

# Basic Thoughts Underlying Eastern Ethical and Social Practice

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## I.

**T**O UNDERSTAND WHAT lies beneath Eastern<sup>1</sup> culture and moral practice it is necessary to know the three principal forms of thought prevailing in the East: Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. The first two are native to China, whereas the last is an importation from the neighboring country, India, in the first century of the Christian era.

Confucianism is concerned chiefly with moral life and politics, that is, with worldly affairs so-called. While Taoism is also politically minded, there is much of religion in it, for instance, when it refers to the "Mysterious Mother" (*hsüan p'in* 玄牝).<sup>2</sup> Buddhism, when it was first transplanted to China, encountered some resistance from the native scholars, chiefly the Confucians, but proved itself strong enough to be gradually recognized not only by the people but also by the intellectuals. The reason is that Buddhism has what the Chinese mind lacks—metaphysics and spiritual feelings. This first fact repelled the Chinese but later attracted them.

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<sup>1</sup> This term will be used here in a very narrow sense, for I wish to limit the applicability of my thought to the Far Eastern area, that is, China and Japan.

<sup>2</sup> Lao Tzu, *Tao-te ching* VI.

Besides, in the Taoist way of thinking and feeling there is something closely related to the Buddhist trends of thought: love of nature, poetic imagination, transcendentalism, a mystic appreciation of reality. Buddhism also has much thought affiliating itself with Confucianism, for instance, when it is not so amoralistic as Taoism. But it was the Taoists who first approached Buddhism and adopted a great deal of its way of life and finally developed a religious system akin to it. Not only that, but, when the Chinese began in the seventh century to establish their own forms of Buddhism, they exhibited a great deal of originality. The Ching-t'u 淨土 Jōdo, Hua-yen 華嚴 Kegon, Ch'an 禪 Zen, and T'ien-t'ai 天台 Tendai are such forms. In them we can detect the imaginative depths of the Chinese mind as well as its speculative penetration. The Chinese perhaps did not realize that all these qualities lay dormant in them until the qualities were finally brought brilliantly to the surface of their consciousness.

As I consider the Zen form of Buddhism more important in many ways than the other forms, such as the Jōdo [Pure Land], I wish to regard Zen as representing Buddhism generally when I talk about the Buddhist influence over Eastern, and especially Japanese, moral life.

Zen flourished in China from the seventh century throughout the T'ang (618-907) and the Sung (960-1278), and even down to the Ming (1368-1661). In Zen we find the best that Chinese culture can offer to the world harmoniously blended with the best of the Indian speculative mind.

In the following, let me take up the Buddhist view of Emptiness and contrast it with the Western way of thinking, for Zen also bases its *Welt-* and *Lebens-Anschauung* on it.

## II.

One, at least, of the most fundamental differences between East and West as far as their way of thinking is concerned is that the Western mind emphasizes the dualistic aspect of reality while the Eastern mind basically tends to be advaitist. Advaitism is not the same as monism; it simply asserts that reality is nondualistic. Monism limits, whereas advaitism leaves the question open, and refuses to make any definite statement about reality. It is not-two, which is not the same as one. It is both yes and no, yet it is neither the one nor the other.

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The West lives in a world separated into two terms: subject and object, self and not-self, yes and no, good and evil, right and wrong, true and false. It is therefore more logical or "scientific," where yes cannot be no and no cannot be yes, where a square is not a triangle, where one is not two, where "I" and "thou" are eternally separated and can never be merged, where God creates and the creature forever remains created, where "our Father . . . art in heaven" and we mortals are groveling on earth. The Western mind abhors paradoxes, contradictions, absurdities, obscurantism, emptiness, in short, anything that is not clear, well-defined, and capable of determination.

Advaitism is not a very clear concept, however, and I should like to have another term to make my position better defined. When I say that reality is not dualistic, that a world of subject and object is not final, and that there is a something which is neither subjective nor objective, and further that this something is not to be subsumed under any category born of the dualistic concept of subject and object, I may be stamped as a mystic with all his scientifically unacceptable qualifications. Whatever this may mean, the mystic has a very concrete and therefore a very positive experience of ultimate reality which according to him cannot be conceptualized after the ordinary rules of logical thinking. Logic, as we understand it, has its limitation and cannot expect to catch every fish in its net.

All our sense-experiences are limited and definite, and the intellect based on them is also limited and definable. They all belong in the world of subject and object, seeing and seen, thinking and thought, that is, in the world of dualities. Here reality is always subjected to a separation; it is never grasped in its suchness or isness, or in its totality. Logicians and scientists deal with reality in its inevitably separated and therefore limited aspect. Therefore, there is always a something left over after their studies and measurements. They are not conscious of this something; in fact, they insist that there is nothing left behind, that they have everything they want to study. They go even so far as to declare that if there is anything left they have nothing to do with it, for it can never be scooped up with their logical shovel.

In fact, there are some minds that can never be satisfied with so-called logical accuracies and mathematical measurements, for they have the feeling or sense of a something which persistently claims their attention and which can never be "accurately" determined. This some-

thing is described by Baudelaire as "the steely barb of the infinite." They cannot rest until this disquieting something is actually held in their hands in the same way as we pick up a piece of stone or listen to a singing bird. Whatever name we may give to this mysterious something—God, or Ultimate Reality, or the Absolute, or the *Ātman*, or the Self, or Brahman, or Tao, or Heaven, or Reason, or the Infinite, or Emptiness, or Nothing—it is always bafflingly before us or behind the duality of "I and thou," or of the self and not-self, or subject and object, or God and the creation.

I may provisionally call this mysterious something the First Person, "I." It cannot be logically determined, temporally chronicled, spatially located. You might say, "That is too vague, too obscure, and we cannot deal with such an unknowable." Naturally, it cannot be clear and definable as far as our intellection is concerned. It is "O taste and see."<sup>3</sup> The tasting-and-seeing is not intellectual; it is perceptual and personal and cannot be brought out to the open market of conceptualization. But its presence in our mind is undeniable and its persistent call for our conscious attention is authentically attested in the history of thought. For this no specifications are needed.

Let me repeat: the First Person, "I," is not the subject standing in contrast to the object; it is not the self opposing the not-self; nor is it the creator looking at his creation. It can never be caught up in any form of intellectual duality, because it is that which produces all dualities and which hides itself somewhere as soon as dualities are taken notice of. It is, therefore, outside the pale of our logical comprehension. The only way to catch it is by means of a paradox or contrary diction—"the clear light of the void," or "rays of darkness," or "eternal present," or "pure darkness is pure light," or "*todo y nada*" (all and nothing), or  $0 = \infty$ , and so on.

Zen is rich in this kind of vocabulary, as is explained in my works on Zen.

There is no doubt that this mysterious First Person is not an object of knowledge. But, if it is not, how can one take hold of it so that one can say, "I have it now!"? An "intuition" does not seem to be an adequate term for this kind of experience. "Feeling" is liable to be misunderstood, unless a specifically defined sense is given to it. I like to take

<sup>3</sup> Psalms 34:8.

it in the most primary sense, somewhat in the way the eye sees and the ear hears.

The difference between sense-perception and “primary” feeling-experience is: in the former there is a sense-subject and its object, but, in the latter, subject and object are not differentiated—subject is object, and object is subject, and yet there is no particularizable substance to be known as such, as a some-thing. What I can state, though only tentatively, in this “primary” experience is that, when I hear or see, it is my whole being wherein hearing is seeing and seeing is hearing, because in the totality of my being there are no such sense-differentiations as one observes in one’s sense-perception.

That is to say, one’s whole being is there where the hearing or the seeing takes place and there is no sense-particularization. One’s whole being is the ear or the eye, and with it the totality of being hears or sees itself in the hearing or seeing. There is nothing in it that is vague or obscure or chaotic. In truth, the ear then hears and the eye sees in the real sense of the term.

Daitō Kokushi, one of the greatest Zen masters of Japan, composed a poem on the subject:

*When the ear sees,  
And the eye hears,  
One cherishes no doubts:  
How naturally the rain drips  
From the eaves!<sup>4</sup>*

This is a typically Zen poem, one might say. How could the raindrops from the eaves be heard as natural when the sense functions in such a crazily confused manner as stated above? But we must remember that our ordinary hearing or seeing is a specialized sense-function taking place at a specified area where a specified set of nerves converge for the

<sup>4</sup> Daitō Kokushi 大燈國師 or “Daitō the National Teacher” (1282–1337) is the honorary title given by the Emperor Godaigo, but he is otherwise known as Shūhō Myōchō. The thirty-one syllable poem quoted here is a well-known one ascribed to him. Unfortunately, I am so far unable to locate its source. [*Editor’s note:* For the present we can only say that it seems to be a Daitō poem found exclusively in Hakuin’s writings.]

performance of a particular limited form of activity. A totalistic hearing or seeing, on the other hand, eventuates at the deepest level of one's being, where hearing is seeing and seeing hearing. If this functional interfusion should come to pass at the localized terminal, there would be an utter confusion of the senses. What might be called the totalization of particular senses, including intellection, transforms all the brutal mechanistic laws of "necessity" into something full of meaning. Life then ceases to be a mere repetition of biological events governed by the so-called laws of Nature.

This may be called Eastern subjectivism, though the term frequently lends itself to gross misinterpretation. What I mean by subjectivism is not opposed to objectivism, which generally characterizes Western thought. Eastern subjectivity is an absolute one. It is a position transcending all forms of opposition and separation. Buddhist philosophy designates it as "Emptiness" (*sūnyatā* in Sanskrit, *k'ung* 空 in Chinese, and *kū* in Japanese). I understand there was a Western philosopher who called it "subjectum," which corresponds to the "First Person" or Lin-chi's *jên* 人 ("person" or "I").<sup>5</sup>

### III.

The philosophy of Emptiness is full of meaning. As I state repeatedly, it is not the philosophy of sheer nothingness; it is the philosophy of infinite possibilities, of a nothing filled with fullness of things, in which "nothing is lost and nothing is added." And there is no contradiction whatever when I say that "Emptiness" is the First Person, "I," and that the First Person, "I," is Emptiness. The identity can be expressed also in the following formulas:

zero = infinity,  
infinity = zero.

In the familiar Buddhist phraseology:

<sup>5</sup> That is, Lin-chi I-hsüan 臨濟義玄 (Rinzai Gigen, d. 867 A.D.). *Lin-chi lu* ("Sayings of Rinzai" or *Rinzai Roku*).

*rūpam = śūnyatā,  
śūnyatā = rūpam.*<sup>6</sup>

I have no time here to explore all the implications that can be discovered in the philosophy of Emptiness. Suffice it to give two of the most significant: (1) Being and becoming are one. (2) Necessity and freedom are one. As long as we hold to the dualistic way of thinking, statements like these are highly contradictory or utterly impossible, and, psychologically as well as morally, we shall find ourselves constantly in one form or another of nervous tension and asked to come to a decision. Fortunately, Buddhism is not a system of philosophy; it simply makes use of philosophy in order to satisfy our intellectual requirements. It tells us that there is a higher field of discipline where we can find our original home. I may call it an ethico-aesthetic experience of reality. Judaeo-Christian mythology will supply us with an illuminating parallel to illustrate what I mean by the "ethico-aesthetic."

When God as creator came out of the Godhead (as Emptiness), he did not ask the question "Why?," nor did he complain about the task of looking after his work. He saw light separating itself from darkness, and said, "Good!" It is not our business as human beings to fathom the meaning of this utterance on the part of the creator, for it is the most mystically pregnant exclamation anyone endowed with the power of expressing himself can make while viewing any work, human or divine. The eye confronts a mass of spring foliage and declares it green. Insofar as we cannot go any further than that, we are still on the logically mechanistic level of necessity. We may be human but are far from being divine. It is only when we can pronounce, "Good!" that we can approach the "psychology" of the creator, which is what I term

<sup>6</sup> In Chinese the formula is: *shih = k'ung, k'ung = shih* 色即空、空即色; in Japanese: *shiki = kū, kū = shiki*; in English: *form = emptiness, emptiness = form*. Literally, it is: "Form is not different from emptiness, emptiness is not different from form; what is form is no other than emptiness, what is emptiness is no other than form." This is the basic philosophy of the "Prajñā-pāramitā" group of Buddhist *Sūtras*. In the original Sanskrit the phrase runs:

*Iha, Sariputra, rūpam śūnyatā, śūnyatā eva rūpam; rūpam na pṛthag śūnyatā, śūnyatā yā na pṛthag rūpam; yad rūpam sā śūnyatā, yā śūnyatā tad rūpam.*

Cf. D. T. Suzuki, *Manual of Buddhism* (London: Rider and Company, 1950), p. 26.

“ethico-aesthetic.” The “good” here has no moral implication pure and simple. It corresponds to what we call in the East *myō* 妙 in Japanese (*miao* in Chinese). When we understand it, the whole universe, including everything in it, good and evil, right and wrong, subject and object, you and me, goes through a transformation, which is marvelously phenomenal.

Advaitism, or the philosophy of Emptiness, is still an intellectual and therefore a conceptual term and does not mean much to the Oriental mind, which is ever yearning for the deepest and most fundamental in the world we live in. The logically true or the morally good is never satisfactory, never fully thirst-quenching. We must come to the realization of the *myō*, the ultimately good, while surveying the creation in its infinite wholeness. Let us study the *myō* for a while.

To understand what the *myō* means is to understand the working of Japanese psychology, or that which lies behind Japanese culture and Japanese behavior. The term appears in Lao Tzu's *Tao-te ching* and also in Chuang Tzu's work. Perhaps it is originally Taoist. Buddhism adopted it, and *saddharma* (true law) was translated as *miao-fa* 妙法 (*myōhō*) in A.D. 407 by Kumārajīva. The best English equivalent one can find for this term “*myō*” is “mystery” or “mysterious.” But “mystery” or “mysterious” has certain intellectual overtones, which is inevitable, seeing that the Western mind is not so well acquainted with the realm of discipline where the idea of the *myō* plays a predominant role.

The *myō* being a Taoist term, it is best for us to know something more about Lao Tzu. It is possible that the *myō* was used before his time,<sup>7</sup> but it was he who made the most of it. In the first chapter of the

<sup>7</sup> A commentator on the *Tao-te ching* says that the character *miao* first appears in the *I ching* (*Shuo kua*, Eighth Wing), where it is verbalized. (Cf. Carl F. Baynes, trans., *The I ching, or Book of Changes*. The Richard Wilhelm translation rendered into English by Carl F. Baynes. Foreword by C. G. Jung. Bollingen Series No. 19. 2 vols. [New York: Pantheon Books, 1950], Vol. I, p. 291.) It is generally used either as a noun or as a modifier; it is unusual to see it turned into a verb as in *miao wan-wu* 妙萬物 “the ten thousand things [acquire the quality of the] *myō* (or *miao*).” The *miao* may be said to be our human response to a situation in which the finites are harmoniously blended with the Infinite, or we can state that here the absolute present touches on Eternity. It is interesting to note that *miao* in the *I ching* is identified with the Spirit (*shen* 神) that moves behind the ten thousand things. The Infinite is “the unmoved mover” behind the ten thousand things, behind the constant flowing stream of all things.

*Tao-te ching* the author refers to the *myō* as something characteristic of Tao. Tao is beyond any form of designation or definition. As soon as one begins to define it, Tao ceases to be Tao. But, as we cannot leave it without designating it somehow, we call it Tao and make it manifest as "being" and "non-being," as something contradicting itself. This is Tao determining itself.

By means of "non-being" we have a glimpse of the *myō*, and by means of "being" we have an objective world of multiplicities and limitations (*chiao* 微 *kyō*). The world of being is subject to quantitative measurements, whereas the world of non-being is unlimited. Unlimited and therefore infinite is this world of absolute non-being. We human beings live in two worlds, limited and yet unlimited, finite and yet infinite. This living in two worlds is called *gen* 玄 (*hsüan* in Chinese).<sup>8</sup> And for this reason Lao Tzu's philosophy is known as the teaching of the *hsüan* (*gen*), and we have compounds like these: *hsüan-hsüeh* 玄學 (doctrine of the *hsüan*), *hsüan-lan* 玄覽 (survey of the *hsüan*), *hsüan-t'an* 玄談 (discussion on the *hsüan*), *hsüan-chih* 玄旨 (principle of the *hsüan*), *hsüan-men* 玄門 (doorway to the *hsüan*), etc. When Taoism was made a pseudo State-religion early in the T'ang, Lao Tzu was canonized in A.D. 666 as Hsüan-yüan Huang-ti 玄元皇帝 (the emperor of the most abstruse philosophy).

*Gen* (*hsüan*) literally means "dark," "reddish black," "the color of the sky," which derivatively came to signify "impenetrable," "unfathomable," "inexpressible," "mysterious," etc. When this *gen* is personified, it is called the "Mother." "All things come from the Mother and return to her. The Mother is "the creator of the ten thousand things." In the West, the creator is the Father, the Heavenly Father, the Almighty God of wrath and jealousy, but in the East the creator is the Mother, the Mother Earth, the Great Earth, or, as Lao Tzu has it, the "Valley Spirit," or the "Mysterious Female."<sup>9</sup> (This difference between East and West provides us with a number of interesting topics for discussion.)

*Gen* (*hsüan*) and *myō* (*miao*) are largely synonymous, with perhaps this distinction: *gen* has a more objective sense, while *myō* is more sub-

<sup>8</sup> *Tao-te ching* I.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, VI.

jective; *myō* is more psychological and *gen* more ontological; *myō* is the way human minds react to the presence of *gen*. When we see a wonderfully executed, most inspiring work of art, we describe it as *myō* and not *gen*. The impenetrable depths of the sky are *gen* but not *myō*. All things designable can be designated as *myō* issue from what is *gen*. Sometimes the two characters form a compound. In this case, *genmyō* may be tentatively translated as "deeply (or unfathomably) mysterious."

The character *myō* 妙 (*miao*) was originally written as a composite of *gen* 玄 (*hsüan*) and *shō* 少 (*shao*), which latter means "young," "small," "weak," "wanting," etc. But later the *gen* was replaced by the character *jo* 女 (*nü*), meaning "a woman," and then *myō* came to be associated with a young maiden. But the original meaning was never lost, that is, an aesthetic appreciation of something immeasurably deep and defying description of any kind. The *myō* is thus not to be caught up by the analytical meshes, however fine, of scientific study, for there is something warm and living and full of creativity, which can only be experienced individually, personally, and is not to be conceptualized.

The *myō* is, then, definable as the feeling reflecting the mystic experience of Identity (*gendō* 玄同 *hsüan-tung*), in which nothingness (*jōmu* 常無 *chang-wu*) and somethingness (*jōu* 常有 *chang-yu*) are indistinguishably merged as one, though differentiated in name. The *gen* is its ontological name, and the *myō* is its psychological, or, rather, aesthetic reaction. When the mystic experience of Identity is actually attained in its pure totalistic aspect, each particular experience one may have in the realm of finites will participate in the general *myō* feeling for "the mystery of being" (*hsüan chih yu hsüan* 玄之又玄). Hence "the doorway of all *myō*" (*shūmyō no mon* 衆妙之門 *chung-miao chih mên*).

In ordinary language, the *myō* experience is essentially the outcome of understanding the obscurest depths of eternal Tao (*jōdō* 常道 *chang-tao*) or eternal Logos (*jōmei* 常名 *chang-ming*), which expresses itself in the finite world of particulars (*yūmei* 有名 *yu-ming*). The finite, namable world of particulars ultimately returns to the infinite Nameless (*mumei* 無名 *wu-ming*), which is called by Lao Tzu "the Mother of all things." By "returning," however, is not meant "to stay returned"; it means that there is a close interrelationship between the Infinite and the finites, the Mother and the child (*eiji* 嬰兒 *ying-erh* or *eigai* 嬰孩 *ying-hai*). So, says Lao Tzu, the Mother and the child are not to be separat-

ed.<sup>10</sup> The understanding of this Identity constitutes the feeling of *myō*. It goes without saying that the Identity is not to be numerically conceived, but is on the transcendental level of the Nameless. We may call it the mystical experience of the Darkness. It would be a great mistake to try to treat it along the line of intellectual analysis.

The serious oversight which is likely to be committed by scientists or logicians is to reduce everything to mathematical measurements and give the result in numbers or in signs. They forget altogether that the essential nature of the feeling is subjective and that when it is objectified it ceases to be itself and turns into a concept which has no life whatever. The feeling that is not alive is no feeling. Especially is this the case with the feeling that arises in connection with the totality of things, which cannot be finitely comprehended. A circle with an infinitely extending circumference is one of such cases; an infinite series of finite numbers is another. A serial infinity may be mathematically symbolized and treated accordingly. An infinity as a concrete totality is not only beyond the pale of intellection but incapable of becoming an object of feeling in the ordinary sense. An infinite totality may be symbolized to a certain degree or may have its analogical representation. As long as our intellect and senses are limited to finite experiences, an infinity must be said to be altogether outside their comprehension. Yet, we have a feeling for the Infinite, and this feeling is at the basis of all finite and particular feelings. We only "vaguely" feel its presence, though we ordinarily fail to bring it to the surface of our consciousness.

When I say a feeling of the Infinite, I use the term "feeling" in its deepest and most fundamental sense. I often used "intuition" in such cases, but I now find it somewhat inaccurate because intuition has still an epistemological taint, as I stated before, while an experience of the Infinite is not to be subsumed under the same category. It is *sui generis*. It is no wonder that so-called religious-minded people ascribe this experience to a power higher than themselves.

Western people try to approach Tao objectively, as I said before, and therefore inevitably epistemologically. On the other hand, the Eastern approach is from the inside; that is, it is subjective, and by "subjective" I mean from the point of view of the thing-in-itself-ness

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, XVI, XX, XXV, XXVIII.

of a thing, or simply its isness. To see a thing subjectively, therefore, means to see it as it is, in its suchness, in its just-so-ness. What we ordinarily call "subjective" is, strictly speaking, not subjective, for it is still objective inasmuch as it is conceived in opposition to an object. No subject is possible without its object, and to this extent there is in the subject something of objectivity. I like to point out that there is a something, though not definitely designable as this or that, even before the differentiation of subject and object. This is one of the first questions the Zen master would require us to answer: "What does your face which you had even before you were born look like?" This "face" which every one of us has, or this something which transcends all forms of dualistic opposition, is that which creates "the ten thousand things." It may be called the Absolute or Ultimate Reality, or Emptiness (as Buddhists have it). Those who hold this view cannot be called subjectivists as the term is commonly understood.

I may add one more word and say that the identification of subject and object where self-knowledge or self-realization takes place is in actuality the self-determining of Emptiness, or the Godhead's turning into God as the creator. By this turning, the Godhead becomes self-conscious in the way Emptiness comes to self-realization.

When I make this kind of statement, I am said to be vague, approaching nonsense. But, when you actually have it, you know what it is and will realize that there is nothing clearer, simpler, and, at the same time, deeper.

When one asserts that the seer is the seen and the seen is the seer, we may declare him nonsensical, because logically A is A and is never not-A. Moreover, practically speaking, the eye cannot see itself—it requires a mirror to see itself. But, in actuality this kind of seeing is not at all seeing itself, but seeing its reflection, which is by no means its self, as it is in its isness, or in its nakedness.

The West excels in describing an object in its relatedness to others, in analyzing it epistemologically, following logical steps one after another, and in coming to a certain form of conclusion, which, however, is not a conclusion, because it is never conclusive or final. One "conclusion" reached by one philosopher is sure to be contested by another, indefinitely.

The East excels in seeing reality or Tao from the inside, from within, in its just-so-ness, without doing any violence to it. Easterners have

been so trained since the first awakening of consciousness.

This awakening has taken two separate courses in its development: the one is the Western way and the other the Eastern. We can say that the West is extrovert, while the East is introvert or introspective or self-analyzing or not at all analyzing. The West is not unconscious of this self-analyzing process, the discipline prevailing in the East. But the West has been doing this cursorily, sporadically, or spasmodically. We see in the West some splendid specimens of it, such as Plato, Plotinus, Eckhart, St. John of the Cross, and so on. But they have been looked upon as abnormal, eccentric, and unacceptable.

A system of discipline more or less methodical has been going on since of old in China as well as in India. To give an example from the *Chuang Tzu*:

Yen-ch'eng Tzu-yu said to Tung-kuo Tzu-chi: Since I received your instruction, in one year I gained simplicity; in the second year I knew how to adjust myself as demanded; in the third I felt no impediments; in the fourth I objectified myself; in the fifth I had an attainment; in the sixth the spirit came to me; in the seventh I was in conformity with Heaven; in the eighth I had no thought of life and death; finally, in the ninth year, I attained to Great *Miao*.<sup>11</sup>

As long as we are in a dualistic world of birth and death, right and wrong, good and evil, subject and object, we cannot realize what the *myō* is; we feel it only when we come in contact with the Infinite, where we are free from all forms of restriction and inhibition. To accomplish this, it may take nine years or more, but one will attain it if one does not relax his efforts.

Instantaneity and eternity, *samsāra* and Nirvāṇa, this world of transiency and the Pure Land of permanent peace, are great contrasts. We live in the former and desire the latter. The desire is strong, but its object is at a great distance. It is impossible to cross the distance. Some say that this distance is the soul of the beautiful and to contemplate the beautiful is bliss. This view, however, is not the one held by Eastern

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., XXVII. "Yü-yen" 寓言. "Yü-yen" means "a talk ascribed to somebody else." It is a fable, or legend, or parable. Most of the stories found in the *Chuang Tzu* are of this nature. [Yen-ch'eng Tzu-yu 顏成子遊, Tung-kuo Tzu-chi 東郭子棄.]

thinkers. Chuang Tzu would advise us to attain what is known as *tso-wang* 坐忘, "sitting-forgetting," or *sang-wo* 喪我, "losing the self."<sup>12</sup> Chuang Tzu is not a Buddhist; therefore, he does not go any further than to state that the self is to be lost or forgotten. Buddhists declare that there is no self from the beginning, that the mirror has never been soiled with dust, and that therefore there is no need of trying to clean it. When we get rid of the delusions arising from finite existences, the "self" is purified, and the "Original Person" reveals himself. It is he who enjoys the ethico-aesthetic feeling of the *myō*.

*Tso-wang* is defined by Chuang Tzu: "It is freeing oneself from the body, getting rid of the intelligence, and, further, thus, by separating oneself from form and removing the intellect, identifying with the Great Thoroughfare<sup>13</sup> (*ta-t'ung* 大通)."<sup>14</sup> *Sang-wo* is given the following description: It is "as if absentmindedly going beyond the opposition of subject and object, as if the body were like a dead tree and the mind like cold ashes, and no longer looking like one's former self."<sup>15</sup> According to Chuang Tzu, when this state of mind is attained, one is in communion with *t'ien-chün* 天鈞 (heavenly equity), or *t'ien-i* 天倪 (heavenly unity),<sup>16</sup> which means that one goes beyond the humanly finite discrimination of good and bad, right and wrong, and lives in the field of infinity, where things move in their just-so-ness. Everything has its place, its destiny, its function, and, so long as it does its work in the way its nature requires though it may not be conscious of it, there is nothing that will interfere with its movements.

In regard to the experience of Identity of Heavenly Unity, Chuang Tzu has the following to say about the wise man who achieves such transcendence of dualistic difficulties:

It is only the wise man who knows how to make use of the principle of Identity through the maze of contrary ideas.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., II, "On Equalizing Contraries."

<sup>13</sup> This may also be translated as "Great Identity" and interpreted as equivalent to "Great Emptiness."

<sup>14</sup> *Tao-te ching* VI, "The Great Teacher."

<sup>15</sup> *Chuang Tzu* II.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. *T'ien-chün* and *t'ien-i* are interchangeable; they both refer to the heavenly reason (*t'ien-li* 天理), in which all inequalities and contradictions we encounter in this world of finites are wiped out, or rather, merge, though not indiscriminately.

He does not uphold his own views as absolutely correct; he surrenders himself to that which transcends all individual differences. By so doing he objectifies himself. By objectifying himself he passes over obstacles. By passing over obstacles he attains Identity and with this he is contented. He has no cravings for anything else. He rests with himself now, and he does not know why it is so. This is Tao.<sup>17</sup>

This is one of the [most] difficult and obscure passages in the *Chuang Tzu*, and I have added a few words to make it more intelligible to modern readers. The translation is inevitably an interpretation and open to discussion.

The principle of Identity to which Chuang Tzu resorts in order to unify or merge the controversies that have been going on around him has its concrete symbolization in the person of Nan-kuo Tzu-chi 南郭子綦. This person is introduced at the beginning of Chuang Tzu's discourse on the subject, that is, in Book II of his work. Nan-kuo Tzu-chi is probably Chuang Tzu's imaginary creation. He is found to be leaning against the table as if lost to the whole world. He looks so absentminded that he is no longer like his former self, which was involved in the whirlpools of subject and object, right and wrong, good and bad.

To such a one, metaphysically speaking, the whole universe is no bigger than the tip of a hair; P'eng Tsu 彭祖, historically renowned for his long life of 800 years, is not any older than the baby who dies even before weaning; "heaven-and-earth and I are of the same age; the ten thousand things and I are all one." From the moral point of view, he is a wise man or a perfect man. He is not concerned with worldly affairs of gain and loss; he lives outside the dust and filth of a finite life; he is the living example of *miao-tao* 妙道.<sup>18</sup>

#### IV.

Living is the art of creativity demonstrating itself. Creativity is objectively seen as necessity, but from the inner point of view of Emptiness it is "just-so-ness" (*jinen* 自然 or *shizen* in Japanese and *tzu-jan* in

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

Chinese). *Jinen*<sup>19</sup> is literally “by-itself-so” and may be regarded as equivalent to spontaneity or naturalness, but in *jinen* we see the innerliness of things more emphatically brought out. When the human mind is perfectly attuned to this innerliness, the feeling of the *myō* is awakened in a manner somewhat as when the tongue touching sugar tastes it sweet.

Objectively speaking, the *myō* may be represented as the straight line of time drawn tangent to a circumferenceless circle of Emptiness. The point at which the time-line touches the curve is the absolute present, or, eternal now, or here-now. All the past converges here and all the future issues from here, but the “here,” which is really “here-now,” is Emptiness itself—Emptiness infinitely rich in content and inexhaustibly creative. Chuang Tzu calls it the “heavenly storehouse” (*tenfu* 天府 *t'ien-fu*). The *myō* is the human way of expressing this experience.

Emptiness, like the Godhead, being the source of inexhaustible creativity, is not to be conceived as empty nothingness, inert, inane, and eternally quiescent, and absorbed in aesthetic contemplation. The *myō* is not such a state of contemplation. It is in every form of motion, in every phase of action, not only individually but totalistically in it. When this is experienced, necessity is freedom, and freedom is necessity. When hungry I eat, when thirsty I drink. “Tao is no more than our everyday-mindedness.”<sup>20</sup> “What does Heaven say?” asks Confucius, “yet the four seasons go on, and the ten thousand things grow up.

<sup>19</sup> I wonder if Lao Tzu was not the first philosopher who used this term 自然. Buddhists have adopted it and coupled it with *hōni* 法爾 (*fa-erh*), “as-it-is-ness.”

<sup>20</sup> *Ching-te chüan-teng lu* 景德傳燈錄 *Keitoku Dentōroku* (“The Record of the Transmission of the Lamp”), J. Takakusu and K. Watanabe, eds., *The Tripitaka* (Tokyo: The Taishō Issai-kyō Kankō Kai, 1928), Vol. LI, No. 2076, Bk. XXIX, fasc. 28, under “Ta-chi Tao-i” 大寂道一 *Daijaku Dōitsu* (Ma-tsu Tao-i 馬祖道一, Baso Dōitsu, d. 788).

*The Transmission of the Lamp*, consisting of thirty fascicles, is generally ascribed to Tao-yüan 道原, a Zen monk of Wu Province. The work was completed during the Ching-te 景德 era (1004–1007) of the Sung (960–1279). The Record begins with the stories of the seven Buddhas prior to Śākyamuni Buddha and goes on to Bodhidharma, who is the Twenty-eighth Patriarch of India and the First in Chinese Zen Buddhism. After the Sixth Patriarch, Hui-neng 慧能, the line of “transmission” breaks into two and then into five. The Record includes [figures] down to the followers of the Fa-yen 法眼 (*Hōgen*) school in the early Sung Dynasty. Altogether 1701 masters of 52 generations after Bodhidharma find here their short biographical notes and mainly their sayings and sermons.

What does Heaven say?"<sup>21</sup> Thus everything goes on along the line of "just-so-ness."

The *myō* is also applied to works of art. However technically perfect, they do not awaken in us the sense of the *myō*; there must be something that goes beyond the technique, that is to say, something that enlivens every display of skill. When this enlivening agency of creativity is present, we have the *myō*. Life, as long as it is confined to the animal and to the vegetative, is necessity; but man is free and creative and proceeds to make the universe look beautiful and lovable. To man, the universe is not something rigidly, mercilessly, and altogether impersonally controlled by so-called laws of Nature.

Beauty is not primarily objective. Nature, symbolic of necessity, becomes beautiful and the source of joy when man's mind rises above things finite, and soaring up to the Infinite, surveys the world therefrom. It is a mistake to think that what is beautiful is limited to a human work of imagination. The universe is also a work of art, though not human; it is beautiful when it is seen from the point of view where the iron chain of necessity and obedience, of law and irresistibility, is shattered, that is to say, when one enters into the spirit of creativity, as "God makes himself necessity," to use the terminology of Simone Weil.<sup>22</sup>

When this takes place, we have the *myō*, the feeling of beauty, not objectively perceived but innerly growing out of one's being. The *myō*, therefore, is a subjective and psychological term. It is the sense of harmony, which is not necessarily objectively demonstrable, but which is felt innerly when all the finites are seen in something infinitely transcending them while not losing their particularization. When this *myō* is felt in the way one lives we have a life of no-striving (*wu-kung yung-hsing* 無功用行 or *anābhogacaryā*),<sup>23</sup> which Buddhists consider as superseding all the moral values we finite beings esteem.

It is not quite true that the East looks upon ethical values as insignificant because the absolute reality is above all forms of relativity. The East, no doubt, pays the highest regard to the Ultimate, but that does not mean that ethics is neglected. In this respect, Chinese Buddhism is

<sup>21</sup> The *Analects* XVII.

<sup>22</sup> *Gravity and Grace* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952), p. 38.

<sup>23</sup> *The Lankāvatāra Sūtra*, Bunyū Nanjō, ed. (Kyoto: The Ōtani University Press, 1923), pp. 42, 43, 89, etc.

eloquent in disproving the charge, in that Chinese mentality is firmly rooted in the Great Mother Earth. The Chinese look up to Heaven as much as the people in the West, but they never forget the Earth. Confucius as well as Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu and other Taoists make frequent references to Heaven and Heavenly Reason, but for that reason they never neglect relating it to our earthly affairs and human relations. Their Heaven always remains in intimate communion with things going on on earth. Indeed, it is Heaven that looks down upon us below instead of our looking up to it.

Buddhism made its start in India and was known for being ethically minded. But, as it developed into the Mahāyāna system of thought, it became more speculative and transcendental and showed a decided tendency to flee from the world. But, when it struck root deeply in China, we find it intimately affiliated with Confucianism as well as with Taoism, supplying them with what they needed, that is, a philosophical background. In Chinese Buddhism we thus discover the best in Indian Buddhism organically functioning in the Chinese practical mind. For instance, Zen Buddhism, which swayed China from the early T'ang (618-907) to the late Ming (1368-1661), for about nine hundred years, is the embodiment of Chinese and Indian thought happily amalgamated.

Buddhism does not try to find meaning outside of life, for living itself is meaning. Meaning is not added to life from the outside. When one knows what life is, one knows that there is nothing of value beyond the living of it. How to live, however, is an art. In this respect every one of us is an artist, a creative artist. The painter may need brushes, canvas, paints, and other materials to produce fine specimens of art. So with sculptors and others known as artists. But we, most ordinary and probably prosaic people, deeply concerned with worldly affairs and far from being artists of any denomination whatever, are also artists in the genuine sense of the term. Besides, we have no need for such external materials as are required by professional artists. Everything we wish to have is already in us, with us, and waiting to be utilized. We are each and all born artists. We are creators of the *myō*.

Inasmuch as life, or how to live it, is an art and every one of us is meant to be an artist of high grade—and who knows we are not already such!—we must try our best to attain the *myō* in our daily living. When a Zen master was asked what Tao is, the answer was "Everyday-

mindedness." When another master was further asked, "What is the meaning of it?" he said, "When you wish to sleep you sleep, when you wish to sit up you sit up."<sup>24</sup> Is this not leading a life of "just-so-ness," following the natural order of things in our daily life? Where is the *myō*? Where is the art? This is the very point, however, where the *myō* is beyond our intellection.

Some may ask, "There are many people who cannot eat even when hungry, cannot sleep even when tired. What about them?" Such questions are asked because the questioner is still groveling in the mud of finitudes and dualities. The *myō* is appreciated only when one can stand at the highest peak of the Himalayas and at the same time walk along the very bottom of the Pacific Ocean.<sup>25</sup> The idea, in modern expression, is that a world of finites is to be understood as the Infinite limiting itself, or, in Buddhist terminology, as the self-determination of Emptiness. The following incident extracted from the history of Zen, I hope, will, to a certain extent, illustrate the point.

Yakusan (Yüeh-shan Wei-yen) once gave the sermon: "Where the intellect fails to reach, do not try to make any statement [on the matter]. If you do, the horns will grow on your head."<sup>26</sup>

Dōgo (Tao-wu Yüan-chih) [or Brother Chih]<sup>27</sup> then left the

<sup>24</sup> *The Transmission of the Lamp*, fasc. 10, under "Ch'ang-sha Ching-ch'en" 長沙景岑 Chōsha Keishin, a disciple of Nan-ch'üan P'u-yüan 南泉普願, 748-834.

<sup>25</sup> *The Transmission of the Lamp*, fasc. 28, under "Yüeh-shan Wei-yen" 藥山惟嚴 Yakusan Igen, 751-834.

<sup>26</sup> Yüeh-shan Wei-yen 藥山惟嚴. *Ku-tsun-su Yü-lu* 古尊宿語錄 *Kosonshuku Goroku* ("Sayings of the Ancient Worthies"), fasc. 25. *The Transmission of the Lamp*, fasc. 14, under "Tao-wu Yüan-chih" 道吾圓智 Dōgo Enchi, gives a somewhat different version.

The *Sayings of the Ancient Worthies*, consisting of 48 fascicles contains sermons, *mondōs*, and sayings of 36 Zen masters beginning with Nan-yüeh Huai-jang 南嶽懷讓 Nangaku Ejo and down to Sung master Fuchao Te-kuang 佛照德光 Busshō Tokkō. Compiled by Wei-i 涇頤 Ii of the Sung. The first edition appeared in 1267, a later one in 1617. I have used the Japanese edition popularly known as the "Ōbaku." Tetsugen, the Zen master of the Ōbaku Monastery, carried out this gigantic task of printing 7334 fascicles of the Buddhist Tripiṭaka in thirteen years (1669-1681).

<sup>27</sup> Tao-wu 道吾 Dōgo, whose other name was Yüan-chih 圓智 Enchi, is referred to as "Chih the Elder" by his fellow monks and as "Brother Chih" by the master. [Yün-yen T'an-ch'eng 雲巖曇晟.]

room.

Ungan (Yün-yen T'an-ch'eng) later asked the master, "Why did not Brother Chih react to your remark, O Master?"

Said the master, "It is Chih the monk who knows all about it. Go and ask him."

Ungan, following the master's advice, came to Brother Chih and said, "How is it that you did not react at all to our master's remark the other day?"

Dōgo responded, "I have a headache today. You had better ask the master himself."

When Ungan passed, Dōgo remarked, "Ungan did not know what's what, after all. I regret that I did not tell him all about it then. In spite of all this, he deserves to be called a disciple of our master, Yakusan."

Daigu Shushi (Ta-yü Shou-chih) of Kinshū later gave this comment: "Ungan did not know what's what. As for Dōgo's knowing it, he regrets that he did not at the time tell Ungan all about it. Tell me now whether or not Dōgo really had it?"<sup>28</sup>

This Zen story may not seem to be very intelligible. The only reference to anything abstract, and perhaps intelligible, is Yakusan's statement about the intellect. Though he does not expressly mention the subject about which he is talking, we know that it is about the final reality or the ultimate truth, and he goes on to say that it is beyond one's intellectual grasp and that if one attempts to give it anything approaching a conceptual definition one will surely miss it. The rest of the story makes no reference whatever to the main subject except one's having a headache and the other's regretting and the third's evading.<sup>29</sup> As for

<sup>28</sup> Shou-chih 大愚守芝 of Ta-yü Shan was a disciple of Shan-chao 汾陽善昭 (Fun'yō Zenshō, 947-1024).

<sup>29</sup> When this inner feeling of *myō* is objectively demonstrated in our daily life, we have a life of *anābhogacaryā*—the life that is free and creative, transcending all moral values we finite beings discriminatingly estimate. Buddhists, especially Zen Buddhists, do not use words such as "spiritual," "saintly," or "divine"; they designate this kind of life as "leaving no traces," "productive of no merits," "doing nothing, yet doing everything," "using the spade empty-handedly," "riding horseback while walking," "like the moon serenely reflecting itself in the stream without any thought of doing so," or "like the stone-woman dancing while the wood-man sings," etc.

the commentator, he is anxious to know whether or not Dōgo understood the whole affair. All that we can get out of the whole transaction is what seems to be a trivial episode in the life of a monastery. But is this really so? What is there in it that makes Zen people so concerned with it?

I will give another example to elucidate what makes Zen masters so concerned with details of our daily life, which passes on without attracting much attention on our part. It may be necessary for the philosopher to maneuver an imposing army of abstract ideas and erudite references when he wants to demonstrate the truth of a proposition, to establish the significance of human values, to confirm the objectivity of knowledge, etc. But, to the Zen master, such a parade of concepts does not mean very much. He is content with offering tea to a visitor, with bidding a fare-thee-well to a departing friend. When a philosopher comes to the master ready to discuss with him something weighty, the master has no hesitation in telling the intruder that he has a headache. The headache is really the answer to whatever question may be coming. If the philosopher understands it, it is all right with him and he may be grateful for the master's kindness. If not, woe unto him—he has “another thirty years” to ponder the matter.

When Ryūtan Sōshin (Lung-t'an Ch'ung-hsin)<sup>30</sup> first came to Dōgo to study Zen, Dōgo gave him no special teaching about it. Some time passed, and Sōshin grew impatient and approached the master and asked him about Zen. Dōgo said, “Ever since you came to me, I have been teaching you in Zen every day.” Sōshin was puzzled and wished to be enlightened on the matter. Dōgo said, “When you bring me a cup of tea in the morning, do I not take it gratefully? When you give me something to eat when mealtime comes, do I not accept it? When you greet me, do I not return it? When have I not instructed you in the essentials of Zen?” Sōshin dropped his head and began to reflect. The master lost no time in saying, “When you want to see, see at once—no deliberation whatever!” This instantly helped Sōshin open his mind. Sōshin then asked how to nourish it further. Dōgo's answer was: “Saunter along self-sufficiently in accordance with your nature; be free

<sup>30</sup> Lung-t'an Ch'ung-hsin 龍潭崇信 (Ryūtan Sōshin) was a disciple of T'ien-huang Tao-wu 天皇道悟 Tennō Dōgo, 748–807. *The Transmission of the Lamp*, fasc. 14, under “Lung-t'an Ch'ung-hsin.”

and uninhibited in response to the situation in which you find yourself. Only do away with thoughts arising from your limited knowledge, and there is no realization specifically to be termed supreme.”

“To do away with one’s limited thoughts” means to recognize rightly the relativity of all knowledge and, further, to see deeply into the source of being or to survey the open field of Emptiness. There is no other revelation to be known as supreme or divine. As Buddhists say, the moon of Suchness shines by itself when the clouds of ignorance (i.e., *wu-ming* 無明, or *avidyā*, that is, relative knowledge) are dispersed. A life cleansed of all accretions is one of *anābhogacaryā*, a life of no-striving.

Baso’s (Ma-tsu)<sup>31</sup> saying, “Everyday-mindedness,” is explained by himself in the following way:

Tao does not need any form of discipline, only have it not defiled. What are the defilements? Have no thought of birth and death. Have no contrivances. Have no purposiveness. These are the defilements.

If one wishes to understand instantly what Tao is, everyday-mindedness is Tao. What is “everyday-mindedness”? It is not to strive after anything. It is neither right nor wrong. It is neither to take up nor to let go. It is to be neither nihilistic nor positivistic. It is not to make any distinction between the commoner and the wise man.

In the *sūtra* we read: “It is not the life of the ordinary man, it is not the life of the saint—that is the life of the *bodhisattva*.” As we at present walk, rest, sit, lie down, respond to various situations, or meet people of all classes—Tao is in all this.

To recapitulate: *Anābhogacaryā* is, as one Chinese translator has it, a life of no strivings, of no usefulness, of no effectiveness. This corresponds to: Lao Tzu’s *wu-wei* 無爲 or *wu-wei erh wu-pu-wei* 無爲而無不爲 (“By doing nothing, all things are done,” or “Everything is done by non-doing”);<sup>32</sup> Chuang Tzu’s *wu-yung chih yung* 無用之用 (“Usefulness

<sup>31</sup> See footnote 20. [Baso’s 馬祖 Ma-tsu]

<sup>32</sup> *Tao-te ching* XLVIII.

of non-usefulness”);<sup>33</sup> Chao-chou Ts’ung-shen’s “Stone-bridge which carries horses as well as donkeys”;<sup>34</sup> Lin-chi’s *wu-shih chin jên* 無事之人 (“A man of no-work”);<sup>35</sup> Hakuin’s “Hiring an idiotic wise man who tries to fill the well with snow”;<sup>36</sup> Bankei’s *fushōnin* 不生人 (“Man of the Unborn”),<sup>37</sup> and the *chieh-k’ung jên* 解空人 (“Man of Emptiness”), to the exposition of which the whole Prajñā-pāramitā literature is devoted.

A [person] of *anābhogacaryā*, then, is one who lives the *myō* in its ethico-aesthetic sense, as well as in its ontological sense. All the moral values and social practice, Buddhists claim, come out of this life of no-strivings, of just-so-ness, of Suchness, which is Emptiness. When all the defilements and accretions are wiped away, purged, purified, the original light of creativity will illumine one’s whole being, and whatever one does will be “good.”

*The Dhammapada* reads:

*Not to do any evil,  
To promote the good,  
To purify one’s own mind,—  
This is the Buddha’s teaching.*<sup>38</sup>

QUESTION: Jean-Paul Sartre says that the world constantly presents to us “an object that can never be an object for us, as it is what we have to be.” Simone de Beauvoir says that in the middle of herself she “only finds the emptiness that is myself.” What would be the comment of a Zen master on these two mental attitudes?

ANSWER: Both views are equally far from the Zen experience, and there is no choice between them, because they are both on the plane of

<sup>33</sup> *Chuang Tzu* IV.

<sup>34</sup> *The Transmission of the Lamp*, fasc. 10, under “Chao-chou Ts’ung-shen” 趙州從諗 Jōshū Jūshin, 778–897. [The passage: 僧云、如何是石橋，州云、渡馬盧渡馬.]

<sup>35</sup> *Lin-chi lu* (“Sayings of Rinzai” or *Rinzai roku*).

<sup>36</sup> [Hakuin 白隱,] *Dokugo Chū Shingyō* 毒語註心經 (“Poisonous Comments on the *Prajñā-pāramitā Hṛdaya Sūtra*”), published 1861.

<sup>37</sup> [Bankei 盤珪,] *Bankei Zenji Goroku* 盤珪禪師語錄 (“Sayings of Bankei”), compiled by D. T. Suzuki (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1941).

<sup>38</sup> Verse 183.

the intellectual quest. Let me quote a *mondō* between Enkan Saian (of the eighth century) and a monk.<sup>39</sup> The monk asked, "What is the primal body of Vairocana Buddha?" (i.e., What is the Self?). The master said, "Will you pass me that pitcher over there?" The monk did what he was asked to do. The master then said, "Thank you. Now take it back where you got it." The monk returned it to the original place. Then the monk repeated the first question regarding Vairocana Buddha and waited for an answer. The master nonchalantly said, "The old Buddha left a long time ago." Too bad that "the old Buddha" also eludes both of the French philosophers.

**QUESTION:** What significance does Zen have for the practical matter of maintaining a productive, peaceful order in society?

**ANSWER:** Disorderliness of society is caused by not understanding Zen. Zen proposes to bring a peaceful state of mind to every individual. There cannot be any disorderliness in a group of individuals whose minds are quiet, peaceful, orderly, well-behaving, and therefore creative.

**QUESTION:** If a Kantian were to reach an understanding of Buddhism, would you consider it a useful analogy to say that Zen is the surprising of reality before it is properly clothed in the forms of space and time and the categories of the understanding?

**ANSWER:** Yes, "surprising," but this is on your side and not on reality's. This reminds me of Eckhart's reference to God as being all stripped off as when we go to a bath.

**QUESTION:** When Zen keeps Buddhist terminology and imagery to express how wonderful the life of every day can be in its just-so-ness and suchness, what becomes of its iconoclastic aspect? Then, how about its naturalism without striving for anything beyond?

**ANSWER:** Zen tells us first to "kill" everything we come across: *buddhas*, patriarchs, *arhats*, *bodhisattvas*, humans, and non-humans; and then to serve others with your "face and head covered with dirt and

<sup>39</sup> *The Transmission of the Lamp*, fasc. 7. [Yen-kuan Ch'i-an 鹽官齋安 Enkan Saian]

## SUZUKI: EASTERN ETHICAL AND SOCIAL PRACTICE

ashes," and this quietly and "secretly" as when you pray in a closet. As to striving, the door will never open without it; but, as long as you are relying on *your* striving, that is, as long as your *pride* subsists, the door will forever remain closed to you.

QUESTION: Regarding the Zen experience: (1) Is it available to everybody? (2) Can one be sure of having it? (3) Does it endure forever?

ANSWER: (1) The Zen experience may not be available to those who are mentally defective. Otherwise, anybody can have it if he makes up his mind to experience it. (2) The strange thing about Zen is that when you have it you know you have it. The assurance is sometimes so overwhelming that the man who has it is led to ascribe it to someone above or beyond him. The idea of revelation is probably based on this psychological fact. (3) The experience once gained has no "dry period." But, human psychology being as it is, a constant watch over what you have gained is needed. They call it "the maturing process."

QUESTION: How can one make the connection between *śūnya* and *karuṇā-garbha* (repository of compassion) intelligible?

ANSWER: From the human point of view, the ultimate reality which is Emptiness has two aspects: *prajñā* and *karuṇā*, substance (*t'i* 體) and activity (*yung* 用). The one is static and the other dynamic. The center remains immovable, like the eye of a cyclone, while the surrounding air is activity itself. *Karuṇā* is activity, "knowledge" in contrast to "innocence" and to the principle of differentiation. In the equation,  $0 = \infty$ , zero corresponds to nothingness or Emptiness, which is immanent in the multiplicity of things, but, because of *karuṇā* or love or *agape*, an infinity ( $\infty$ ) of resourceful activities known as "skillful means" (*upāya*) are produced to lead all beings to enlightenment (*bodhi*). When the *bodhisattva* says that he postpones his entering into *nirvāṇa* because of his love for his fellow beings, he may appear to be separating *karuṇā* from *prajñā*, but in actuality his *karuṇā* is *prajñā* itself, for the two cannot be separated as if they were merely two connected parts of one thing. The one thing is *prajñā* as well as *karuṇā*.

This may not be very understandable when it is taken out of context. In one of the following paragraphs, reference was made to the

“everyday-mindedness” of Great Tao. The phrase is characteristic of the Zen philosophy of life. “Having a headache,” expressing “regrets” of any kind, or “evading a definite answer on certain occasions”—all these are everyday occurrences, that is, the demonstration of “everyday-mindedness.” The ultimate reality is not limited to a highly abstract concept. It is to be experienced or intuited in the raising of a finger or in walking in the street or exchanging greetings, saying, “A Happy New Year” or “A Merry Christmas.” Relying unconditionally on the omnipotency” of intellectual analysis is a sign of stupidity. Those who are addicted to it are to be born as animals “with two horns on the head.”