

# Chapter 26

## D. T. Suzuki and the “Logic of Sokuhi,” or the “Logic of Prajñāpāramitā”



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### 1 Introduction

The small connective words “*soku*” and “*sokuhi*,” typically found in the writings of the Kyoto school thinkers, have baffled many a Western reader. Describing what he termed the “logic of *sokuhi*,” Daisetz T. Suzuki (1870–1966) wrote:

In chapter 13 of the *Diamond Sūtra* there is a passage that reads: “The Buddha preached the perfection of wisdom, which, he taught, was not the perfection of wisdom; therefore, it is called the perfection of wisdom.” This is the logical form at the heart of the *prajñāpāramitā* tradition, and also of Zen, and of the “Japanese spirituality.” The basic insight of this passage may be formulated into:

To say “A is A” is  
To say “A is not A.”  
Therefore, “A is A.”

It means that affirmation is negation as well as negation is affirmation. ... Thus, in the *prajñāpāramitā* thought, statements are made such as “a mountain is not a mountain, a river is not a river, and therefore a mountain is a mountain, a river is a river.” (SDZ 5: 380–381)<sup>1</sup>

Further, Suzuki elaborated on this “logic of *sokuhi*” as follows:

The Buddha preached that the perfection of wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*) is *at the same time not (sokuhi)* the perfection of wisdom, and therefore it is called the perfection of wisdom.” Referring to this formulation, I call it “the logic of *sokuhi*.” I am not sure if it should be called “logic,” but let us leave it at that for now.

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<sup>1</sup> Suzuki Daisetsu, “*Kongokyō no zen*” (1968) in *Suzuki Daisetsu Zenshū* (SDZ) (1980); also see Osaka Kōryū (1975, 17).

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This “logic of *sokuhī*” is the logic of spiritual intuition (*reiseiteki chokkaku* 靈性的直覺), as well as the key to unlock any Zen kōan. If you understand what it means, you will understand not only the *Diamond Sūtra* but also the entire *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* of six hundred scrolls! (SDZ 5: 387)

The term “*sokuhī*” is made up of two ideograms, *soku* 即 and *hi* 非. “*Soku*” (also pronounced “*sunawachi*” in modern Japanese) is a connective word, meaning “that is,” or “*id est*”; “*hi*” (also pronounced “*arazu*”) negates the compound-word, adding the meaning of “not.”

The expression “logic of *sokuhī*” was first introduced into the writings of the Kyoto school philosophers via NISHIDA Kitarō 西田幾多郎 (1870–1945), the catalytic figure of the Kyoto School of philosophers, and Suzuki’s lifelong friend. He found Suzuki’s insight profound but also expressed reservations, as we read in his letter to Suzuki, concerning this point:

What you call the “*prajñāpāramitā* logic of *sokuhī*” is full of suggestion. We must construct it logically so that it can stand on its own to face western logic (*seiō ronri* 西洋論理). If we don’t do that, it might be labeled “unscientific” (*hikagakuteki* 非科学的),<sup>2</sup> and we may end up depriving the eastern thought (*tōyō shisō* 東洋思想) of its strength from developing into a globally viable [system of] thought. (NKZ 19: 405)

Nishida adopted and situated the “logic of *sokuhī*” in a philosophical context, especially in his final essay (Nishida 1945), “*Bashoteki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan*” or “The Logic of *Topos* and the Religious Worldview” (NKZ 11: 371–464).<sup>3</sup> This logic of *sokuhī*, however, came to Nishida’s attention only in the very last years of his life, leaving him very little time to develop it fully.

In the following pages, we shall focus on the birth of this “logic of *sokuhī*” in Suzuki’s writings, its context and the import in the *Diamond Sūtra*, and Nishida’s elaboration of this logic.

## 1.1 Notes on the Text

NAKAMURA Hajime, the noted Japanese Buddhologist, was convinced of the necessity to make basic Buddhist scriptures accessible to the readers of modern Japanese, and embarked, together with his colleagues, on the translation of seminal Buddhist scriptures directly from the original Pali and Sanskrit texts. Thanks to these efforts, since the 1960s, major texts, such as the *Mahāparinibbāna-Suttanta*, the *Dhammapada*, the *Suttanipāta*, the *Lotus Sūtra*, and the *Sukhavatīyūha Sūtra*

<sup>2</sup> Here by “science,” the German word “*Wissenschaft*” is meant.

<sup>3</sup> The original title is “*Bashoteki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan*” (NKZ 11: 371–464). For an English translation see Michiko Yusa (1986–1987). A more widely circulated translation is by David Dilworth, “The Logic of the Place of Nothingness and the Religious World View” (Dilworth 1987). Unless otherwise noted, the translation by Michiko Yusa is used in this chapter.

have become available in modern Japanese translation. Moreover, this group of scholars meticulously consulted Tibetan and Chinese texts and produced reliable, accurate, and eminently readable translations, accompanied by copious notes and commentaries. In addition, these major scriptures were published in an inexpensive “pocket book” edition by Iwanami Shoten. Thus, today we have rich textual resources to draw from, instead of having only the ancient Chinese translations, many of which were made over 1500 years ago. For this reason, in this essay, these modern Japanese translations are used as the main sources, instead of the traditional texts compiled in the *Taishō Daizōkyō* (or *Taishō Tripitaka*).

For the *Diamond Sūtra* and the *Heart Sūtra*, the text used is the translation by NAKAMURA Hajime and KINO Kazuyoshi.<sup>4</sup> Most essential and helpful is the fact that for the *Diamond Sūtra* Kumārajīva’s Chinese translation is printed on the right page, and, the traditional Japanese reading of the Chinese and the modern Japanese translation from Sanskrit are on the left page for easy comparison. I will refer to this translation as “Nakamura-Kino.”

For the Sanskrit text of the *Diamond Sūtra*, the edition with the English translation by Edward Conze was consulted; the Sanskrit text is based on Max Müller’s edition.<sup>5</sup> In the context of the present essay, it is relevant to mention that it was through Suzuki’s writings, especially his 1935 *Manual of Zen Buddhism* (Suzuki 1960) and his 1934 *Essays in Zen Buddhism* (Suzuki and Humphries 1976) that Conze first heard of the *Prajñāpāramitā* thought and ended up dedicating the next quarter of a century to the study of these texts (Conze 1960: 24). Such was Suzuki’s scholarly influence on his Western colleagues. For the *Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*, NAKAMURA Hajime, HAYASHIMA Kyōshō, and KINO Kazuyoshi’s translation was used (Nakamura et al. 1963).

Concerning Daisetz T. Suzuki’s writings, apart from the standard *Suzuki Daisetsu zenshū* published by Iwanami Shoten (first imprint 1968–71, second imprint 1980–83), there are a few other series of “selected works” compiled by different scholars, notably, the *Suzuki Daisetsu Zen Senshū* [Selected Essays on Zen by D. T. Suzuki], published by Shunjūsha. Expedience ruling the day, various editions were consulted for their varying strengths, but the references in the footnotes always include the corresponding volume and page(s) of the second imprint of *Suzuki Daisetsu zenshū* (abbreviated as SDZ).

For NISHIDA Kitarō’s writings, the 1978–80 third imprint of the *Nishida Kitarō zenshū* (abbreviated as “NKZ”) published by Iwanami Shoten was used, with the exception of volume 19, for which the fourth imprint of 1989 was used.

<sup>4</sup>The title of their translation is *Han’nya shin-gyō, Kongō han’nya-kyō* 般若心經 · 金剛般若經 (Nakamura and Kino 1960).

<sup>5</sup>Edward Conze’s *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā* constitutes volume 13 of the “Serie Orientale Roma” under the general editorship of Giuseppe Tucci.

## 2 Part I: The Birth or the “Logic of Sokuhi”

### 2.1 Suzuki’s Original Question and the Insight Behind the “Logic of Sokuhi”

Suzuki was intent on bringing to the foreground a “philosophical” dimension of the *prajñāpāramitā* tradition in his study on “The Philosophy and Religion of the *Prajñāpāramitā*,” – Chapter VI of his *Essays in Zen Buddhism, Third Series* (1934). Therein we encounter Suzuki’s reflection on the nature of logic and wisdom (*prajñā*):

In order to discover a philosophical element in the *Prajñāpāramitā* text, it is necessary to ascertain its standpoint. When this is not properly done, one may mistake the shadow for the real thing. What, then, is the standpoint of the *Prajñāpāramitā*? As the Mahayanists understand it, it is not based on logic as commonly understood; but it is based on intuition. The *Prajñāpāramitā* is a system of intuition. Its thorough understanding requires a leap from logic to the other shore. (Suzuki and Humphries 1976: 269; adapted)

Suzuki describes this intuition as something beyond an ordinary “logical” way of thinking. He draws a clear line between ordinary dualistic conceptual thinking and “wisdom” of the bodhisattva. “*Bodhisattva*” is understood here and elsewhere in this essay as a dedicated Buddhist practitioner, lay or monastic, who lives to embody the Buddha’s teaching with the aim of bringing happiness to all the individuals and society at large. The following passage, although predating his formulation of the “logic of *sokuhi*,” clearly demonstrates that Suzuki was consciously working through the style of argument peculiar to the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature. One notices that the essential ingredients of the “logic of *sokuhi*” are already present in this exposition:

According to the Mahayanists, so-called logic or our ordinary human way of thinking is the outgrowth of a dualistic interpretation of existence – *astiva* and *nāstiva*, being and non-being. This dualism remains steadfast throughout our thinking. We can never get away from this so long as we stay with the conditions of thinking. The opposition of “A” and “not-A” is fundamental, is the warp and woof of human understanding. But singularly, our heart or spirit never rests quietly so long as we do not transcend this apparently logically essential position. Ordinary logic is the most useful implement in our practical life, for without it we can never expect to rise above the animal plane of existence. It is due to the faculty of forming concepts that we can go, as it were, out of ourselves, out of our immediate experiences. It is the greatest weapon we have over our brother animals. Unfortunately, we have become so enamored with our concept-forming power that we have gradually detached ourselves from the source of our being – the sources that enabled us to construct ideas and carry out abstract reasoning. The result of this is that we have begun to feel somehow uneasy about ourselves. Even when we are convinced of the accuracy and perspicuity of our logic, we seem to cherish somewhere a sense of inner vacuity, we are not able to locate it in our logic, but the logic itself as a whole seems to lack a certain fundamental convincing power. In any event we are dissatisfied with ourselves and with the whole world so long as we cling to the dualism of *asti* and *nāsti*, “A” and “non-A.”

Perhaps our so-called logic is only the ultimate utilitarian instrument wherewith we handle things belonging to the superficialities of life. The spirit or that which occupies the deepest part of our being requires something thoroughly non-conceptual, i.e., something

immediate and far more penetrating than mere intellection. The latter draws its materials from concepts. The spirit demands immediate perceptions. Evidently, what may be designated an inner or a higher perception, which expresses itself through the ordinary senses, but which is not bound by them, must be awakened, if the spirit is to be satisfied with itself.

The final goal of all the Buddhist disciplines is the awakening of this inner sense. So with the Prajñāpāramitā, the awakening is the one thing that is most needful here. All the teachings expounded in the sūtras, all the bold statements at which the student is warned not to become terrified, are the views extended before the awakened sense of the Bodhisattva. They are his intuitions, they are the dialectic of his immediate experiences, and not that of his concepts. This is the reason why the sūtra so repeatedly refers to seeing things *yathābhūtam*, i.e., as they are.<sup>6</sup> It must be remembered that “seeing” and not “reasoning” or “arguing” logically is here the topic. *Yathābhūtam* is the term applicable only to the act of seeing or viewing, and not to the process of inference. (Suzuki and Humphries 1976: 270–271)

In regard to the function and the use of traditional Aristotelian logic, Suzuki turns the tables on that logic and propounds a non-linear type of “intelligibility” inherent in spiritual intuitions – hence his “logic of *sokuhi*.” This idea seems to have matured in him gradually while he engaged in a textual study of Pure Land Buddhist (or Japanese) Shin Buddhist thought. It appears that Suzuki, always interested in Pure Land thought, approached it through his Zen background. Shin Buddhism is traditionally understood as the religion of “*tariki*” (reliance of human beings on Amida’s infinite compassion and grace in order to be delivered from the sufferings of the world), while Zen Buddhism is that of “*jiriki*” (the reliance on one’s own effort at attaining awakening to be liberated from the sufferings of the world). Suzuki’s studies strengthened his conviction that both Shin and Zen share a common source of spiritual insights on the psychological, ethical, and logical planes. On the psychological plane, he found that the single-minded concentration on the *nenbutsu* invocation – the repetition of “I take refuge in Amida Buddha” (*namu-amida-butsu*) – is comparable to the single-minded concentration Zen students embody to work on the *kōan*. On the ethical plane, the bodhisattva’s good acts that alleviate the pain of people were akin to the life of gratitude that the Shin followers lead everyday. On the logical plane, Suzuki similarly saw the commonality of the worldview in which “opposites” are seen to form a fluid and dynamic whole—as in the Pure Land thought “the paradise” (J. *gokuraku* or *jōdo*) and the “human world” are actually viewed to “interpenetrate” one another without reducing the one to the other. He came to designate this way of thinking as the “logic of *sokuhi*,” which stood for the “interpenetration” of independent entities.<sup>7</sup>

In his “*Shinshū kanken*” [“My View of Shin Buddhism”] (Suzuki 1939b), Suzuki discusses the question of how to articulate the “mutual penetration” of transcendence and immanence in the Buddhist experience:

<sup>6</sup>“*Yathābhūtam*” is translated into Japanese as “*nyojitsu*” 如実 by SUGUHIRA Shizutoshi 杉平顯智 (SDZ 5: 15, 5: 40).

<sup>7</sup>There is a similar view developed by the Christian theology of the Trinity, which sees the reciprocal presence of the three persons of the Trinity—an idea known as “*circuminsessio*” or “*perichoresis*.”

For those who adhere to the “*tarikī*” principle, and broadly speaking for those who adhere to Mahāyāna teaching, one must not forget that while they live their daily lives on earth – the life of karmic actions and the “relative” life, they at the same time live the life of transcendence, which is the life of spiritual freedom, freedom from being tied down by the chains of karmic causation. Christianity preaches God’s immanence and transcendence. But the immanence and the transcendence, if taken separately, would make no sense. Rather, we must consider them both together in their internal dynamism. The ordinary logic cannot explain that both dimensions exist at the same time. But that these two directions mutually exist, sometimes mutually attempt to negate each other, and yet both continue to be present – this is the reality of everyday life. How are we to understand this reality by way of logic?

The Mahāyāna Buddhist scholars of the past, having grappled with the relationship between affirmation and negation of the karmic actions, or the question of immanent transcendence and transcendental immanence, came up with their own logic. Aśvaghosha had already explained it systematically in his *Mahāyāna Awakening of Faith*, with the notion of *tathatā* (*shin’nyo* 真如).<sup>8</sup> ...It is in “*tathatā*” that all the conflicting ideas, such as the affirmation and the negation, find their *place* of harmony (*chōwa* 調和) and interpenetration (*kon’yū* 渾融), because in *tathatā*, affirmation can turn to negation, and negation affirmation. In this way, “*tathatā*” has a sound footing both in the world of life and death, the domain that affirms the karmic actions, and the world that transcends life and death, the realm that is beyond the reach of the law of causality. (SDZ 6: 15)<sup>9</sup>

Suzuki further notes in this connection that, instead of “*tathatā*,” Buddhists also employed such words as “*citta*” (J. *kokoro* 心), “*dharmakāya*” (J. *hosshin* 法身), or “*śūnyatā*” (J. *kū* 空) – all referring to the same reality of the interpenetration of transcendence and immanence (SDZ 6: 15–16; Suzuki 1939b).

Identifying this intuition as the salient articulation of Mahāyāna spirituality, Suzuki came to call it the logic of *sokuhi*. In his essay, “*Gokuraku to shaba*” (“The Paradise and the Human World”) (Suzuki 1941a), he reflects on the relationship between language and spiritual experience. Precisely because the “spiritual” intuition is not something utterly transcendent of the reasoning faculty or the senses but does take on linguistic expression, it is possible for us to talk about it at all. The catch is, if we are trapped by the linguistic expression, we cannot get to the spiritual insight. “Spirituality requires language to express itself (*soku-suru* 即する), and yet it is not tied down by it (*kōsoku serareru* 拘束せられる)” (SDZ 6: 76). On the description of paradise in the *Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*, Suzuki writes:

The essence of spirituality (*reisei* 靈性) is “utterly empty” (*kyomu* 虛無) and “limitless” (*mukyoku* 無極). But these descriptions make very little sense to us, because we are cognitive beings as well. Therefore, we need to introduce the dimension of corporeality (*shin* 身 and *tai* 体) to the discussion to add a sensual dimension. If we simply describe spirituality as “utterly empty” or “limitless,” these words are no longer within the realm of our intellectual understanding. But, from the perspective of spirituality, this contradictory reality beyond intellectual understanding and its linguistic expression has a strange reality of its own. This indeed is to be marveled at.

<sup>8</sup> It is good to remember that one of Suzuki’s earliest works was on the Aśvaghosha’s *Discourse on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana* (Suzuki 1900).

<sup>9</sup> This excerpt is from “*Shinshū kanken*” 真宗管見 (SDZ 6: 7–69). The original may have been Suzuki’s essay written in English, entitled “The Shin Sect of Buddhism” published in the *Eastern Buddhist* (Suzuki 1939a). The text I consulted is a translation into Japanese by SUGIHIRA Shizutoshi 杉平顯智, published in February and March 1942, further edited by D. T. Suzuki in July 1942, and compiled in the *Jōdokei shisō ron* (Suzuki 1942: 10–11).

It follows, then, that the “body” is the body and yet it is not the body at the same time. This is what I call “the logic of *sokuhi*” (即非の論理). In the realm of the *dharmas*<sup>10</sup> (*dharmadhātu*, *hokkai* 法界), it has to be so. This phenomenal body (色身) is not the same as the *dharmā body* (法身), nor is the *dharmā body* the same as the phenomenal body. Their relationship is not something like that of “the front and the back,” either. It is not entirely wrong to put it that way but is prone to intellectualization, for “the front” and “the back” imply dualistic thinking. Again, it is nothing like the *dharmā body* “swallowing the phenomenal body in one gulp.”

What is meant by “*soku*” (即) is not any of these relationships. The “phenomenal” *rupa* (*shiki* 色) and the “principle” *dharmā* (*hō* 法) are clearly distinguished and stand in opposition, and yet in their very opposition, “*rupa* is (*soku dharmā*)” (*shiki soku hō* 色即法), “*dharmā* is (*soku rupa*)” (*hō soku shiki* 法即色). This is how it is in the world of spirituality. One may call it “Oneness” or “Non-duality” (*ichinyosei* 一如性), which is different from the identity of two things. The One is the many, and the many is the One. What is self-identical is at the same time not self-identical – this is what is called “*ichinyo* 一如,” “Non-duality.” The Sūtra reads that [in the paradise] “Everyone effortlessly receives the body of emptiness, the body of limitlessness” (自然虛無之身。無極之體).<sup>11</sup> This line captures very aptly the reality of this non-duality. The word “*jinen*” 自然 (meaning “of itself,” i.e., “effortless”) is also fitting.

It appears to me that “contradictions” are the products of the human mind. In the world of spirituality, “contradictions” are dissolved “of themselves.” We recognize and pay obeisance to the appearance of “the effortlessly empty body, the limitless body.”

In the Prajñāpāramitā tradition, the same intuition is expressed as “phenomenal objects (*rūpa*) are *śūnyatā*, *śūnyatā* is *rūpa*” (色即是空、空即是色). *Śūnyatā* is *śūnyatā*, *rūpa* is *rūpa*, and intellectually they cannot be considered to be “one”, and yet where *śūnyatā* and *rūpa* are one, and *rūpa* and *śūnyatā* are one, we find “non-duality,” which is none other than “of itself” (*jinen* 自然). What Shinran Shōnin referred to by “*jinen hōni*” should be considered in this light. In the paradise of the *Sukhavatīvyūha Sūtra*, one encounters these two ideograms, “*ji-nen*,” ubiquitously. (SDZ 6: 76–77)

Suzuki’s reflection on the Pure Land paradise hinges on the notion of “*reisei*” (spirituality), which has its foundation in the traditional Buddhist analysis of several layers of consciousness. We return to Suzuki’s reflection:

There is a line in Shinran Shōnin’s letters that reads: “Although my body is here in the human world, my heart (*kokoro*) sports in the Pure Land.” The meaning of this statement is very profound. This “heart” (or mind) of Shinran that sports is not the mind that we objectively conceive as the corporeal mind or the biological organ of the heart, but it refers to spirituality that transcends the opposition of body and mind. The mind we ordinarily think of is the intellectual mind characterized by discrimination. One cannot sport in the Pure Land with this mind. The intellectual mind is always looking toward the realm of senses. Even if it turns towards the Pure Land, it carries with it the sensual aspect, and as such, it imparts a sensual hue to the Pure Land. The intellect cannot leave the world of senses, but when the light of spirituality shines on it, that sensual dimension presents itself differently, and “my heart sports in the Pure Land.” The light that shines must come forth from spirituality.

<sup>10</sup>“Dharma” is usually translated into English as the “law,” but Suzuki points out that “dharma” here means all the objects of our senses and cognition (see SDZ 6: 16).

<sup>11</sup>This is a shortened reference to 容色微妙。非天。非人。皆受自然虛無之身。無極之體 (“Their appearance is subtle; it is neither of heaven nor of human. Everyone receives this empty body, the limitless body”) to which Suzuki refers in the passage prior to the one quoted. This passage is cited from the *Daimuryōju-kyō* 大無量壽經 (see Nakamura and Kino 1960: 158).

The spiritual world is the dharma-world (*hokkai*), which we may call the Pure Land Paradise. The *dharmadhātu* (the dharma-world) has a metaphysical ring to it, and the Pure Land has a sensual ring. Psychology associated with Pure Land Buddhism tends towards the latter, but in reference to the chapter, “Entering into the *Dharmadhātu*” of the *Huayan Sūtra*, I want to consider the Pure Land Paradise and the *dharmadhātu* as one. I actually consider them one and the same. As I read the *Sukhavatīvyūha Sūtra*, I cannot help but feel that it is a passage taken from the *Huayan (Gandavyūha) Sūtra*. It is because my observation stems from the standpoint of spirituality.

“Spirituality” (*reisei*) is the workings of the mind that is brought about after the *manas*-consciousness turns on itself and makes a turn.<sup>12</sup> Before the *manas* turns on itself, one is focused solely on the intellectual discriminating aspect, and one cultivates ego-attachment within oneself, and cultivates nothing but the occasions that increase delusions outside oneself; seeing the hell and the paradise in a dream, one sows the seeds of anxiety and agony. However, a one hundred eighty degree turn [of the *manas* consciousness] takes place here, a great turn! After that, the world of senses which one used to look at is no longer the same. Indeed, as before, the feathers of crows are black and those of herons white, but that “black” and “white” are no longer “black” and “white.” This is not to say that they ceased to be black and white and become indistinguishably blurred – such a statement comes out of one’s mind which is trapped by the intellectual discrimination. The *manas*-consciousness after its great turn no longer is governed by the dictation of the six consciousnesses (*roku-shiki* 六識). On the contrary, it now gives orders to them. The world of free creativity unfolds. This is the *dharmadhātu* (*hokkai* 法界), the Paradise (*gokuraku* 極樂). Even if the coloring may be different between the metaphysical-sounding “*dharmadhātu*” and the sensually colorful “paradise,” both are essentially the same. (SDZ 6: 77–78)

To recapitulate: Suzuki came to formulate his “logic of *sokui*” in order to designate the non-dualistic reality of Buddhist spirituality and did so out of his recognition of the universal spiritual principle that was applicable both to Zen and Shin worldviews. Acknowledging the emphasis placed on the two directions of spiritual practice – that of “*jiriki*” (liberation attained by the effort of the self) and “*tariki*” (liberation attained by the grace of the Other), which are two vectors, as it were, *within* Mahāyāna Buddhism, Suzuki observes that what sustains the Mahāyāna worldview is this non-dualistic “interpenetrating co-presence” of the contradictories. This is what the Prajñāpāramitā tradition succinctly summarized in the *Heart*

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<sup>12</sup>Suzuki’s earlier extensive study of the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* is no doubt behind his statement concerning the Buddhist theory of consciousness (see Suzuki 1978: 40, 190–193, 207–210). Some Buddhist analyses of the mind advance the theory of eight consciousnesses. The first five are associated with the five senses of vision, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. The sixth consciousness (S. *mano vijñāna*) is the discriminating consciousness that also gives rise to the sense of ego. The seventh consciousness is called “*manas vijñāna* (J. *mana-tensō-shiki* 摩那轉送識). It is hidden between the sixth and the eighth consciousness. When this *manas*-consciousness is awakened and turns to the *ālaya vijñāna* (J. *araya-ganzō-shiki* 賴耶含藏識), it sheds light on the latter and turns the sixth consciousness towards the spiritual dimension. This spiritual awakening of the sixth consciousness leads to the life of spiritual practice, in which one works carefully to transform the defiled content of the *ālaya vijñāna* into pure content. See Zen Master Hakuin’s “explanation of the eight consciousnesses” (J. *hasshiki no ben* 八識の弁) in his “Keisōdokusui” 荊叢毒蘂 (Hakuin 1977: 376–377).



*Sūtra* in the famous line: “*yad rūpam sā śūnyatā, yā śūnyatā tad rūpam*” (“whatever is form, that is *śūnyatā* (‘emptiness’); whatever is *śūnyatā*, that is form,”) or “*rūpam śūnyatā, śūnyatāiva rūpam*” (“*śūnyatā* is form, *śūnyatā* indeed is form”) (Nakamura et al. 1963: 185) – “*shiki soku ze kū, kū soku ze shiki* 色即是空 · 空即是色.” It is also significant that Suzuki’s scriptural basis is deeply connected to the worldview of the *Huayan Sūtra*; however, a discussion on this point must wait for another occasion.

## 2.2 A Closer Look at Suzuki’s Formulation of the “Logic of Sokuhi”

As we saw above, Suzuki introduced the term “*sokuhi no ronri*” in the series of essays on Pure Land thought (published in his *Jōdokei shisō-ron*), dating from around 1940. But Suzuki’s keen interest in the “logical expression” of wisdom (*prajñā*) had been in fermentation for quite a while, as testified in his *Essays on Zen Buddhism, the Third Series*, and other writings going back to the early 1930s.

Suzuki’s most direct and concise explanation of the “logic of *sokuhi*” is found in his lectures on “*Kongōkyō no Zen*” (“Zen of the *Diamond Sūtra*”), delivered in the winter months of 1943 through January 1944. We have already quoted this passage in the introduction, but let us revisit it:

“The Buddha preached the perfection of wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*), which at the same time is *not* (*sokuhi*) the perfection of wisdom, and therefore it is called the perfection of wisdom” (*The Diamond Sūtra* 13a). To this formulation, I gave the name “the logic of *sokuhi*.” *I am not sure if it should be called “logic” or not, but let us leave it at that for now.* (SDZ 5: 387; Suzuki 1975, 4: 23, emphasis added)

What is noteworthy here is that the last line of the *Diamond Sūtra* 13a referred to by Suzuki – “The Buddha preached that the perfection of wisdom is not the perfection of wisdom, and *therefore it is called the perfection of wisdom*” (說般若波羅密、即非般若波羅密、是名般若波羅密) is actually *not* in the widely circulated Chinese text translated by Kumārajīva (344–413). The Chinese reads: “The Buddha preached the perfection of wisdom. That is, it is not the perfection of wisdom” (仏説般若波羅密。則非般若波羅密). But both the Nakamura-Kino Japanese translation of the *Diamond Sūtra* from Sanskrit and the Sanskrit text edited by Conze do have the line, “Therefore it is called the perfection of wisdom” (Nakamura and Kino 1960: 74–75; Conze 1957: 37–38). Suzuki must have added the line, 是名般若波羅密 after the fashion of the traditional Chinese scripture style.

Another minor point is that a careful reading of the Chinese text translated by Kumārajīva reveals that the term “*sokuhi*” 即非 is written sometimes with the ideogram, “*soku*” 則 (C. *ze*), and other times with “*soku*” 即 (C. *ji*), both mean “is” or “that is.” However, Suzuki did not pay special attention to this minor point that

“*sokuhi*” was written either as “*jifei*” 即非 or “*zefei*” 則非. From this sort of observation, we may conjecture that Suzuki focused on a philosophical reflection instead of a philological textual study. The textual variations did not concern him, for he was formulating his own understanding of the larger and more comprehensive logical structure of Mahāyāna spirituality, which he came to call *sokuhi*.

### 2.3 “Logic of *Sokuhi*”: A Way to Encapsulate the Mahāyāna Understanding

Suzuki explains that the “logic of *sokuhi*” is just another metaphysical formulation—just like the non-duality of distinction (J. *shabetsu* 差別) and unity (J. *byōdō* 平等) – “*shabetsu soku byōdō*, *byōdō soku shabetsu* 差別即平等、平等即差別.” It also points to the same intuition of the interpenetration of the abstract principle (J. *ri* 理) and concrete things or affairs (J. *ji* 事),<sup>13</sup> which was most famously formulated into the Huayan doctrine of “*jijimuge*” 事事無礙 (“non-hindrance among concrete things”).<sup>14</sup> Again some Mahāyānists explained it in terms of the oneness of the “thing” (J. *tai* 體) and its “function” (J. *yū* 用). Suzuki notes that while the “thing” (J. *tai*) corresponds to the “principle” (J. *ri*) and “unity” (J. *byōdō*), the “function” (J. *yū*) corresponds to the “individual things” (J. *ji*) and “distinction” (*shabetsu*). The notion of unity of “the thing and its function” was developed by the Chinese Chan master Linji (J. Rinzai) 臨濟 (d. 867) into the teaching of “the total oneness of the person and the function” 全体作用 in which the function is but the person, and the person is nothing but the function. Suzuki points out that, describing this reality of personhood, Linji said: “One becomes the master of one’s own self, and wherever one stands is real” 隨處作主、立處皆真. (SDZ 5: 443–444; Asahina

<sup>13</sup>Traditionally, individual things are compared to numerous waves, and the principle to the vast ocean (i.e., the body of water). As the ocean manifests itself into waves, the ocean and the waves are not in conflict, and waves are not in conflict with one another (see Tsukamoto and Mochizuki 1993). For a textual reference, see Chenguan’s 澄觀 *Huayan fajie xuanjing* 華嚴法界玄鏡 (T 45.676).

<sup>14</sup>In Huayan Buddhism, the world is divided into four metaphysical moments or “realms” of (1) the things or “concrete facts” (C. *shifajie* 事法界, J. *jihokkai*), (2) the realm of the principle (C. *lifajie* 理法界, J. *rihokkai*), (3) the realm in which concrete things and the principle interpenetrate (C. *lishi wuai fajie* 理事無礙法界, J. *rijimuge-hokkai*), and (4) the realm in which individual things co-exist without any conflict (C. *shishi wuai fajie* 事事無礙法界, J. *jijimuge hokkai*). The first is the realm of “differentiation and distinction” (J. “*shabetsu*”), the world of phenomena. The second is the realm of a commonly held principle (“*byōdō*”), which brings together individual particulars. The third is the realm of no-interference between the particular individuals and the principle, as things arise by the principle of “dependent co-origination” (S. *pratītyasamutpāda*, C. *yuānqǐ*, J. *engi* 緣起). The fourth is the realm of dynamic interactions and communication among particular individuals, without conflicting with one another. See the entry “*Shihokkai*” in the *Mochizuki Dictionary of Buddhism* (Tsukamoto and Mochizuki 1993–1994: 2) and the *Huayan fajie xuanjing* (T 45.672).

1966: 100–101). Likewise, Linji’s teaching of the fourfold relationship between the subject and the object known as “four classifications” (J. *shiryōken* 四料揀)<sup>15</sup> is none other than a formulation of the Zen experience in a “logical” or systematic manner.

For Suzuki, be it the “logic of *sokuhi*,” or any other metaphysical formulation, they speak of the same spiritual insight. He ponders on the necessity of articulating and sorting out one’s spiritual understanding in terms of a “system” (J. *taikei* 体系) and concludes that unless one’s experience is sorted out in an encompassing holistic way, it remains powerless and ineffectual. In this context, Suzuki fondly refers to the formulation known as the “five ranks” (J. *goi* 五位),<sup>16</sup> developed by DONGSHAN Liangjie (J. Tōzan Ryōkai) 洞山良价 (807–869) and his followers. The formulation of “five ranks” was apparently incorporated into a system of *kōan* classification by Japanese Zen master HAKUIN Ekaku 白隱慧鶴 (1685–1768) and came to be required of advanced Zen students henceforward.<sup>17</sup> Seasoned Zen students, who passed their initial *kenshō* stage, are required to sort out and organize their understanding of *kōan* practice, in order to see how the solution of numerous *kōans* may be related to one another. Suzuki observes:

[Talking about the *kōan* practice], there are innumerable numbers of *kōan*, but one could also say that the *kōan* is one. Since the realm of all dharmas (*hokkai*), in which everything arises in mutual dependence (*hokkai engi*), is absolutely one (*zettai itsu*), if a student penetrates through the reality of this *hokkai*, every *kōan* that is related to this dharma-realm must dissolve of itself all at once. Here is a spiritual insight. But, that insight cannot remain merely on the level of insight. I would imagine it is because human consciousness demands something systematic, something structural.

The formulation of the “five ranks” [of the Sōtō doctrine], for instance, is not a formal “logical” expression, but it is an attempt of the Zen adepts to organize systematically the content of their own insight. Zen practitioners are asked to sort out their reflections in terms of five ranks concerning the *kōan*, which they have solved one by one.

<sup>15</sup>The text reads: “Sometimes I take away the person but do not take away the surroundings; sometimes I take away the surroundings but not the person; sometimes I take away both person and surroundings; sometimes I take away neither person nor surroundings” (Sasaki 2009: 150–151).

<sup>16</sup>The first stage is that of “the unity exists in the distinctions” (J. *shōchūhen* 正中偏), the second stage is that of “the distinctions exist in the unity” (J. *henchūshō* 偏中正), and the two together mean “the unity is the distinction, the distinction is in the unity.” These two stages are spatial ways of viewing our experience, and not yet temporal. When the element of temporality enters the discourse, our action arises, and the “coming into being of all things” (J. *engi*) in the world takes place. Therefore, the next two stages follow: the third being “one’s action comes from the unity” (J. *shōchūrai* 正中來), and the fourth stage being “one’s action arrives at distinctions” (J. *henchūshi* 偏中至) – there is a circular movement between stages three and four. And finally, full and ripe awakening transforms the person from ego-centered “lopsided” mode (J. *hen* 偏) to ego-transcending centered mode (J. *shō* 正), and one freely exercises one’s authentic actions. That is the fifth stage, “arriving at the non-duality of unity and distinction” (J. *kenchūtō* 兼中到) (SDZ 5: 446–447). The same topic is discussed at length in Suzuki’s “Lectures on Zen Buddhism” (Suzuki 1970: 59–74). There seems to be some confusion of “*hen*” 偏 and “*ken*” 兼 in the printed text, however, and the reader must navigate very cautiously to follow the thread of Suzuki’s point therein. There appears to be at least two variations concerning the fourth rank, either “*henchūshi*” or “*kenchūshi*.”

<sup>17</sup>Zen master Hakuin called the fourth rank “the arrival at mutual integration” (J. *kenchūshi* 兼中至) (Miura and Sasaki 1965: 62–72).

It is important to systematize one's thought. Just having an experience is not good enough. Unless we have a system in which we abstractly grasp our entire understanding, we do not know where each individual concrete case [of experience understood through *kōan*] belongs. Once we organize our insight, our experience gains more power. Here, too, we see the mutual penetration [of insight and intellect]. Experience must be systematized, and the system must have its foundation in experience. Only then, both mutually deepen and shed light on each other. (SDZ 5: 447–448)

Precisely because of this recognition of the essential importance of the hermeneutic “mutually productive circle” of the articulation of the content of spiritual insight and the experience itself, Suzuki speaks of the “discrimination of non-discrimination” (J. *mufunbetsu no funbetsu* 無分別の分別). Suzuki's stance as a Zen man is that of an intellectual Zen man. For him, the purity of the mind (or heart) and intellectual discernment imbued with *prajñā* should not collide with each other. He observes:

Experience (*taiken* 体験) is something beyond discrimination (*mufunbetsu*), while thinking is discrimination (*funbetsu*). We must cultivate our [spiritual] discrimination (*mufunbetsu no funbetsu*) that is beyond the intellectual discrimination. We must have the discrimination that is rooted in [the experience, which sees] beyond discrimination (*funbetsu no mufunbetsu*). That is why it is beneficial for Zen students to have a “Zen system of thought,” modeled after such as the “five ranks,” for instance. (SDZ 5: 448)

A very important point is made here by Suzuki, namely, the “logical” or systematic understanding of *kōan* is not inimical to spiritual practice and can be a meaningful enterprise, as it can deepen and clarify the meaning of spiritual experience. Religious practice and intellectual reflection must go hand in hand, according to Suzuki. Let us resort to the familiar metaphor of “the ox and the cart.” If the cart (“logic”) is placed before the ox (“experience”), we go nowhere. In the Zen world, the cart is eventually absorbed (or internalized) by the ox, so that the ox alone can proceed hither and thither without being hampered by the cart but never rejecting the “cart.” Suzuki embraces the “cart” and moves freely, fully utilizing his intellectual capacity.

### 3 Part II: The Diamond Sūtra and “Sokuhi”: *Prajña* as the Source of the “Logic of Sokuhi”

#### 3.1 *The Negative Dialectical Style of the Diamond Sūtra*

Let us go back to the *Diamond Sūtra* to see what inspired Suzuki to come up with his formulation of the “logic of *sokuhi*.” The *Diamond Sūtra* (S. *Vajracchedikā prajñāpāramitā sutra*, J. *Kongō hannya haramita kyō* 金剛般若波羅蜜經) is full of statements that are phrased in “negation-*qua*-affirmation.” This peculiar style has been called “the dialectics of *prajñāparamita*” by Thich Nhat Hanh (Hanh 1992: 55), or “the dialectical nature of reality” by Edward Conze (Conze 1958: 52). Let us take the passage in question from chapter 13a: “the perfection of wisdom preached

by the Tathāgata is not a perfection of wisdom the Tathāgata preached; therefore it is called the perfection of wisdom”<sup>18</sup> (Conze 1958: 52). Here, the second reference to “*prajñāpāramitā*” is shortened to “*pāramitā*,” and its negation “*apāramitā*” is used. In this case the Sanskrit word directly corresponding to the word “*sokuhi*” (C. *jifei, zefei*) is “*saiva*” (“like so”). But many Sanskrit passages that are translated into “*sokuhi*” in Chinese lack this word altogether. In fact, it is not necessary in Sanskrit sentences. This fact is instructive in relation to our discussion of the idea of “*sokuhi*.” In this context, Conze’s remark on the use of “*tenocyste*,” meaning “therefore,” merits a special attention. It reads:

*Tena* here has the meaning of “therefore,” in either the sense of “that is why,” or “for that reason,” or in the sense of “that is how,” “in the manner.” ... The phrase is a common ingredient of Buddhist definitions and argumentations, in the texts of all schools, and it indicates a logical relation which is plausible and can be assented to. In this Sūtra, however, it is used to indicate a paradoxical inconclusive and illogical relation between what precedes and what follows. It pregnantly brings out the opposition which exists between esoteric truth and mere speaking, between the true state of affairs as it is, and the words in which it is expressed. This is quite in keeping with the use of *tasmād* in the *Hridaya* [i.e., *Heart Sūtra*]. *Because*, we are there told, emptiness is the same as the skandhas, *therefore*, we are told, the exact opposite is true, i.e., that the skandhas are completely absent in emptiness. By abrogating the principle of contradiction, the logic of the Prajñāpāramitā differs from that of Aristotle....

In the history of human thought different thinkers have preferred different logical rules. Some, the followers of Aristotle, have held that terms should be unambiguous, and, ideally, have one meaning only, in such a way that one word corresponds to one idea. Others again have chosen to load each one of their basic terms with a great number of varying meanings, and to them belong the followers of the Prajñāpāramitā. Their terms *śūnyatā* is another case in point. It is not here my task to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this approach. It is sufficient to say that it exists, strange as it may seem to the Aristotelians. ... If the reader of the English translation is sometimes puzzled about the exact connotation of the word “*dharma*,” he is in no worse position than the readers of the Sanskrit original.

With regard to *apratishthita*<sup>19</sup> we must bear in mind that the English language has never undergone the influence of Buddhist thought, and therefore often offers not ready-made equivalents for Buddhist concepts and attitudes. (Conze 1957: 12–15)

If Suzuki were to formulate a terminology from Sanskrit, he might have called the “logic of *sokuhi*,” the “logic of *tena*.” Be that as it may, Conze’s observation that “the English language has never undergone the influence of Buddhist thought” is quite pertinent to our discussion because many misconceptions among different linguistic and cultural environments are, after all, due to the lack of corresponding experiences of the words that are in common used in the ordinary discourse. The exciting challenge of the intercultural encounter lies precisely herein, as it can enlarge our horizon of intelligibility.

In the Chinese translation of the *Diamond Sūtra*, the compound in question, “*sokuhi*” (C. *jifei* or *zefei*), appears about 20 times, and a related negative formulation just about another 10 times. There are essentially two types of negative formu-

<sup>18</sup> *Prajñāpāramitā Tathāgatena bhāṣitā saiva-a-pāramitā Tatgāgata bhāṣitā. tenocyste prajñāpāramiteti.*

<sup>19</sup> Meaning “unattached,” or “not caught by”; it is translated into Chinese as 無所住, “having no place to dwell.” In everyday Japanese, its equivalent would be “*torawarenai*” とらわれない.

lations – namely, (1) “A is not A,” or “A is non-A, therefore it is A,” and (2) “A is neither A nor non-A.” In the following, we will briefly examine the first type of negative statement (from chapters 13a, 10b and 17g, 8, 13c, 17d)<sup>20</sup> as well as the second type of negative statement (from chapter 7). In each case, after the Sanskrit lines, the Chinese translation by Kumārajīva, with an English translation, is given. Next, the Nakamura-Kino (1960) translation into modern Japanese is given with an English translation.

1. **Chapter 13a** (Sanskrit) *prajñāpāramitā Tathāgatena bhāṣhitā saiva-a-pāramitā Tathāgatena bhāṣhitā. tenocyate prajñāpāramiteti.*

(Chinese) 仏説般若波羅密。則非般若波羅密。(“The Buddha preached the perfection of wisdom. That is, not the perfection of wisdom.”)

(Japanese) 「如来によって説かれた智慧の完成は、智慧の完成ではない」と如来によって説かれているからだ。それだからこそ、智慧の完成と言われるのだ。(“It is preached that “the perfection of wisdom spoken by the Tathāgata is not the perfection of wisdom.” That is why it is called the “perfection of wisdom.”)

2. **Chapters 10b and 17g** (Sanskrit) *kshetra-vyūhāh kshetra-vyūhā iti (Subhūte), 'vyūhās te Tathāgatena bhāṣhitāh. tenocyante kshetra-vyūhā iti.*

(Chinese) 莊嚴仏土者則非莊嚴。是名莊嚴。(“To embellish the Buddha land is not to embellish the Buddha land. For this reason, it is called “to embellish.”)

(Japanese) 如来は国土の建設、国土の建設というのは、建設ではないことだ、と説かれているからだ。それだからこそ、国土の建設と言われるのだ。(“The Tathāgata preached that making of peaceful Buddha land is not making of peaceful Buddha land. Therefore, it is called making of peaceful Buddha land.”)

3. **Chapter 8** (Sanskrit) *buddhadharmā buddhadharmā iti (Subhūte) 'buddhadharmās caiva te Tathāgatena bhāṣhitāh. tenocyante buddhadharmā iti.*

(Chinese) 所謂仏法者即非仏法。(“The so-called Buddha dharma is not the Buddha dharma.”)

(Japanese) 目ざめた人の理法、目ざめた人の理法というのは、目ざめた人の理法ではない、と如来が説いているからだ。それだからこそまた目ざめた人の理法と言われるのだ。(“The Tathāgata preached that the Awakened One’s insight [*buddha dharmā*] is not the Awakened One’s insight. Therefore it is called the Awakened One’s insight.”)

4. **Chapter 13c** (Sanskrit) *yo’py asau loka-dhātus 'dhātuh sa Tathāgatena bhāṣhitah. tenocyate lokadhātur iti.*

<sup>20</sup>The Chinese translation by Kumārajīva is traditionally accompanied by the chapter breakdown into 32, originally given by Prince Zhaoming 昭明太子, the heir apparent of Wudi 武帝, first emperor of the Liang 梁 dynasty. Since then, this convention has been adopted by scholars for convenience, even when referring to the Sanskrit text (see Conze 1957: 1; Nakamura and Kino 1960: 209–212).

(Chinese) 如來說世界非世界、是名世界 (“The Tathāgata preached that the world is not the world; thus it is named the world.”)<sup>21</sup>

(Japanese) 「如来によって説かれたこの世界は、世界ではない」と如来によって説かれているからです。それだからこそ世界と言われるのです。 (“The Tathāgata has taught that the world [*loka-dhātu*] that was spoken of by the Tathāgata is not the world; therefore it is called the world.”)

5. **Chapter 17d** (Sanskrit) *sarva-dharmā iti (Subhūte) a-dharmās Tathāgatena bhāshitā. tasmād ucyante sarva-dharma iti.*

(Chinese) 所言一切法者。即非一切法。是故名一切法。 (“What are called the entire phenomenal objects [*dharmas*] are not the entire phenomenal objects. Therefore, they are named the entire phenomenal objects.”)

(Japanese) 「あらゆる法というものは実は法ではない」と、如来によって説かれているからだ。それだからこそ「あらゆる法」といわれるのだ。 (“It is preached by the Tathāgata that ‘All phenomenal objects [*sarva-dharma*] are not actually phenomenal objects.’ Therefore they are called ‘all possible phenomenal objects.’”)

An example of the negative formulation of “A is neither A nor non-A” is taken from chapter 7:

6. **Chapter 7** (Sanskrit) *yo’sau Tathāgatena dharmo’bhisambuddho deśito vā, agrāhyah so’nabhilapyah, na sa dharmo na-adharmah. tat kasya hetoh? asamskrita-prabhāvitā hy ārya-pudgalāh.*

(Chinese) 如来所說法。皆不可取不可說。非法非非法。所以者何。一切賢聖。皆以無為法<sup>22</sup>。而有差別。 (“None of the dharmas that the Tathāgata has preached can be grasped, because they cannot be spoken of. They are neither the phenomenal objects nor the non-phenomenal objects. It is because holy sages abide by the ‘uncreated’ dharma, and moreover, concrete distinctions obtain.”)

(Japanese) 如来が現に覺られたり、教え示されたりした法というものは、認識することもできないし、口で説明することもできないからです。それは、法でもなく、法でないものでもありません。それはなぜかという、聖者たちは、絶対そのものによって顕されている<sup>23</sup>からです。 (“Because the phenomenal objects that the Tathāgata has fully realized or taught cannot be intellectually grasped nor can it be explained in words. It is neither a phenomenal object nor a non-phenomenal object. It is because the holy enlightened ones are given proof and authenticated by the Absolute itself.”)

<sup>21</sup> Here the Chinese translation simply uses “not” (C. *fei* 非), instead of “that is not” (C. 即非), although the meaning remains the same.

<sup>22</sup> 無為法 is opposed to phenomenally manifested things 有為法, and it denotes the indefinable source of existence. (Nakamura and Kino 1960: 145 n. 49).

<sup>23</sup> Conze translates “*asamskrita-prabhāvitā hy ārya-pudgalāh*” as “an Absolute exalts the Holy Persons” (Nakamura and Kino 1960: 146–147 n. 53).

From this quick exposition of the passages of the *Diamond Sūtra*, we gain some feel for the use of the negative expressions employed in it. Next, we shall move onto the content of the *Diamond Sūtra*, which will further make clear why the expression “*sokuhi*” *logically* works in that context.

### 3.2 *The Practical Message of the Diamond Sūtra and the “Logic of Sokuhi”*

We must remember that Suzuki was interested in the *Diamond Sūtra* because it was one of the most basic texts honored in the Zen tradition, and, moreover, he saw how clearly the Mahāyāna spiritual insight of *śūnyatā* was expressed in it. He saw in the juxtaposition of “*is and is not*” (J. *sokuhi*) the essence not only of the *prajñāpāramitā* tradition but also of the Mahāyāna worldview at large. This sūtra contains guidelines of conduct for the *bodhisattvas*, the spiritual workers who choose to carry out the work of altruism freely and joyfully. As such, the practical and ethical dimensions present in the religious pursuit of *bodhisattvas* are especially featured in this sūtra. In this context, the “*logic of sokuhi*” acquires practical importance.

The main section of the sūtra begins with the question posed to the Buddha by the venerable Subhūti: “If a young man of a ‘good family’ (S. *kula-putra*) or a ‘well bred young woman’ (S. *kula-duhitri*) wants to pursue the *bodhisattva* career (*bodhisattva-yana samprasthāta*), how should one live, act, and what state of mind should one maintain?” (chapter 2).<sup>24</sup> The Buddha, deeming the question worthy of his response, complies with Subhuti’s request. The main points of the Buddha’s teaching may be summarized as follows:

1. There is no substantive reality to living things;
2. Engage in the act of giving without the thought of accruing merits, and through this practice, learn to give rise to the mind that is not caught by the erroneous thought of substantial view of living beings;
3. Engage in mental training to consider every proposition to have its counter proposition (it helps to nullify the substantive thinking); and
4. The ultimate pledge of the *bodhisattvas* is to understand and embody the message of the affirmation and negation of the proposition.

Concerning the first point, that there is no substantive reality to living things, the sūtra propounds that the thought of “the self or the being, the idea of the soul or of the person” should not be entertained by the *bodhisattvas* (chapter 3). The Sanskrit terms used for these terms are: “*ātman*” (“the self,” C. 我相, J. “自我”), “*satva*” (“the living being,” C. 人相, J. 生きているもの), “*jīva*,” (“soul,” C. *zhongsheng xiang* 衆生相, J. *kotai* 个体), and “*pudgala*” (“person,” C. *shouzhe xiang* 壽者相,

<sup>24</sup>Conze translates it as “how should a son or daughter of good family, who set out in the *Bodhisattva*-vehicle, stand, how progress, how control their thought?” (Conze 1958: 22).



J. *kojin* 個人).<sup>25</sup> This is a clear declaration that this Sūtra stands on the fundamental doctrine of *anātman*, or no-self, that is, the negation of ego.

The second point explains the practice of “giving” (S. *dāna*) without being caught up in the idea of accruing the merits. Giving, or charity, is the first of the six “perfections of wisdom,” namely, (1) giving (*dāna*), (2) observing “moral life” (S. *śīla*), (3) perseverance or “humility” (S. *kshānti*), (4) diligence, or “striving” (S. *vīrya*), (5) “meditation” (S. *dhyāna*), and (6) “wisdom” (S. *prajñā*) (Suzuki and Humphries 1976: 335–338; SDZ 5: 376–378). In the practice of selfless giving, sustained by the view that there is no substantive self, the bodhisattva will cultivate the mental habit of non-attachment. In the course of giving, the realization of the nature of all things to be *śūnyatā* should lead to the strengthening of one’s mental attitude of non-attachment. In this context, the Buddha famously advised: “Give rise to the mind which abides nowhere” (Suzuki and Humphries 1976: 111–114) 心無所住而生其心 (chapter 10c).<sup>26</sup>

Here, we see how the practice of egoless “giving” (S. *dāna*) can lead to “wisdom” (S. *prajñā*) that clearly discerns the true nature of reality. Suzuki writes: “the source out of which the act of giving emerges is wisdom, *prajñā*. Once one acquires *prajñā*, one cannot help but perform the act of giving. For me, *prajñā* boils down to *dāna*, and *dāna prajñā*” (SDZ 5: 378).

In the practice of mental training in the teaching of *śūnyatā*, what Suzuki called the “logic of *sokuhi*” comes to the center stage. The existence of living beings, the world we live in, the physical features of a holy person, even down to a speck of dust are first mentioned, are then denied to exist, and only to be affirmed as such. Bodhisattvas must find this constant repetition of mental training helpful, as they can examine their understanding of the true nature of reality, and in this process their *mental habit* shifts from the ordinary way of thinking into a spiritual way of thinking that transcends the binary objectifying thinking.

Concerning the fourth point of the pledge the bodhisattvas make, the sūtra reads:

“I pledge to lead all living beings into the realm of eternal peace, which is devoid of defilement. And moreover, even if I lead all living beings into this realm of unsoiled eternal peace, in fact there is not even one living being that will have been led into the realm of eternal peace.” The reason being that if a bodhisattva entertains the idea that there are “living things,” such a practitioner would no longer be called a bodhisattva. ... And the reason is that “those who embrace the bodhisattva path” actually do not exist, and therefore they are called bodhisattvas. (chapter 17a)

Moreover, the bodhisattvas accumulate great merits by acknowledging that “everything is devoid of ego, and nothing comes into existence,” but they must not consider those merits as their own. They may know that they have accumulated great merits, but because they have no ego to attach themselves to these merits, the bodhisattvas “do not consider any of these merits as their own” (chapter 28).

<sup>25</sup>In this context, the meaning of word “*jīva*,” originally “living thing,” comes close to an “individual thing” (Nakamura and Kino 1960: 142 n. 35).

<sup>26</sup>This is one of the favorite mottos of Zen adepts. A similar recommendation is repeated as “Give rise to the mind that abides nowhere” (C. 心無所住心) (chapter 14e).

That Suzuki especially singles out the passage from chapter 13a is significant, as it concerns how to “remember” the kernel of the Buddha’s teaching. Venerable Subhūti asks the Buddha: “How should the bodhisattvas remember the Buddha’s teaching?” The Buddha’s answer is the passage Suzuki quoted: “The Buddha preached the perfection of wisdom, which he taught was not the perfection of wisdom; therefore, it is called the perfection of wisdom,” and as such it is meant as a *pointer* for the bodhisattvas to “remember” the teaching of the Buddha wherever they may be and in whatever act of benevolence they may be engaged. In other words, if the bodhisattvas remember this line with the proper understanding that comes with it, they have all the tools necessary to pursue their selfless career of liberating all beings from suffering.

### 3.3 *A Reflection on the Religious Significance of the Practice of Giving*

Charity or giving (*dāna*) is always relational. Presupposing a community of more than one person, giving is an eminently social act. It involves the “giver,” the “gift” (which can be material or spiritual), and the “receiver.” Moreover, giving is a very mundane activity, taking place everywhere at all times. As we look into “giving,” however, we see its structure can be a subtly complex one. The *Diamond Sūtra* talks about one type of giving – the bodhisattva way of giving – which we will contrast with a non-bodhisattva way of giving, or an inauthentic way of giving, to highlight its uniqueness.

The features of the inauthentic ways of giving are marked by the donor’s expectations of return, which creates a sense of obligation in the receiver. “I give this to you, therefore you do such and such for me.” The worst case of this giving may be bribery. Political campaign contributions by large corporations and industries are also of this type of giving. Take a more frivolous example: in Japan it has become a custom in the last 20 years or so for women office workers to give a box of chocolate each to their male co-workers and bosses on Valentine’s Day. The box of chocolate given on this day is called the “obligation chocolate” (“*giri choko*”). Once the male coworkers and bosses receive this “*giri choko*,” they are obliged to give back a box of chocolate or whatever a month later, on the 14th of March. This seemingly innocuous custom shows how a gift may create a sense of social obligation and pressure to bind one to return the favor. This obligatory giving is the opposite of giving practiced by the bodhisattvas. The generally accepted practice of “*quid pro quo*” (proportionate return of favor) is a calculated action based on an ego-centered thinking.

The bodhisattva’s way of giving rises above such social conventions and is carried out freely – that is, free of the expectations of “a return in kind.” Why? Because, “One must give without any thought of doing anything good,” so that it would not create any bond of obligation. For one to have the thought of doing something good is for one to be attached to the thought of “something good,” which further implies that such a giving act is stuck in the mold of a substantive ego-self. In other words,

if one can practice the act of free giving without any expectation or any thought of doing a good act, it is in fact a practice of having no-self, “*anātman*.” In such an action, not only is there no giver but also there is no “receiver,” and there is no “credit” for the work accomplished.

This is where the “logic of A is -A” no longer poses any contradiction. When there is no “ego” that gives the gift, the gift is still given, and yet not given, for there is no “giver” – the non-ego that gives the gift is a bodhisattva. Again, the gift that the bodhisattva gives, in order to lead “all beings to eternal peace,” is “empty of the thought of return,” because the bodhisattvas, out of having no attachment, do not entertain the sense of the substantive reality of those who are led out of suffering. The “logic of *sokuhi*” (here, “A gift is a non-gift, therefore it is a gift”) makes sense; it no longer presents itself as “logic” but rather how bodhisattvas, committed to the path of *prajñāpāramitā* (“perfection of wisdom”), perceive the world and work in it. The “logical” contradiction is dissolved with the dissolution of the obstinate idea of the things and all beings as substantive. When that dissolution happens, pure giving simply takes place, and compassion that fuels the bodhisattvas breaks into a realm of emancipation. Such would be the world that “reflects” paradise on this earth.

It is in this practical context that the Buddhist tradition speaks of “affirmation *qua* negation,” and this “negation” is the means to cut through the illusions of existence as substantive reality. It also eradicates the dualistic scheme of subject and object, which is fundamentally embedded in the grammatical structure of many human languages.

## 4 Part III: D. T. Suzuki and Nishida Kitarō in Dialogue on the Philosophy of Sokuhi

### 4.1 Suzuki and Nishida as Voicing the Same Idea

D. T. Suzuki and NISHIDA Kitarō shared close intellectual ties, reflecting each other’s thinking and acting as the “sounding board” to each other. Nishida once described their relationship succinctly: “Daisetz is in the field of religion, and I am in philosophy, but we share the same idea” (NKZ 19: 158). Their relationship was one of mutual dialogue as opposed to one person influencing the other, as has been sometimes portrayed by some scholars. D. Dilworth, for instance, wrote “Suzuki’s direct influence on Nishida’s ‘The Religious Worldview’ essay must ... be taken into account” (Dilworth 1987: 146). The reader is to be cautioned that Dilworth reads Suzuki’s work as “religiously and culturally chauvinistic, extolling Japanese Buddhist spirituality at the expense of other Japanese, Asian, and Western forms of religiosity.” In the same breath, he assesses that Suzuki exerted his influence over the shape of the post-war Kyoto school “to retain this agnostic strain of encounter theology” (Dilworth 1987: 146).

The fact is that both Suzuki and Nishida personally acknowledged each other as the source of inspiration. In Suzuki’s “Zen of the *Diamond Sūtra*” (*J. Kongōkyō no*

Zen 金剛經の禪), Suzuki makes numerous references to Nishida's philosophical ideas and terminologies. Suzuki especially finds Nishida's coinage, "absolute present" (J. *zettai genzai* 絶対現在) to capture the Zen spirit, and he borrows it from Nishida philosophy (SDZ 5: 430). Another term Suzuki adopts from Nishida is "absolute nothingness" (J. *zettai mu* 絶対無), especially in explaining the meaning of "non-attachment" or "*mujū*" 無住 (S. "*apratishthita*"). Suzuki writes:

To speak of the "foundation" – if there were any – of non-attachment is *absolute nothingness*, which is not "nothingness" in terms of being and non-being. Nor does it mean that there is some other "nothingness" outside being and non-being. It means that "being and non-being" are at once "nothing." Herein one finds the spiritual intuition. (SDZ 5: 391)

Suzuki read with great interest Nishida's essays that were related to Buddhism. Therefore it is not surprising to encounter a long passage from Nishida's writing that Suzuki quotes in his 1941 essay, *Zen e no michi* ("The path towards Zen," Suzuki 1941b). The passage quoted from Nishida's 1940, "*Poieshisu to purakushisu*" ("Poiesis and praxis) reads as follows:

...What the "Eastern no-mind" (*tōyōteki mushin*) means is nothing to do with the disappearance of the self or some sort of irrationality. It means, in opposition to appropriating a thing as belonging to oneself, the self becomes the self that belongs to the thing. The self becomes the thing that belongs to the Absolute One (*zettaiasha*). [The phrase] "the unity of God and human beings" does not mean that the human beings become God, but rather, it means that each becomes a thing that belongs to God. One's self is one's self all the way through. The only difference here is that the self becomes an absolute thing, an absolute fact. This is why I say: "we become a thing and we think, we become a thing and we act." ...The standpoint of Eastern no-mind is not the standpoint from which one grasps the world immanently, but rather it is the standpoint from which one grasps the world transcendently. It is not a standpoint in which the self disappears, having being taken over by a thing. Rather, it is where the self becomes a thing and acts; it is the standpoint in which the self is embraced [by the Absolute One]. It is the standpoint, in which the self becomes the present moment as the self-determination of the absolute present. (Nishida 1940; NKZ 10: 175, quoted in Suzuki 1941b; SDZ 13: 302-303)

Suzuki quoted this passage of Nishida to illustrate the experience of Zen masters, whose utterance may appear "abrupt" or "non sequitur" to the untrained mind (SDZ 13: 303).

From this cursory examination, it is hoped that a picture emerges that Suzuki and Nishida, both independent thinkers, mutually respected and responded to each other's work and each developed their own thought being inspired by each other.

#### 4.2 *Nishida's Adoption and Exposition of the "Logic of Han'nya Sokuhi"*

Nishida first encountered the expression "logic of *sokuhi*" in Suzuki's "Studies on the Pure Land Thought" (J. *Jōdokei shisō ron* 浄土系思想論), which was published in December 1942, a copy of which he received soon thereafter.<sup>27</sup> His first mention

<sup>27</sup> See Nishida's letter #1728 to YANAGIDA Kenjūrō, January 25, 1943 (NKZ 19: 219).

of this expression appears in the essay “*Ronri to sūri*” 論理と数理 (“Logic and the Mathematical Principle,” 1944a), in which he compares western logic and eastern logic. He observed that western logic—whether Kantian critical philosophy, phenomenology, or Hegelian dialectical philosophy—remained within the framework of traditional Aristotelian logic that turned the subject of investigation into an object of classification. Nishida’s critique of Aristotelian logic is that it does not include the discussion of what makes that objectification possible. It is Nishida’s project to establish a logical form that incorporates the speaker into the logical form. This endeavor led him to the formulation of the “logic of topos” (*basho*) in 1926.<sup>28</sup>

In his “*Ronri to sūri*,” Nishida embraces the Buddhist philosophy of “*sūnyatā*” as helpful in constructing a non-Aristotelian logic. To quote:

I maintain that in the Buddhist philosophy, which takes the self as the object of investigation, that is, in the philosophical analysis of consciousness (or mind [*kokoro* 心]), we encounter “the non-substantive logic” (or logic of “nothingness” [*mu* 無]). One could call it a logic of the eastern worldview (*tōyōteki sekaikan* 東洋の世界観). ... This eastern worldview, however, is yet logically formulated. What I call the “contradictory self-identity” is an attempt to formulate such a logic. It should not be confused with “*satori*.” Rather, it is the logic of what [Dōgen described as] “all things are manifest as they are” and “all things proceed to authenticate the self.” Mahāyāna Buddhism is not [psychological] subjectivism. The “mind” (*kokoro*) is not a psychological entity. It is said [in the *Diamond Sūtra* 18b]: “All minds are no-mind, therefore they are minds.” There must be at work something like the “logic of *sokuhi*,” so termed by D. T. Suzuki. When that which expresses itself is that which is expressed, “all minds are no-mind.” (Nishida 1944a; NKZ 11: 86-87)

This passage requires further elaboration, but for now suffice it to note that this is the first instance of the mention by Nishida of the “logic of *sokuhi*.” By the last line just quoted above—“That which expresses itself is that which is expressed,” Nishida refers to the workings of self-consciousness or “consciousness that permeates every self” (*J. jikaku* 自覚), in which “I see myself in myself,” and the “I” that sees and “myself” that is seen are one and the same – that is, the seer and the seen are “contradictorily self-identical.” In the mutually determining relationship of that which knows and that which is known, “all the minds are no-minds and therefore they are called the mind” (NKZ 11: 86).

As we mentioned in the Introduction, above, it was through Nishida’s writings that the “logic of *sokuhi*” was introduced into the arena of philosophy. D. Dilworth, who translated Nishida’s essay, paid special attention to the paradoxical discourse present in this essay. Dilworth elaborated on this point in some detail in his “Postscript”:

We have ... seen that the paradoxical mode reduces to the basic predicative structure of “is and yet is not.” We can alternately characterize this as the logic of the simultaneity, and biconditionality, of opposites without their higher synthesis. Thus “is” if, and only if, “is not,” as in the *sokuhi* formulation. In Nāgārjuna’s logic, the four positions +1, -1, +1 and

<sup>28</sup> For much fuller discussion on this point see M. Yusa, “Parsing the Topos and Dusting the Mirror: A Radical Internalization of ‘*Basho-Topos*,’” *Journal of Japanese Philosophy*, vol. 2 (2014): 7–32.

-1, and not (+1 and -1) all return to the same basic structure of biconditional opposition. ... Nishida came to repossess this same logical form in a contemporary philosophical version. (Dilworth 1987: 130–131)

While this is not the time or place critically to engage Dilworth's observation, it is important to note that Nishida's enterprise cannot be reduced simply to "repossessing" the traditional Buddhist logic. Nishida's philosophical starting point was to articulate his own analysis of what experience is, the nature and the function of consciousness, and the topological mode of all things existent in the world. It was for this reason that Nishida paid utmost attention to establishing a logical structure of the world, which resulted in his "logic of *basho* or *topos*" with which he felt he was able to explain his philosophical vision. More recently, J. Heisig's discussion of the logic of "*soku*" or the "contradictory unity of contradictions" (Heisig 2001, 65–69, 298), further assisted the entry of the "logic of *sokuhī*" into the philosophical arena.

After his "*Ronri to sūri*," Nishida makes an indirect reference to the "logic of *sokuhī*" in his "*Yotei chōwa o tebiki to shite shūkyō tetsugaku e*" 予定調和を手引きとして宗教哲学へ ("Towards a Philosophy of Religion with the Notion of the 'Pre-established Harmony' as the Guide" 1944b, NKZ 11.114–146). In this, while referring to the passage of the *Diamond Sutra* (18b), Nishida describes how religious awareness arises from the very contradictory unity of self-consciousness, in the unity of the knower and the known. We read:

What I mean by "religions" is something different from conceiving God as the supreme principle from the standpoint of intellectual knowledge, or recognizing the existence of God as the moral necessity from the standpoint of morality. Nor do I mean that religion is based on a subjective mystical experience. Rather, religion is the standpoint that forms the foundation of intellectual knowledge and morality, that is, the standpoint of the recognition of the reality of "*jikaku*" (自覚 self-consciousness). No one would consider self-consciousness to be "mystical." It is the standpoint of the existence of oneself. ...

"*Jikaku*" (self-consciousness) means that the knower is the known, the thinker is the thought. To put it broadly, that which is expressed is that which expresses. Some may claim that that would be impossible, or self-contradictory. But precisely because it embraces the contradicting directions, it is called "*jikaku*." The starting point of [philosophical investigation] is not one's psychological "*cogito*," as Descartes had it. But rather, the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* has it that "all minds are no-mind, therefore they are called the mind." It may sound paradoxical, but the "discrimination of non-discrimination" is the true "*jikaku*" (cf. D. T. Suzuki). In the Western philosophy, I think that Nicholas of Cusa's "*docta ignorantia*" (*muchi no chi* 無知の知) comes closest to this understanding. ...

The deeper one reflects and meditates on the foundation of the self, the more one faces Absolute God. God and human beings are connected in a contradictorily self-identical way. This is nothing mystical. From this standpoint of *jikaku*, our self, intellectually and actively, is the infinite process of the contradictory self-identity. ... (Nishida 1944b; NKZ 11L 137-139)

Finally, in Nishida's last essay "The Logic of *Topos* and the Religious Worldview" (Nishida 1945; NKZ 11: 371–464), which he completed two months before his death, he made several references to the "logic of *sokuhī*" (NKZ 11: 405, 420, 423,

430–31, 446). I quote a passage here, in which Nishida expresses his wish to have a clear formulation of the “logic” that speaks for the Buddhist insight into *śūnyatā*—a logic that Suzuki identified as the “logic of *sokuhi*”:

The world of the Absolute One (*zettaisha* 絶対者), which is absolutely empty and yet self-determines, is the world of the absolute present, which embraces that which expresses itself within itself in a contradictory self-identical way, i.e., it embraces what stands against itself. Thus, it is said: “Give rise to the mind that dwells nowhere” (*Diamond Sūtra* 10c). Medieval thinkers who compared God to an infinite sphere said that [God has] no circumference and yet everywhere is the center. This is precisely what I call the self-determination of the absolute present. Should this vision be interpreted abstractly, instead of grasping it as the reality of our spiritual experience, these words would but be empty contradictory concepts. The real Absolute, however, simply does not transcend the relative. The world of the Absolute One (*zettaisha*) is the world wherein everything relates to everything else (*gyakutaiōteki ni*) in a contradictorily self-identical way through the mutual determination of the one and the many. As the logic of *sokuhi* has it, it is Absolutely Being because it is Absolutely Nothing; it is absolutely still because it is absolutely dynamic. Our self always stands in this mutual determination and mutual relationship with the Absolute One, i.e., God.

To see that in our life (*seimei* 生命), the present moment of “now” is always the absolute present does not mean that the self abstractly transcends time. Each moment, which does not stand still even for a second, stands in a mutual determination and mutual relationship with the eternal present. That is why, *samsāra* (life and death) is *nirvāna*. To transcend oneself means to return to oneself through and through – it is to become the real self. Thus it is said that “all minds are no minds; therefore they are called mind” (*Diamond Sūtra* 18b). The meaning of the saying, “The mind is Buddha and the Buddha is the mind,” is also intelligible in this context. It is not that mind and Buddha are identical in terms of objective logic. The logic of emptiness of the Prajñāpāramitā tradition (*han’nya shinkū no ronri* 般若真空の論理) cannot be grasped by occidental logic. But Buddhist scholars of the past yet to have clarified the profound import of the logic of *sokuhi*. (NKZ 11: 422–423; Yusa 1987: 88–89; adapted).

While Nishida was in the middle of writing his final essay, he wrote to Suzuki on March 11, 1945, referring to the “logic of *sokuhi*”:

I am currently writing on religion. I want to clarify in this essay that “religion” cannot be treated from the viewpoint of conventional objective logic (*taishō ronri* 対象論理), but that it requires what I call the logic of the contradictory self-identity, that is, the logic of “*sokuhi*.” I would like to delineate what the real human being (“*nin*” 人) is, i.e., the “person” (“*jinkaku*” 人格), from the standpoint of the *prajñāpāramitā* logic of *sokuhi*.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, I would like to situate this “person” in the actual historical world. ... I learn a great deal from your book, *Japanese Spirituality (Nihonteki reisei* 日本の靈性).<sup>30</sup> I really like the line, “no thought is the whole mind” (*munen soku zenshin* 無念即全心), or something to that effect.

<sup>29</sup>Nishida is here responding to what Suzuki wrote in “*Kongōkyō no Zen*,” concerning the authentic Zen “person”: “To speak about ‘nothingness’ (*mu*) or ‘being’ (*u*), the discussion ends up too logical and intellectual. Therefore, I would like the notion of person (*nin*) to our discussion. This ‘*nin*’ is the subject of action; it is the protagonist of spiritual intuition.” (Suzuki 1968; SDZ 5:402).

<sup>30</sup>The first edition of *Nihonteki reisei* contained “*Kongōkyō no Zen*” as its appendix, and Nishida is referring to it here. In the second edition, the appendix was removed, as Suzuki saw it fit better in a different context.

In my attempt to give a logical structure to my thought, I describe the existence of the self in terms of the “direction of the grammatical subject-term” or “the direction of the predicate-term.” This may not make an immediate sense to you. But if I may explain it, it is really a simple idea. It may appear that I’m toying with logic by using such words as “the subject-term,” “the predicate-aspect,” “the temporal” and “the spatial,” but unless I clarify from the outset their mutual relationship, my thought would not speak to the trained academics. (NKZ 19: 399–400)

Nishida attempted to give a philosophical foundation to the “logic of *sokuhi*” in his last work, but it turned out to be an unfinished task, as he died on June 7th, 1945, just 3 months after his letter to Suzuki, just quoted above. What Nishida set out to do still remains a viable project for the future.

## 5 Part IV: “Logic of Spiritual Awareness”

D. T. Suzuki looked for a way to communicate the Buddhist spiritual experience both to the Japanese and the Westerners, who were unfamiliar with it or eager to learn more about it. His “logic of *sokuhi*” came out of his endeavor to explain the Buddhist experience in a concise manner.

Formal logic cannot explain the “logic of *sokuhi*,” as the latter is open to describing the *existential reality* of our lives by going beyond the logical principle of non-contradiction. This does not mean, however, that the *sokuhi*-type of logic is illogical and that it defines a logical explanation. Several commendable efforts to make sense of the “contradictory logic” of the Kyoto school thinkers have been made.<sup>31</sup>

Nishida saw in Suzuki’s “logic of *sokuhi*” an insight that can clarify the self-contradictory structure of self-consciousness – I see myself in myself, in which “I,” who knows, and “myself,” that which is known, are contradictorily one. In his last years of life, Nishida finds the formulation of function  $y = f(x)$  helpful, as a way to formulate the “logic of inter-relationality.” On this point, he observes: “The functional relationship indicates that the one (y) reflects (or mirrors) the other (x). Judgment is established by reflecting one’s self within one’s self. This is how the universal determines itself” (Nishida 1944b; NKZ 11: 102-103).<sup>32</sup>

Let us return to the “logic of *sokuhi*.” The initial goal of Zen practice is to be awakened to the reality of primordial subject-object unity, that “underlies” or “precedes” our intellectual judgment. The famous words of QINGYUAN Xingsi (J. Seigen Gyōshi) 青原行思 (d. 740), a major disciple of the Sixth Patriarch Huineng, nicely illustrate this point:

<sup>31</sup> One example is Nicholaos John Jones’s “The Logic of *Soku* in the Kyoto School” (Jones 2004: 302–321).

<sup>32</sup> For the formula  $y = f(x)$ , see “*Yotei chōwa o tebiki to shite shūkyō tetsugaku e*” (NKZ 11: 123–124).



Thirty years ago, before this aged monk got into Zen training, I used to see a mountain as a mountain and a river as a river.

Thereafter I had the chance to meet enlightened masters and, under their guidance I could attain enlightenment to some extent. At this stage, when I saw a mountain: lo! It was not a mountain. When I saw a river: lo! It was not a river.

But in these days I have settled down to a position of final tranquility. As I used to do in my first years, now I see a mountain just as a mountain and a river just as a river. (Izutsu 1977: 208)<sup>33</sup>

Here, it is not that a mountain magically changes into a non-mountain but, rather, that the speaker’s understanding, expressed by “y,” of the phenomenal world,  $f(x)$ , changes. The first is the state of ordinary perception in which “the knower and the known are sharply distinguished” (corresponding to Suzuki’s “*funbetsu*”), the second is the state in which one experiences the unity of consciousness that is prior to its bifurcation into subject and object (Suzuki’s “*mufunbetsu*”), and the third stage is the recognition that “the undivided unity of consciousness” underlines the subject-object perception,  $y = f(x)$ . In other words, Suzuki’s “*mufunbetsu no funbetsu*” refers to the knowledge of non-discrimination.

## 6 Conclusion: “Logic beyond a Formal Logic”

This open-ended essay concludes with the reflection on the “logic” as understood by D. T. Suzuki and Nishida. Suzuki meant by the word “logic” a certain coherent structure of spiritual experience and intuition, which points to a discernible pattern of discourse, or a “system” according to which one’s experience can be organized into a meaningful whole. Nishida defined logic as the “self-expression of living beings,”<sup>34</sup> which is to say, it is the self-expression of self-consciousness.

Suzuki’s “logic of *sokuhi*” may be criticized for infringing upon the rule of the “formal logic,” but it may also be viewed to enlarge the mind and its capacity by pointing out the realm beyond an objectifying thinking. Many an artist and a philosopher for centuries have been attempting to liberate logic from the yoke of “formal logic.” Their effort should shift the intellectual focus from the dualistic

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<sup>33</sup>The lyrics of Donovan’s popular song, “First there is a mountain then there is no mountain, then there is,” seem to be inspired by this Zen account. What is remarkable about it is that Donovan captured the meaning with such simplicity.

<sup>34</sup>In its full length, the passage from “*Ronri to sūri*” reads: “I consider logic as the form of the self-expression of living beings. A living reality (*jitsuzai*) is that which exists in itself and moves by itself. That which exists in itself and moves by itself comes to have its self-existence in the contradictory self-identity of the many and the one. It has no substratum in terms of the one or the many. That which has its existence by way of the contradictory identity of the many and one is that which expresses itself and that which has its self in its self-expression. To have one’s self in self-expression means that which expresses itself is that which is expressed. That which thinks is that which is thought. That which reflects is that which is reflected. In one word, it pertains to the nature of “*jikaku*” (self-consciousness)” (NKZ 11: 60).

ratiocinating function of the mind to the self-critical and “poetic” creative function of the mind (or consciousness).

Certainly, the discriminating function of the mind is to be respected. But we also need to recognize that the mind is deeper and richer in imagination and creativity than just a geometric mind—Pascal talked about the “*esprit of geometry*” and the “*esprit of finesse*.” The ordinary “*forma mentis*” (the habit of mind, the mental posture) is challenged by the “logic of *sokuhi*.” Stepping back to reevaluate the workings of our mind, after all, belongs to the nature of the mind itself, and as such is an eminently philosophical activity. The “logic of *sokuhi*” pushes us to include the logic of spiritual insight into our learned discourse.

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