

# Dependent origination and the dual-nature of the Japanese Aesthetic

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ABSTRACT As most commentators on Japanese aesthetics agree, the Japanese aesthetic is pervaded by a profound affirmation of things in their suchness or original uniqueness, and at the same time is tinged with an element of sadness or melancholy. While the responses of affirmation and melancholy seem rather subjective and may--at first glance--appear inconsistent with Buddhist notions like anatman, or non-self and the Buddhist demand for non-attachment, I shall argue that a more careful reading of certain Buddhist doctrines, specifically the doctrine of dependent origination or pratitya-samutpada, reveals that the basic tenets of Buddhism are not only consistent with these sorts of subjective responses, but in fact serve to help explain the dual nature of the Japanese aesthetic. Accordingly, I shall suggest that given the undeniable influence Buddhism has had on Japanese culture, it seems likely that the doctrine of dependent origination is not only compatible with, but also contributed to the formation of what we regard as the Japanese aesthetic.

In *Zen and Japanese Culture*, Suzuki states that the Japanese aesthetic is characterized by "imbalance, asymmetry, the 'one-corner,' poverty, *sabi* or *wabi*, aloneness and cognate ideas". [1] According to Suzuki, the Japanese aesthetic is pervaded by a profound recognition and acknowledgement of the beauty of things in their suchness, or *tathata*, [2] and at the same time is tinged with an element of sadness or melancholy. While there is significant scholarly debate concerning Suzuki's conception of the Japanese aesthetic, I shall not address these concerns in this paper. [3] Instead, I shall focus on articulating the principal features of Suzuki's Japanese aesthetic, examining the compatibility of certain Buddhist ideas with this aesthetic and showing how the work of Yasunari Kawabata, a prominent figure in contemporary Japanese literature, supports Suzuki's conception of the Japanese aesthetic as having both affirmative and melancholy aspects. While the responses of affirmation and melancholy that Suzuki identifies as central to the Japanese aesthetic seem rather subjective, and may--at first glance--appear to be inconsistent with Buddhist notions like anatman, or non-self, and the Buddhist demand for non-attachment, I shall argue that a more careful reading of certain Buddhist doctrines, specifically the doctrine of dependent origination, or pratitya-samutpada, reveals that the basic tenets of Buddhism are not only consistent with these sorts of subjective responses, but in fact help to explain the dual-nature of Suzuki's Japanese aesthetic.

First, what is Suzuki's Japanese aesthetic? Unlike Western aesthetics which

often focus on the impression of the aesthetic object on the individual subject, Suzuki maintains that the Japanese aesthetic focuses on the apprehension of the aesthetic object in its own right. To achieve this end, the Japanese aesthetic minimizes the significance of the subjective impression, seeking "a perfect identification between the subject and object" [4] which, due to the removal of subjective projections, allows for the revelation of the aesthetic object in its suchness. Moreover, Suzuki asserts that where the Western tradition often regards aesthetic experience as something that takes place apart from ordinary life, the Japanese aesthetic does not tend to isolate aesthetic experience in this manner. Rather, because the Japanese aesthetic embraces the everyday, it readily acknowledges the aesthetic significance of common or seemingly insignificant objects. In my view, the work of Japanese novelist Yasunari Kawabata confirms Suzuki's insight. For example, in his novel *The Sound of the Mountain*, the main character Shingo notices a flower, "a broken thistle under the window. The flower had fallen, but the stem, bent from its base, was still a fresh green". [5] Here, a broken flower which many would pluck from its position and discard is seen as worthy of aesthetic attention. As Suzuki states, the Japanese aesthetic recognizes that, "[a]ll things come out of an unknown abyss of mystery and through every one of them we can have a peep into the abyss". [6] He maintains that because the Japanese orientation regards everything as having the potential to give us "a glimpse of the Unfathomable", [7] it has an all-encompassing character. Unlike Western aesthetics which oftentimes compartmentalize aesthetic experience, seeing it as something we have when we go to a museum or a play or otherwise distance ourselves from practical life-Suzuki asserts that the Japanese do not limit aesthetic experience in this way. For the Japanese, everything has an aesthetic component. As such, the Japanese aesthetic calls for what we might term an aestheticization of experience.

According to Suzuki, the two essential elements of the Japanese aesthetic are *sabi* and *wabi*. He indicates that the preoccupation with imbalance, with asymmetry and the "one-corner" style derive from *sabi* and *wabi*. According to Suzuki, *sabi*--which literally means loneliness or solitude--"consists in rustic unpretentiousness and archaic imperfection". [8] *Wabi*, in turn, signifies an aloofness or poverty. [9] Both these elements combine to engender a sense of poignancy, a realization of the uniqueness and ephemerality of beauty as well as a resigned sadness at its loss. Again, the work of Kawabata lends support to Suzuki's conception of the Japanese aesthetic insofar as Shingo, the main character in Kawabata's *The Sound of the Mountain*, illustrates this sense of poignancy when he states, "[a] single acacia in the row had scattered its flowers on the sidewalk ... the flowers had been delicate ones, pale yellow tinged with green. Even had there not been the single tree shedding its flowers, the fact of the row of flowering trees would no doubt have left an impression". [10] Here, when the main character stops and takes notice of the falling blossoms, we see that in so doing he is acknowledging the transiency of beauty. Similarly, in an earlier chapter, upon encountering a plum tree late in the season Shingo states, "[t]he white blossoms were past their prime. In the warm sunlight they were beginning to look dirty". [11] Regarding the flowers, he indicates that the smell of such flowers is "the smell of disappointment". [12] Here, Shingo's disappointment seems to lie in the loss of beauty to time, the loss of the pure white blossoms, the inevitable passing of life. Importantly, this poignant appreciation of imperfection and transiency is not confined to the natural realm but applies equally to humans. Again, in *The Sound of the Mountain*, Shingo says he experiences "vague feelings of despondency" [13] after he, an elderly man, passes two young prostitutes on the street. Here, it seems Shingo is experiencing not only some regret about his own aging but also a certain sadness at the youth that is being wasted. Later, when Shingo returns home and his daughter-in-law Kikuko

shows him a scar on her forehead, we see illustrated what Suzuki recognizes as the Japanese appreciation of imperfection for, as Kawabata writes, "the scar, whenever [Shingo] chanced to glimpse it afterwards somehow drew him to her". [14] Likewise, in another Kawabata novel, *Snow Country*, the main character remarks about his lover that her "indefinable air of loneliness only made her more seductive". [15] Here again, what might be considered an imperfection is regarded as attractive, as aesthetically appealing.

Sadness and melancholy are not however the only, or the primary elements of Suzuki's Japanese aesthetic. As I suggested earlier, Suzuki's aesthetic has a sort of dual-nature, a nature which combines affirmation and mourning. Suzuki maintains that for the Japanese, melancholy is but an aspect of a larger experience, an experience of existential affirmation. While there is a requisite sadness which accompanies the recognition of the ephemerality of beauty, there is also a profound acknowledgement of that beauty, and of the power of the moment in which that beauty exists. Because the Japanese recognize that beauty is fleeting, that beauty is not an enduring quality but rather something that is revealed anew in the suchness of things, Suzuki maintains that the Japanese aesthetic compels attention to, and affirmation of, detail. In *The Sound of the Mountain*, we see this illustrated when Shingo's attention is, at one point, captured by the vision of girls in bright kimonos. He states, "[b]ehind them two or three young cherries were in full bloom. Defeated by the powerful colors of the girls kimonos, they seemed pale and wan. The sun was shining on the green of the tall trees beyond". [16] Here, while we still hear a tinge of sadness in the defeat of the cherry trees, the overall tone is one of affirmation, a sense of the rightness of things. Similarly, later in the novel when Shingo goes to the train station to go to work he indicates, "without warning there were red flowers outside the train window, equinox lilies all along the railway filling, so near they seemed to quiver as the train passed ... Just coming into bloom, they were a fresh, clear red. It was the sort of morning when flowers made one feel the quiet of autumn meadows". [17] As in the previous example, the tone here is positive, indicating a lucid apprehension of the situation in its suchness as well as a subjective response to that apprehension. This affirmative tone is also present in another Kawabata novel *Snow Country*. In the first scene the main character, Shimamura, is struck by an experience he has gazing through the window of a train. There the images of the landscape at dusk are being reflected in the face of a young girl seated next to the window. Kawabata states, "[t]he figures and the background were unrelated and yet the figures, transparent and intangible, and the background dim in the gathering darkness, melted together ... when a light shown out in the mountains in the center of the girl's face, Shimamura felt his chest rise at the inexpressible beauty of it". [18] Perhaps this quote best captures Suzuki's notion of the Japanese aesthetic. Here, we see how beauty resides in ephemerality, that this event is poignant in its momentariness, in the flashing of light and shadow across a girl's face, in the moment where the aesthetic object exists not separate, but "in its original unity with ourselves". [19]

Given Buddhism's undeniable influence on Japanese culture, the question remains how one can reconcile the subjective responses of joy and melancholy which Suzuki sees as characteristic of the Japanese aesthetic with Buddhist doctrines which deny the subject. In my view, the reconciliation lies in coming to an understanding of the doctrine of dependent origination, a doctrine which incorporates the more fundamental insights of impermanence and emptiness, a doctrine which, when properly understood, not only reveals that the notion of anatman is consistent with the above-mentioned sorts of subjective responses, but also helps explain the dual-nature of Suzuki's Japanese aesthetic.

The basic doctrines of Buddhism are (1) impermanence, or anicca, (2) no-self, or anatman, (3) emptiness, or sunyata, and (4) dependent origination, or pratityasamutpada. The doctrine of impermanence states that things in the world are constantly in flux and therefore lack inherent essence. The doctrine of no-self states that like empirical phenomena, the subject also lacks an absolute or inherent essence or identity. According to Buddhism, when one analyzes one's condition honestly, one cannot find a self. The substances which combine to form one's physical body are continually being replaced so that one's physical composition is not the same from one day to the next. Likewise, the thoughts and ideas with which one identifies are constantly, and often radically, modified to the extent that sometimes one cannot believe one remains the same person. From the Buddhist perspective, the notion of an enduring identity, a Cartesian sort of ego, is an illusion. According to Buddhism, everything is empty, or sunya. As Garma C. C. Chang states, the doctrine of emptiness suggests that "although things in the phenomenal world appear to be real and substantial outside, they are actually tenuous and empty ... as a philosophical term, sunyata denotes the absence of any kind of self or selfhood". [20] Here, emptiness is not nihilistic because, according to Buddhism, emptiness is not construed as utter non-being. Emptiness is not an entity standing in opposition to form, rather it is an idea meant to illustrate form's lack of essence. Ultimately, emptiness reveals that, instead of possessing distinct essences, things emerge as a result of conditions, that is, they arise dependently. According to Stephen Batchelor in his introduction to Echoes of Voidness, emptiness and dependent origination are the flip sides of the same coin, and "a genuine understanding of voidness, far from undermining reality, is the only way one can gain correct knowledge of the way in which empirical phenomena do exist and function. In the final analysis, these two truths--the ultimate truth of voidness and the conventional truth of empirical phenomena--do not contradict but rather complement one another. Phenomena are able to function effectively in causal interrelationships precisely because by their nature they are void of any inherent self-existence. Conversely, the fact that they are in essence void is most strikingly indicated by the fact that their occurrence is invariably dependent on causes, conditions". [21]

The Two Truths Doctrine which Batchelor mentions indicates that as a result of the coincidence between emptiness and phenomenal appearance, [22] it is essential that we regard everything as having two aspects, a conventional aspect and an ultimate aspect. For Buddhism, at a conventional level, people and things appear to have distinct self-natures. However, at an ultimate level, everything is empty. Because of the Two Truths Doctrine, it makes perfect sense for a Buddhist to talk about particular individuals while at the same time bring ultimately to the notion of emptiness. From the Buddhist standpoint, the realm of conventional truth is characterized by ignorance of ultimate reality, of the truth of emptiness and dependent origination. Ultimate truth, in contrast, is characterized by wisdom and enlightenment. Though some Buddhist scholars may not agree, it is my opinion that in transcending conventional truth, ultimate truth does not negate conventional reality so much as encompass it. From the perspective of ultimate truth, one can see conventional truth and see through it. One can accept conventional truth as conventional without jeopardizing one's awareness of ultimate truth. In the subsequent paragraphs, I shall examine how this sort of understanding, an understanding which I feel derives from an authentic understanding of dependent origination, serves to explain the dual-nature of the Buddhist aesthetic.

Generally speaking, I believe the reason the subjective responses of joy and melancholy which characterize the Japanese aesthetic appear

inconsistent with the notion of anatman is because people oftentimes wrongly conflate Buddhism's denial of the subject in an ultimate sense to a denial of the phenomenal subject. However, as the Two Truths Doctrine and the concepts of impermanence, emptiness and dependent origination indicate, the goal of Buddhism is not to annihilate the phenomenal self but to demonstrate that there is no basis for belief in, and subsequently attachment to, an enduring or absolute conception of the subject. According to the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism, existence is suffering and the origin of suffering is desire, or *trṣṇā*. According to Buddhism, desire is what prompts us to regard ourselves as "selves" possessing essential natures and particular likes and dislikes. Desire is what prompts an individual to discriminate herself from the dynamic totality of life and to erroneously identify a "world composed of numerous finite entities standing alone and essentially unrelated". [23] From the Buddhist perspective, the only way to end suffering is to extinguish desire and the attachment which stems from it. However, the non attachment which Buddhism claims is necessary for eradicating suffering is not a radical withdrawal from the world. Instead, it is a transformation in awareness which stems from a realization of the impermanence and ultimate emptiness of things and of the truth of dependent origination. As Nishitani states in *Religion and Nothingness*, this realization marks "the point at which we become manifest in our own suchness as concrete human beings, as individuals with both body and personality. And, at the same time, it is the point at which everything around us becomes manifest in its own suchness". [24] Similarly, as Kasulis remarks in *Zen Action, Zen Person*, "without denying the forms encountered in daily life, the Zen Buddhist, nonetheless, does not cling to them or take them to be the only reality". [25]

Given the understanding that from a conventional standpoint forms, that is particular entities, appear and function, the goal of Buddhism is simply to prevent attachment to any absolutized understanding of form. In terms of aesthetic experience, the Buddhist would not wish to deny "subjective" responses to phenomena, but rather would want to prevent clinging to those feelings. From the Buddhist standpoint, the aesthetic experience might be compared to waves incessantly hitting the shore. Here, the waves represent the feelings which result from the identification with the aesthetic object (i.e. the apprehension of suchness), and the shore can be regarded as the subject. As this image illustrates, the shore does not hold onto the waves. Rather, the waves ebb and flow naturally. The feelings associated with aesthetic experience should be treated likewise. They can be acknowledged, but cannot be coveted.

According to Buddhism, eradicating suffering involves following a Middle Way, a path which avoids the extremes of essentialism and nihilism, that is, of assuming the essentiality and independence of form or reifying nothingness. While denying the existence of the world in an ultimate sense, it affirms the existence of the phenomenal world and the phenomenal subject. What Buddhism asks is not that we deny who we are and seek some abstract nirvanic state, but that we find an end to suffering here in the world by "break[ing] down our dependence on categories that interfere with the directness and immediacy of experience". [26] As Kasulis states, "[t]he Zen Master simply advises us to return: to go back to the state before we put on the first filter. But what is this telling us to become? An infant-like preverbal consciousness that, making no distinctions, is incapable of communication? Certainly not. That would be an autistic route, a withdrawal from the world . . . [r]ather, we must return to where we are. We must regain our grasp of the present moment". [27] This return involves recognizing that our typical mode of discriminatory understanding is one where we analyze experience and try to make our experience fit already existent categories of understanding, and, more importantly, that this

typical mode of understanding, or vijñāna, does not allow us to see things in their true suchness because it denies the dynamic interrelationships which characterize phenomenal reality. From the Buddhist standpoint, in order to see things in their suchness, one must see through our typical mode of understanding. To see things in their suchness, we must resist the objectification and categorization which characterize conventional thinking and language, but, as Kasulis states, "this does not mean that thought stops altogether". [28]

What does Kasulis mean here? How can one not think in a discriminatory manner? And, in terms of aesthetics, how can one talk about aesthetic experience without using discriminatory language? In *Zen Action, Zen Person*, Kasulis develops the notion of "without-thinking", [29] a notion which he contrasts with conventional or discriminatory thinking and not-thinking, or the absence of consciousness altogether. In my opinion, this notion of without-thinking captures what is going on during an aesthetic experience. According to Kasulis, without-thinking is a "non-conceptual or prereflective mode of consciousness", [30] which is the foundation of all discriminatory consciousness.

For Kasulis, in the without-thinking state there is no discrimination between the self and the object. This parallels Suzuki's comments regarding aesthetic experience where he states, in aesthetic experience "there ought not to be any presence of a mediatory agent between artistic inspiration and the mind into which it has come". [31] Importantly, the absence of a mediatory agent during an aesthetic experience does not preclude subsequent analysis of the aesthetic impression, for, as Kasulis states, "[e]ven though without-thinking circumvents all objectification, it is nonetheless a mode of consciousness, and through reflection on a without-thinking act, one may isolate aspects of its formal contents". [32] Given this understanding, it seems that, in terms of aesthetics, we can, for purposes of clarity, isolate the aesthetic experience which occurs in a without-thinking state, from discursive attempts to convey the impressions accompanying that experience. [33] While Buddhists generally view analysis, or discriminatory thinking with suspicion, Suzuki maintains that its use can be justified in an effort to convey aesthetic experience so long as the "images are not figurative representations made use of by the poetic mind, but they directly point to the original intuitions . . . and are immediate expressions of the experience". [34] On this point, Kasulis agrees, stating, "from the Zen Buddhist view of consciousness, thought is effective only when it arises spontaneously out of a problematic situation. Whenever the person willfully thinks, whenever one tries to make experience fit retrospectively derived categories, that thinking inevitably leads to paradoxes and conflicts. When thought arises as a spontaneous response to a break in immediacy, however, it serves as an intermediary in the return to spontaneity". [35] Thus, in terms of aesthetic usage, thought and language are justified when they attempt to convey the original aesthetic intuition, an intuition we are removed from either due to temporal, physical, or psychical separation. Accordingly, in the case of a haiku, or landscape painting, the goal is not to invest the scene with layers of symbolic imagery, but to render the scene in such a manner that it reveals the original situation's suchness.

Having defined Suzuki's Japanese aesthetic, argued for the consistency between 'subjective' aesthetic responses and the doctrine of no-self, and having distinguished between the original aesthetic experience and secondary aesthetic descriptions, we can now turn our attention back to our original question concerning the compatibility of the notion of dependent origination with Suzuki's Japanese aesthetic. Why, we must ask, does his Japanese aesthetic have a dual-nature? Why does it incorporate both an

affirmative and a melancholy aspect? In my view, this dual-nature is a response to the existential insight into dependent origination, a realization which both annihilates one's previous sense of connection to the world and at the same time places one in the midst of an infinite matrix of interrelation. [36] I maintain that the dual-action of alienation and association that result from the realization of dependent origination is conveyed in and through the dual-nature of Suzuki's Japanese aesthetic and that this dual-action relates directly to what Nishitani describes as the "Great Affirmation" [37] and the "Great Doubt", [38] and what Batchelor describes in a Sartrean fashion as being-alone and being-with-others. [39]

In *Religion and Nothingness*, Nishitani states, upon the realization of dependent origination, "where form is emptiness and emptiness form, `forms' (that is, all things) are absolutely nameless, absolutely unknowable, distanced from one another by an absolute breach ... [yet] on the field of emptiness that absolute breach points directly to a most intimate encounter with everything that exists". [40] As Nishitani indicates, when one realizes the thoroughgoing nature of emptiness and the truth that things are impermanent and emerge only as a result of conditions, there is both a sense of intimacy and a sense of alienation, a Great Affirmation and a Great Doubt. In *Alone With Others*, Stephen Batchelor expresses a similar understanding when he states, "[1] if e does not mechanically alternate between aloneness and participation, rather it embraces them both in an undivided unit. Being-alone and being-with are the delicate ontological strands which, when woven together, help form the complex fabric of life. Thus, life is the unified whole of which they are the diverse parts and we, as living beings, always find ourselves in the paradoxical situation of being simultaneously alone with others". [41] For Batchelor, upon the realization of dependent origination one exists in the paradoxical situation of knowing, in an ultimate sense, that one is inextricably tied to innumerable conditions (i.e. to others), and yet, at a conventional level, one's individual orientation is experienced "only by oneself". [42] Here, both Batchelor and Nishitani recognize that the insight into dependent origination prompts a sort of dual reaction, an affirmation of our intricate connection to the world, and a doubt which results from the emptying of foundations.

In my view, insight into dependent origination initiates a radical shift in orientation from our conventional mode of understanding. As Batchelor points out, humans typically seek a "world composed of numerous finite entities standing alone and essentially unrelated. This situation seems to offer us security, predictability and manageability". [43] However, when robbed of this sense of fixity and faced with the dynamic totality of dependent origination, the individual's conventional sense of security is compromised. Basically, her security is compromised because the individual can no longer rely on her fixed conceptions of things. Perhaps more disturbing, the individual can no longer accept a single linear notion of causality which at once explains events and serves to tie her to certain things and make her independent of others. While the insight into dependent origination offers the individual a vision of an infinite matrix of interrelation, precisely because that matrix is infinite, because its relations are innumerable, this vision defies understanding. Because the vision of dependent origination defies both the individual's understanding and even her imagination, the individual becomes, as Batchelor indicates, "acutely and uneasily conscious of [her] aloneness, insignificance and helplessness ... existence as such is anxiously felt as too massive and overwhelming to be concernfully accepted as a totality". [44]

As Suzuki acknowledges, the immensity of the vision associated with dependent origination can engender feelings of "helplessness" [45] and

"resignation" [46] on the part of the subject. In my view, the utter incomprehensibility of this insight likely contributed to the emphasis on aloneness and humility in Suzuki's conception of the Japanese aesthetic. As Nishitani points out, upon the acceptance of impermanence, emptiness and dependent origination, one is forced to admit that "[e]ach and every thing, no matter how well acquainted the self may be with it, remains at bottom, in its essential mode of being, an unknown". [47] Thus, even when one accepts the notion of dependent origination and intuitively embraces its rich and dynamic view of the world, because that view defies conceptual understanding, it can, at a certain level, engender a both sense of alienation and a sense of humility. In Kawabata's novel, *Snow Country*, this response is captured when Shimamura gazes at the night sky and, as he states, "[t]he Milky Way came down just over there to wrap the earth in its naked embrace. There was a terrible voluptuousness about it". [48] Shimamura describes that in this state of "voluptuous astonishment," [49] his life, "the years and the months ... seemed to be lighted up in that instant; and there, he knew, was the anguish". [50] Here, as Shimamura faces the immensity of life, its voluptuous arising and dissolution, his anguish seems to lie both in his inability to comprehend it all and his recognition of his own insignificance.

As the previous quotation suggests, one of the reasons the insight into dependent origination challenges conceptual understanding is its dynamism. From the Buddhist standpoint, by demonstrating that things arise only as a result of conditions, the notion of dependent origination illustrates the truth of impermanence. In terms of aesthetics, awareness of impermanence initiates a realization that the suchness of things lies in their momentariness, in their fragility. The acknowledgement of impermanence causes one to realize that while one may want beauty to endure, beauty is not enduring. Rather beauty is revealed in the suchness of things and this display of suchness is fleeting. Ultimately, beauty is revealed in the absolute uniqueness of phenomena in the moment. Again, Kawabata captures this realization in *Snow Country* when he states, "[k]aya plumes waved on the steep slope of the mountain opposite, a dazzling silver in the morning sun. Dazzling and yet rather like the fleeting translucence that moved across the autumn sky". [51] Ultimately, with the realization of impermanence comes the sense of melancholy that is characteristic of Suzuki's Japanese aesthetic. It prompts the bittersweet acknowledgement that while things can only exist in transience, that nonetheless we experience a sadness at their loss, at their utter irreplaceability, their presence and passing.

Finally, with regard to the affirmative aspect of Suzuki's Japanese aesthetic, I maintain that it too is compatible with the intuitive recognition of dependent origination. While the notion of dependent origination defies our understanding in many ways, it nonetheless supplies a more plausible conception of our existential condition. Rather than keeping us isolated from phenomena, the insight into dependent origination gives us a sense of how we merge with them. It allows us to see ourselves in terms of dynamic interrelation and to admit the myriad of ties we have to the world. An affirmative attitude emerges upon the acceptance of dependent origination because after admitting the inherent impermanence and permeability of life, one is no longer opposed to reality, frantically trying to force a fluid existence into fixed categories. One affirms the vision of dependent origination because upon its acceptance one is, for the first time, able to deal with "those little pools of non-being which we encounter each instant". [52] After embracing dependent origination one realizes that emptiness and phenomenal reality are one and the same, that emptiness is not a threatening force but an integral component of the dynamic totality we call life.



In conclusion, though there seemed to be a prima facie inconsistency between some of the basic doctrines of Buddhism and Suzuki's Japanese aesthetic, through my discussion of certain Buddhist doctrines and specific pieces of literature, I hope to have shown that these Buddhist doctrines are not only consistent with Suzuki's aesthetic, but that they can help explain its dual-nature. As I have argued, the realization of dependent origination prompts both joy and melancholy because while initiating the individual into an infinite network of interrelation, because of the immeasurable complexity of this network and the fact that it challenges the individual's conventional understanding, joy may be tempered with sadness. Ultimately, as Shingo states in *The Sound of the Mountain*, acceptance of dependent origination forces one to admit the wonderful and at the same time sobering truth that, "[h]appiness ... might be just such a matter of the fleeting instant". [53]

#### NOTES

[1] SUZUKI, D. T. (1993) *Zen and Japanese Culture* (Princeton, Princeton University Press), p. 27.

[2] Here, tathata indicates awareness of an object or event in its own right, namely without subjective projection or overlay. As Nishitani states in *Religion and Nothingness*, when things appear in their suchness, "[a]ll attachment is negated: both the subject and the way in which "things" appear as objects of attachment are emptied. Everything is now truly empty, and this means that all things make themselves present here and now, just as they are, in their original reality". [34]

[3] Here, I am referring to the objections raised by various commentators that Suzuki has overemphasized the role certain foreign influences like Buddhism have played in the formation and development of the Japanese aesthetic, while failing to give sufficient consideration to elements indigenous to Japanese culture.

[4] SUZUKI, op. Cit., p. 246.

[5] KAWABATA, YASUNARI (1970) *The Sound of the Mountain* (New York, Berkeley), p. 79.

[6] SUZUKI, op. Cit., p. 257.

[7] Ibid., p. 221.

[8] Ibid., p. 24.

[9] Ibid., p. 23.

[10] KAWABATA, op. cit., p. 195.

[11] Ibid., p. 113.

[12] Ibid., p. 126.

[13] Ibid., p. 16.

[14] Ibid., p. 18.

[15] KAWABATA, YASUNARI (1957) *The Snow Country* (New York, Perigee), p. 129.

[16] KAWABATA (1970), op. cit., p. 126.

[17] Ibid., p. 205.

[18] KAWABATA (1957), op. cit.

[19] SUZUKI, op. Cit., p. 228.

[20] CHANG, GARMA C. C. (1989) *The Buddhist Teaching of Totality: The Philosophy of Hwa Yen Buddhism* (University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press), p. 60.

[21] RABTEN, GESHE (1983) *Echoes of Voidness* (London, Wisdom Publications), p. 8.

[22] Here, I am referring to the form is emptiness and emptiness is form identification which is expressed in the Heart Sutra.

[23] BATCHELOR, STEPHEN (1983) *Alone With Others: An Existential Approach to Buddhism* (New York, Grove Press), p. 62.

[24] NISHITANI, KEIJI (1982) *Religion and Nothingness* (Berkeley, University of California Press), p. 90.

[25] KASULIS, T. P. (1981) *Zen Action, Zen Person* (Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press), p. 44.

[26] Ibid., p. 58.

[27] Ibid., p. 56.

[28] Ibid., p. 58.

[29] Ibid., p. 72.

[30] Ibid., p. 75.

[31] SUZUKI, op. cit., p. 225.

[32] KASULIS, op. cit., p. 75.

[33] Here, I want to emphasize that one must be careful when making determinations with respect to original and secondary sorts of aesthetic experience. An original aesthetic experience is determined by the presence of a without-thinking state. Thus, it is not the aesthetic object which determines whether the aesthetic experience is original or secondary, but the experiential orientation. Accordingly, while a haiku may be a secondary aesthetic experience for the individual who wrote it (i.e. insofar as that individual is attempting to convey the immediacy of an actual event), it may be an original aesthetic experience for the individual who, having not had any actual interaction with the subject matter of the haiku, is experiencing it for the first time.

[34] SUZUKI, op. cit., p. 240.

[35] KASULIS, op. cit., p. 64.

[36] Here, it is essential to note that I do not feel that formal awareness of the doctrine of dependent origination is necessary in order for an

individual to have the senses of affirmation and mourning that are present in Suzuki's Japanese aesthetic. While formal knowledge of this and other Buddhist doctrines may indeed deepen an individual's existential understanding, it is not a prerequisite for aesthetic appreciation. Ultimately, the doctrines of impermanence, no-self emptiness and dependent origination simply offer formal articulations of insights into the human condition that are available to all. In other words, one need not study Buddhist philosophy to know that life is characterized by impermanence. Instead, one can simply watch the changing of seasons. Likewise, one need not possess thematic awareness of the doctrine of dependent origination to know that things exist in a matrix of interrelation. Instead, one can simply bear witness to the complex interpenetration of things in the natural world. Thus, what I mean when I state that an individual realizes the truth of dependent origination is not that the individual possesses a formal understanding of the historical doctrine of dependent origination--although that may be present--but that she has in some manner come to recognize both the inherent impermanence and emptiness of things and to acknowledge that things exist fundamentally in interrelation.

[37] NISHITANI, op. cit., p. 131.

[38] Ibid., p. 111.

[39] BATCHELOR, op. cit., p. 91.

[40] NISHITANI, op. cit., p. 101.

[41] BATCHELOR, op. cit., p. 91.

[42] Ibid., p. 94.

[43] Ibid., p. 62.

[44] Ibid., p. 61.

[45] SUZUKI, op. cit., p. 230.

[46] Ibid., p. 231.

[47] NISHITANI, op. cit., p. 111.

[48] KAWABATA (1957), op. cit., p. 165.

[49] Ibid., p. 168.

[50] Ibid., p. 174.

[51] Ibid., p. 117.

[52] SARTRE, JEAN-PAUL (1956) Being and Nothingness (New York, Washington Square Press), p.53.

[53] KAWABATA (1970), op. cit., p. 195.

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