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YUTAKA MATSUZAWA ‘talks to’ Louwrien Wijers

In a letter to me of 20 June 1990, sent from his famous address 5370 Shimosuwa-machi, Nagano-ken, Japan, Yutaka Matsuzawa writes under his beautiful Japanese signature: “P.S. I want to inform you that I visit to Amsterdam with my wife and also my daughter Kumiko, with who I visit your home, in 1971.”

Of course I remember until today Yutaka Matsuzawa-san’s impressive presence in my rather small Amsterdam apartment, Houtmankade 35, where many, now reputed, conceptual artists visited and stayed at the time. I had met Matsuzawa-san on the green lawns in Arnhem at the ‘Sonsbeek ‘71’ event, that spread out over the whole of Holland, in which Matsuzawa took part by announcing his concept of ‘world revolt’ at the heart of this show by Wim Beeren, the Sonsbeek Park. I had seen Matsuzawa’s exhibition at ‘Art & Project’ in the summer of 1970, in the beautiful art villa that Adriaan van Ravesteijn and Geert van Beijeren had in Amsterdam. That same summer of 1971 Matsuzawa had a publication in the ‘Art & Project Bulletin’, number 21.

After those meetings we wrote letters back and forth between Japan and The Netherlands. Our correspondence of 1989/1990 came about because I had invited Yutaka Matsuzawa to take part in ‘Art meets Science and Spirituality in a changing Economy’, the meeting of artists, scientists, spiritual leaders and economists that I initiated, encouraged by French Fluxus artist Robert Filliou (1926-1987) in the sense of “an Art of Peace Biennale, Triennale, Quartre...”, as Robert put it. These AmSSE dialogues were to take place at the Stedelijk Museum and the Fodor Museum of Amsterdam, in September and October 1990.

I have put together the following excerpt from Matsuzawa-san's typed out script for his presentation in Amsterdam. It has the title, 'Art meets Science and Spirituality, Art of Piece Biennale, 1990, Amsterdam'. This compilation will give you an insight into Matsuzawa-san's thinking and the import of his oeuvre:

"My art piece presented in Bulletin 21 of Art & Project in Amsterdam, in 1971, was: 'You. Fill the frame of the Diamond World Mandala with water and drink to satisfy your thirst.'

My art piece presented via radio on NHK broadcast in Japan, in 1982, was: 'Now, imagine a white square in your mind, then fill it with water and quench your thirst with it.'

These two pieces are the keys to solving the theories supporting my art. These works are like questions which cut like swords. They ask a person whether she/he is brave; they ask her/him to abandon the established things and desperate catechetic questions. And they ask us whether we can surpass matters, concrete things, and modern civilization.

Once more suddenly, I would like to speak of 'Nehan', the Japanese word for 'Nirvana'. This word is a transliteration of ancient Indian Sanskrit by Hsüan-chuang, a Chinese priest of the T'ang Dynasty. 'va' means to blow, which when added to the prefix 'nir' means blow out. It means to blow the fire of maya, to extinguish ignorance. It means to reach a condition of salvation over agony. It means the death of Buddha. On Feb. 15, 486 BC, Buddha lay on his right side under a couple of sal-trees at Kushinagara. Putting head to the north, and face to the west his last testament was, 'All is vanity. Complete your discipline diligently.' At midnight, while laying on his side in deep meditation, he died.

However 'Nehan', 'Nirvana' does not mean Buddha's bodily death. Under a Bodhendrum, a bo-tree at Buddhagaya, he attained enlightenment after six years asceticism. On the way to Mrgadava to preach he said that he abandoned everything and was emancipated, he was pure and entered into Nirvana. That's an absolute free stage. What on earth did Buddha attain? It's just Ku, Sunyata!

Since I first used the frame of the Diamond World Mandala in my art piece 'The Meaning of Psi', subtitled 'By Way of Heisenberg's Equation of The Universe' in 1959, I use this mandala in almost all my art pieces. Let me say here what a mandala is.

‘Manda’ of mandala means ‘essence’ and ‘the core’. ‘La’ means ‘to have’. Mandala means things that have the essence and things that possess the law of the universe.

Mandalas were brought first from China to Japan by Kukai in 806. Kukai classified mandalas into four kinds. 1) Great Mandala. Diamond World Mandala and Womb Store World Mandala, a real figurative one. 2) Law Mandala. Letter mandala which symbolizes theory and figure. 3) San Mandala. Samadhi means concentrating the mind to ritual tools by which an invocation of Buddha’s essence is symbolized. 4) Katsu Mandala. The Katsuma Mandala symbolizes human’s inevitable retribution. It doesn’t need special expression. Space itself is thought to be a mandala. A garden is a mandala as well. A mountain is a mandala as well. Any specific space is made to be a mandala. These are visible mandalas, but there are also invisible mandalas, both spiritual and physical. For example, the five elements and five vowels meditation by Kakuban, the founder of the Shingi-sect of esoteric Buddhism and the Chakura doxy of Indian Tantrism. These are internal mandalas.

Next let me talk about the two mandalas of the Great Mandala. First, the Womb Store World Mandala is drawn by the Mahavairocana-sutra, in due form, Mahakaruna-garbhadhatu-mandala. It expresses that Buddha redeems all lives with mercy as a mother bringing up an embryo. It is divided into 12 divisions around a central Chudai-hachiyo-in, the world of Mahavairocana-tathagata’s enlightenment, and in total 13 divisions adding an invisible one. The 409 Buddha figures are drawn with a prescribed ritual manual.

The Diamond World Mandala means the true form of eternally adamant enlightenment, composed with nine of Buddha’s meetings, and named The Nine Assemblies Mandala. Central is Joshin-e singly called the Kongo-kai Mandala, a symbol of the layered cosmos. 1461 Buddhas are drawn on the nine assemblies by the Vajrasekhara-sutra. It expresses the ‘prajna’ (wisdom) of Mahavairocana, as compared with the Womb Store World Mandadala which expresses ‘tathata’ (truth).

Now I will present a series of projects, which are collectively titled ‘Towards Quantum Art’.

1. The Nine Meditations Chamber Nine Meditations, Kuso, asubha bhavana, are the nine types of meditations on the corpse to free oneself from attachment to the human body. The 1st one is Choso, vyadhmatataka samjna, to perceive a bloated corpse, and the 9th one is Shoso, vidagdhak samjna, to perceive the bones being reduced to

ashes. My 'Nine Meditations' is the following: You have to contemplate each of nine white papers as earth, water, fire, wind, air, consciousness, time, catastrophe and vanishing. These are simply preparations to vanishing. The exhibition photographs of the self-disciplines actions of 9 + 12 ascetics are to encourage the practice of 'Nine Meditations'.

2. Nine Mandalas All pieces except one are nine groups of nine pieces composed of nine units each. Nine pieces located at nine assemblies of the Diamond World Mandala indicate the numberless cosmos and micro-cosmos by removing each other. Then at last the whole is reduced to the White Circular Fundamental Picture by synthesizing the ideas more and more calmly.

3. Eshiki-ron In Japan we call the garment of a Buddhist priest 'Kesa'. This comes from 'Kasaya' out of Sanskrit, meaning 'non-pure colour'. It is a rectangular cloth covering like a robe from the left shoulder to the right side and it is never dyed in the five pure colours, blue, yellow, red, white or black. We dye it an impure colour with simple vegetable dyes to prevent adhesion and attachment. I expressed this piece in the way that I dedicate canonicals to the nine words, earth, water, fire, wind, air, consciousness, time, catastrophe and vanishing.

4. Water and Fire I pointed to nine places on the globe, (nine capital cities where I left my footsteps). These places were under water about two hundred million years ago. For silkscreen prints of the nine places I used photos taken from a Landsat space craft.

5. After Man I pointed out the remnant years of the human being in case of man's vanishing. Please contemplate, watching an egg of a weird bird, the pilofile, Phalorus phalorus which will rule the places on the globe after man vanishes. (See 'After Man', the book by Scottish paleontologist Dougal Dixon.)

6. Quantum Art Manifesto In 1988 at the Wewerka Galerie in Berlin I exhibited this manifesto as an art piece, which was accompanied by 22 pages of written declaration (and one page with symbolsLW). Those who go on writing after these 23 pages and get through with 'Quantum Art', are the last artists.

7. By Nine Nils This work is subtitled 'V1990 by nine white papers, nine Zen-sheets and nine conceptual ways of 'Quantum Art' and is displayed in the same way as 'Yutaka Matsuzawa Exhibition V1010, by Nine Nil Canvas, Nine Psi Chair and Nine Ultra-Futural Ways' in 1967 at Azuma Gallery in Kyoto.

V1010 is a forerunner of 'Conceptual Art' and
V1990 is a forerunner of 'Quantum Art'.

8. Eshiki-ron 8 In the form of this piece I dedicate canonicals to the theory and nothingness of quantum physics which pursue the birth of the universe. Energy of vacuum occurs inside the mini mini cosmos made from noting by the Big Bang. By this so-called 'repulsion' of the cosmic paragraph, the mini cosmos began to expand rapidly. In succession of this inflation, the same phase change occurred in a vacuum and at this time the energy of the vacuum was freed into the cosmos and vanished as latent heat. By this heat the cosmos became a fire ball.

The very theory that the whole was born from this super-torrid heat. Ah. I set Ku, Sunyata, between four False Vacuums and four True Vacuums and I dedicated nine canonicals altogether.

9. Hypercube 9 by Working Concepts to Search Quantum Art The First Fine Art beyond The Four Dimensions. This piece is in the guise of the true piece that should be created by all of you who have experienced my 'Towards Quantum Art' to this point as your own piece. This is only my catechetic question which I present to you. I hope you make a question for yourself, pursue it, think it out and go with an answer in front of a Zen teacher. (Your answer will not be allowed.)
(Your answer will not be allowed) 1999 times.
(Your answer will not be allowed) 1999 times until 1999 A.D."

The rest of the page is empty with in the middle: "144 letters blank"

Yutaka Matsuzawa explains that his work 'Towards Quantum Art' has an obsession with the number 9. "Namely it has nine sets of art piece groups, each of which is composed also of nine pieces. Moreover a piece among them has an obsession with 9. So the whole of 'Towards Quantum Art' forms a solid mandala. Eventually each of the livable art pieces is stored in each assembly of the layered Diamond World Mandala one by one. The mandala of esoteric Buddhism symbolizes the cosmos. Therefore 'Towards Quantum Art' includes the construction of the layered cosmos. Modern physics will soon make clear a genuine aspect of this many layered cosmos. The year before last in Berlin (1988LW) I started the 'Quantum Art Movement' which should bear the last and true paradigm-shift with my one man exhibition 'Quantum Art Manifesto'.

Today I want to speak of this by all means.

I want to put this as the last art movement
which accomplishes its mission
by the end of the second millenium
and also I want to campaign for it.
Here I want to note the recruiting of the Quantum Artist.

What on earth is 'Quantum Art'?"

For it, here I want to read the first page of 'Quantum Art Manifesto'.

Quantum Art Manifesto I

This art is an art that is based on a concept which is similar to that of
the quantum in quantum physics.

This art does not appeal to human beings' senses directly. Nor can
human beings directly see it or touch it.

This art can be recognized and understood only by human beings'
intellectual capabilities, that is, only through the workings of human
reason such as judging, hypothesizing, and the forming of concepts.
Also, this is a case of specialization through an intellectual power that
moves toward sharpness.

This art will finally break through the stagnation in the conceptual arts
and achieve a far greater progress. It is an art in which rare artists
(such as scientists) have begun to capture the new humankind's
inherited forms (of which Noam Chomsky speaks), and which will have
the possibility of creating and promoting."

It is hard for me, LW, to understand what Matsuzawa-san means to say
with "creating and promoting." But I do agree, that contemporary art
has, as far as I know, from the early 1960s onward, brought forward an
art approach that, as Matsuzawa puts it, "cannot be experienced by our
senses", but "can be recognized and understood only by our human
intellectual capabilities, through reasoning, judging, hypothesizing and
forming concepts." I also agree that this art needs "specialization
through an intellectual power that moves toward sharpness." My
agreement to the above is based on my little knowledge of Buddhist
logic, that also did arouse in me a vision of and a longing for an art
really based on inner concepts and executed as a direct perception.

Furthermore I fully agree with Matsuzawa-san that "this art will finally
break through the stagnation in the conceptual arts and achieve a far
greater progress." Let me remark here that I am not sure that what we

have so far called “Conceptual Art” actually has anything to do with pure concept. It may be known to you, reader, that Henry Flynt, American artist and philosopher, coined the term ‘Concept Art’ in 1961 and publicly promoted the idea of “an art of which the material is concepts” in New York from 1962 onward. In 1967 the artist Sol LeWitt, according to Flynt, bluntly transformed Flynt’s idea of ‘Concept Art’ into the term ‘Conceptual Art’, which I think, is a fake transformation into materiality of a thing that was meant to remain purely immaterial.

I do specifically agree with Matsuzawa-san that “this art will achieve a far greater progress.” I have always felt that the so-called ‘Conceptual Art’ was a set back in the evolution of art that has cost us now almost fifty years of deterioration in visual art instead of progress.

Finally, I full-heartedly agree with Matsuzawa-san that concept art’ “is an art in which rare artists (such as scientists) have begun to capture the new humankind’s inherited forms,” as he puts it. Matsuzawa-san adds “(of which Noam Chomsky speaks)”. This is a point that I am not really aware of. I just know that the American artist Lawrence Weiner requested me to have Noam Chomsky on his panel for science in the second edition of ‘Art meets Science and Spirituality in a changing Economy’ in 1996 in Copenhagen. Unfortunately Chomsky declined my invitation because his fully booked schedule needed him to make appointments two and a half years ahead of an event.

It was also Lawrence Weiner who told me in 1986 in Amsterdam to research Henry Flynt and interview him. I did that immediately, went to New York and talked to Flynt at length. It became the reason why not only Yutaka Matsuzawa, but also Henry Flynt took part in the ‘Art meets Science and Spirituality in a changing Economy’ program at the Fodor Museum in Amsterdam in 1990. If you might want to know more about the ideas suggested by Henry Flynt go to www.henryflynt.org or look for his book ‘Blueprint for a Higher Civilization’, Milan, 1975, that has Flynt’s early texts.

Yutaka Matsuzawa proceeds in this text for his 1990 presentation in Amsterdam that I am quoting from: “We are now enjoying a golden opportunity. Soon we will experience a good day in our lives when we become aware of the intellectual evidence that the human being has accomplished thus far.” My wish (LW) is too that the above awareness will indeed soon be experienced.

Matsuzawa-san continues: “And yet it may become the last evidence of the human being.

We should perceive this deeply.
What?

The universe is created from nothing and reduced to nothing. All material particles of the universe answer in various ways of vibrations of a 'super string'. This is the solving of the eternal riddle. The fundamental problem of philosophy, metaphysics, and religion is about to be answered by theoretical physicists.

In November of 1982 Alexander Vilenkin of Tufts University, USA, wrote a paper titled 'The Creation of the Universe from Nothing' published in the physics magazine 'Physical Letters'. In the paper Vilenkin said that the universe was created from literally nothing. By saying 'Nothing' he meant no time, no space and no energy situation, namely the theory that the whole universe was created from nothing indeed. This was a shocking presentation that he made.

It's also a shocking that a person stated that in the cosmos, time goes back at a certain time and we can see the future as the past and then the cosmos vanishes. He is Stephen Hawking of Cambridge University, who is called a 'super genius'. On April 29, 1980, at the inaugural ceremony for his Lucas Professorship of logical physics at Cambridge University, Hawking gave a memorial lecture, 'The End of Logical Physics Can Be Seen?' Matsuzawa-san concludes: "Logical physics will end. It's a terrible statement."

He then remembers that in the summer of 1984, M. B. Green of Queen Mary University, London, and J.H. Schwarz of Caltech University, Pasadena, stated that matter is composed of strings and introduced 'The Super String Theory'. Matsuzawa-san predicts: "This will become a final 'Cosmic Theory'."

He proceeds: "As the final achievement of human civilization, physics soon elucidates the truth of the cosmos and physicists says positively that theoretical physics will end. Considering our contemporary art, we must hurry to answer for the present age reaching this situation. We must hurry up.

Some time ago I introduced a concept of 'the last fine art', I created the final art expression and looked to the situation where there is no more art.

In other words, I declare that fine art is over. Thus I recently began to draft my 'Quantum Art Manifesto' and rushed into the last level of

realizing my intention. Within this century at the latest we should achieve the theory and product of 'Quantum Art'. The collaboration of far-sighted artists, art theorists and specialists of many fields is requested. Oh! Prodigies of all the world! Fall in here! When we think of it, since the Altamira Cave paintings human beings have created many fine arts. Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Gothic, Renaissance art and in modern ages, the Impressionist School, Post-Impressionism, Fauvism, Cubism, Abstract Art and Surrealist Art. From before the 1960s Neo-Dada, Assemblage, Happening, Pop Art, Op Art, Primary Structures, Technology Art, Minimal Art, Process Art and Earth Art continued. And at last Conceptual Art seems to bring this to an end.

But also Bad Art was produced, daring to leave a shady feeling of art making, and then they worked out Post-modernism with the four pains, nay the eight pains. But now all this existing art can not answer for the present day. Willing fellow thinkers who want to answer for the present day and prove the present day unite!

Fall in here! Let's complete the last art expression of the human being by 'Quantum Art' and declare that fine art is over! The new quantum artists of all the world unite! In this connection, please read the first page of 'Quantum Art Manifesto I' in the 22 pages of the 'Quantum Art Manifesto' which I drafted!

Succeed to write the words that follow the 22nd page!
You! New new Quantum Artists!"

On page 17 of his typed out presentation Matsuzawa-san prints that first page of his 'Quantum Art Manifesto I' again.

Page 18 starts with the headline 'To The Person Who Becomes A Quantum Artist'.

He formulates nine points:

1. We pursue the ideas that are different from any of the existing art philosophies.
2. The ideas, philosophies and ways that bring a true paradigm shift of art.
3. The ideas, philosophies and ways that prophesy the vanishing of art and make it happen.
4. Philosophies and ways that bring about the human being's final artistic achievement by the full and radical operation of concept.
5. These will be the art achievements that can be agreed upon and understood only by a truly ultra-advanced minority.
6. These are the products that can be produced by specialists of specialists.

7. Therefore it does not matter that it be understood and supported by a majority of the world.
8. But in its turn it controls and decides the destiny of all human beings.
9. And it should be able to respond and align with the destiny of the cosmos.

On page 19 Matsuzawa-san says: "I will give an outline of the basic facts and concepts of Buddhism, namely Ku, Sunyata, Hannya-shingyo (Heart SutraLW), Kaihogyo-ascetics at Mount Hiei, the Meditation on a letter of esoteric Buddhism, Shingon mantra or dharani, Kotaishisama-gokushoku and the Fudasho-pilgrimage. Most of our people have a knowledge of these items but I want to certify those, because these ideas form the background of my thinking. And, at present, when the elucidation of the physical principle of the cosmos is being completed, these are the only keys to solve the several catechetic questions of my 'Quantum Art' which is the last paradigm-shift of art, I claim. This is the reason.

We should hurry up!

Hurry up! Hurry up! Hurry up!

Hurry up! Hurry up! Hurry up!

Hurry up! Hurry up! Hurry up!

I estimate that the vanishing of the human being begins in 2002 and finishes in 2222.

But this cosmos may collapse now
by quantum conversion. Now!

I suddenly want to penetrate to the pith. It's the pith of the cosmic principle, the pith of human-ethic and I dare to say the pith of beauty, I think. What's that? Ku, void, Sunyata. Sunyata of Buddhism. Ku is a proverbial saying to us Orientals. I want to put this Ku, Sunyata, as the philosophy on which my art depends. All actions of man are for the sake of reaching this Ku.

We can say that man is living to master this Ku, Sunyata, realize this Ku, Sunyata, and go to the very end of this Sunyata. As to the principle, the simpler, the better. The principle is Sunyata. Sunyata is just the principle. All is Sunyata. It is by Sunyata that we thus get together here. For the sake of Sunyata.

This is the field of Sunyata.

This is the time of Sunyata.

Sunyata of sunyata. Ku of ku.

What is Ku on earth? What is Sunyata on earth?"

Praise to Yutaka Matzusawa wells up from my heart (LW) when I read the above. Is it him who rescues art? My mind goes all directions. Was'nt it Monet who looked for the stability of truth in art? How did Duchamp approach it? I reread: 'Smile of the Buddha' by Jacquelynn Baas, University of California Press, 2005, that starts with her saying: "My own introduction to a Buddhist perspective was seeing Thornton Wilder's play 'Our Town' when I was in my early teens. For an unhappy Dutch Calvinist girl in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Wilder's insistence on the importance of the everyday was a Saul-on-the-road-to-Damascus moment. At that time there was no intellectual framework available to me within which these Buddhist-influenced insights could blossom. That came when I began to research the influence of Buddhism on the work of Paul Gauguin.'

Above her introduction in 'Smile of the Buddha', Jacquelynn Baas quotes Kakuzo Okakura: 'Buddhism is a growth. It is this very power of adaptation and growth that constitutes the greatness of that system.' Under it she quotes Tich Nhat Hanh: 'The essence consists of living principles that cannot bear any specific formulation.'

Kakuzo Okakura (1863-1913) was in 1890 one of the founders of the first Japanese fine-arts academy, *Tokyo bijutsu gakko*. He became the head of it and contributed to the development of arts in Japan. Tich Nhat Hanh, the Vietnamese Zen buddhist monk, nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize 1967, was born in Vietnam in 1926 and fled his country in 1966. He lives in exile in France helping many thousands of individuals seeking peace in their hearts and in their world.

Jacquelynn Baas in her introduction: "The impact of the teachings of the Buddha on modern artists in the West is relatively unexplored. What the Buddha offered is an articulated path of freedom from mental and emotional conditioning. The teaching unique to later Buddhism is 'emptiness'; all things are empty of 'inherent self-existence'."

She proceeds: "It was Siddharta Gautama who, in a disciplined search for a solution to the problem of suffering perceived this fundamental understanding of reality. He perceived the interdependence of all things and explained this happens by cultivating attitudes and behaviors consistent with it - the so-called middle way between indulgence and asceticism. His dharma earned him the Sanskrit title Buddha - 'the awakened one'. Seeing things as they actually are. Knowledge was understood to be what remains when false beliefs are removed. Marcel Duchamp's version of this was: 'There is no solution because there is no problem.'

Certain Western artists intuitively grasped the philosophical implications contained in the Asian art they saw. Vincent van Gogh and Paul Gauguin read up on Buddhism, reaching the sophisticated level of understanding conveyed in Gauguin's manuscript 'Diverses Choses': 'Buddha, a simple mortal who neither conceived nor comprehended God, but who conceived and comprehended fully the intelligence of the human heart, reached that eternal bliss, Nirvana - the last stage of the soul in its progressive movement through the ages -. All people, by virtue of the attainment of this wisdom, are able to become Buddhas.'

Buddhist perspectives were transmitted to European and American artists through books by Western scholars and through Asian devotional art, along with garden design and Japanese prints. A Western form of artistic expression that has been influenced by Buddhism may not 'look' Buddhist. Works of art are complex products of complex minds, and this makes the search for the sources of inspiration that lie behind them cumulative and endless.

The relevance of East and West do convey very real historical cultural differences, but that relevance fades after World War II, when the work of Asian artists like Isamu Noguchi, Nam June Paik and Yoko Ono became a vital part of European and American culture.

Art comes from and is realized in a place before language, outside of the discursive mind. It shares this place, the place of emptiness, with Buddhist meditation practice. This is why the relationship between art and Buddhism turns out to be so rewarding."

Especially this sentence from the book of Jacquelynn Baas resembles what I have said about art myself (LW) since around 1987.

Jacquelynn Baas again: "What the creation and the perception of art share with Buddhist meditation practice is that they allow us to forget ourselves and thus realize ourselves. They are parallel practices. This is perhaps, what the American painter Ad Reinhardt (1913-1967) meant when he wrote, 'The fine arts need not sit cross-legged'."

In accordance with how Jacquelynn Baas concludes her introduction here, outstanding German artist Joseph Beuys (1921-1986) told me in 1979: "Really 'art=tantra' Louwrien!" In Paris Beuys speaks about his 'art=tantra' concept with Lama Sogyal Rinpoche on 27 January 1982. On the instigation of Robert Filliou again, I initiated their dialogue that is in my book of 1982, 'His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama talks to Louwrien Wijers'.

In April 1982, my Tibetan Buddhist teacher Lama Thubten Yeshe (1935-1984), turned around to me while walking towards a door slightly lower on the grounds of his 'Tushita' centre in McLeod Ganj, in the foothills of the Himalayas, near to where the Dalai Lama lives, and said: 'You don't have to do sitting meditation. Your meditation is already in your sitting down to write and in your making art.' He smiled at me and light from within made his face look pure golden.

Jacquelynn Baas explains in her first chapter, 'The Infinite Moment': "The modern era in Western art emerged from the Romantic attitude toward life that developed over the course of the 1700s. Romanticism was a revival of a medieval impulse that valued feeling and the bonds of love over intellect, a reaction against the rationalism of the Enlightenment. A number of elements were part of this overall shift of emphasis from intellect to feeling, amongst them a yearning for the experience of awe tinged with terror and exaltation that artists referred to as 'the sublime', and a sense of the transitoriness of human life newly understood as an expression of nature rather than of God.

Romanticism in art, exemplified by the turbulent paintings of Eugène Delacroix, peaked around 1830. It was eclipsed in France by Realism and then Impressionism, but artists' interest in the concept of impermanence continued. By the second half of the nineteenth century a significant number of educated people no longer believed in God. The two major available thought systems that eliminated the need for a concept of God were science and Buddhism.

Buddhism offered a solution to the dilemma of satisfying spiritual yearnings in a self-consciously scientific era. Buddhism was a new kind of threat to Christianity, for science and Buddhism were seen as compatible. In 1888 Emile Burnouf writes in the 'Revue des deux mondes': 'Pure Buddhism has the amplitude required of a teaching at once religious and scientific.'

The Impressionist Claude Monet (1840-1926) points to the impact of Buddhism's emphasis on the present moment in the development of his mature style. Monet may yet be the most eloquent Western expression of the Buddhist concepts of impermanence and the interdependence of all things.

Vincent van Gogh and Paul Gauguin shared an interest in Buddhism, which informed their art in different ways. For Van Gogh, the Buddha provided a personal model for how life as an artist might be lived - how artistic practice could be a compassionate practice. For Gauguin, the Buddhist concept of desire as the cause of suffering was a factor in his

struggle to sort out internal philosophical and psychological issues, while Buddhist imagery supplied a symbolic language for communicating these issues in his work.

Visual artists were inspired not only directly by Buddhist ideas but secondarily, through the Buddhist-influenced theories of such 19th-century musicians and writers as Richard Wagner and Leo Tolstoy.”

The book ‘Smile of the Buddha’ informs on Buddhist influences in the work of Monet, Van Gogh, Gauguin, Redon, Kandinsky, Brancusi, Duchamp, O’Keeffe, Noguchi, Reinhardt, Klein, Johns, Cage, Paik, Ono, Anderson, Martin, Irwin, Celmins and Tuttle.

Now back to Yutaka Matsuzawa stating that Stephen Hawking holds that this cosmos vanishes someday and is reduced to nothing. “Why did I begin to talk about the most advanced cosmic elucidation of modern physics to consider what Ku, Sunyata, is? Because I think that Ku, Sunyata, which has been the center of Buddhist thought for two thousand years, will be elucidated by quantum physics of the present day at the end of the 20th century.

It’s Ku, Sunyata, Void in the phrase of Hannya-shingyo, Prajnaparamita-sutra (Heart SutraLW), ‘Matter is void, void is matter’. It’s the essence of Hannya-kyo which is named as the the supreme truth of Buddhism.

In our language the letter of Ku, void means ‘sky’ and ‘vacant. Buddha Sakyamuni considered that all things in the universe were made as the origin of something with the nature of swelling. He made it Ku, Sunyata, and made it the fundamental principle of the universe.

After six or seven hundred years of the entering into Nirvana of the Buddha, Nagarjuna, an Indian high priest, said in the book of Chu-ron, Mula-madhyamaka-shastra: ‘There is Ku, Sunyata, therefore all things materialize. Without Ku, Sunyata, all things can not materialize.’

This is how it is. The very Ku, Sunyata, is the root. Such is the case. It is proper that I put the principle of my art on Ku, Sunyata, and as a matter of course we should accomplish the art of Ku, Sunyata.”

Matsuzawa-san then praises Nagarjuna, “Who is called the first man understanding Ku, who spoke of the essence of Ku logic as, ‘which does not bear, does not die, is n’t extinct, is n’t constant, is n’t singular, is n’t plural, does n’t come, does n’t go, stands aloof from fiction and is supreme bliss, as such taught the Buddha. I worship the highest

person of the preachers'. ('A Eulogy of Worship' translated by Yuichi Kajigami)"

On the next page Matsuzawa-san prints an English translation of the Heart Sutra. The following page is blank with in the middle just the word: "(void)"

On page 28 Matsuzawa-san states: "My nationality is Japanese. But I think that nations are worthless systems. Also Tenno which is called the symbol of the nation is a rubbish existence, I guess. Also the Shintoism which is connected with Tenno has the shadow of trivial distorted thought that is realized by the background or frame of an enslaved mind. I destest it.

Such things will vanish soon.

I don't feel bitter that such things vanish.

But all things vanish. All things vanish."

He continues: "Various asceticisms have been succeeded at Mount Hiei, a sacred place of Tendai esoteric Buddhism. Among them is Kaiho-gyo asceticism with a thousand years' tradition (of walking LW). Without knowing why, I have to talk about it," he adds and explains different walks to the sacred places on Mount Hiei - one for 20 hours per day during a thousand days.

Then he explains the procedure of the meditation called 'Ajikan' of Shingon esoteric Buddhism, which involves meditating on the letter 'A', "through which the faithful lay man can catch the way of deliverance from living and dying. Somehow I've got to speak of it," he says and gives a profound explanation, concluding: "But, as Eliade said, mantra is supposed to be not the reduction of a long sutra but is the intuitive symbol of the truth 'Ku, Sunyata' which sutras elucidate.

He further explains mantra and sutra according to Kukai. On page 35 jumps to the mantra 'Om mani padme hum' and translates it 'O Bijou on a Lotus. Wish it good luck.' He ends: "The words of Tantrism have different secret meanings." He then writes out and types out the mantra 'Gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi svaha', and translates, 'Gone, gone, gone beyond, gone altogether beyond, gone altogether beyond. O what an awakening!'"

Now he recites his mantra of vanishing:

"All human beings Let's vanish Let's go. Let's go. gate. gate.

All human beings Let's vanish Let's go. Let's go. gate. gate.

I recite my mantra of vanishings here. I have already recited the mantra one million times. I waved this 22 meter pink vanishing streamer upon which was written the mantra of vanishings in sumi-ink at Sakai-city in Osaka in 1966. I waved it at eight maha places on the globe. I waved it eachwhere and at each place as a Psi Pilgrimage. I waved it frantically and earnestly to pray that the human beings may reach Nirvana. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, attain. In haste. In haste. Let's go. Let's go. Attainingly I waved the vanishings streamer here in Amsterdam today. All human beings Let's vanish. Let's go. Let's go, gate, gate. Anti-civilization Committee. With secret meaning observe.

If the human beings vanish early, many other animals will survive' 50 million years from now, all at once, long after the human beings have vanished, our present co-existing species of animals will also almostst vanish. The globe continues changing the crust and the continents will have other climates than today's. And on the ground new animals, and new species are living.' He points at Dougal Dixon, the paleontologist, who forecasts the animal phase in his book 'After Man'."

Matsuzawa-san pictures Dixon's distarterops (scinderedens solungulus) on the Polar Ocean and the porpin (stennis piscivora) on the South Pole, the khiffah (armasenex aedificator) in the Tropical Forest, and the sand flapjack (platycaudatus structor) living in Deserts. He concludes, "And the animals that appear after that will be vanishing in the fullness of time."

On the next page he paints that the plants will vanish too, that the sun will become a red gigantic star and will die, that the gas between the stars will be exhausted and the death of the galaxies will start so that structures will vanish from the universe and the remaining black holes will be resolved in neutrino and they will vanish too. "Now the universe is vacant" he writes on a blank page.

Next Matsuzawa-san turns to Professor Yoichi Yamamoto, "metallic mineral scholar from Japan, who observed in 1969 in his book 'Buddhism and Natural Science' that Ku, Sunyata, is the fundamental cause which produces all things. Therefore Ku is a real aspect and so is something existing. Professor Yamamoto regarded daringly this something existing as 'Planck's constant h'. The very Planck constant that Dr. Max Planck, famous German physicist and one of the creators of quantum dynamics discovered on Dec. 14, 1900. This is something expressed quantitatively of Ku's infinitesimal corpuscle which Buddha conceived as the origin of all things and phenomena To relate this

'Planck's constant h ' to the core of Buddhism's philosophy is a very fantastic thing, I esteem.

And let me introduce one more person. He is Dr. Shuji Inomata, who wants to catch 'an imaginary world' and found that there is another imaginary space-time outside of ordinary space-time and made a theoretical system for a 'Shadow World'. According to Inomata's theory 'a huge imaginary world is existing in our world'. It has something in common with above mentioned Vilenkin's conception that the universe was born from 'Nothing'. Inomata says that endless energies are born from this 'Nothing'. Moreover he conceives that human consciousness becomes a pipe which connects the 'Imaginary world' and the 'Real world'. He called it 'Conscious engineering'. Also he says that the imaginary world makes Super ordinary phenomena such as telepathy possible.

Looking back at esoteric Buddhism and its features of secretness, mysteriousness and exclusiveness Matsuzawa-san says that "treatises are deep and cannot be written by pen and ink. So by a picture the philosophy is disclosed without enlightenment. As such the art of esoteric Buddhism was produced to convey the deep meaning of the Buddha to ordinary men by expedient means. For example a picture as the way to approach the truth."

Matsuzawa-san completes this work with: "At last I'll talk about two things and then vanish my soul of language. One is the following. At Mount Koya, a sacred place of Shingon esoteric Buddhism, for 1150 years every morning they have offered a breakfast to Kobodaishi, Kukai. They believe the great teacher is living and contemplating calmly. And every year on 21 March they change Daishi's dress. And the other one is that at eighty eight holy places of Shikoku-island where Kukai walked, even now pilgrims, who are dressed in white, with a sedge hat on, staff in the right hand and ringing a bell, are walking even now. On their sedge hat they write 'Dogyo-ninin', meaning 'to walk with Kukai'."

Yutaka Matsuzawa, born 2.2.1922, passed away 15.10.2006. How happy I am to walk with him still and talk with him. That is why, like before, I have titled this piece of writing 'Yutaka Matsuzawa 'talks to' Louwrien Wijers'. Once you recognize a good friend, how near you remain always. It is great.

Yutaka Matsuzawa started his work when the tide of Conceptual Art was yet to rise. Originally Matsuzawa-san was experimenting with

poetry, that was in the 1940s. Then, from 1954 on, he started creating Symbol Poems of objects and words. Ten years later he received a message: "I was sleeping at midnight on the 1st of June 1964, when suddenly I heard a voice saying, 'Let Object Vanish'. In the darkness I wrote down the words so as not to forget. Of course, I didn't forget them. The meaning of the words 'Let Object Vanish' was too clear for me to doubt. My works had been composed of both objects and words. The world told me to abandon objects and keep the words only. I kept asking myself for three days and nights if there could be works of art composed of words only. I made up my mind that this would be my way. It was the 4th of June 1964. From that day I began composing my works only by words."

In 1970 Yutaka Matsuzawa exhibits at the Guggenheim Museum, New York. In 1971 he takes part in Sonsbeek '71, in Arnhem, together with: Vito Acconci, Bas Jan Ader, Carl Andre, Ben d'Armagnac, Richard Artschwager, Bruce Baillie, Douwe Jan Bakker, Joseph Beuys, Ronald Bladen, Marinus Boezem, Stanley Brouwn, Daniel Buren, Javacheff Christo, Tony Conrad, Hanne Darboven, Walter de Maria, Ad Dekkers, Jan Dibbets, Ger van Elk, Pieter Engels, Groep Enschede, E.R.G., Hans Eykelboom, Barry Flanagan, Hollis Frampton, Ernie Gehr, Dan Graham, Robert Grosvenor, Michael Heizer, Douglas Huebler, Ken Jacobs, Joepat, Donald Judd, On Kawara, W. Knoebel, Hans Koetsier, Axel van der Kraan, Peter Kubelka, George Landow, Standish Dyer Lawder, Sol LeWitt, Richard Long, Moving Mass, Mario Merz, Moore, Robert Morris, Bruce Nauman, Robert Nelson, Groep Noord-Brabant, Claes Oldenburg, Dennis Oppenheim, Nam June Paik, Panamarenko, Egbert Philips, Emilio Prini, Klaus Rinke, Peter Roehr, Ulrich Rückriem, Edward Ruscha, Fred Sandback, Jean-Michel Sanejouand, Wim T. Schippers, Richard Serra, Paul Sharits, Eric Siegel, Tony Smith, Robert Smithson, Kenneth Snelson, Michael Snow, Koert Stuyf + Ellen Edinoff, Shinkichi Tajiri, Sajiki and Yokoyama Tenjo, Carel Visser, Andre Volten, Hans de Vries, Lex Wechelaar, Lawrence Weiner and Joyce Wieland.

In 1972 Yutaka Matsuzawa is invited to the Documenta 5 in Kassel, Germany, projecting 'Psi Mandala'. In 1974 he is in 'Prospectiva '74' in Sao Paulo, Brazil. In 1976 he partakes in the 37th Venice Biennale in Italy. For his participation in the 'Bienal de Sao Paulo 1977' famous Japanese art critic Professor Ichiro Haryu writes in the special publication 'Four Japanese Artists' on Yutaka Matsuzawa: "According to him, art should aim at 'Nirvana', meaning ecstasy beyond material reality. He sees the world of non-existence not through sense, but through super-sense, minimizing the material medium. Hence his

method of 'non-sensory paintings' as a device named 'Psi'. He presses a leap from sense to super-sense, from substance to non-existence, with a blank sheet of paper, a white canvas and words that indicate an impossible meditation. He named his own art extremely conceptualized, toward the annihilation of the world, 'vanishing' in contrast to 'happening'. He preaches the fictitiousness of civilization as the incentive to emancipation." Professor Haryu mentions that the Japanese artist who moved to New York in 1961, Shusaku Arakawa, called Matsuzawa's work, 'The most idiosyncratic artistic concept that post-war Japan had ever brought forth'."

In 1988, Matsuzawa-san, meanwhile 66 years old, published his now famous 'Quantum Art Manifesto'. Hajime Morita, then curator at Saito Memorial Kawaguchi Museum of Contemporary Art, wrote with regard to it: "Taking his art into the world of contemporary quantum mechanics Matsuzawa has a peculiar position in Conceptual Art, but ultimately he stands out as an impressive pioneer of Conceptualism. However, Matsuzawa is not a conceptual artist. His work does not fit the category. Conceptual Art eventually stumbled into a blind alley. Matsuzawa on the other hand has been engaged in being true and correct."

"He explained," says art critic Midori Ishikawa, "that Quantum Art is a method to directly seize in our mind the fundamentals of the cosmos, without any media, by way of meditation, contemplation, intuition, inspiration and revelation, to intentionally improve this field in our brain. Each one of us is supposed to be a quantum artist." Ishikawa then continues: "In the 20th century theoretical physics has made it clear that the entire cosmos is made of multi-dimensional structures, which leads to the conclusion that our cosmos is a super-dimensional, diverse existence appearing in the three-dimensional world. It is Matsuzawa's 'earnest wish' to revive our spiritual cosmology by unifying it with the entire order of the cosmos. Matsuzawa is a religious artist of the nuclear age."

Other sayings I found on Matsuzawa-san are:

"He has been successful in introducing a completely new kind of art."

"He has continually striven to combine the profound voice of the spirit with art in a fresh and simple form."

"His work will keep attracting us in the future,"

Louwrien Wijers

Amsterdam, 7 March 2007

P.S. Just as I finish writing this, a piece of paper with my handwriting falls from above onto my computer. It fell from a Piet Mondriaan book and quotes him saying in 1942, living in New York: "The aim is not to create more individual forms and colours, with all their restraints, but to strive for their elimination in favour of a greater oneness."
How similar Matsuzawa and Mondriaan are. LW

Louwrien Wijers (1941) is visual artist and writer on art. She calls herself a sculptor because, after having been an adept of Joseph Beuys for 18 years, 1968-1986, she sees also writing as sculpture. Her sculptural work is mental sculpture and material sculpture. The biggest mental sculpture was 'Art meets Science and Spirituality in a changing Economy', 1990 and 1996. Compassionate Economy is now her focus. See www.louwrienwijers.nl or write to louwrien@louwrienwijers.nl

caption:

Matsuzawa-san's presentation 'Quantum Art' on 17 September 1990 at the Fodor Museum in Amsterdam. We see Yutaka Matsuzawa, his gallerist Tamako Okazaki-san, Herman Lutje Schipholt, Paul Goede, Maud Struyvenberg, Jarko Almuli, Egon Hanfstingl half behind a pole and Louwrien Wijers. Photographer unknown.