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Takao Hagiwara

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## DERRIDA AND ZEN: DESERT AND SWAMP

**Takao Hagiwara**

Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, Case Western Reserve University  
txh13@case.edu

### *Introduction*

I will talk about similarities between Derrida's deconstruction and Zen Buddhism, and more specifically D. T. Suzuki's *soku-hi* logic (*sokuhi no ronri* 即非の論理) (A is A, because A is not-A).<sup>1</sup> I do not completely agree with some critics, including Robert Magliola, who argue that Suzuki's Zen is centric, entitative, and essentialist, and thus runs counter to Derridean deconstruction (see, e.g., Magliola 1986, pp. 97–98). Rather, I argue that contrary to Magliola's contention that it is centric and entitative, Suzuki's *soku-hi* logic actually concurs with Derrida's deconstruction, or what Magliola calls Derridean differentialism (*ibid.*, pp. x, 1). Suzuki may occasionally become heavy-handed, and thus seem centric in making his point, but I consider this to come in part from the very centric nature of human language itself, and in part from his "skillful means" (*upāyakaśālya*), which the Buddha himself is said to have fully utilized.<sup>2</sup> That is, in order to express the unspeakable, one must resort to language. *Soku-hi* logic addresses this paradox: wisdom/silence is wisdom/silence, because wisdom is not-silence, that is, words/speech. And this paradox also applies to Derrida, who was exceptionally garrulous.

Resemblances between *soku-hi* logic and logocentrism are only superficial and, I think, arise at least in part from what the Japanese Catholic writer Shūsaku Endō 遠藤周作 (1923–1996) would call the "swamp sensibility"<sup>3</sup> (what I call the "womb sensibility") of Japanese culture. The underlying logic of that sensibility seems to me to be ultimately the same as, or at least connatural with, Suzuki's *soku-hi* logic, a logic that is considered to be originally Indian.<sup>4</sup> Traditional Japanese culture and sensibility are deeply rooted in the Japanese lifestyle of wet-rice paddies—the swamp—and the womb is a miniature "swamp." It might be that compared to other Buddhist sects and schools such as Shin (真宗) and Tantric Buddhism (see note 6), Zen seems to be masculine; Suzuki himself writes: "In it [Zen] there is something virile and unbending. A mild, gentle, and graceful air—almost feminine, one might call it—which prevailed in the periods preceding the Kamakura, is now [in the Kamakura warrior period] superseded by an air of masculinity" (Suzuki 1970 [1959], p. 30). On the other hand, Suzuki emphasizes that a sense of great-earthness (motherhood) underlies and supports the Kamakura warrior sensibility (see notes 4–6). He also repeatedly stresses the crucial importance of motherhood in the Eastern (and so by extension, Zen) sensibility (see section V and notes 4–7).

How can we explain this apparent contradiction? The clue, I think, is that Suzuki here emphasizes the importance not so much of femininity as opposed to masculinity,

but of the great earth's motherhood (womb), which transcends, subsumes, and generates both male/masculinity and female/femininity. Spiritually this motherhood is "Japanese spirituality" (*nihonteki reisei* 日本的靈性), and logically it is *soku-hi* logic. In the preface to his *Kongōkyō no zen* (Zen of the *Diamond Sūtra*), where he discusses *soku-hi* logic, Suzuki writes: "There is something connatural between Japanese spirituality and Zen [i.e., *soku-hi* logic]" (SDZ 5, p. 370). And in *Nihonteki reisei* (Japanese spirituality) he even says: "One usually calls [no-delusion (*makumōzō* 莫妄想) in Japanese spirituality] a permeation of Zen, but from the Japanese people's point of view, it would be better to say that Japanese spirituality is speaking and acting through the form of Zen" (SDZ 8, p. 29). Thus, I think the apparent contradiction in Suzuki's Zen of his simultaneously asserting both masculinity and femininity arises from the paradoxical nature of *soku-hi* logic, which Suzuki thinks is essentially the same as the logic of the great earth (motherhood or the womb), or that of Japanese spirituality (see note 4). Put differently, on the meta-level (or transcendental level) (see note 11), *soku-hi* logic or the logic of the womb topologically subsumes both masculinity and femininity (see section II for a discussion of the word "topological"), but on the object (or the immanent or mundane) level, it generates the two (see also notes 4–6). *Soku-hi* logic simultaneously negates and affirms (i.e., deconstructs) itself; hence Suzuki's seemingly contradictory simultaneous affirmation of both masculinity and femininity (or, better, motherhood) in Zen and the Kamakura warrior sensibility.<sup>5</sup> It is in this paradoxical sense that I maintain in this essay that Suzuki's Zen is womb-oriented.

#### *More on Suzuki's Womb-oriented Zen and Soku-hi Logic*

In the following, I will further show how *soku-hi* logic is essentially the same as, or at least strongly resembles, the logic of the womb sensibility, and how both *soku-hi* logic and the womb sensibility underlie the art forms that flourished during and after the Kamakura and Muromachi periods (1185–1573), such as Noh, *sumi-e*, the tea ceremony, flower arranging, *renga* (linked poetry), and haiku. I see Zen as being womb-oriented for several reasons. First, the feminine principle forms a crucial element of (Mahāyāna) Buddhism and Zen, as suggested, for instance, by the story of the village girl Sujata, whose milk-porridge the Buddha received after renouncing asceticism, thus re-energizing himself and achieving *satori* 悟り (enlightenment/*nirvāṇa*).<sup>6</sup> Second, the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* (*Ryōgakyō* 楞伽經) and the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* (Skt. *Mahāyāna Śraddhotpāda Śāstra*; Jpn. *Daijōkishinron* 大乘起信論), two important sources of Suzuki's Zen, are also highly womb-oriented in their synthesis of *Yogācāra* (Mind-only school) and *Tathāgatagarbha* (the womb of the Thus-Come/Gone One) thought (see section III for further discussion of *Yogācāra* and *Tathāgatagarbha*).<sup>7</sup> Third, Zen arose from a blending of the generally theoretical, abstract, and otherworldly Indian Buddhism with the this-worldly, concrete, womb-oriented philosophy of Daoism (see notes 4, 23). These are, in my view, some of the important elements that caused Buddhism, including Zen, to resonate and become synthesized with what Suzuki calls Japanese spirituality (*nihonteki reisei*) during the Kamakura period and thereafter (see note 4).

Although this womb (swamp) image may seem incompatible with Derridean dissemination and desert nomadism, the Japanese womb/swamp sensibility in fact overlaps and even coexists with Derridean desert nomadism. Compare, for instance, Derrida’s deconstructive handling of Plato’s *chora* (*khōra*) (womb or receptacle) (see Derrida 1995b [1993]) and the Noh play *Yamanba* 山姥 (Mountain crone), or the haiku poet Bashō’s 芭蕉 (1644–1694) “nomadism” as expressed through his travelogue *Oku no hosomichi* 奥の細道 (The narrow road into the deep north), a title suggestive of the author’s womb sensibility (see sections III–V below for more on these topics). Also consider Kōbō Abe’s 安部公房 (1924–1993) *The Woman in the Dunes* (*Suna no onna* 砂の女), which essentially synthesizes the womb and the desert, nomadic sensibilities paradoxically juxtaposed like the sides of the Möbius strip: this side (womb) imperceptibly turns into its opposite (desert).<sup>8</sup>

### 1. Différance and Soku-hi Logic

The Möbius strip, shown in figure 1a, works as a metaphor<sup>9</sup> to explain both Derridean *différance* and the *soku-hi* logic that I think underlies the womb or swamp sensibility. Differentiation between the “two sides” of the strip is simultaneously affirmed and deferred, thereby providing a visual representation of *différance*. The Japanese Zen master Hakuin 白隠 (1685–1768) utilized the idea of the Möbius strip (and the similarly paradoxical Klein bottle) in his expression of *satori* (*nirvāṇa*) (see Yoshizawa 2008, pp. 72–77 *passim*). Therefore, I consider the strip to be a crucial visual expression of both Hakuin’s *satori* and the Buddhist *Dharma* (Law). As such, I believe the Möbius strip, like the Klein bottle, is a powerful key image/idea embodying many of the Derridean and Zen Buddhist paradoxes the abstruseness of which has often baffled, confused, and frustrated our understanding.

Let us explore *soku-hi* logic in terms of the Möbius strip. *Soku-hi* logic says A (“this side” of the strip) is A, because A is not-A (“the other side”).<sup>10</sup> A is different from not-A, and yet they are the same. But A (“this side” of the strip) and not-A (“the other side” of the strip) do not belong to the same logical type or level.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the distinction between A and not-A is not that of mere symmetrical, binary opposition, as

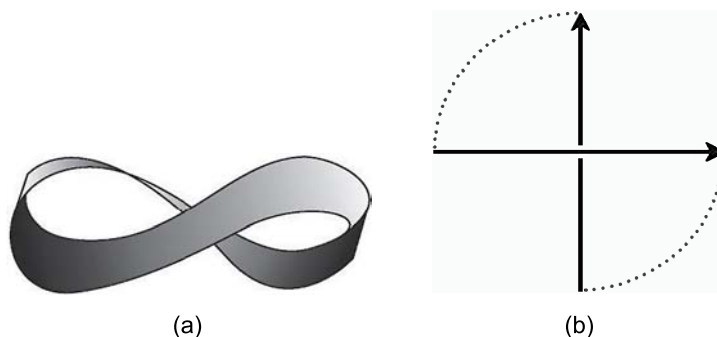


Figure 1

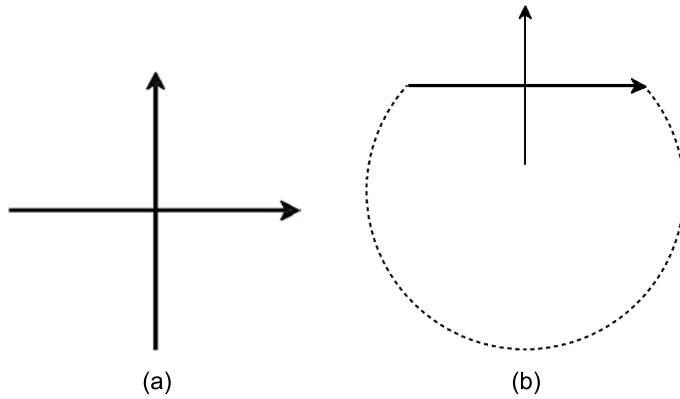


Figure 2

figure 2a illustrates: the coincidence of two contradictory terms in *soku-hi* logic is essentially different from a mere still point or coincidence of opposites, where the vertical axis (the transcendental/eternal/spirit) crosses the horizontal axis (the mundane/temporal/flesh) (see figure 2a). The crucial difference (*différance*?) between this type of coincidence and Derridean *différance* also lies in the difference, in terms of cross points, between the Möbius strip and a regular circle or a regular circular strip, even if the latter is infinitely large (i.e., as large as the universe itself) (see figure 2b).

This still point, represented as the origin in figure 2b, where the coincidence of opposites takes place, is, as an intersection of the mundane (flesh) and the eternal (spirit), also the point of Eucharist transubstantiation, or the point of synthesis in Hegelian dialectics, both of which Derrida deconstructs in his *Glas*, as I discuss below.

## II. Law and Dharma (Buddhist Law/Truth)<sup>12</sup>

In his "Force of Law" (1992), Derrida argues that deconstruction is justice, since law (a set of codified rules) has to deconstruct itself in order to be responsible to and pass judgment on aporia cases that do not fit within it as a result of law having, through its logocentric codification, excluded the alterity or the singular otherness of the world as degradation, illegitimacy, and evil. From the Buddhist standpoint, these challenging aporia cases inevitably arise from *karma* (actions) that take place interdependently (*pratītyasamutpāda*); underlying everything we experience in the world are the playful and singular interactions and interpenetrations of innumerable things (*dharma*), and thus nothing exists in and of itself (nonentity, or *niḥsvabhāva*). According to this perspective, legal cases and events in general inevitably extend beyond logical rules or laws because of both the fundamental make-up of the world and causality. That is, these cases, like all events, put laws into a state of irresolution or aporia at the moment of judgment about not-guilt and guilt, or good and evil.

To explore the contrasts between laws and *Dharma*, let us see how Buddhist law/truth deals with the issue of good and evil. That *soku-hi* logic underlies Buddhist law is indicated by the famous words “form/*saṃsāra* is emptiness/*nirvāṇa*, and emptiness/*nirvāṇa* is form/*saṃsāra*” (Jpn. *shiki soku ze kū, kū soku ze shiki*) (see note 6). Put differently, Buddhist law says that God/good is the Devil/evil, and vice versa. However, as I have already pointed out with reference to the Möbius strip, such coincidence is not the mere coincidence of, say, good and evil as binary opposites. Rather, it is a topological coincidence of *soku-hi* logic, “topological” here referring to the paradoxical/deconstructive relationship represented by the two sides of the Möbius strip, which are not in binary opposition like those of an ordinary strip or a coin. The infinite Möbius strip (see note 10) simultaneously has both one and two side(s), thereby deconstructing the binary-opposition basis of traditional Aristotelian logic. In this essay, the term “topological” thus refers to this kind of paradoxical/deconstructive function and/or characteristic of the cosmic Möbius strip. The Klein bottle also exhibits the same topological principle (see note 16).

In his last essay, “*Bashoteki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan*” 場所の論理と宗教の世界観 (The logic of place and the religious worldview), Kitarō Nishida 西田幾多郎 (1870–1945), the founder of Kyoto school philosophy and Suzuki’s close friend, substantially utilizes this topological coincidence of *soku-hi* logic to elaborate on such key philosophical concepts as the “self-identity of the absolute contradiction” (*zettaimujunteki jikodōitsu* 絶対矛盾的自己同一) and “inverse correspondence” (*gyakutaiō* 逆対応) (Nishida 1965, pp. 398–399, 420, 423, 430). In the same essay, Nishida asserts that a truly absolute God must in a sense be devilish:

A God who merely opposes and struggles with evil is a relative God, even if the struggle is to overcome evil to the end. A God that is merely transcendentally supremely good is nothing but an abstract God. The absolute God must contain absolute negation within himself. He must be able to descend into ultimate evil. The God that saves [perpetrators of] ultimate atrocities is truly the absolute God. . . . This does not mean to confuse good and evil. (ibid., pp. 404–405)

This “coincidence” of God and the Devil or good and evil is not a mere synthesis or coincidence of opposites (see figure 2a); rather, they are topologically identical (see figure 1b). The *soku-hi* logic on which this identity is based is not a homogeneous (i.e., analytical, binary-oppositional) logic of either/or, because, like the Möbius strip, it has a built-in topological twist (a characteristic that induces a difference in logical type), what Nishida calls an “inverse correspondence” (*gyakutaiō*). In other words, God and the Devil (or this and the other side of the cosmic Möbius strip) correspond and coincide at “the beginning” (eternal past) and/or at “the end” (eternal future) of the universe, which means both that they will never meet or coincide and that they have always already met/coincided in the here and now (see figure 1b). This, I believe, is a Derridean *différance* and the idea of justice as deconstruction.

The following Zen *kōan* 公案 (lit., a public case, a Zen question) from the *Mumonkan* 無門関 (Gateless barrier) further clarifies the parallels between Derridean notions of justice and law and those of Zen Buddhism. Master Shuzan 首山 (926–

993) holds up a bamboo stick before a group and says, “If you call it a bamboo stick, you infringe on [the absolute/*nirvāṇa*]; if you do not call it a bamboo stick, you go against [relativity/the mundane]. What will you call it?”<sup>13</sup> The Zen master Mumon comments on this *kōan*: “You cannot say, yet you cannot not say. Speak quickly! Speak quickly!” (*Mumonkan*, case 43, my translation). One of the disciples snatches the stick and snaps it in two. The master is greatly pleased with his action (see Blyth 1966, p. 280). This is a Zen way to handle the aporia of good and evil, of law and justice; Zen deconstructively passes judgment and thus carries out both good and evil, both *kū/nirvāṇa* (emptiness/the-other-world) and *shiki/saṃsāra* (delusion/this world). According to Derrida, “Justice, as law, is never exercised without a decision that *cuts*, that divides” (Derrida 1992, p. 24). But he also says, “[J]ustice, however unrepresentable it may be, doesn’t wait. It is that which must not wait. To be direct, simple and brief, let us say this: a just decision is always required *immediately*, ‘right away’” (ibid., p. 26). That is, the decision in Derridean justice is subject to the same pressure of immediacy as the one in the Zen *kōan*. Moreover, in both Zen and Derridean justice, good (yes) and evil (no), as well as law (logos/legitimacy) and excess (deviation/illegitimacy), are divided or cut into two (i.e., differentiated) by the boundary of the (cosmic) Möbius strip. And this cosmic boundary eternally defers the static calculation/conclusion/settlement of the aporia of good and evil, life and death.

### III. Trace, Ghost, and Kṣaṇika (*Instantaneous Extinction*)

Speaking of the impossibility of fully experiencing justice, Derrida says:

As its name indicates, an experience is a traversal, something that *traverses* and travels toward a destination for which it finds the appropriate passage. The experience finds its way, its passage, it is possible. And in this sense it is impossible to have a full experience of aporia, that is, of something that does not allow passage. An aporia is a non-road. From this point of view, justice would be the experience that we are not able to experience. (Derrida 1992, p. 16)

The boundary of the Möbius strip is a representation of such a way-less, impossible experience, a calculation of the incalculable:

Justice is an experience of the impossible. . . . Law (*droit*) is not justice. Law is the element of calculation, and it is just that there be law, but justice is incalculable, it requires us to calculate with the incalculable; and aporetic experiences are the experiences, as improbable as they are necessary, of justice. . . . (Derrida 1992, p. 16)

In other words, Derrida suggests that one would need to go through or “experience” a Kafkaesque gate of law (or Mumon’s gateless barrier) to exert and render justice (“*rendre la justice*”) (ibid., p. 17), but that one can never go through such a gate because “rendering justice” (or making a decision/differentiation, or crossing the Möbius strip’s “boundary” from one side to its reverse) is a binary oppositional fixing of the boundary/passage between this and the other side of the strip, a fixing that negates deconstruction or justice. Thus, Derrida says that justice or deconstruction is

possible only as a ghost (pp. 24–25). This ghost is the Derridean trace, the unfixable boundary (and thus non-boundary) between this and the other sides of the Möbius strip. The strip’s boundary both differentiates and defers its binary differentiation between this and the other sides of the strip, thereby effecting *différance*.

In terms of the Buddhist *Yogācāra* (Mind Only School), the Derridean ghost or trace corresponds to the *kṣaṇika* (instantaneous extinction) of *bīja* (seeds).<sup>14</sup> *Kṣaṇika* is the cross point (center), or rather the non-cross point (non-center), of the two axes (this [*saṃsāra*] and the other [*nirvāṇa*] sides) of, so to speak, a cosmic Möbius strip (figure 1b).<sup>15</sup> The *Yogācāra* and the *Avataṃsakan* (*Kegon* 華嚴) counterparts of the Nāgārjunan *pratītyasamutpāda* (dependent co-arising), in my understanding, are, respectively, *sanpōchinden inga dōji* 三法展転因果同時 (the simultaneous evolution of cause-effect-cause of three *dharma*s) (Xuanzang 1928, p. 122; also see Wang 2001, chap. 5) and “the *dharma* world of interpenetration” (see, e.g., Loy 2006). As in these Buddhist views, the Derridean ghost, trace, or “under erasure” (*sous rature*) has a palimpsest-like overlaying effect that can be both seen and unseen in the intersection of the “horizontal” (*saṃsāra*/time) and “vertical” (*nirvāṇa*/non-time) axes of the Möbius strip (figure 1b).

Criticizing what he perceives to be a binary, oppositional view of *saṃsāra* (causality) versus *nirvāṇa* (transcendence of causality), Magliola says, “If the notion of causality is to be used at all, then, it must be used to mean that *emptiness* is causality” (Magliola 2006, p. 248). And he quotes from Nāgārjuna’s *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (Philosophy of the middle way): “Because emptiness works, therefore everything works” (ibid.). I do not see a fundamental difference between what Magliola says about emptiness (*nirvāṇa*) and causality (*saṃsāra*), and the *soku-hi* logic that underlies, for instance, the above-quoted famous line: “*Saṃsāra* is *nirvāṇa*, and *nirvāṇa* is *saṃsāra*” (form is emptiness, and emptiness is form).

Whereas according to traditional formal logic emptiness (*nirvāṇa*) is different from causality (*saṃsāra*), in *soku-hi* logic they are topologically the same: that is, they are superimposed onto each other as in a palimpsest, or, better, as in *this* and the *other* sides of the Möbius strip. Because this superimposition takes place instantaneously, it generates a ghost effect or trace.

Such superimposition appears as well in Japanese Noh drama, which is based on spirit possession, animism, shamanism, and Buddhism. Noh’s pronounced *kasane* 重ね (overlying, superimposing) elements, including masks, costumes, music, dance, stage structures, and language, all combine and interpenetrate to produce the final effect of *yūgen* 幽玄 (originally a Buddhist term, derived from *yū* 幽, meaning “subtle, deep, ghostly,” and *gen* 玄, “dark with a tinge of red”). Some salient features of Noh are that the performers, usually male, are often either possessed by or emanations of the spirits of the dead, whether gods, animals, or plants; that a male performer often acts as a female; and that while acting as a female, this female character sometimes assumes a male figure (see, e.g., the Noh play *Izutsu* 井筒 [The well head], where a male character acts as the ghost of a young woman, who in turn wears her deceased lover’s robe and looks into a well where she sees her lover’s figure reflected in the water).



Similarly, the language of Noh expresses *kasane* and spirit possession. Employing numerous quotations and allusions from sources ranging from lyrical poetry to Buddhist scripture, Noh texts are dense, intertextual brocades. The delivery of the text on stage is highly stylized, almost incantatory, and the usual clear, logocentric, either/or aspects of language are often muffled by the performers' masks. Furthermore, enemies on stage may finish each other's lines, which adds another layer to the *kasane* and interpenetration of opposites. The foundation of these overlaying elements is an animistic and shamanistic sensibility combined with the Buddhist senses of the transience (*kṣaṇika* or instantaneous extinction) of the world and of *soku-hi* logic.

However, because it is based on *soku-hi* logic, *kasane* in Noh is more than a mere coincidence of such binary opposites as good and evil, life and death, man and woman, humans and nature. Suzuki says that the Noh play *Yamanba* (Mountain crone), often ascribed to the Zen monk Ikkyū 一休 (1394–1481), exemplifies the Mahāyāna Bodhisattva ideal (Suzuki 1970 [1959], pp. 419–427). This dream-like Noh is about Hyakuma-yamanba, a beautiful young *yūjo* 遊女 (courtesan) from Kyoto, who, on her pilgrimage to a Buddhist temple, encounters the fearful, demon-like Yamanba deep in the mountains. Hyakuma-yamanba has enjoyed popularity in the capital by singing and dancing a song that depicts Yamanba. The “real” Yamanba, on the other hand, is a great-mother figure who, humans do not realize, is the (non-entitative) creator and supporter of everything in the world, including human lives: she embodies nature. More precisely, however, she is *jinen* 自然 (a nature-human composite or *Yogācāran ālayavijñāna* [storehouse of consciousness], an autopoietic system)<sup>16</sup> itself, beautiful and ugly, benevolent (good) and malevolent (evil), all at once. But one cannot synthesize these binary pairs into a three-dimensional totality, since the terms within each pair are always already deconstructed by *soku-hi* logic. In other words, as *jinen* (a nature-human composite), Yamanba (topologically) requires Hyakuma-yamanba for her existence and function as the great mother, the (nonentitative) creator and supporter of the world. The same is topologically true of Hyakuma-yamanba: her popularity in the capital (the mundane, phenomenal world) depends on the existence of the “real/noumenal” Yamanba.

A further *kasane* effect appears in the “mother-daughter” pairing of Hyakuma-yamanba and Yamanba: youth and old age, life and death, beauty and ugliness, good and evil, human and nature, this world and the other world, et cetera. This *kasane* layer, too, is based on the *soku-hi* logic that the Möbius strip represents. Noh, like haiku (which I discuss below), is a highly womb-oriented art because *kasane*, based on *soku-hi* logic, is essentially a form of the womb sensibility (see notes 4, 5). Moreover, the Noh aesthetics of *yūgen* (deep, ghostly, and dark with a tinge of red) are those of the womb, a mother-child/daughter complex. Thus, *Yamanba* exemplifies a cosmic womb or a cosmic Möbius strip (see note 10).

At the same time, the play embodies Buddhist deconstruction and nomadism:

From the very beginning,  
Yamanba does not know her birthplace,  
Nor does she have a fixed abode;

Just flowing with clouds and waters,  
She reaches even the deepest mountain recesses.  
(—Koyama and Satō, p. 579; my translation)

*Behold, she was here a while ago;  
Now she is no more to be seen anywhere;  
She flies over the mountains,  
Her voice echoes through the valleys;  
Forever from mountain to mountain, wandering, wandering,  
She has vanished to the land of Nowhere.*  
(—Suzuki 1970 [1959], p. 427; Suzuki's italics)

Here, Yamanba embodies a famous line from the *Diamond Sūtra* (*Kongōkyō* 金剛經): “without a fixed abode, the mind arises.” And her wandering around the mountains expresses her *saṃsāric*, transmigrational Bodhisattva nomadism; she is *jinen* or the cosmic Möbius strip itself, and thus embodies a Derridean trace, a ghost, a *différance*.

But Yamanba is also an embodiment of the *Tathāgatagarbha* (the womb of the Thus-Come/Gone One). *Tathāgata* has a double meaning: the “One thus come” and the “One thus gone.” Yamanba expresses both *Yogācāran kṣaṇika* (instantaneous extinction) and *sanpōchinden ingadōji* (the simultaneous triple evolution of cause-effect-cause), and so is both *this* and the *other* sides of the cosmic Möbius strip. She both goes (the other side) and comes (this side), or neither goes nor comes. As such, Yamanba is the “*fūmo mishō izen no shinmenmoku*” 父母未生以前の真面目 (the true face/self that “exists” before one’s father and mother were born) (see notes 11, 23). This “true face/self” (*shinmenmoku* 真面目) is the “true Other” (the Messiah), what the Zen master Rinzai 臨濟 (?–867) would call “*shakuniku danjō no ichi mui no shinnin*” 赤肉団上の一無位の真人 (the true man with no title who sits on a mass of reddish flesh). One encounters this true self/man (the Other/Messiah) in the eternal past or in the eternal future, which means that in history or this three-dimensional spatiotemporality, one will never meet it, which in turn means that one has already met it here and now at this moment’s topological intersection of temporality/impermanence/the present and eternity (see figure 1b). Rinzai’s “true man with no rank” (eternity/noumenon/*nirvāṇa*) sits here and now “on a mass of reddish flesh” (phenomenon/this world/*saṃsāra*). Hakuin put this *différance* of the Messiah as follows: “Enlisting the help of other foolish saints, one tries to fill the well [of suffering] with snow.”<sup>17</sup> The Messiah will never come, and the Bodhisattva’s effort to assist sentient beings in attaining *satori* (*nirvāṇa*/salvation) is futile, because the Messiah (salvation) has already come, and is always “here and now” at the “intersection” of the two axes of the cosmic Möbius strip.

#### IV. Derridean Justice and Buddhist Justice (Wisdom/Compassion)

Deconstruction inevitably faces the question of how to apply law and justice to non-human realms of the world:

In the space in which I'm situating these remarks or reconstituting this discourse one would not speak of injustice or violence toward an animal, even less toward a vegetable or a stone. An animal can be made to suffer, but we would never say, in a sense considered proper, that it is a wronged subject, the victim of a crime, of a murder, of a rape or a theft, of a perjury—and this is true *a fortiori*, we think, for what we call vegetable or mineral or intermediate species like the sponge. . . . In our culture, carnivorous sacrifice is fundamental, dominant, regulated by the highest industrial technology, as is biological experimentation on animals—so vital to our modernity. (Derrida 1992, p. 18)

Derrida also points out the anthropocentrism of Heidegger, who distinguishes between humans—who, he argues, have “spirit” (*Geist*)—and animals, which lack spirit (Derrida 1989 [1987], p. 47). Derrida explains thus:

Discourses as original as those of Heidegger and Levinas disrupt, of course, a certain traditional humanism. In spite of the differences separating them, they nonetheless remain profound humanisms *to the extent that they do not sacrifice sacrifice*. The subject (in Levinas's sense) and the *Dasein* are “men” in a world where sacrifice is possible and where it is not forbidden to make an attempt on life in general, but only on human life, on the neighbor's life, on the other's life as *Dasein*. (Derrida 1995a [1992], p. 279)

Heidegger's anthropocentrism crucially distinguishes him from Nishida and Suzuki, whose views are often erroneously compared with Heidegger's fascism/Nazism.<sup>18</sup> Derrida argues that there is an “affinity between carnivorous sacrifice, at the basis of our [Western] culture and our law, and all the cannibalisms, symbolic or not, that structure intersubjectivity in nursing, love, mourning and, in truth, in all symbolic or linguistic appropriations” (Derrida 1992, p. 19).

The issues (subjectivity, sacrifice, cannibalism, humanism, anthropocentrism, etc.) raised by Derrida here also have, I believe, an enormous importance to the Mahāyāna Bodhisattva ideals (salvation of all beings through wisdom/*prajñā* and compassion/*karuṇā*) expressed, for instance, in the Noh play *Yamanba* (see notes 2, 6). These issues crucially touch on the related concepts of law and justice (wisdom and compassion, in Bodhisattvan terms) not only for human beings but for all beings, sentient and non-sentient. The mountain crone Yamanba, for instance, says to Hyakuma-yamanba, her phenomenal embodiment in the human world, “Accompanied by the birds and beasts of grieving, dusky mountains, the demon phantom of Yamanba has come out thus far” (Koyama and Satō 1998, p. 571; my translation). Since Yamanba is *jinen* (the nature-human composite) itself, the grief of Yamanba is also that of animals, trees, mountains, and the setting sun—in other words, of all entities in the entire non-human world—which are “sacrificed” for the sake of humanity. More precisely, Yamanba's grief arises from how everything in the world, including human beings, has been appropriated and exploited by what Derrida calls “carno-phallogocentrism” (the anthropocentric sacrifice of non-human lives) (Derrida 1995a [1992], p. 280). This non-anthropocentric perception of the world is the crucial difference between the Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian senses of law and justice and those of Buddhism and Zen.<sup>19</sup>

This non-anthropocentrism, I think, is also a crucial difference between Derrida and Heidegger but also between Derrida and Levinas, whom many critics see as having deconstructed and surpassed Heidegger with the articulation of his asymmetrical I-Thou concept. Compare, for example, the following passages, from Levinas and Suzuki, respectively:

Without knowing how to swim, to jump into the water to save someone is to go toward the other totally, without holding back anything of oneself. To give oneself totally to the other to respond to his unspoken request . . . his 'Thou shalt not kill.' But above all, it is no longer just a question of going toward the other when he is dying, but of answering with [one's] presence the mortality of the living. That is the whole of ethical conduct. (Levinas 1999 [1995], p. 164)<sup>20</sup>

For instance, seeing a baby about to fall into a well, even a bad man who is morally lax in daily life would rush to save the baby. His action springs up from his unconscious; he never thinks such things as he should save the baby, people would praise him for saving it, he would be rewarded, and people would be excited and pleased. . . . [T]his is *mukuyūgyō* 無功用業 (motiveless act) or to let the Great Compassion (*daiji daihi* 大慈大悲) of *jinenhōni* 自然法爾 (as-it-is-ness) function. Insofar as we contribute to today's society, I consider *mukuyūgyō* to be the most important thing. (SDZ 34, p. 372)

Suzuki and Levinas seem here to share an ethical stance. However, Levinas' asymmetrical hospitality/love between "I" and "Thou" crucially differs from the (topological) asymmetry of Suzuki's Mahāyāna Bodhisattva sense of compassion and wisdom. Whereas Levinas' sensibility, while putatively deconstructing the logocentrism of the Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian senses of law, justice, and love, operates because of its anthropocentric humanism within what Derrida calls carno-phallogocentrism, Suzuki's Bodhisattva compassion/wisdom arises from the non-humanistic, non-anthropocentric sensibility of *jinen* (the cosmic womb). Suzuki writes as follows:

The other day, I [Suzuki] saw a movie scene, in which a big snake swallowed something like a small snake and a frog. The scene was so cruel that I felt like saving the frog out of the big snake's mouth. . . . But, snakes and lions eat [small animals] because they are hungry. If we take their prey away, they in turn will be in trouble. However, I think that to wish to solve such a situation arises from our Great Compassion or, to put it more Buddhistically, from the original vow of the *Amitābha* Buddha (*mida no hongan* 弥陀の本願). (SDZ 34, p. 369)

In fact, Levinas' acute ethical injunction "Thou shalt not kill" along with his ideas of hospitality and love, all despite Auschwitz, might ironically have engendered Auschwitz itself. That is because Levinas apparently excludes non-human beings from deserving justice, love, and hospitality, and because it is inevitable that, through carno-phallogocentrism,<sup>21</sup> some human beings will relegate others to the status of non-humans or sub-humans, thereby excluding, oppressing, exploiting, sacrificing as "scapegoats," and "cannibalizing" them. Thus, the existential problematics explored

by Kafka's animal stories, such as *The Metamorphosis*, mirror those that I raise concerning Levinas' anthropocentric ethics.

#### V. Dissemination, Bija, Chora, and Tathāgatagarbha

Magliola, I think correctly agreeing with Cheng, points out an apparent instance of logocentrism in Suzuki's words:

Cheng is pointing out that Suzuki's version of Nagarjuna's 'Eight Negations' makes them behave like a classic negative theology. That is, Suzuki's version assumes an Absolute Reality transcending the human attributions which the Eight Negations negate. (Magliola 1997, p. 170, note 4)

Elsewhere too, in translating Yamanba's lines from the Noh play *Yamanba*, Suzuki uses a misleading expression that Magliola and other critics would doubtless seize upon to criticize his *soku-hi* logic as an instance of logocentrism. Suzuki's words are as follows:

When seen from the standpoint of absolute identity, good and evil are mere forms of relativity, and 'Form is Emptiness and Emptiness is Form' (*rūpam eva śūnyatā śūnyatā eva rūpam*). (Suzuki 1970 [1959], pp. 425–426)

Suzuki's position may also appear entitative in his repeated praise and advocacy of the mother, which I have earlier touched on (see Introduction and notes 4–6). Here are a few more examples of what he says:

In any case, Goethe's "Eternal Womanhood" is an eternal truth. I would say that this "Eternal Womanhood" is not a mere "*Weiblich*," but "*Mutterlich*". . . . Lao-tzu called this [Eternal Womanhood] "evaluating to be nurtured by the mother" or "the mother of ten thousand things" or "the valley goddess does not die." "The valley goddess" is a deification of womanhood. . . . From the Buddhist point of view, this [the true spirit of "ladies first"] is a faith in "the *Avalokiteśvara* of the Great Compassion and Sorrow" (*daiji daihi no kanze'on* 大慈大悲の觀世音). (*SDZ* 34, pp. 346–347)

And the Christian God is a father. The Japanese Buddha is a mother. (Suzuki 1971, p. 168)

And Lao-tzu, who says, "Return to Mother," admires being nurtured by the mother. To be nurtured by the mother means not merely returning to one's origins, but to turn back to them and then come out [into this world]. (*ibid.*, pp. 223–224; see also note 23)

I call [what underlies true freedom] absolute dependence, or [absolute dependence on] motherliness. (*ibid.*, p. 224)

I think that in a sense Japanese culture is feminine. (*ibid.*, p. 247; see also notes 4–7)

In the first place, Catholicism has the Virgin Mary. She is a Maternal *Avalokiteśvara* of Sorrows (*hibo kanze'on* 悲母觀世音).<sup>22</sup>

However, as I have so far explained in the introduction, section I, and elsewhere, Suzuki's "absolute reality" or "absolute identity" (*ichinyo* 一如, lit., one suchness)

and, by extension, that of Yamanba and the mother (womb) are, because they are based on *soku-hi* logic, a locus-less locus of the boundary between this and the other sides of the cosmic Möbius strip; as such, they actually exhibit Derridean deconstruction, *différance*, trace, ghost, dissemination, justice, *chora*, and so on. Just as Derridean deconstruction does not simplistically negate binary oppositional law, Suzuki's *soku-hi* does not simplistically transcend human attributions (*karma*, *saṃsāra*), as is clear from the formula on which the Bodhisattva ideal of compassion and wisdom is based: "form is emptiness, and emptiness is form." Compassion (form/*saṃsāra*/coming-back) is topologically (i.e., deconstructively) no other than emptiness (wisdom/*nirvāṇa*/going-away/transcendence), and vice versa. And this "coincidence" will never take place, which means that it has always already taken place (see figure 1b). The paradox of this coincidence simultaneously both taking and not taking place parallels the paradoxical relationship between potential and actual infinities (see note 15). From the standpoint of potential infinity, the coincidence will never take place, whereas from that of actual infinity, it has already taken place (see my discussion of Hakuin's well at the end of section III).

Let us further compare Derridean *chora* (*khōra*) with *soku-hi* logic, which grounds not only Suzuki's orientation toward the maternal but also the haiku poet Bashō's aesthetics of *fueki ryūkō* 不易流行 (the superimposition of the immutable and the mutable). Derrida writes:

The *khōra* is a *triton genos* in view of the two types of being (immutable and intelligible/corruptible, in the process of becoming and sensible), but it seems to be equally determined with regard to the sexual type: Timaeus speaks of "mother" and "nurse" in regard to this subject. (Derrida 1995b [1993], pp. 91–92)

This third genre (*triton genos*) is not the locus of the synthesis of binary-oppositional terms (see figure 2a); it is the boundary of the cosmic Möbius strip, and as such it exemplifies *soku-hi* logic. Bashō's aesthetic idea *fueki ryūkō*, which I see as being based on *soku-hi* logic, therefore accords with Derrida's idea of *chora*. Bashō's *Oku no hosomichi* (The narrow road into the deep north) is a "nomadic" inquiry into the womb of *jinen*, but his *fueki ryūkō* ultimately deconstructs the stasis of "vaginocentrism"<sup>23</sup> (or *nirvāṇa* in the womb), as can be seen in his last haiku, often considered as his *jisei* 辭世 (farewell haiku):

Tabi ni yande  
yume wa karen o  
kakemeguru  
(—*Oinikki* 笈日記)

Fallen ill on a journey,  
Dream runs around  
The withered moor  
(—my translation)

Symbolically, Bashō's *saṃsāric* journeys here resemble those of ghostly Yamanba, and so, in this sense, this haiku embodies his deconstructive *fueki ryūkō*.<sup>24</sup>

Derrida calls *chora* (*khōra*) a kind of abyss:

If there is indeed a chasm in the middle of the book [the *Timaeus*], a sort of abyss “in” which there is an attempt to think or say this abyssal chasm which would be *khōra*, the opening of a place “in” which everything would, at the same time, come to take *place* and *be reflected* (for these are images which are inscribed there), is it insignificant that a *mise en abyme* regulates a certain order of composition of the discourse? And that it goes so far as to regulate even this mode of thinking or of saying which must be similar without being identical to the one which is practiced *on the edges* of the chasm? (Derrida 1995b [1993], p. 104)

Compare this suggestion with the following imagery from Derrida’s *Glas*:

The golden fleece surrounds the neck, the cunt, the verge, the apparition or the appearance of a hole in erection, of a hole and an erection at once, of an erection in the hole or a hole in the erection: the fleece surrounds a volcano.

The borders of the hole the fleece hides or delimits are certainly those of a pit [*puits*, a well], and what the four black men find at the heart of Harcamone’s heart, at the heart of the rose, is a “shadowy pit”. . . . (Derrida 1986 [1974], p. 66)

While deconstructing and depersonifying *chora* as “mother/womb/receptacle” in “*Khōra*” (1995b [1993]), Derrida is obviously extending his thinking in *Glas* (1986 [1974]). It seems to me that the Zen master Hakuin’s well (see end of section III) is such a pit. And this well or chasm or abyss is also the boundary of the Möbius strip that forms, partakes of, and is formed by an infinite play of “*mise en abyme*” (nest-box embedding).<sup>25</sup> The binary opposition of the phallus/logos (“this side”) and the vagina/womb (“the other side”) is deconstructed in and through the boundary/abyss/well of the Möbius strip; the binary opposition hangs undecidably (and thus with vertigo) at the edge of the strip’s boundary/abyss/well. In *Glas*, as in “*Khōra*,” Derrida deconstructs phallogocentric orthodoxy through his discussion of the “bastardy” and “dissemination” of Genet and *chora*. The same seems true in his other works such as “Force of Law,” which deconstructs carno-phallogocentric law and justice through a non-anthropocentric perspective on the world, a perception that parallels the Buddhist sense of law and justice (*karuṇā*/compassion and *prajñā*/wisdom) as seen in the Zen *kōan*, the Noh play *Yamanba*, and Bashō’s haiku.

### *Concluding Remarks*

As does the Derridean *chora*, Suzuki’s womb-oriented, non-anthropocentric Zen deconstructs itself through *soku-hi* logic, the deconstructive “logic” of the womb/swamp sensibility<sup>26</sup> just as the womb/*jinen* as the Möbius strip (underlying which is *soku-hi* logic) deconstructs itself, thus simulating Derrida’s desert-oriented, nomadic deconstruction (differential thinking). Derrida deconstructs the patriarchal Greco-Roman and the Judeo-Christian bases of law and justice through the womb sensibility of *chora*. Although Suzuki’s *soku-hi* logic, insofar as it is womb/mother oriented, may seem to be entitative and (logo)centric, as Magliola and others point

out, both correctly (from the standpoint of actual infinity—see note 15) but also erroneously (from the standpoint of potential infinity), it actually deconstructs itself. This deconstructive process becomes clear when one uses the cosmic Möbius strip metaphor to compare Derridean metaphors of *différance*, trace, ghost, et cetera with their Buddhist counterparts, including *soku-hi* logic itself, *bija*, and *kṣaṇika*.

## Notes

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The following abbreviation is used extensively in the text and the Notes (full citation in the References):

*SDZ* Suzuki *Daisetsu zenshū* 鈴木大拙全集 (Collected works of D. T. Suzuki)

- 1 – *Soku-hi* 即非 (lit., immediately not) logic is thus both logic and non-logic at the same time, or neither logic nor non-logic. In other words, it is a paradoxical logic. Quotation marks often attached to some words used in this essay, as in “the two sides” of the Möbius strip, indicate that the words partake of the paradoxical nature of *soku-hi* logic. Following *soku-hi* logic, one can say that the Möbius strip simultaneously has two sides and one side (see note 10 below). Unless otherwise specified, all the translations from Japanese into English in this essay are mine.
- 2 – One famous example of the Buddha’s “skillful means” appears in the “Hōbenpon” 方便品 (Skillful means) chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*, where a father (the Buddha) saves his children (deluded human beings) by luring them out of a burning house (the pain and suffering of the mundane world) with the attractive toys he says he has for them outside. “Skillful means,” believed to have arisen from the Buddha’s compassion (*karuṇā*), is one of the two crucial elements of Mahāyāna Buddhism, especially of the Mahāyāna Bodhisattva ideal (discussed below), the other element being wisdom (*prajñā*) (see note 6 and section IV). The paradoxical relationship between the two elements parallels that of *soku-hi* logic: A is A, because A is not-A. Also see Pye (2008), who discusses Suzuki’s seeming essentialism in connection with what he perceives as Suzuki’s great sensitivity to the needs of his Western readers. I would say that this sensitivity is one example of Suzuki’s “skillful means.”
- 3 – For instance, Endō’s novel *Silence* (*Chinmoku* 沈黙), describes the persecution and the eventual apostasy of the Portuguese missionary Sebastian Rodrigues, who enters Japan in the mid-seventeenth century, when Christianity was banned



in that country. In the end, Rodrigues apostatizes by trampling on the *fumi-e* 踏み絵 (lit., stepping-on picture), often a wooden or copper plaque with the figure or face of Christ or the Virgin Mary inlaid in its center, which those who were suspected Christians were required to step on in order to prove their innocence. After Rodrigues' apostasy, the Lord of Chikugo, his persecutor, says to him that he has been defeated by the mud-swamp of Japan. The novel constantly emphasizes images of rain, vital to the Japanese wet-rice paddies (mud-swamp); fertilizer and other putrefaction; and oppressed crypt-Christian Japanese peasants. These images, together with the image of the *fumi-e*, underscore the passive, centripetal Japanese sensibility. Both rice paddies and the *fumi-e* are trodden down and soiled by Japanese (Christian) peasants' feet, but they are both productive of life, either physical or spiritual. In this sense they partake of the womb. Some critics argue that the paternal image of God is changed into a maternal one in *Silence*, and that the concave image of Christ's face in the *fumi-e* that Rodrigues tramples on supports this interpretation (see Etō 1967, Hagiwara 2011, and Higgins 1984). The novel's other womb images include the sea that engulfs Japanese Christians; the Christian peasant Monica (the name of St. Augustine's mother), who offers to Rodrigues a cucumber taken out of her bosom; the pit filled with excreta, above which the Christians, both Japanese and Western, are hung upside down in torture; and the small prison whose floor is wet with urine and where Rodrigues is confined until the dawn, when, taken out of his cell, he is led through a narrow corridor (symbolically, a birth canal) to the place where he tramples on the *fumi-e*. Through these womb images, *Silence* underscores the idea that Rodrigues' apostasy is indeed the apostasy of paternal Western Christianity in favor of a maternal, Japanese form of Christianity. Thus, Rodrigues' trampling on the *fumi-e* sublimates the Eucharist and baptism to a Japanese version of *felix culpa* (for more on *felix culpa* in Endō, see Hagiwara 2001a, 2011).

- 4 – The womb sensibility seems entitative or essentialist when the womb is seen as a cul-de-sac (locus), but it may also be seen as a kind of Klein bottle or Möbius strip where the bottle's "inside" and "outside," or the strip's "this side" and "the other side," are topologically interchangeable (see section II, second paragraph for a discussion of the word "topological"). The logic of the womb is indeed the logic of *soku-hi* (see section I for further discussions of the Möbius strip / Klein bottle and *soku-hi* logic). While Suzuki does not seem to have logically analyzed the essential sameness of *soku-hi* logic and that of the womb, for the various interrelated reasons stated below I think he intuited it. First, Suzuki says that Zen and Japanese spirituality (*nihonteki reisei* 日本的靈性) are co-arising (*sottaku dōji* 啐啄同時) (*Nihonteki reisei* [Japanese spirituality], *SDZ* 8, p. 26) or connatural (*reisai itten o tsūzuru* 靈犀一点を通ずる) (*Kongōkyō no zen* 金剛經の禪 [Zen of the *Diamond Sūtra*], *SDZ* 5, p. 370), and that Zen is not foreign to Japanese culture and life (*Nihonteki reisei*, *SDZ* 8, pp. 25, 26). Indeed, he even says that *soku-hi* logic is that of Japanese spirituality (*Kongōkyō no zen*, *SDZ* 5,

pp. 381, 382, 387). Second, he emphasizes that motherhood underlies the Eastern sensibility in general, and that the Kamakura warrior sensibility was rooted in the great earth (*daichi* 大地), which he equates with motherhood, as the following passages show:

What is called “before the division of subject and object” is the time when God has not said “Let there be light” or the moment when God is about to say so. The dark mystery of dark mysteries (*gen no mata gen* 玄之又玄) of the Eastern mind lies in capturing this moment. . . .

. . . Drawing on Lao-tzu 老子, the first Eastern thinker, we can describe the scene before the division of light and darkness, or subject and object, as ecstasy [*lek-stásis*] or blissfulness (*kōkotsu* 恍惚). Chuang-tzu called this scene [primordial] amorphousness (*konton* 渾沌). It is also called stateless state, formless form (*mujō no jō* 無状の状, *mushō no shō* 無象の象). . . . Lao-tzu called it the ravine of the world (*tenka no kei* 天下谿) or the valley of the world (*tenka no tani* 天下谷). . . . Also, it is called dark, mysterious female (*genpin* 玄牝). It [*genpin*] means mother or female, the same concept as Goethe’s “Eternal Womanhood.” When one keeps and abides by it, not being misled from it, one will return to the state of an infant (*ejji* 嬰兒), limitlessness (*mukyoku* 無極), and uncouth simplicity (*boku* 樸 [lit., un-carved wood]). . . . To recognize intellect as dividing ten thousand things (*banbutsu* 万物) is important, but we must not forget “to keep the mother.” At the root of the consciousness, mentality, thought, and culture of Eastern peoples lies the idea of “keeping the *mother*”—the *mother*, not the *father*. We must not forget this. . . .

What I call the *mother* here is not the Dao (道) or “Godhead,” as commentators have so far usually called it. I want to see the *mother* as something that is much more *concrete* [emphasis added], active, and human. . . . (“Tōyōbunka no kontei ni aru mono” 東洋文化の根底にあるもの [What underlies Eastern cultures], in *Tōyōteki na mikata* 東洋的な見方 [Eastern way of seeing], *SDZ* 20, pp. 286–287. See also *SDZ* 20, pp. 266–267. This “something that is much more concrete, active and human” [i.e., *mother*] seems connatural with the spirits of the Kamakura warriors and Zen, the latter of which is expressed, for instance, in the bamboo-stick *kōan* discussed in section II)

Life all points to heaven. But, whatever one may say, it has to root itself in the great earth (*daichi*). . . . Heaven is to be held in awe, but the great earth is to be felt as intimate and lovable. . . . Heaven is far; the great earth is near. The great earth, no matter what, is *the mother*; she is the great earth of love. There is nothing as *concrete* as this [the great earth]. Religion will certainly not be born unless from this *concrete* thing. The innermost shrine of spirituality (*reisei*) is indeed at the seat of the great earth. The Heian people felt the beauty and pathos (*awaresa* 哀れさ) of nature, but they did not know labor, intimacy, and peace of mind vis-à-vis the great earth. Thus, they could not touch the great earth’s limitless love, acceptance, and *maternity*, which forgives anything. (*Nihonteki reisei*, *SDZ* 8, p. 45; emphasis added. See also note 7)

Heian culture was necessarily replaced by the culture that arose from the great earth, and the ones who represented that great earth were the [Kamakura] warriors, whose roots were in the country and who directly interacted with the farmers. (*ibid.*, p. 50)

The Kamakura warriors and Zen are masculine and strong-willed. But, as Suzuki says, the existence itself of these warriors is rooted in the womb (mother) of the great tangible earth: “The [Kamakura] warriors had physical power, but their strength did not lie there; their strength lay in the fact that they were rooted in the great earth [i.e., mother]” (*Nihonteki reisei*, *SDZ* 8, p. 50).

In the womb sensibility (where time is topologically vertical [see figure 1b] and the past and the future are topologically interchangeable [also figure 1b]), the mother/parent/past (A) is the embryo/child/future (not-A), and vice versa, thereby illustrating a paradoxical superimposition of *soku-hi* logic (A is A, because A is not-A). (For further discussion of this topic, see section III and notes 5, 7.)

- 5 – It is usually said that Shin Buddhism depends on the salvational power of the Buddha (the other-power or *tariki* 他力), whereas Zen depends on one’s own efforts (self-power or *jiriki* 自力) for the achieving of enlightenment, hence Suzuki’s observation that Zen is compatible with the strong-willed warriors of the Kamakura period. However, Suzuki’s *soku-hi* logic deconstructs this binary opposition of self- and other-power: “Is the parent [the Buddha, the other-power] the child [the follower, the self-power], or vice versa?” (“*Jiriki to tariki*” 自力と他力 [Self-power and other-power], in *Daisetsu tsurezuregusa* 大拙つれづれ草 [Daisetsu’s essays in idleness], *SDZ* 20, p. 317). By extension, then, is the mother the child, or vice versa? Answer: neither, or both, in the paradoxical logic of the womb. In this sense, too, *soku-hi* logic is that of the womb, and vice versa. The womb (mother) generates both female (Heian court ladies) and male (Kamakura warriors). Male and female are like the two sides of the Möbius strip, and the “boundary” of the strip is what Suzuki calls “the mother” (womb). It is in this sense that Suzuki’s Zen may be seen as womb-oriented. See also notes 4, 23, 26.

- 6 – I consider the story of Sujata and the Buddha to point out, or at least concur with, the Mahāyāna assertion of the crucial importance to Buddhist enlightenment of this-worldliness (down-to-earthness or, in Suzuki’s thinking, motherhood). Sujata’s offering also embodies *fuse* 布施 (offering, or, by extension, compassion [Skt. *karuṇā*]), the first of the six perfect virtues (*roku-haramitsu* 六波羅蜜) in Buddhism. According to Suzuki, offering is one and the same as the last of these virtues, *chie* 智慧 (*prajñā* or wisdom) (*Kongōkyō no zen*, *SDZ* 5, pp. 377–378; see also note 2 and section IV). I think Suzuki here is saying that the two are *soku-hi*-logically (or deconstructively) “one and the same.” The same can be said of Sujata as *shiki* (this world of forms, *karuṇā*) and the Buddha as *kū* (the other world of emptiness, *prajñā*) in the Sujata story.

The story also suggests the persistent undercurrent in traditional Indian culture of the indigenous worship of Shakti (Śakti) (the divine feminine creative power associated with the earth). This worship underlies Indian and Buddhist tantrisms. As I have suggested above, the point of the Sujata story seems to be succinctly expressed by the famous formula from the Mahāyāna Buddhist text,

the *Heart Sūtra* (*Hannya shingyō* 般若心經): “*shiki soku ze kū, kū soku ze shiki*” 色即是空, 空即是色 (form is emptiness, and emptiness is form), underlying which is *soku-hi* logic (see also note 10 below). That the *Heart Sūtra* ends with a tantric mantra conveys the importance of tantrism, and, by extension, the Shakti maternal element, to the sūtra. Suzuki says the *Heart Sūtra*’s mantra is an integral part of the sūtra (*SDZ* 5, pp. 102–121). *Soku-hi* logic parallels that of Shakti in that both of them subsume the male and female principles. See, for instance, the following:

Śakti’s universal power is the prime mover and *mother-womb* of the recurring cycles of the universe, and as such reflects the procreative powers of eternal substance. She also symbolizes total life-affirmation and is a source of all polarities, differentiation and distinction of elements. The tantrikas [practitioners of Tantrism] also identify the power of Śakti with the Absolute or One, since *she projects the divine bi-unity of male and female principles*. (Mookerjee and Khanna 1977, p. 16; emphasis added)

In my view, however, one crucial difference between the logic of Shakti and that of *soku-hi* is that the former is substantive (entitative or essentialist), whereas the latter is deconstructive. Also notable is Suzuki’s emphasis on the crucial importance of the great-earthness (*daichisei* 大地性) and its motherhood/maternity (*bosei* 母性), which, he argues, underlie and support the sensibilities of Zen and the Kamakura warriors (see notes 4, 5).

7 – Shirō Matsumoto criticizes *Tathāgatagarbha* thought as not being true Buddhism because it is *dhātu-vāda* (Jpn. *kitaisetsu* 基体説 or essentialism), and thus presupposes Ātman (Matsumoto 1989). But Akira Hirakawa refutes this assertion, arguing that *dhātu* in *Tathāgatagarbha* means not Ātman but dependent-co-origination (Skt. *pratīyasamutpāda*; Jpn. *engi* 縁起) (Hirakawa 1990, pp. 78–89).

Quoting Suzuki’s words (1958) in connection with what he calls the *amae* 甘え mentality (mother-child symbiotic dependency, or a regressive desire for the womb) of the Japanese, the Japanese psychologist Takeo Doi (1920–2009) writes the following:

“The mother,” he [Suzuki] says, “enfolds everything in an unconditional love. There is no question of right or wrong. Everything is accepted without difficulties or questioning. Love in the West always contains a residue of power. Love in the East is all-embracing. It is open to all sides. One can enter from any direction.” One might see this as nothing other than a eulogy to *amae*. (Doi 1986 [1971], p. 77)

Doi’s words here represent another view of a connatural relationship between Suzuki’s Zen and the womb sensibility. Suzuki’s view of the all-accepting mother (womb) sheds light on his idea of “suchness” or “thusness” (Skt. *tathatā*; Jpn. *sonomama* そのまま or *konomama* このまま; Chin. *ru* 如), a crucial term in Suzuki’s Zen (e.g., *SDZ* 7, pp. 301, 383–386; *SDZ* 20, pp. 241–259). We can see a close connection between Suzuki’s mother/womb orientation and

*Tathāgatagarbha* thought. William Johnston (1925–2010), a Catholic priest who practiced Zen meditation, similarly points out an essential affinity between *amae* and Zen (see Johnston 1971 [1970], chap. 7; also, see notes 4, 26).

- 8 – *The Woman in the Dunes* is a Kafkaesque novel of magic realism about Jumpei Niki, a high school teacher and amateur entomologist, who goes to catch insects during the summer vacation and is entrapped in a sand pit presided over by a mysterious woman in the dunes (hence the novel's title). The novel centers on his persistent attempts to escape from the pit and his eventual adaptation to life in it with the woman. In this novel one irony, or even a *soku-hi* paradox, is that the entire traditional Japanese rice-paddy village (swamp) where the sand pit is located rests on and is surrounded by sand dunes (desert). Of the numerous womb images in this work, the central one is the sand pit presided over by the woman, an archetypal figure who transcends time by being nameless and simultaneously both young (she is still around 30) and old (the villagers call her "Granny"). When Niki first descends into the pit, he feels as if he is returning to childhood, a suggestion that he is beginning his regression into the womb. That first night, Niki engages in a short debate with the mistress of the pit over the nature of sand. He argues that sand is dry and sterile, but the woman insists that it is wet (rotting) and fertile, an assertion supported by the novel's numerous putrefaction images. Ultimately, her claim is validated when, toward the end of the novel, Niki finds that the sand generates water, and that the woman has become pregnant by him. Essentially, the woman is an emanation of the dunes (nature) and thus has intuitive knowledge of the sand, in contrast to the scientific, objective, but alienated knowledge of the outsider, Niki. The novel's seeming ironies between desert and swamp, sterility and fertility, death and life, young and old, et cetera border on the paradoxes of the "this" and "that" sides of the Möbius strip, which Abe alludes to by naming one of Niki's colleagues "Möbius man."
- 9 – I use the word "metaphor" in the sense in which Derrida, in his "White Mythology," deconstructs the opposition between literal (or natural) and metaphorical (or mythological) languages (Derrida 1982 [1971]). Note that Derrida freely uses metaphorical expressions such as *différance*, dissemination, trace, ghost, hymen, under erasure (originally Heidegger's term), and *chora*. His famous words "there is no outside-text" (*il n'y a pas de hors-texte*) imply the close relationship between this deconstruction of metaphor and literal language and the Buddhist idea of *māyā*, this world, as a delusive texture woven by the Goddess *Māyā*.
- 10 – The regular Möbius strip seen as a whole has only one side, but it appears to have two sides when we impose a limited framework onto it or—although it is the same thing—when we imagine what I will call the "cosmic Möbius strip," a Möbius strip expanded to the size of the universe, which can be conceived of as both closed (actual infinity) and non-closed (potential infinity), as the dotted lines that connect the two ends (the eternal past and the eternal future) of the

horizontal and vertical axes in figure 1b indicate. Thus, we can say that paradoxically, the cosmic Möbius strip has both one and two sides at the same time. Since *soku-hi* logic embodies this paradox, it is not surprising that Hakuin utilizes the paradox of the Möbius strip in order to explain his Zen. See also note 11 below.

- 11 – Logical type or level is a matter of meta- and object levels of language and logic, or of self-reference, as seen in the statement “I am lying,” which is “both a statement in an object language (about ‘I’) and a statement in a metalanguage (about ‘I am lying’)” (Wilden 1977 [1972], p. 124). (We see the same differences in logical types/levels in the self-referential situation of *this* and the *other* side of the Möbius strip, and in the notions of the “inside” and the “outside” of the Klein bottle. The same paradoxes exist in the self-referential *soku-hi* logic, autopoiesis, the womb sensibility, and autophagy [see note 19].) Similarly, Russell’s theory about a “meta-set” (i.e., set of sets) involves different logical types. Wilden argues that while Russell, in order to avoid “Russell’s paradox,” excludes from his set theory a set that has as its members the sets that are not members of themselves, “I” in “I am lying” is such a set because the human subject “I” is “the subject of both the proposition ‘I am lying’ and of the goal-seeking, TIME-DEPENDENT subsystem that proposes it” (Wilden 1977 [1972], p. 124). Furthermore, the same type of paradox that involves a difference of logical types seems to underlie the Zen *kōan* (Zen questions) on “*fumo mishō izen no shinmenmoku*” (the true face/self [that “exists”] before one’s father and mother were born) (see note 23 and section III, last paragraph) and the Zen master Rinzai’s image of “*shakuniku danjō no ichi mui no shinnin*” (the true man with no title who sits on a mass of reddish flesh) (for more on these *kōan*, see section III). Zen, I think, is a matter of truly understanding this fundamentally paradoxical self-referential situation.
- 12 – In Buddhism, *dharma* (Skt.) has two different but interrelated meanings: the ultimate Buddhist truth or law, and phenomena or things, both material and abstract. Respectively, the two kinds of *dharma* are the noumenal and the phenomenal aspects of “reality,” and correspond to *kū* and *shiki* in the *Heart Sūtra* formula: “*shiki soku ze kū, kū soku ze shiki*” (form is emptiness, and emptiness is form) (see note 6). In *soku-hi* logic, similarly, the two are different and yet the same, like the “two sides” of the Möbius strip.
- 13 – *Mumonkan* 無門関 (Gateless barrier), case 43 (my translation based on Blyth and Cleary).
- 14 – A poetic image of *kṣaṇika* is given in the first several lines of a poem by the Buddhist poet Kenji Miyazawa 宮沢賢治 (1896–1933):

The phenomenon called “I”  
is a blue illumination  
of the hypothesized, organic alternating current lamp  
(a compound of all transparent ghosts)

a blue illumination  
of the karmic alternating current lamp  
which flickers busily, busily  
with landscapes, with everyone  
yet remains lit with such assuredness  
(Miyazawa 1989, p. 28; Hiroaki Sato's translation)

- 15 – See note 10 above about how the relationship between the closed and open “cosmic totalities” parallels that of Aristotelian actual and potential infinities. Magliola appears to criticize *Yogācāra* and, by extension, *soku-hi* logic as centric or entitative because he considers only the *actual* infinity aspect of the “A” in the logic’s formula: A is A, because A is not-A. But “A” is also a *potential* infinity, and the relationship between actual and potential infinities is like that between the two sides of the Möbius strip. The same is true of the *Yogācāran ālayavijñāna* (storehouse of consciousness) and the *Avataṃsakan* “*dharm*a world of interpenetration,” both of which Magliola would attack as entitative.
- 16 – “Autopoietic” describes a system that “defines” its boundary by producing its own constituent elements that in turn lead to this very same self-defining process, thus forming a (topologically) self-referential loop in the productive (and destructive) process. In this system, the eye of the observer (who, for instance, as a bystander observes the interactions between a homeostatic open system [the conventional image of an organism] and the environment [ecosystem]) is built into the system itself as both an element and a product. The observer thus can never “stand outside” the autopoietic system as an objective bystander because this system does not have an inside or an outside in the three-dimensional sense. Rather, the outside and the inside here are self-referentially and topologically connected, as in the Klein bottle. For more on autopoiesis, see Maturana 1981 and note 11.
- 17 – This line originates in the words of the Chinese Zen master Setchō Minkakuzenji 雪竇明覺禪師 (980–1052). See *Minkakuzenji goroku* 明覺禪師語錄 (Collected words of the Zen master Minkaku), vol. 5. The *soku-hi* dialectics of “will never-come” and “has-already-come” are essentially different from Hegelian-Marxian dialectics in that the latter strives for a rectilinear sense of development, accumulation, and progress toward the ultimate goal/end. See note 24.
- 18 – On the recent trend to dismiss Nishida and Suzuki as fascistic and nationalistic, see, for example, Heisig and Maraldo 1994. For critiques of such relegation, see Hagiwara 2001b, 2004. See also note 21 below.
- 19 – There is also, I believe, a crucial difference between Christian love as symbolized in the Eucharist transubstantiation (theophagy), which is highly theanthropocentric, and Buddhist *karuṇā* (compassion), which is non-theanthropocentric because it is based on what Norman O. Brown would call

“cosmic autophagy” (life eating itself): “This world as food feeds on itself. The mystical body feeds on itself. Autophagy. . . [:] The identity of the eater and what he eats” (Brown 1966, p. 170; also see note 11).

20 – This and the subsequent quotations and passages in this section are, with minor changes, taken from Hagiwara 2001b.

21 – Japanese sociologist Hitoshi Imamura argues that anthropocentric humanism is cannibalistic for the same reasons I cite here (Imamura 1994, pp. 225–230). That Levinas’ type of humanism and anthropocentrism might have engendered Auschwitz may seem a strong statement to some. However, should it be a fact, which I think it is, we would have to face it. At Auschwitz, humans were regarded and treated as sub-humans or cattle. But how can we avoid such a situation when we carnivore other lives and existence, on the ground that they are non-humans, while, in fact, the binary oppositional distinction between humans and non-humans has been deconstructed? This question seems to echo the problematic of modernity seen, for instance, by Adorno and Horkheimer in their *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. It is, I believe, to address this fundamental problematic that Nishida and Suzuki attempted to “overcome modernity” (see note 18).

22 – Quoted by Shigenobu Suzuki (1969). Here, D. T. Suzuki seems to have *Mater Dolorosa* in mind.

23 – See the following:

Lao Zi [Lao-tzu] appears to identify it [the Lacanian “transcendental signifier”] with the female sex organ, as in chapter 6.

The spirit of the valley does not die;  
This is called the mystical female.  
The gateway of the mystical female  
Is called the root of heaven and earth.  
Darkly, darkly, seemingly there:  
Use it, it will not be exhausted.

This orientation is the opposite of phallogentrism and may be called vaginocentrism. In brief, Daoism provides a useful counterweight to Western logocentrism, phallogentrism, and the metaphysics of presence. (Liu 1988, p. 21)

Liu goes on to refute Magliola’s charge that philosophically, Daoism is essentialist and entitative (Liu 1988, pp. 22–23). I concur with Liu because the womb sensibility, which *soku-hi* logic underlies, is, after all, nonentitative and deconstructive (see notes 4, 6).

Chuang-tzu 莊子, too, is womb-oriented, as can be surmised from his story of *konton* (Jpn.) or *hudun* (Chin.) 混沌 ([primordial] amorphousness) (*Sōshi* 莊子, *Naihen* 內篇, chap. 7; see note 6). The faceless *konton*, symbol of the primary innocence of humanity and the world, also stands for the faceless and amorphous image of the embryo in the womb. In Zen terms, *konton* is “the true



face/self [that “exists”] before one’s father and mother were born” (see note 11 and section III, last paragraph).

24 – This sense of *samsāric* journey overlaps with not only Derrida’s nomadism, but also Kafka’s labyrinthine world, as seen, for instance, in his “A Country Doctor” and *The Castle*. It is suggestive that Kafka was very interested in Kierkegaard, whose qualitative dialectic (or “leap”) seems to me to be very close to *soku-hi* logic. Kafka’s “Before the Law” also appears to echo Kierkegaard’s qualitative dialectic and the mechanism of Zen *satori*, as expressed, for instance, by Shuzan’s bamboo stick (section II) and Hakuin’s well (see note 17 and the end of section III). Derrida also writes “The instant of decision is a madness, says Kierkegaard. This is particularly true of the instant of the just decision that must rend time and defy [Hegelian, quantitative] dialectics. It is a madness” (Derrida 1992, p. 26).

25 – Note that Hakuin also utilizes the image of the nest box in his Zen paintings (see Yoshizawa 2008, pp. 43–69, 82–88).

26 – See also the following:

In the Zen school, completion indeed means nothing but overcoming and discarding those doctrinal expressions [such as *Tathāgatagarbha* thought]. In a sense, all thoughts can be necessary conditions for that school, but not sufficient ones. We can probably say that *Tathāgatagarbha* thought and the Zen school have an irreversible relationship, that while *Tathāgatagarbha* thought has left large traits in the Zen school, the latter does not belong to the category of *Tathāgatagarbha* thought. (Okimoto 1990, p. 538)

I think “discarding” in the phrase “overcoming and discarding” in this passage is a little misleading; instead of “discarding,” I would say “deconstructing”; it seems to me that since it is connatural with *soku-hi* logic, the womb sensibility—and, by extension, Suzuki’s womb-oriented Zen—deconstructs itself (see note 5).

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