change, as an example. This mutually interacting process is in constant flux and never-ending (but how long can it be sustained?—we began to raise these questions). In his approach to “*poiesis* (making) and *praxis* (action)” Nishida paid attention to this mutually influencing dynamic reality of the human and the world—or the “dialectical world,” for short.

In this dialectical world, “desire” (*yokkyū*) is “the demand of the self to fashion itself, i.e., to construct itself” (*jiko-keisei*) as an individual-in-the-world reflecting the external world. Moreover, the desire of the individual to fashion itself is contradictorily the desire of the world to form itself.<sup>75</sup> We can make sense of this statement of Nishida by referring to Raichō, who desired to establish herself as an independent authentic self in the world, while she was reflecting in her consciousness the predominantly androcentric social milieu of her time.

Nishida observed that in human beings biological instincts turn into desires.<sup>76</sup> The body has various aspects. As a biological body, consciousness is instinctive (*hon'nō-teki*); as a historical body, consciousness is mainly sensory (*chikaku-teki*), but consciousness becomes self-conscious (*jikaku-teki*) when the body finds itself being in the world, with which the body stands in the absolutely contradictorily self-identical relationship—that is, it is radically interacting.<sup>77</sup> Nishida says that in the recognition that without the body “I” cannot be, “I” become truly self-aware on the extreme edge of this recognition of the fact.<sup>78</sup> To summarize these points let us turn to Nishida’s own words:

In the world that moves on constantly “from that which is created to that which creates,” the moment of “from that which is created” refers to the individual negating itself and entering into the world (a whole)—and in this direction the individual becomes “a thing” that belongs to the world. On the other hand, in the moment of “to that which creates,” the individual gains its independence *qua* individual ... [In this radically mutual connectedness of the world and the individual], for an individual to “see” is to “work,” and to “work” is to “see.” To “see” means that the individual negates itself and enters into the world as a “whole,” which, however, [contradictorily] signifies that the individual becomes a thing (*mono to naru*). By “that which creates” what is signified is that the individual works as one among the many [world constituting] individuals, by negating its being a “whole.”

An individual possesses desires by reflecting the world within itself. An individual is cognitive and constructive *qua* individual in the absolutely contradictorily self-identical world. The more the individual consciously defines itself as an individual, the more it works as a constitutive element of the world—in a contradictorily self-identical way. That is, the individual thinks, having become a thing, and it works, having become a thing. Hence, in the movement of “from that which is created to that which creates,” the world is imbued with consciousness, and it is rational in its self-formation. Reason (*risei*) is not something that simply resides in the head of an individual but is thoroughly objective. Reason is the world-constructing power. In this sense, reason is thoroughly historical.<sup>79</sup>

In a nutshell, each of us as the “embodier” of historical life gives shape to the world in our *praxis* (action) and *poiesis* (thing-production), which transforms *both* the world *and* the self. To put it differently, each self, being self-conscious, determines itself in place and time, which has the signification of an “event” (or an occurrence) determining itself from the perspective of the world. When the individual self-expresses itself through action, it “negates” the world. Thus, the world arises with the “self-affirmation of the self.” And yet, the self originally comes into being in accordance with the “law” of coming into being and going out of being (*jiko shōmetsu*—meaning, all things perish; no self abides forever).<sup>80</sup> So, the world ultimately “negates” the self in this sense. Herein, we cannot help but detect the fundamental Buddhist intuition of dependent co-origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*) of all things and the radical temporality of all things (*anityā*), as there is no eternally abiding self-substance (*ātman*). Nishida upholds that this is the radically objective picture of the world (i.e. the “one”), of which the individuals (i.e. the “many”) are its constitutive elements. This is the dynamic way in which the historical world constantly takes its shape.

It is not surprising then that Nishida came to summarize his view of life in terms of the encompassing notion of “historical life” (*rekishiteki seimei*).<sup>81</sup> But, in its spiritual yearning, the individual is not satisfied without seeking “eternal life” (*eien no seimei*), as “love does not cease to long for eternal life.”<sup>82</sup> Here, “love” is best understood to mean more than just romantic love or self-love, but as the principle that

enables the interpersonal relations as well as the relationship to the entire universe. This is the culminating point of Nishida's reflection on life.

As noted at the outset of this chapter, Nishida resorted both to apophatic and kataphatic styles of discourse. While the analysis of consciousness renders itself more congenial to an apophatic style of discourse, the blood-flowing breathing body, a concrete and tangible existence, renders itself more readily to kataphatic discourse. Nishida does not seem to privilege one over the other, as his view is radically "contradictorily self-identical." Moreover, he writes that when the field of consciousness (*basho* or *topos*) determines itself, life is established.<sup>83</sup> This implies that the self-determination of self-consciousness and life "simultaneously arise" together. That is to say, unless we become self-aware, there is no "life." When we become self-aware, we are "alive."

What is the relationship of the body to eternal life? If the body were absolutely being, Nishida would argue that it makes no sense that it grows old, and eventually decays. If it were mere "nothing," then it could not come into being. The body, then, is a "relative being" partaking something of eternal life. Life force is absolutely-being-and-non-being, in that we cannot objectify it. Nishida finds this mode of being can be seen in the structure of time (*toki*): each "moment" comes into being and disappears in the next, but the "absolute present" or "eternal now," which determined itself as the moment, never ceases to be. He finds the same insight expressed by Heraclitus's view of "logos," which is in constant flux and yet remains "constant." Individuated lives are thus the independent "moments" of the "absolute present," and of the "eternal life." But in a religious consciousness, each individuated life, each moment, is eternal as the self-determination of the eternal life, the eternal now. We must leave behind such concepts as relative and absolute in the end.

## CONCLUSION

The present exposition is an attempt to broaden the scope of the methodology of intercultural philosophy, while drawing on the Japanese thinkers. I had three guiding themes, which were:

1. By focusing on the topic of life, we can access the kataphatic dimension of Zen philosophy.
2. By bringing individual thinkers together in dialogue on a topic mutually shared, it can shed new light on the aspects of their thoughts that were formerly less obvious.
3. By introducing a woman thinker into the discourse, we may break down the artificial boundaries built around the kinds of "philosophies," and thereby we may obtain a more balanced picture of the issues under discussion. In this chapter, a conscious effort was made to bring in Hiratsuka Raichō as a convincing conversation partner with two other well-known "Zen" philosophers, Suzuki and Nishida.



The assessment of this present approach and investigation is left to the judgment of each reader.

At this time, one thing emerges to conclude this chapter. Raichō, Suzuki, and Nishida all talked about the importance of love (*ai*) (or compassion, *daihi*, *mahākarunā*) alongside insight or reason (*prajñā*). For Raichō, the life of romantic love unfolded into her life of altruistic love, which became the source of her energy to dedicate herself to the cause of women's movement. For Suzuki "eternal life (*eien no inochi*) was possible only where there is infinite love (*mugen no ai*)."<sup>84</sup> In his open letter of 1963, addressed to Gabriel Marcel, he noted that while "life" harbors the tendency to self-destruct as it individuates, love curbs that drive and rescues life from self-destruction.<sup>85</sup> He adds a cautionary remark that this faith in infinite love (*mahākarunā*) has to be backed by sustained hope, perseverance, and self-exertion, which constitute the bodhisattva path.<sup>86</sup> For Nishida love is nothing instinctive ("what is instinctive is not love but a selfish greed") but is that which enables and sustains the essential reciprocal relationship between individual persons, between "I" and "Thou."<sup>87</sup>

It appears it is here that the human responsibility comes in, as life is not a given or something "eternal" in itself, but we are radically related to it, although it is the ground of our being (in a "contradictorily self-identical way," Nishida would say). Just as we may neglect the health of the earth, we could play havoc on life. If Daisetz is right in holding that love curbs raw instincts, we will have to speak the language of love, friendliness, and gentleness. That is, if we want to see this world and humanity rehabilitate in such a way that the virtues—such as justice, equity, consideration for fellow beings, and magnanimity—can reclaim their places. Daisetz (and also Nishida) found in the following poem of Zen Master Shidō Munan a viable hint that can inform a new social principle. Infinite love is possible when we "die once while alive" (*ikinagara ni shinu*) and return to life as dynamic actors, not as ghosts. The poem reads:

*ikinagara  
shinin to narite  
narihatete  
kokoro no mama ni  
suru waza zo yoki*

While alive, I become a dead man  
I die to my ego through and through  
Then I act following my heart  
Aren't these actions wonderful?

Daisetz wrote to Gabriel Marcel that he finds genuine "peace" in this experience of "dying and returning to life."<sup>88</sup> He illustrates this point with the same insight from the New Testament: "I died to the old Adam and live in Christ," while he also ponders the meaning of Christ having died on the cross before he was resurrected.<sup>89</sup>

Affirmation via negation, then, constitutes the vital key to the survival of every being and the hope for any chance for peace.

## NOTES

In this chapter, all translations from Japanese into English are the author's, unless they are quotations from the English sources.

1. March 25, 1941, Letter #1564 to Kimura Michiko, NKZ 19.158: "*Kare wa shūkyō, watakushi wa tetsugaku da ga, mattaku onaji kangae desu.*"
2. This apophatic use of the language that grew out of the Christian mystical theology is very useful in interdisciplinary intercultural philosophy as well, and it is progressively being employed, independent of its theological origin, to uncover the dimensions of human experience otherwise difficult to "describe." See, for instance, William Franke, "Apophatic Paths: Modern and Contemporary Poetics and Aesthetics of Nothing," *Angelaki* 17.3 (2012), 7–16.
3. Nishida is referring to his essay "*Rekishiteki sekai ni okeru kobutsu no tachiba*" [On the individual's place in the historical world] (1938) (NKZ 9.69–146), which discussed Leibniz and the monad.
4. Letter #1284, September 25, 1938, to Miyake Gōichi, NKZ 19.47–48.
5. "Postscript" by Kobayashi Tomie, in HRJ 3.310. Raichō's autobiography is published in Japanese in four volumes (Tokyo: Ōtsuki Shoten, 1971–73). The first volume is fully translated into English together with the summary translation of the second volume by Teruko Craig, *In the Beginning Woman Was the Sun: The Autobiography of a Japanese Feminist* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006). Volumes three and four are yet to be translated.
6. M. Yusa, *Zen and Philosophy: An Intellectual Biography of Nishida Kitarō* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), xix. Original passage is in Nishitani Keiji, "Nishida, My Teacher," in *Nishida Kitarō*, trans. Yamamoto Seisaku and J. Heisig (Berkeley: University of California press, 1991), 27.
7. See M. Yusa, "Women Rocking the Boat: A Philosophy of the Sexed Body and Self-Identity," in FJP 6.155–169, for an initial treatment of this subject matter, as well as "Women Philosophers: Overview," in JPS 1115–1126.
8. See Kimura Bin, "*Seimeiron-teki sai no omosa*" [The weight of different theories of life], in *Nihon no tetsugaku [Japanese philosophy]* 3 (Kyoto, 2002), 19–20.
9. Nishida Kitarō, "*Ronri to seimei*" [Logic and life] (1936), NKZ 8.281.
10. *Zoe* (ἡ ζωή), meaning "life" as well as "a way of life," is derived from *zao* (ζάω), "to live," "to be in full life and strength," "to be fresh, be strong," with the connotation of "vitality." *Bios* (ὁ βίος) is life distinguished from "animal life" (ζωή), and denotes "a course of life, manner of living" (Latin *vita*); "life-time"; "a living," "means of living," "substance" (Latin *victus*); and "a life, biography." *Bios* is derived from *bioo* (βίωω), "to live," "pass one's life," whereas "*zao*" (ζάω) properly means "to live," "exist." "*Bios*" connotes a cultural dimension, laden with human values, as such words are derived from it as "*biosimos*" (βίωσιμος), meaning "worth living."
11. As opposed to *bios* (ὁ βίος), "way of living," and as opposed both to *bios* (ὁ βίος), and *zoe* (ἡ ζωή), meaning "existence," *psyche* (ἡ ψυχή) designates "vital principle," and the

compound, “to have psyche” or *psychen echon* (ψυχὴν ἔχων), means to be “animated” or spirited.

12. Donald Keene, ed., *Anthology of Japanese Literature* (New York: Grove Press, 1994 (1960)), 197.
13. Shūsaku Endō, *Deep River*, Van Gessel, trans. into English (New York: New Directions, 1996), 189.
14. D. T. Suzuki, “On Death,” in *Tōyōteki ichi* [The Eastern “nonduality”] (1942), SDZ 7.435–442.
15. Thomas Merton, “The Zen Kōan,” in his *Mystics and Zen Masters* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1967 (1961)), 236–237. English slightly altered.
16. *Ibid.*, 237.
17. Craig, trans., *In the Beginning Woman was the Sun*, 128.
18. *Ibid.*, 92–93.
19. *Ibid.*, 93; emphasis added.
20. It was the first journal of this kind, compiled, written, and sold by women for female readership in Japan. Its inaugural issue was published in September 1911.
21. Hiratsuka Raichō, “*Sanzen shite ita koro*” [Around the time when I was formally practicing Zen under Zen masters] (1924), HRC 4.83–84.
22. Suzuki Daisetz, #141, September 23, 1902, SDZ-N 36.222.
23. Narrated by Albert Stunkard, professor of Psychiatry at the University of Pennsylvania, in *A Zen Life*, DVD, directed by Michael Goldberg (2006). English slightly altered.
24. Could this name be connected with the notion of “*ātman*” in the *Upanishads*, where a small person, a size of a thumb, was thought to dwell in everyone’s heart as the soul? There is no document to sustain this interpretation, but it is a charming association.
25. Nishida Kitarō, Letter #42 to D. T. Suzuki, October 27, 1902, NKZ 18.60. This letter is translated into English by M. Yusa, *Zen and Philosophy*, 73–75.
26. On Nishida’s Zen practice, see M. Yusa, *Zen and Philosophy*, 45–75.
27. D. T. Suzuki, Letter #165, March 19, 1904, SDZ-N 36.248. This letter is originally in English. Suzuki’s used the word “*dhyāna*” (i.e. “meditation”) to refer to zazen. English slightly altered.
28. Suzuki, “Book review, Heinrich Dumoulin, *A History of Zen Buddhism*,” *The Eastern Buddhist* (New Series) 1.1 (September 1965), 124.
29. Merton, *Mystics and Zen Masters*, 12.
30. Nishida Kitarō, “*Jitsuzai no kontei to shite no jinkaku gainen*” [The notion of the person as the ontological foundation of reality] (September 3–5, 1932), NKZ 14.152. This is a three-day lecture he delivered to the members of the Shinano Philosophy Association.
31. Craig, *In the Beginning Woman Was the Sun*, 133.
32. Thomas Yūhō Kirchner, trans., *Entangling Vines: Zen Kōans of the Shūmon Kattō-shū*, (Kyoto: Tenryūji Institute for Philosophy and Religion, 2004), Case 162, 84.

33. D. T. Suzuki, “*Shūkyō to seiyoku*” [“Religion and sexual desire”] (originally published in *Kokoro* 1.6, on December 1, 1948), SDZ 28.535/SDZ-N 33.300; emphasis added.
34. Hiratsuka Raichō, “*Genshi josei wa taiyō de atta*,” HRC 1.16.
35. Craig, *In the Beginning Woman Was the Sun*, 108.
36. On the “Shiobara incident” that broke down Raichō’s youthful idealism, the circumstances leading up to it, and the aftermath, see *ibid.*, 105–122.
37. Hiratsuka Raichō, “*Genshi josei wa taiyō de atta*,” HRC 1.17.
38. Hiratsuka Raichō, *Jiden* [Autobiography], “*Fujin kaihō shisō*” [O the philosophy of liberation of women], HRJ 2.492–3. This section is omitted from Craig’s translation.
39. Merton, *Mystics and Zen Masters*, 254.
40. Hiratsuka Raichō, “*Kojin to shite no seikatsu to sei to shite no seikatsu to no aida no sōtō ni tsuite*” [The conflict of life as an individual and as a gender] (August 1915), HRC 2.40–41. “Women Philosophers, Overview,” JPS 1125; emphasis added.
41. Hiratsuka Raichō, “*Kojin to shite no seikatsu to sei to shite no seikatsu to no aida no sōtō ni tsuite*,” HRC 2.49.
42. Hiratsuka Raichō, “*Haha to shite no ichinenkan*” [One year as a mother] (April 1917), HRC 2.274–275; JPS 1125–1126.
43. This led her to engage in debates on the need for the state protection of motherhood with Yosano Akiko, 1916–18. In 1919 together with Ichikawa Fusae she organized the New Women’s Association (*Shin Fujin Kyōkai*), and initiated her activities for the women’s suffrage movement.
44. Hiratsuka Raichō, “*Anata jishin o shire*” [Know thyself] (1947), HRC 7.18–22.
45. *Ibid.*, HRC 7.21.
46. *Ibid.*, HRC 7.19–20.
47. Hiratsuka Raichō, “*Shūzen ni tsuite*” [On Zen practice] (1931), HRC 5.274–276.
48. *Ibid.*, HRC 5.275.
49. Suzuki Daisetz, Letter #211, May 21, 1907, from La Salle, SDZ-N 37.304–305. The letter is written in English.
50. Nishida Kitarō, Letter #55, dated July 13, 1907, NKZ 18.76.
51. Suzuki Daisetz, “*Shūkyō to seiyoku*,” SDZ 28.522–537/SDZ-N 33.287–301.
52. Suzuki’s reflections are tied with the notion of transmigration. To the question, what transmigrates?, Suzuki offers his understanding that “the soul is a principle, not an entity, and it creates a body suitable for its own habitation. Function determines form.” See D. T. Suzuki, *Mysticism: Christian and Buddhist* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002 (1957)), 106.
53. *Ibid.*, 109.
54. *Ibid.*, 108.
55. *Ibid.*
56. *Ibid.*, 106–107.
57. *Ibid.*, 111.
58. *Ibid.*, 63.

59. Ibid., 109.
60. Ibid., SDZ 28.525–526/SDZ-N 33.290.
61. Ibid., SDZ 28.532/SDZ-N 33.296–297.
62. Ibid., SDZ 28.537/SDZ-N 33.301.
63. Suzuki Daisetz, “*Heiwa no kakuritsu no tame ni warera wa nani o nasubeki ka,*” [What should we—religionists—do to establish peace securely?] (1948), SDZ-N 33.203. This essay is compiled in the SDZ-N 33.198–204. See Moriya Tomoe, ed., *Zen ni ikiru* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō 2012), 358. On Suzuki’s definition of “religion” to include the realm of imagination and ideal, see his essay “*Heiwa to sensō*” [Peace and war] (1947), SDZ 28.473/SDZ-N 33.158–159, in Moriya, *Zen ni ikiru*, 338, 341.
64. Nishida Kitarō, Letter #595, January 4, 1930, NKZ 18.396–398, trans. in Yusa, *Zen and Philosophy*, 246.
65. Nishida Kitarō, “*Jikanteki naru mono oyobi hi-jikanteki naru mono*” [That which is temporal and that which is a-temporal] (1931), NKZ 6.236.
66. Nishida Kitarō, “*Benshōhōteki ippansha to shite no sekai*” [The world as the dialectical universal] (1934), NKZ 7.340.
67. This line of investigation traces its beginning to the “*Ippansha no jiko gentei*” [The self-determination of the universal] (1929), NKZ 5.409.
68. One of the earliest mentions of the body in its philosophical significance is found in “*Hyōgenteki jiko no jiko gentei*” [The self-determination of the expressive self] (1930), NKZ 6.13–85; see, for instance, 6.77.
69. Nishida Kitarō, “*Junsui keiken ni kansuru danshō*” [Fragments on “pure experience”] (ca. 1900–1906), NKZ 16.348/NKZ-N 16.78. This passage strongly retains the flavor of Zen meditation, which was transiting into the field of philosophy.
70. Nishida Kitarō, “*Ronri to seimei,*” NKZ 8.328.
71. The earliest mention of action-intuition is in “*Sekai no jikodōitsu to renzoku*” [The self-identity and continuation of the world] (1935), NKZ 8.7–106. Also he noted in “*Kōiteki chokkan no tachiba*” [The standpoint of action-intuition] (1935), NKZ 8.121: “Artistic intuition is no mere imagination; all intuition is something like action-intuition.”
72. The exception to this is how the geniuses work. Nishida cites Mozart, to whom the entire score of symphonies would unfold first, which he subsequently would write down.
73. The first appearance of this phrase may be traced to “*Kōiteki chokkan*” [Action-intuition] (1937), NKZ 8.560.
74. See Nishida Kitarō, “*Rekishitekishintai*” [The historical body] (1937). This was Nishida’s two-day lecture, September 25–26, 1937, to the members of the Shinano Philosophy Association. NKZ 14.265–292.
75. Nishida Kitarō, *Nihon bunka no mondai* [The problem of the Japanese culture] (1940), NKZ 12.318. “Desire is the individual’s demand for self-formation as it reflects the world inside itself; it is furthermore the demand of the contradictorily self-identical world that forms itself.”

76. Ibid.
77. Nishida Kitarō, “*Jikaku ni tsuite*” [On self-consciousness] (1943), NKZ 10.523.
78. Nishida Kitarō, *Nihon bunka no mondai*, NKZ 12.318.
79. Nishida Kitarō, *Nihon bunka no mondai*, NKZ 12.324–325.
80. Cf. Nishida Kitarō, “*Butsuri no sekai*” [The world of physics] (1943), NKZ 11.9.
81. Noe Keiichi convincingly argues that Nishida’s notion of action-intuition and the historical body were finally synthesized in the notion of historical life (*rekishiteki seimei*), which Noe finds as the culminating point of the later Nishida philosophy. See Noe Keiichi, “*Rekishiteki seimei no ronri*” [The logic of historical life], in *Kōza Seimei*, ed. Y. Nakamura and B. Kimura (Tokyo: Tetsugaku Shobō, 1996), 21.
82. “*Ai wa eien no inochi o motomeru no de aru,*” Nishida Kitarō, “*Poieshisu to purakushisu*” [Poiesis and praxis], NKZ 10.125.
83. Nishida Kitarō, “*Ronri to seimei,*” NKZ 8.284: “*Basho ga basho o gentei suru to iu koto kara seimei ga seiritsu suru no de aru.*”
84. D. T. Suzuki, ““*Mugen no ai*” o *shinjite, satori aru shūdan-shin o*” [Having faith in “Eternal love”: Give rise to the communal spirit of awakening] (1963), SDZ-N 34.306; Moriya, *Zen ni ikiru*, 406. Suzuki’s open letter to Gabriel Marcel, published in the *Yomiuri Newspaper*, April 28, 1963; SDZ-N 34.305–310; Moriya, *Zen ni ikiru*, 405–411.
85. Suzuki, ““*Mugen no ai*” o *shinjite, satori aru shūdan-shin o,*” SDZ-N 34.306.
86. Ibid., SDZ-N 34.307; Moriya, *Zen ni ikiru*, 408.
87. Nishida Kitarō, “*Bashoteiki ronri to shūkyōteki seikaikan*” [The logic of topos and the religious worldview] (1945), NKZ 11.437.
88. Suzuki, ““*Mugen no ai*” o *shinjite, satori aru shūdan-shin o,*” SDZ-N 34.306, Moriya, *Zen ni ikiru*, 406–407. Nishida quotes this poem by Zen Master Shidō Munan in his last essay, “*Bashoteiki ronri to shūkyōteki seikaikan,*” NKZ 11.437.
89. Suzuki, SDZ-N 34.306.

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