

# The Problem of *Anjin* in Zen

NISHITANI KEIJI

## INTRODUCTION

THE CORE OF Nishitani studies in Japan has formed around his two-volume *Collected Essays on Religion*. The first volume, completed by the author at age sixty-one, called *What is Religion?* (*Shūkyō to wa nanika*; 1961), a translation of which appeared serially in the pages of this journal, is better known in the West under its adapted title, *Religion and Nothingness*, trans. Jan Van Bragt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982). The second volume, called *The Standpoint of Zen* (*Zen no tachiba*), came out in 1986, and contained three separate monographs: "The Standpoint of Zen" (*Zen no tachiba*), "Issues in the Study of Zen" (*Zen ni okeru shomondai*) and "[Zen] Poems" (*Shige*).

In fact, the three essays that comprise *The Standpoint of Zen* were first published shortly after *Religion and Nothingness*, in the period from 1967 to 1969. "The Standpoint of Zen" (1967) appeared in the first volume of the eight-volume *Zen Lectures* (*Kōza Zen*) series, edited by Nishitani Keiji and supervised by D. T. Suzuki, now unfortunately out of print. A translation of this seminal essay was published by John C. Maraldo in the *Eastern Buddhist* 17-1 (1984), under the title "The Standpoint of Zen." The piece below, "The Problem of *Anjin* in Zen" (1968), is the translation of the first half of the second essay, entitled *Zen ni okeru anjin no mondai* in the original and published in volume eight of the *Zen Lectures* series. It is hoped that the triad will be completed eventually with a translation of the third and final essay, "Dharma and Person in Zen" (*Zen ni okeru hō to nin*, 1969), originally published in *Zen Essence and Human Truth* (*Zen no honshitsu to ningen no shinri*), edited by Hisamatsu Shin'ichi and Nishitani Keiji. The three essays in *The Standpoint of Zen* have since been compiled in volume eleven of Nishitani's *Collected Works*.

## THE EASTERN BUDDHIST XXIX, 1

In the epilogue to *The Standpoint of Zen* (1986), Nishitani explains how this work expresses his view of the Zen tradition and Western philosophy, stating that he felt he had clarified his standpoint of "religious and philosophical consideration." As with the first volume, *Religion and Nothingness*, the critical outlook in this essay is the result of a long process of thought: "My reasoning is based on the fact that it has become possible for me to philosophically investigate the standpoint of Zen." Nishitani defines "the standpoint of Zen" as one "which I have taken as the path to the philosophical self-awareness of one's own self." It is this investigation of the self that Nishitani broaches in the first essay, "The Standpoint of Zen," and which he rigorously engages in the thoughts that follow.

# The Problem of *Anjin* in Zen

## I

NISHITANI KEIJI

## I

**T**HE FACT THAT as humans we seek to illuminate the self while living in the real world is the result of an awareness of a deep anxiety regarding the self's existence in the world. The types of anxiety which manifest within both the individual and society lead to various efforts to erase this problem from within the individual or from society, but it matters little because such profound anxiety cannot be removed by any form of labor in the usual sense of the word. When this state of insecurity appears from the very bottom of these multifaceted phenomena of uncertainty, when one realizes that the depth of this anxiety reveals it to be coiled around our very existence in this world, it is then that in searching for a solution one takes the first step into the realm of religion and philosophy. Because it arises from the depth of our existence and brings with it the problematic of existence itself, which manifests itself from within that anxiety, it is useless to seek a genuine

\* This is the first of a two-part translation of "Zen ni okeru anjin no mondai" (1968), in *Nishitani Keiji chosaku-shū* [Collected Works] 11:32-84; the present installment comprises pp. 32-61. It was originally published in the eight-volume *Kōza Zen* series edited by Nishitani Keiji, and later republished along with other essays in *Zen no tachiba* (1986). The second part of this essay will appear in a future issue of the journal. We wish to thank John C. Maraldo for his editorial assistance on technical portions. Footnotes are the author's, as presented in the original *Kōza Zen* volume; the endnotes are those provided by the translator.

solution to this problem anywhere outside religion and philosophy.

In Zen such searching is called "investigating the matter of self" (*ko-ji kyūmei* 己事究明), and is presented as an intense focus on returning the self to within the self itself. In this way light is reflected back onto the original self by means of the self itself; it is directed to dig up the ground upon which one's own existence stands.

Investigating the matter of self thus means a thoroughgoing probe into the very ground where our self-existence is established. But at the same time it is a search for the only possible point of origin for the fundamental conquest of the multiform anxieties of the world. It is there that one finds dynamic recognition of the fact that stopping halfway means that whatever solution one achieves is also an inevitable cause for the outbreak of new anxiety. This problematic is referred to in Zen as the search for *anjin*—"assurance" or "pacified mind."<sup>a</sup>

The search for *anjin* is a search for certainty regarding [the nature of] the existence of the self. The word *anjin* is frequently used in a religious sense to express the resolution of anxiety, but it contains a philosophical meaning as well. The philosophical and intellectual side of *anjin* means to dispel any doubt about the existence of the self itself. However, in order to fundamentally remove all of one's genuine doubts, one must first clarify the origins of the uncertain nature of existence. And those origins lie hidden within the roots of the very fact of one's own existence within the world. The uncertainty of self-existence originates in the very fact that, at its base, self-existence is rooted exactly where the world itself has its base. All existence changes, all life inevitably must die; the existence of human life is also a matter of birth and death. This fact speaks of the uncertainty of existence itself—an uncertainty rooted in the fundamental nature of the world itself. And while everything else may exist in the world without ever awakening to this indefiniteness, human beings have this insecurity about them that demands they inevitably carry their doubts with them wherever they go.

Humans are conscious and self-conscious beings; they exist in the world in such a way the world and themselves are knowable. It is inevitable in the human condition that one senses anxiety and doubt regarding one's own existence. This anxiety and doubt spring from the very foundation of the world in which the anxiety of existence is rooted and accordingly also emerge from the foundation of one's own existence. It

is this mental foundation which is thoroughly discussed in Mahāyāna Buddhism as the *Ālaya-vijñāna*,<sup>b</sup> the locale where the world and the conscious and self-conscious mind are one.<sup>1</sup>

As in all religion, Buddhism is trying to extricate a self shackled by the world from a state of uncertainty. It seeks to remove oneself from the world and this separation is none other than breaking through the dark prison of the *Ālaya* consciousness. In Zen the method used for this breakthrough is to dig up the roots of an existential doubt which arises from within one's own mind. This takes the form of a tenacious penetration of doubt. And in this exhausting of doubt, the *Ālaya* consciousness becomes manifest to the self from the very ground of one's own mind. In this way, doubt changes into a foundational doubt which conjoins the world and the self into one primal doubt: each is transformed and fused into the so-called Great Doubt.<sup>c</sup> Within that Great Doubt, the *Ālaya* consciousness becomes manifest to the self as yet another Great Doubt.

In the investigation of the matter of self, this transparency of the *Ālaya-vijñāna* is transformed from the Great Doubt into something which manifests the so-called Great Death. The Great Death is a death in which the world and the self die together as one. In olden days, people referred to this as "cutting off the roots of *saṃsāra*." *Saṃsāra* means rebirth, the cycle of being born again and dying again in a continuous round of anxiety and uncertainty without end. This sense of infinitude is represented in the concept of *duḥkha* as an infinite aspect of the experiences of birth, aging, disease and death.

In the situation in which we find ourselves in the world, the unlimited nature of *duḥkha* must be recognized; that is, the anxiety and uncertainty that surround existence itself contain an element of infinity. This is an actual fact of *saṃsāric* existence and the origin of this fact lies in the *Ālaya-vijñāna*, where our existence is rooted. The root of this *saṃsāra* filled with this dimension of infinity is *the Ālaya-vijñāna*.

From this point of view, what we normally call death is limited to the dissolution of a mind and body that were only temporary to begin with; a death of one component within the endless stream of birth and death and birth and death. This conventional sense of death does not constitute a liberation from *saṃsāra*; it is not the longed-for complete

<sup>1</sup> See my essay, "Zen no tachiba" in the first volume of this Kōza Zen series.

casting off of body and mind from all reincarnations. Thus, death in the usual sense is not a genuine extrication from anxiety and uncertainty. This is why suicide is not a solution [to spiritual problems]. Death in the truest sense of the word can only be a death from the ground of *samsāra* itself. It must be a death that happens where there is a union of the ground of samsāric existence and the ground of the world. This is precisely digging up the roots of a *samsāra* rooted in the *Ālaya-vijñāna*, and then cutting them off. Understood in this sense, the Great Death is a death that is existentially transcendent, and it is this death that is the real escape from the world and the self entrapped within it, existentially liberating the self.

The standpoint of Zen is expressed in ways that reflect a completely normal state of affairs as well as a total self-negation. These are the two sides of *anjin* attained in the investigation of self. We could call these two faces of *anjin* absolute affirmation and absolute negation. Thus in addition to *anjin* signifying absolute affirmation it also incorporates an aspect of absolute negation represented by the Great Death—dying to the self and to the world. In other words, it is these two aspects together that express a fundamental transformation in human existence.

In the realm of religion and philosophy where this transformation is made an issue, however, we generally find that the motive force behind the transformation in the sense of death described here, as well as the subsequent resurrection, is in some way ascribed to an absolute existent (i.e., God or Buddha). It is thought that only something eternal can enable humans to truly overcome death and make them into new persons who are reborn in life without falling into the realm of birth and destruction. And there is sufficient reason for this attitude. In the first place, the problems of death and its conquest are most basic to everyone. Normally it is thought that for the self with all its entanglements in the world, it is the threshold of death that is the limit of the self, the last possibility for the self. In commonsense terms the death of the self is considered simply a “natural” destruction and while its inevitability is explained as a biological phenomenon accepted as coming at some unknown time, for many living in the present, death is avoided by pushing it aside to the indefinite future.

Philosophically this is brought back into one’s actual present existence, and from the limited nature of that existence in which nonexis-

tence is also somehow mixed in, it is interpreted as an ontological issue. Religiously speaking, however, problems of the inevitability of death or the rationale for death can only be clarified existentially through one's personal burden of fate. And it is through this clarification (which Kierkegaard called the "infinite resignation") that one takes responsibility for this issue upon oneself. In such a decision, the death which is the death of the world together with the death of the mortal self can be turned into a death of dying while living. But such a death only becomes a complete death when one throws the self into the absolute eternal other, such as God or Buddha, who is manifest on the other side of that death line. Another way of saying this is that, at the moment when one entrusts oneself to that power of God or Buddha which draws people in, the self is obliterated and one is embraced by God or Buddha. Moreover, at that moment the obliterated self is brought to life by the power of that embrace and is reborn: thus death for the self immediately becomes rebirth.

This expresses, more or less, the religious viewpoint on death and how it can be overcome. We may borrow Dōgen's famous words,<sup>d</sup> "When you simply release and forget both your body and your mind and throw yourself into the house of Buddha, and when functioning comes from the direction of Buddha and you go in accord with it, then with no strength needed and no thought expended, freed from birth and death, you become Buddha."<sup>2</sup>

In contrast to this religious standpoint, in the modern period there are a number of positions which deny the existence of what is known as an "absolute" in religious terms, claiming instead that such an assertion is oppressive. Some of these arguments maintain that all things are based on human consciousness or knowledge, but I will not deal with them here. Whether one sees such positions as rational or irrational, scientific or antiscientific, nowhere do we find in these modern conclu-

<sup>2</sup> Because, of course, Dōgen's own standpoint was that of understanding this issue from a Zen perspective, namely the Buddhist position that *samsāra* equals *nirvāṇa*, his attitude differs greatly from the general religious point of view. The above quote is from the "Shōji" [*Samsāra*] chapter in *Shōbōgenzō* (ch. 92 of the standard edition), and begins, "Because the Buddha is in *samsāra*, there is no *samsāra*. It is also said, because the Buddha is not in *samsāra*, one is not confused in *samsāra*." The above quotes, as well as, "this *samsāra* is none other than the holy life of the Buddha," must be understood from this Zen point of view.

sions any genuine confrontation with the problem of death (or in Buddhist terms, the problem of *samsāra*); they make no attempt to confront the problem and thus they have nothing to offer that would lead to a solution. In not offering a proper solution to the problem of life and death, these philosophical positions cannot possibly know even of the existence of a place buried in the depths of one's own existence and the world where the answer to this eternal question lies.

Among those modern viewpoints which deny the existence of God, the only one that has managed to touch this place is nihilism in the word's original (i.e., philosophical) sense. Such nihilism incorporates the problem of death and its triumph, and accordingly confronts the issue of religious *anjin*, including its metaphysical dimension as well. Because this point of view is based on the concept of nothingness, this is only to be expected. Even Nietzsche's active nihilism can be seen as a search for a new solution in the modern period when certainty is questioned regarding traditional Western questions of anxiety and death. The denial of preexisting solutions to anxiety and the conquest of death resulted in a fundamental rejection of long-standing traditions in metaphysics and religion.<sup>3</sup>

The standpoint of Zen, however, has the characteristic of occupying a third position between that generally found in religion and philosophy on the one hand and nihilism on the other. In Zen, the Great Death, more than anything else, means liberating oneself from prejudices toward both the self itself and the world, dying to one's self and to the world. Not ending there, it goes further still in seeking liberation from any position of reliance upon Buddha or God, from faith in

<sup>3</sup> Hegel's philosophy can be seen as the grandest attempt in modern times to unify Christianity with the metaphysical tradition dating from the Greeks. Within the works of those who first confronted Hegel—namely, Kierkegaard and Schopenhauer—the issues of death and nihilism were hidden motivating forces. In the case of Kierkegaard, these cast a shadow in his thought on anxiety and despair. Schopenhauer sought to overcome death in a Buddhist-like *nirvāṇa* (understood here as a Hīnayāna Buddhist *nirvāṇa*) as the dissolution of the will to live. In any case, death and nihilism are problems that do not countenance speculation; that is, they emerge into consciousness as problems essential to one's own existence (and by extension, human existence) and can be truly solved only by oneself. This type of problem consciousness prescribed the basic attitude of these thinkers when they philosophized, propelling them to confront Hegel. Nietzsche finally concluded that Schopenhauer's "Buddhist" stance was "nihilism as pessimism," and thereupon hammered out his own theory of active nihilism.



and even contemplative visions of Buddha and God. As long as a relationship to God or Buddha is supporting the stability of one's existence, any such form of *anjin* is an *anjin* with strings attached. No matter how certain the support from the side of God or Buddha, no matter how definite one's certainty about that support, this type of certainty remains limited to the certainty of a fetus still connected by its umbilical cord to its mother, the certainty of a child who walks holding his mother's hand. This is obviously not the certainty of someone of independent thought and action who has discovered that wellspring from within oneself. Regardless of how much the certainty of one's existence is founded upon an absolute other, there will always be something on the side of the self that remains to be fulfilled, and to this extent the path of self investigation for such an individual has yet to be completed.

There is an example in medieval Europe of someone whose investigation of the self itself penetrated to that exalted level. For Meister Eckhart, the attempt to return to the basis of the soul went beyond a deeply personal love of God to a position whereby he declared, "I take my leave from God." How much more so in the modern period when scientific knowledge has once again awakened within philosophy, philosophy has become independent of theology, and since Bacon and Descartes a new awakening to and establishment of the "self" in human beings, a new investigation of self, has begun. We have emerged from the serious conflict between the theists and the atheists, finally broken through the whirlpool of nihilism, and now the investigation of the matter of self has entered a stage of major exploration. The stage now is one where we face the limit of anxiety and uncertainty. And in the present situation there are obvious reasons why the *anjin* of Zen should be reexamined.

## II

The investigation into the matter of self in Zen expresses itself in such phrases as "Above the Buddhas, beyond the patriarchs," or "Kill the Buddha, kill the patriarchs," wherein one goes beyond the dominating sphere of the patriarchal lineage. One does not stop at the notion of a self saved by the power of the great compassion of the Buddha as manifest in his enjoyment-body, as a self born into the Buddha's per-

sonal realm as a child (i.e., disciple) of the Buddha, or as one living under the protection of a Buddha. Nor does one rest in a mode of contemplating the Dharma of the Buddha after one has opened up by oneself the light of great wisdom of the Buddha manifest as dharma-body.<sup>e</sup>

In all these states, the self is still supported by its relationship with the Buddha or the Dharma, and to that extent, as I have stated above, there is a side of oneself the self has not been exhausted, hence there is a part of the self that can never fully become the self. If one takes this reliance on the Buddha or the Buddhist Teachings as a shackle, then only by cutting it off can one truly return to the self itself, become the self itself, and penetrate to one's original countenance. This was the way of the patriarchs, and it is how the awakening to the Buddha (the so-called self realization of Buddha-mind) and the content of that realization (the dharma-treasury that is the Buddha-mind) truly become one's own possession for the first time, when the self can stand on a footing equivalent to that of a living Buddha.

In Zen, however, even upon attaining the "Zen" of the patriarchs, that is, becoming conversant with and free to move within that realm, the process of the investigation into the matter of self has not been completed; one is not there yet. In this situation the self continues to be supported by the patriarchs—one is still under the supervision of the patriarchs, as it were. This could be compared to a young man who is independent to the point of earning a living, but still under the shadow of his parents, is unable to fully extend his own sphere of influence to others. This is, in a most basic sense, reflective of the situation where someone is tied to their community (the Saṅgha).<sup>f</sup> A self that has been made independent of Buddha and Dharma must go on to become independent of Saṅgha as well. This means cutting off the tradition of so-called mind-to-mind transmission of the truth in which the self-realization of the Buddha-mind and the content of the Teachings have been passed down from Śākyamuni through the patriarchs. (The meaning in which I speak of "community" and "tradition" here is not simply a historical one. Rather these are things that at once express the essential spatiality and temporality of the self in the realm of religion as well as an existentialist sociality and historicity of religious existence itself.)

In this way all relationships of the self itself are to be cut off, and through the abandonment of all frameworks and restrictions, for the

first time the self truly returns to the self itself, and as the self itself freedom is obtained. This freedom is not that of person, Dharma, or Buddha; it is the origin of the original self, before the beginnings of any tradition. And that origin is the beginning of all beginnings, a true freedom, a freedom in which there is true unity between the freedom from all things and the freedom to all things.<sup>4</sup>

In the context of this freedom it is possible to re-establish a connection to tradition. The severing of tradition is the true fusing with tradition. That severance is an opening to the standpoint of a truly creative freedom. It is a direct participation in the tradition of the Buddhas and patriarchs wherein it is as if there were nothing one could do which would not be creative, a living continuation of a living tradition. In addition this is where there is the possibility of a true encounter with a Buddha or a patriarch, because the Buddhas and patriarchs originally were people of such experiences. Such an encounter can only mean a manifestation of the true *communitas*, as in the phrase: "Divided for millions of years but not apart for even an instant; facing each other throughout the day but not face to face for even a moment."<sup>5</sup>

In other words, in the path to the knowledge of self, the issue of certainty should not be something confirmed by anything outside the self, regardless of what this may mean. Whether this be the Buddha, Dharma, or Saṅgha (i.e., the so-called patriarchs and the so-called spiritual guides [*kalyāṇamitra*] that make up the community and its tradition), one must not stop at a confirmation of self that comes from any of these which are, after all, outside the self. To stop here is to veil the true self through the patronage of the self by these forces. The certainty of self must always be something confirmed by the self itself; only by means of the self itself—herein accordingly the self becomes absolutely "alone"—can there be a certainty that is truly certain. The certainty that is attainable for one who has extricated oneself from any and all forms of "other" is the certainty of a true self. That is, the

<sup>4</sup> This must be termed an absolute freedom but here, as I will discuss below, all non-freedoms are also free. For example, although an elbow naturally does not bend outward, in the situation where illness prevents it from bending inward, both express a lack of freedom. From the point of view of what has been established as the very beginning of this reality as well as the reasons (and law) included within it—in the words of Western thought, the basis of a Creator God—therein lies something like an absolute freedom in which the freedom to reality and the freedom from it are one.

proof that it is possible to break away [from all supports] in this manner is a confirmation of self in terms of the final and ultimate possibility included in the very essence of one's existence. Such confirmation, or self-realization, is none other than the certainty of self. Here the confirming and what is confirmed are one. This is what is meant by penetrating to where one sees one's original face. That vision is the disclosure of the original countenance, when the self becomes the true self.

This is the only time one can truly say the clouds of doubt are completely gone. Attaining this indubitability means the self is truly able to confirm the self itself. This is the ground of true *anjin*. Until one reaches this point, one cannot escape the fact that everything one encounters in this world, including the self itself that exists within it and even one's interactions with Buddha, the Teachings and religious personages, are all exposed as lying within the scope of the Great Doubt. As long as the existence of self is established by means of protection by some kind of "other," in other words, as long as the certainty of the self is based on a relationship with an "other," that certainty exists essentially within a significant degree of doubt.<sup>5</sup> The clearing away of this

<sup>5</sup> This "Great Doubt" is not simply an irresolvable form of the doubt that arises from the subjective opinions of each individual. It is a doubt that can arise in relation to what is absolutely eternal, like the relationship between the self itself and the world, or God/Buddha; or a doubt regarding the objective reasoning that dominates that relationship. As a doubt regarding the self itself on the plane of the self itself, it is a case where this has been existentialized. By its philosophical and ontological nature such doubt is directly transformed into an existential question. In this sense, it may be said to be existential and immediately existent, existent and immediately existential. Or, in a new way, it may be possible to consider this position as transcendent. Without stopping even at this Great Doubt, Zen transcends all standpoints of thought or thinking, while at the same time somehow encompassing substantial thought or thinking at the point of that transcendence. On the extreme of that transcendent point where we find the stick of Te-shan and the shout of Lin-chi, not a shadow of thought or thinking remains. In such things as Lin-chi's "four shouts" and "four outlooks"<sup>h</sup> we can recognize the traces of a deliberative thought transformed by a flash of insight. The *shikan taza* (zazen alone) position advocated by Dōgen is found in his *Shōbōgenzō*, where on the topic of zazen he writes, "If one maintains this, it will be [like] a powerful scarecrow in a field." In the background of this "scarecrow" is the expansive *dharma-dhātu*, which includes the entirety of the universe and humanity. The investigation of this *dharma-dhātu* is illustrated by the standpoint, "How does one measure the immeasurable? By nonmeasurement." In Zen dialogues we frequently see language such

Great Doubt requires the penetration to that final possibility that is located within one's self-existence and thus essentially within the existence known as humanity. For this reason, the severing of every conceivable relationship with an "other" is nothing less than what is known as the Great Death.

Included within the term "Great Death" is the notion that not just the world or the self dies but also the Buddhas and the patriarchs die. The path of investigating the self demands this degree of thoroughness. One must go through the experience of letting go of their hold on to what keeps them from falling and after dying then coming back to life once again. This is the ground of absolute affirmation. The self that one confronts when one is reborn after the self itself has died is the self on the ground of this absolute affirmation. Returning here, for the first time one accepts oneself absolutely. Here one can approve of one's existence as good in and of itself. This also means truly reaching the certainty of self.

The certainty of the existence of self that one encounters as a result of doubting even the existence of the world or God—as Descartes was said to doubt everything that could be doubted—can truly be affirmed only because one has actually encountered this self after passing through this Great Death. When one removes any reliance on God or Buddha and is able to affirm oneself truly in a place where he has transcended the dominating sphere of the patriarchal line from the Buddha, when one can confirm one's own existence, then for the first time one is able to encounter the self's original face. This is a self-knowledge that cannot be destroyed by anything, and as such can destroy everything impeding its penetration to the self. This self-knowledge of the certainty of existence at the same time also includes an awareness of the

---

as "You've got it," or to "get it." What is the standpoint of this "nonmeasurement" or "getting it"? Zen is religious and philosophical, while at the same time it can be called nonreligious and nonphilosophical (nonreligious by means being philosophical, and nonphilosophical by means of religious). What is this position that is religiously nonreligious, philosophically nonphilosophical. At the same time, besides incorporating both these positions, what is standpoint of the entirety of Zen itself? For example, where does it resemble or differ from the speculative mysticism from Plotinus to Jacob Boehme, or the standpoint of Kierkegaard's "second directness" (indirect communication) and "second philosophy"? Regarding the basic position of Zen, an investigation from this point of view is a problem remaining for the future.

certainty of that self-knowledge. This totality of certainty regarding both existence and knowledge is the indubitability of the existence of the self; i.e., when the self no longer holds any doubt about the self itself.

Manifest in an awareness of self-existence, such indubitability means the self itself is none other than the endpoint of the investigation into the matter of self. And from the standpoint of Zen in which this investigation is central, this is truly an important issue. In the introspection within the self that occurs during this self-investigation, as long as there remains something that one cannot resign oneself to, some feeling however faint in which the self cannot relax, this inquiry will inevitably continue to advance regardless of where it leads. This is the conscience of Zen. And for this reason a persistently severe and sharply critical mentality, directed above all toward oneself, is required. This point of view unavoidably creates an attitude toward the teachings of the Buddha and patriarchs that is fundamentally different from that of Buddhism in general, yielding a vital clue to unraveling the question of what exactly is this point of view in which indubitability is the conclusion of the investigation into the matter of self, the certainty of self-existence that is confirmed by the self itself where one has transcended the sphere of Buddhas and patriarchs. Let us now consider this point.

### III

Zen continuously makes the point that, "Not to doubt words is a great illness." No matter how sincerely one may revere scripture, no matter how deep one's understanding, it is a great illness to stop there. The reason is that within that situation one still harbors doubts about the self as there remains territory within the self yet to be probed. As long as one has not reached that place beyond the Buddhas and patriarchs where one affirms the self by the self itself, where one is confirmed by oneself, one is not there yet, not free yet.

For example, the following dialogue is recorded between Ku-yin Yün-ts'ung and his disciple. When the disciple quoted the words of the ancient master Shih-t'ou, "Attachment to things has always meant confusion, conforming to principle is not enlightenment either," Ku-yin asked him, "Are you using that as an expression of medicine or as an expression of illness?" The student of course answered that these were

words of healing, whereupon Ku-yin scolded him with, "You take illness and call it medicine—why would you do such a thing?" He also said, "If words do not leave the nest, how can one leave behind the self-imposed veils and restrictions of the mind?"<sup>1</sup>

In the history of Zen there seems to be an uncountable number of dialogues similar to this one. These express in the most graphic manner the individual standpoint of Zen. Above everything, the original standpoint of Buddhism is to abandon one's attachments to things, awaken to the principles of the Teachings and live accordingly. The explanations of doctrinal scholars struggling to unravel the teachings of the Dharma as contained in the scriptures are indeed antidotes prescribed for the illnesses of sentient beings. Accordingly the words of Shih-t'ou, "conforming to principle is not enlightenment either," indicate a further transformation of this basic Buddhist position to something transcendent, an exalted position within Buddhism itself. These are medicinal words to combat what might be termed a higher dimension of illness where one is restricted by Buddhist truth itself.

Although such progressive words of the Zen tradition like these sound a warning to those based in the scriptural tradition who may face some infirmity lurking within their own natures, in fact this dialogue points out that even this message can itself become a source of further illness. The problem does not lie in what is being discussed but how one receives what is said. Thus the attitude displayed in the phrase, "Not doubting the word," is precisely the Great Illness. Even if one clearly comprehends from the Zen point of view the words of patriarchs which themselves express that same Zen point of view and as a result achieves a penetrating insight into one's own mind and even reaches the enlightenment of grasping one's self-nature (*kenshō*), that by itself would not be the endpoint of the investigation into the matter of self. Rather, one would end up with a situation whereby one's lucid Zen satori is actually concealing Zen satori itself. In other words, the very acceptance of medicinal language as medicinal language is a Great Illness.

In the same sense it is also said, "Do not engage in dead words, practice live words." No matter what the medicinal words may be, whenever they are accepted as just that, those words are dead idioms. They kill the self just as imbibing poison would the physical body. I say that these healing words are the basis of illness and death because they

obscure the path to the attainment of what I have discussed above as "freedom" for the self—the self itself in the locus of absolute confirmation. They render that great freedom as something not yet available. In that situation the self sits within the enclosure of the patriarchs who originally articulated those medicinal words. Those same words may lead to insights into one's own mind, cure a variety of mental ills produced from within oneself, and help one to reach a certainty of self-existence and affirmation of one's self as good, but the ground of that confidence is established on the lack of doubt regarding the patriarch's words. Hence the path of investigating the matter of self wherein the certainty of self is confirmed by the self itself without relying on anything outside is not yet completed. This is where the attained indubitability itself veils the final step to true indubitability. With a sense of relief that all of one's problems have now been solved, this creates a relaxed feeling of assurance that results in stopping at an *anjin* within the borders of the patriarchs. In a word, one becomes a prisoner within the castle of one's own relief.

The ancients referred to this situation as "being turned around by another's words." Because one is only following the words of the patriarchs there is an implication of subordinating oneself to their authority or essentially being under their dominance or control. Yet the individual does not realize this is going on.

This is what is meant by "being turned around by another's words." This is also what Ku-yin probably meant by, "If words do not leave the nest, how can one leave behind the self-imposed veils and restrictions of the mind?" The word "nest" here refers to a place of security for birds and animals. The "veils and restrictions" are those things that bind one to that traditional enclosure or compound, giving one a sense of support and security. To the extent that one does not doubt these words they have the character of commands handed down by those patriarchs, or rules establishing a law. One's sense of *anjin* in this situation should be understood as that which arises from following orders, as if something prescribed by law.

Of course the orders or laws in this situation are not the same as natural laws or moral laws where the self is under the domination of something outside the self itself. Not doubting the words of the patriarchs may mean one has achieved a place of indubitability within the self itself, having returned to the original ground of one's own



mind, and gained the freedom derived from seeing into one's Buddha-nature (*kenshō*). In this sense the self has become the self itself, has become free—a standpoint where there are no laws or commands coming from anywhere outside. Yet even in this place one is controlled by hidden commands and laws.

But there is also a wellspring of subtle law that can make one's own existence something absolutely free vis-à-vis the other side where all natural laws and moral laws operate. While opening up a limitless horizon of activity for the complete freedom of self, this law becomes the hidden ground of freedom latent in the foundation of that freedom, as it opens up a locale where complete freedom for the self can be realized. The commands implied in this situation are strong, declarative and conclusive nature, and are quite decisive and affirmative by nature.

It is well known that Kant was a superlative lawgiver who, by placing humans on the standpoint of practical reason, himself established the laws of reason. At the same time he expounded a so-called autonomy of practical reason that meant following those laws himself, and which thereby provided a foundation for morality. At this position of autonomy the commands which order us to follow the laws of morality are generated from within each of us. Thus to the degree that each person is truly himself or herself they cannot otherwise but follow those commands unconditionally. Kant called these categorical imperatives. But no matter how entirely subjective these imperatives may be, one cannot escape them becoming conscious to the self in the form of commands. To this extent, these too retain something of the nature of being external. This autonomously realized moral freedom thus is not an absolute freedom. That is why in his theory of religion Kant posits God's decree to be the moral rule which restricts the establishment of moral freedom.

Regarding our concern here, however—freedom from the Zen point of view—the issue of freedom is not simply a moral question. The Zen concept would not even fit into Kant's notion of a categorical imperative. And even if we called it a religious freedom (generally understood as an imperative coming from the Absolute), still it would not be included in the notion of following the decrees of God. In this sense, it is none other than what the words say: absolute freedom. This is the standpoint which states that what flows out from one's own bosom covers

heaven and earth. This in itself implies that the legal restrictions latent [in the Zen notion of freedom] are a far more conclusive imperative than any rules of moral law or any rules based on decrees of God.

In Buddhism there are said to be three jewels or treasures: the Buddha, the Dharma and the Saṅgha. Ontologically or philosophically speaking, if the Dharma points to the essential way of being and way of appearing of all things in the world, then all things return inclusively to the dharma-body of the Buddha (the so-called *dharmatā-dharmakāya*). To enter that dharma-body by means of properly enlightened wisdom in the Dharma and to open up the perfect enlightenment equal to a Buddha within one's own mind is the goal of being human in Buddhism. Even beyond this, it is stipulated that according to the Teachings the path of practice leads one to the astonishing goal of nothing less than omniscient wisdom. Practice is also one part of the teachings. Characterized by the fusion of knowledge and practice it is the practice of compassion linked with the development of a wisdom of self-enlightenment which, like the selfless pledge to save all living things, which is a manifestation of the Buddha's Teaching, an imperative for Buddhism.

In short, the Buddhist Teaching has the power to mold humanity into a moral or religious existence; the Buddha's Dharma is dominant universally in every aspect of the world and mankind. In the Dharma we have the traces of the life, strength, and work of a Buddha who totalizes the totality of the world and mankind. From the development of this notion of the Dharma came the three bodies of the Buddha: the dharma-body, the enjoyment-body, and the transformation-body. The Buddha is thus a Buddha with three bodies that are simultaneously one. And taking refuge in this Buddha, living one's life based on following his teachings, is a description of a religious person and the confraternity of such (i.e., the Saṅgha). For example, the fifteenth century Jōdo Shinshū leader Rennyo once saw a piece of paper that someone had dropped in the hallway and, commenting that this was part of the Buddha's Dharma and should not be treated as insignificant, raised it reverently to his head. Only a religious person would view a piece of paper as belonging to the realm of the Buddha's Teaching, as a possession of the Buddha and thus to be revered.

However, the investigation into the matter of self within the Zen tradition does not end when one finds assurance within the realm of the Dharma; it must continue further and try to reach the ultimate place in

the Buddha's Teaching. One may call this an investigation directed towards that place which is the elemental source of all things, digging out the self and the foundation upon which that self rests. To seek the original source of the Dharma is to search for the Buddha who, in dominating all being, all things in the world and in humankind, totalizes everything by means of his Teaching. It is to search for the original source of the Buddha himself, his life, his power (including the so-called power of the Original Vow) and his work. This is what a Zen person calls "the place from which all Buddhas came," wherein all Buddhas means the original source manifesting the form of "Buddha." The investigation into this original source through the self itself is none other than [an investigation into] the original source of the self itself.

In this situation even what is called the Buddha's dharma-body is no longer the original source of the Buddha. Of course it is said that the dharma-body of the Buddha has nothing discernible and is thus described as formless, and that having no form, the dharma-body is the ground of everything that has form. As far as the self is concerned, to the degree that the Buddha and his dharma-body are still seen or conceived of as having the nature of "something other," however, these are still objects of contemplation and thus the "formless" takes on a kind of form. One must look for the genuine source of the Buddha in a place that transcends any notion of Dharma as a "body" of a Buddha. At that time the original source of the Buddha will have shed any nature of being "something other" and one will have no choice but to return to that point directly under that searching self itself, up to the central axis of the self itself penetrating the self. At the same time this is a unitary, absolute standpoint encompassing one's entirety and cannot in any sense be objectified. Thus what is truly formless cannot possibly be anything but the absolute self. The original source of the Buddha that one is searching for is at bottom, originally, the original source of the self itself. For this reason, for example, even in Tillich's conception that the root of religious existence is one's "ultimate concern," insofar as he still sees the "ground of being" as God, he is thinking in terms of an other. As long as one affirms that one's relationship to that ground of being is one of an existential "participation," from the Zen point of view this cannot be said to constitute the final step.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Of course Tillich did not trample on the traditional view of God in Christian theol-

ogy. Rather, he pursued God while touching on the modern historical situation. This superlative thinker finally reached the end of his pursuit when he spoke of faith in "the God above God."

On the other hand, as I have mentioned above, to the degree that we regard the usual, conscious self (what Buddhism calls the self of discrimination) as the self itself, it goes without saying that everything that is not the self will be seen as "other." And when that self seeks what it is that causes both oneself and everything else to be, it is natural and even logical that this will lead to consideration of a transcendent other such as "God" or "Buddha," in some cases an absolutely transcendent other. Whether one sees this transcendent other as the product of human imagination like Feuerbach or as the opiate of the masses as in Marxism, or even something more serious, none of these views is sufficient to resolve the issue. From their viewpoint, the search for God or Buddha itself is a vain effort, but in fact there is a true reason deep within the individual for such questioning. However, even when such questions have been raised, the individual rarely questions the ground upon which he himself is standing, or even if he does question this, problems usually remain with how the questions are asked. All of that notwithstanding, the seeking of God or Buddha arises as an inevitability inherent in the essence of what it is to be human. This is what the ancients called "the great matter of life and death," the vexing issue that eternally dogs the human condition. As emphasized by Kierkegaard and others, this is a matter that must be treated with the proper gravity. It cannot be taken care of simply by redirecting it into a social "love of mankind," or by analyzing it as an issue of class theory seen from a materialistic view of history, or by reducing it to a psychoanalytic problem of the sexual libido. The basic problematic outlined in all these viewpoints reifies the matter into something shallow.

As long as the investigation into the matter of self is not resolved, as long as the ground of that great freedom discussed above remains unrealized within oneself, all being, all things within mankind and the world itself will, as seen from the self, be something "other." And everything considered "other" is, by this rule, in the hands of an absolute Other. Hakuin compared this situation to someone "crying for thirst in the middle of water," or, "the son of a wealthy household who loses himself in poverty." Such a person has forgotten that all being, all things and all teachings are held in the precious storehouse of his parent's home and that from the moment of his succession this will unquestionably become his own possession. Instead he sees his parents as outsiders, separates himself from the family and looks toward the outside, becoming someone whose course is determined by what he looks for in others. As long as this state of ignorance of the self (called *avidyā* in Buddhism and original sin in Christianity) is essentially rooted in actual human existence, it will be inevitable that we wander about facing the "outside." It will also be inevitable that we grow tired of this confusion and seek out an absolute Other who can grant us peace and comfort. At that point we begin to search for what was originally our own treasure as if it were something possessed by that which is "other" to us. This is the equivalent of assuming that one does not have the strength within oneself and so asks to be conferred it by the head of another family.

## NISHITANI: THE PROBLEM OF ANJIN IN ZEN (I)

To take this one step further, because of an original oblivion to the self by oneself, the responsibility of this unsettled situation leads one to look on it as if it were a debt toward the Other. Thus what was originally one's own property is rewritten under the pretext of a loan from another, wherein the individual either works hard to buy this back, or humbly asks for what amounts to an unrepayable gift from the Other. In other words, while one is in the midst of the process of investigating the matter of self and no resolution has been reached, there is a sense of debt incurred tied up incessantly with the conception of an Other which is transcendent to the self yet manifest in a variety of ways. This is the inevitable state of things during the development of reason.

As long as the original source of the self itself has been forgotten while one is wandering about in other lands, the original storehouse of the self is put under the safekeeping of God or Buddha who, in the form of an Other, has custody of it in until the delusion is lifted. Although there are various stages of awakening that arise in the process of investigating the matter of self such as a certainty of self or the assurance (*anjin*) that comes with a sense of satisfaction in the self itself, this other-centered point of view will always function as a hammer pulverizing the various forms of return to the self that occur as answers in the course of one's questioning.

That people after a period of time become suspicious of the assumption that their own thinking is sound is not at all unusual even in the religious world. Yet do we not see manifest in that self seeking a new personal certainty a structuring whereby what is sought is once again reaffirmed under the rubric of otherness by means of such things as Buddha or Buddhadharma? This is because from a standpoint unable to escape completely the relative two-dimensionality of self and other, the only all-inclusive, absolute one-dimensionality that one can recollect is that of the Other. But if the *anjin* which has been given to the self from a standpoint centered on an absolute other remains problematic for the investigation into the self (these days this problem is linked to the rise of nihilism, but I will not deal with that issue here), then we have a situation where there is an inevitable questioning of the origins of Buddha or Buddhism. Such questions must be asked in a way that returns to the bottom of the self itself; put directly to the self it must inquire as to the origins of the self itself. The examination of God or Buddha must become an examination of self. The all-inclusive standpoint recalled from the side of the Other is, from the side of self, now recalled from within the self. It is by means of this that the investigation into the matter of self can be thorough. As stated above, the path to the original source of the existence of self simultaneously includes all inquiries into the original source of Buddha or Buddhadharma. It is then, for the first time, that such inquiries become genuine.

Seen from the point of view of the thoroughgoing investigation into self within Zen, any calling to mind of a transcendent other or any of the accompanying phenomena associated with this are no different from considering one's own treasures as belonging to someone else. Here the term, "as-if" has been used frequently to reinterpret concepts related to trans-empirical realms from the standpoint of Neo-Kantian criticism (*kritizismus*). Based on the Kantian method of analysis, in his *Die Philosophie des Als-ob* [The Philosophy of As-If] (1911), Vaihinger attempted to show (not only for metaphysics and religion) the fictive nature of all concepts associated with realms of speculative

Returning to one's original source is to leave behind any mode of being based in the power of "Buddha" or "Dharma." It is to be released from a locale framed by the dominion of Buddha or Dharma and to open up a standpoint of true liberty and freedom—it is this that can be called the true ultimate. Even if this formless self is opened up as the original source of the self, in that this signifies a resolution to the investigation of self, it is at the same time a return to the self of a manifest reality where the self has form. If one considers what is referred to as the formless self to be something separate from the directly known self of manifest reality, this is in fact not the true formless

---

knowledge and indeed the necessity of seeing these as mental constructions.

The notion that trans-empirical conceptions have the character of always being "as if" should be accepted, but the approach of these philosophers comes from a completely different point of view. We are not talking about something which, from the standpoint of "experience," transcends the possibility of empirical proof, but rather, from the standpoint of the investigation into the matter of self, about a form which further shrouds what can be proved in the complete examination of self. Here, "as if" definitely does not mean simply a fictive nature. Since everything which can be said to have a fictive nature belongs to the self-development of reality in the path to the investigation of the matter of self, if we were to label all of this as fiction, then it must be a fiction that has more reality than what is usually called real. It conceals a new reality in the background, and seen from this reality, what normally is referred to as real exhibits the characteristics, rather, of illusion. God or Buddha and everything associated with them are, in terms of the investigation into the matter of self, very solemn issues; it is imperative that one understands them with proper dignity.

In Zen, when one speaks of transcending the Buddhas and Patriarchs or killing the Buddhas and Patriarchs, this of course comes from the core of Zen itself. It will not do, however, to assume this means that therefore one has put away the issue of Buddha. Trivializing the problem of Buddha creates the danger of taking Zen frivolously. There is a traditional saying, "Those in the Zen tradition love frivolity," indicating there has actually been such danger for quite some time. On the other hand, it is alright to be frivolous for a great person of freedom who has removed from their shoulders the heavy burden of such things as Buddha or Buddhadharma. To borrow a metaphor from Nietzsche, if one does not kneel down before everything noble to carry it on one's back as a camel, one cannot be transformed into a lion. If one cannot become a lion who reigns over all animals on a desert with nothing, that person cannot be transformed into a child. The frivolity of a child on a beach who draws figures in the sand only to have them wiped out by the ocean waves—the danger of taking things in this kind of frivolous manner is always latent in the path of Zen. This is illustrated in the fact that Nietzsche himself was dismissed frivolously by the populace as the man who killed God.

self and thus not the true conclusion to one's investigation. The self which is truly formless is expressed in the phrase, "If there is no Buddha in *saṃsāra*, one is without restrictions in *saṃsāra*." No Buddha in *saṃsāra* means freedom of the formless self; "without restrictions in *saṃsāra*" is liberty.<sup>1</sup>

I will come back to this below, but the self manifest in its present place is at once the formless self. The truly final point of this investigation can be said to be manifest in the self in this way of being. And the viewpoints of the patriarchs in the Zen tradition reveal a resolution to the investigation of self that is in this dimension. It is one of the special characteristics of Zen that it emphasizes the way of being of the patriarchs. The internal self-realization of Buddha means the manifest realization active in manifest reality. By means of returning to the original source of the self which has transcended "Buddha," one reflects the living work of all the Buddhas and patriarchs beginning with Śākyamuni in this manifest reality. In other words, in establishing the Buddhist Teaching as a living Buddhist Teaching adapted to the circumstances of the present situation, a standpoint has been provided that enables each person to obtain true liberty for his/her self and become enlightened to his/her intrinsic, enormous freedom. Therefore, from the standpoint of questioning whether or not one has indeed arrived at the conclusion of their search, if it is affirmed that one has not doubted the words of the patriarchs and has stopped within the enclosure of those patriarchs, this means that that person cannot be confirmed as having reached a true conclusion. To be where one is turned around by the language of the patriarchs is to not yet have either true independence or true freedom. To attain these goals one must give up any participation in dead language and participate in living words.

#### IV

"To participate in living words" is to abandon the pursuit of language that has already been produced and to inquire instead into the original self of the person who produced that language. It means to inquire into that person's "home-ground." One visits where that person lives and at the entrance, one opens the mouth of his/her self-itself; it is a direct visit to that "person." Transcending Buddha or patriarch (the Buddhas and patriarchs as "others" to one's own self), one takes the origi-

nal source manifested in the Buddhas and patriarchs and, in a word, self-transforms it absolutely into oneself. The patriarchs were just such people—individuals who were compelled to inquire into the self. A patriarch, a living patriarch, is someone who has gone to the point of realizing (in himself) a living “person” as the manifest reality of Buddha. And any questioning directed at the original source of this living patriarch is none other than an inquiry into the home-ground of that patriarch. “To participate in living words” can only mean, from the mind of one living person to another, going out and knocking on their door.

This is illustrated in the example of the well-known story of the eminent scholar Liang-sui’s audience with Ma-ku.<sup>k</sup> Ma-ku saw Liang-sui coming, picked up a hoe and went into the vegetable garden. When Liang-sui followed him into the garden, Ma-ku ran back to his room and closed the door. Liang-sui at that point had no choice but to return the next day. When he then knocked on Ma-ku’s closed door, he heard Ma-ku’s voice say, “Who is it?” Without thinking, Liang-sui answered, “Liang-sui,” and at that instant he was enlightened. It is written that he then faced Ma-ku and said, “Master, you had better not deceive Liang-sui. If I had come and not bowed to you in respect I would have been guilty of nearly an entire lifetime of impertinence toward the scriptures.” He is also known for remarking in a lecture delivered after returning home, “The place everyone knows about, I know everything about. The place I know about, no one knows about.”

It is interesting that when Ma-ku saw Liang-sui coming he grabbed a hoe and went into the vegetable garden, and it is also interesting that when he saw Liang-sui follow him into the garden he ran back to his room and shut the door. The scene that Liang-sui witnessed is itself a living development of the Dharma. Ma-tsu’s closing the door and leaving Liang-sui outside can be seen as an expression of what I have mentioned above as the absolute standpoint of total inclusion. At the same time, moreover, we can also see that between himself in this position and Liang-sui, Ma-ku has drawn a line of discontinuity that cannot be transcended. This is the final burden buried within Liang-sui’s state of being as yet personally unresolved, as well as the manner in which Ma-ku presented to him his ultimate limit. The refusal of Ma-ku to allow the visit is of course an act of great compassion. As a result of Ma-ku’s act Liang-sui knocked on the door, announced himself and in that mo-



ment awakened to the truth, reaching a place where he could tell Ma-ku to his face not to deceive him.

These words are used again and again within the Zen tradition. For example, when Dōgen returned from China, the first time he entered the hall to speak he said, "I return home with empty hands." His statement "without being beguiled by the patriarchs" is also well-known. The words "deceive" and "beguile" include implications of belittling or making a fool of, just like an adult might fool or coax an innocent child. Because a grownup stands in a dimension of "knowledge" one level higher than that of a child, when he sees things with the light of that knowledge the thinking of the child becomes transparent to him. Even among adults we speak of one who can see clearly into someone's heart.

When people are at different stages of "knowledge" such things occur naturally, but this kind of relationship also naturally manifests a form of deception, which is not necessarily something negative. If one takes advantage of this type of relationship in a way that is selfish, this truly can lead to "deceiving" someone; but when a grownup looks into what a child is thinking, it is usually for reasons of affection. It is said when Buddhas and bodhisattvas provide sentient beings with teachings, it is like giving an autumn leaf to soothe a crying child whose thoughts one can see into. In Zen, there are stories of cut grass<sup>1</sup> which are said to arise out of compassion, but these, too, are all forms of deception. To be led around by words of the patriarchs without doubting them, no matter how much one thinks they have helped to clarify issues about himself, still means one has not rid oneself of the deception that one has accepted from the patriarchs. When one sets out [on the path to self-discovery], there is no reason to expect to be deceived by the patriarchs or their disciples either, but the way things are these relationships of deceiving and being deceived just come about naturally.

Here we can see one problem basic to religion: the relationship between master and disciple—the one doing the teaching and the one being taught. My view is that the problem between master and disciple is a manifestation of an ultimate problem that exists between people as a whole. For example, in Christianity Christ is called the master and is considered the true teacher of the spirit for everyone. Later thinkers like Augustine or the medieval scholastics wrote religious and philo-

sophical works on the significance of Christ as "teacher." Likewise in Buddhism, Śākyamuni is called "the teacher of men and gods" and "the great leader." [But] the transmission of teachings or faith in religion is fundamentally something that occurs from one mind to another. The process is such that there will always be an ultimate character building (on the ground of the mind) of the disciple through the master, and by means of the disciple himself there will also be an ultimate self-formation or self-cultivation. At the root of the transmission of doctrine or faith there is always an educational dimension also included. This is true even for Zen, which rejects all instruction based on words or logic. Therefore it is worth taking a look at the master-disciple relationship in Zen as a human relationship: what kind of structure does it have, what educational meaning is there in it?

In the case of Zen, which professes to be a "transmission outside the teachings" and which "directly points to the mind," the usual transmission norms regarding doctrine or faith are not sufficient. By means of a complete investigation into oneself, it becomes a search for the original source of the self from the standpoint of the absolute "I." That original source is, as I have said above, the certainty of self on the field of absolute affirmation of the self by the self, without requiring any reliance on any sort of "other." The establishment of a standpoint seeking to penetrate to one's original face in this way means the opening up of a path one step beyond the realm of religion. And on this advanced path, anything remaining of the position where the words of the patriarchs are not doubted is designated to be a great ill.

This requires involvement in living words. To dialog with living words is, as stated above, to dialog with a "master" as a living patriarch. A patriarch is someone who has transcended the Buddhas and patriarchs, continuing until reaching their original source; it is someone who has reached the point of realizing the self as person, living in the present reality of Buddha. A patriarch is always a living patriarch, and as such is a master. And to go back and ask of the original source of this master is to participate in living words. This type of query illustrates a resolve to try to penetrate even further, to conclusively exhaust the path of investigation into the matter of self no matter what. It is the expression of an extremely critical state of mind that, until personally satisfied, will go anywhere in pursuit of the field of true resolution. As a feature of the Zen investigation of self, this special

characteristic inevitably means the master-disciple relationship will appear as something quite different from that of religion in general, and particularly different from the normal didactic relationships between people outside the religious sphere.

Upon first glance, the shape of that relationship may seem complicated and even bizarre. But what is revealed here is the form unearthed at the very bottom of the bottom of didactic relationships in the world of religion which, in focusing on issues like these, represent what is actually manifest in such relationships present in all aspects of human society. If the essence of what is called education is firstly the formation of one person by another, and then the formation of a person by himself, then it is possible to understand these attempts to exhaustively investigate all the complications which become manifest in the relationship between master and disciple in the Zen tradition, the relationships between people in general, and the relationship between an individual and his or her self itself.

These so-called complications or conflicts are all expressions of the investigation into the matter of self. And what we are calling participation in the living words of living patriarchs is none other than an indication of the field where this limit is located. I spoke of this above in terms of an inquiry into the origins of the patriarch's hands or his bosom; inquiring into the original source of the patriarch who has become a Person, even while one's own original source is the original source of Buddha. Knocking on the patriarch's gate in this sense is not limited to the example of Liang-sui. Examples like these abound in the history of Zen and considering the subject matter, this is only to be expected.

There is also the famous example of the visit by Yün-men to the gate of Chen-tsun-su where Huang-po had instructed Lin-chi.<sup>m</sup> When Yün-men rapped on the gate, the teacher who opened it interrupted Yün-men's entering and demanded of him, "Speak, speak!" Yün-men was so taken aback he was unable to answer right away and when the teacher saw this, he pushed him out and closed the door. Some time later Yün-men knocked on the door again and just as the door was being opened he tried to barge his way in. But just at that moment the door was closed, jamming his right foot in the doorway. Yün-men cried out unconsciously in pain and in that moment experienced an enlightenment.

To give another example, among the disciples of Nan-ch'üan there was a practicing layman named Kan-chih." When he was visited by (the monk) Hsüeh-fêng, he closed the gate and from behind it said, "Please do come in." It is said he was testing his visitor but when Hsüeh-fêng saw this, he stepped back from the fence, shook his robe and started to walk past the gate. At that moment, Kan-chih opened the gate and bowed in obeisance.

What does it mean that Hsüeh-fêng shook his robe? As a monk's robe can be the billion worlds of the Buddha's domain, we can probably even call it the Buddha. Even Paul spoke of "wearing Christ." If we see this therefore as one or two shakes of the billion worlds of the Buddha, we can see this as Hsüeh-fêng emitting light and shaking the ground (like a Buddha). Or, Hsüeh-fêng may simply have shaken his robe to clean it from the dust that had accumulated. Kan-chih's closing of the gate can also be said to be an expression of his own so-called absolute self wherein he has transcended his relationship to the Buddhas and patriarchs. In the same way, perhaps the dust on Hsüeh-fêng's robe represents his absolute self from the same transcendent standpoint.

In this expression of a mutual cutting off of their relationship to tradition, we have in this story what may be termed a point of perfect harmony where one mirror is turned to face another. This is expressed in Buddhism as being "divided by millions of kalpas but not apart for even an instant." Ultimately, we can see how the entire meaning of what I have said here is contained within the one image of the shaken robe of Hsüeh-fêng. At least I hope it is clear that within these stories of the encounters between two persons of Zen can be found expressions of the ultimate locale of an encounter between Person and Person.

To close the door to someone who comes to "ask" about one's own home-ground is to allow an encounter between Person and Person on the ground where an absolute resolution of each self can take place. But first that ground must be opened up. In this sense the closed gate is actually the open gate of a most profound and final dimension. In that dimension it is only by means of the closed gate that the open gate is possible; i.e., the rejection is the sermon. Or, "dropping one's hands is the same as a cliff 10,000 fathoms high."<sup>o</sup> In a sense it is a kind of experimental device used to find out the state of the visitor as Person; but

it is also an act of compassion to suggest to him the ground to which he must ascend before the resolution of his self can occur. As with the examples above, Liang-sui's and Yün-men's first attempt at a visit and ended in failure, but on the second try they were able to reach that ground. In the case of the practitioner Kan-chih and Hsüeh-fêng, they met on that ground from the beginning. On another occasion, the same Hsüeh-fêng, in response to a monk who came to visit him, opened the gate, suddenly stuck out his face and said, "What is this?" This is the same as the closed gate incident in that he challenged his visitor to open the ground that must be reached to resolve the existential/existentialist gap that exists in the relationship between two people.

Occurrences like these—events in which two persons are linked within actual historical circumstances—form religious/existential landmarks. Regarding these existential occurrences themselves from the point of view of the realized "Dharma principle" (in a word, the existentialist point of view), each can be called a real dialectic (not a dialectic as an abstract theory but a dialectic based on an actual relationship that has been embodied, as it were, in a doctrinal principle). This real dialectic is included in the basis of the relationship between one Person and another Person, both living and active in the present world. This can also be seen as a development of Dharma on the field of the so-called realm of the interpenetration of phenomena without obstruction.<sup>p</sup> In a Zen encounter, the Dharma-wheel of the "realm of truth" (*dharmadhātu*) is turned. From the Zen standpoint (on the field of the realm of the interpenetration of phenomena without obstruction), of course, the two viewpoints of "existential" and "Dharma principle" (existentialist) are in the end one. The complexity of the encounter is, just as it is, the living development of Dharma. Looking at it from this point of view, as in the example of the encounter between the monk and Hsüeh-fêng, the totality of the impact can be said to be the action of Hsüeh-fêng turning the Dharma-wheel standing on the standpoint of absolute self; this can be termed his Great Activity.<sup>q</sup>

To sum up, what is opened up in a Zen encounter is a place which in every way serves as the ultimate locale for a meeting between people. When two Persons who have each returned to their own original source meet, no matter when this takes place, it is on such a ground; this will never change. In Buddhist doctrine this is called "a place of only Buddhas and Buddhas." The phrase in Christianity, *communio sanctorum*

(the interchange of saints) probably corresponds to the same thing. To what extent does the complete form born from this kind of encounter manifest in this place? At the very least we can say that this something that occurs only between Buddhas [and Buddhas], is transformed in Zen, without any loss of its total profundity, quietude and intensity, into an encounter between Person and Person. This goes one step beyond the original source of "a place of only Buddhas and Buddhas," to a simultaneous realization of the living present. It is on this basis that both the "event" and "Dharma principle" included therein transcend the distinctions among religions, transcend the differences between faith and doctrine, and become a matter related to every possible Person.

TRANSLATED BY MARK L. BLUM

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

<sup>a</sup> In East Asian Buddhism, *anjin* 安心 represents the religious ideal of a mind without anxiety, or in a strictly doctrinal sense, without *duḥkha*. Much more than the absence of worry implied by the phrase, "peace of mind," *anjin* is used in Buddhism as a technical term to indicate spiritual attainment reached after treading a rigorous path of inquiry. Unlike the modern Japanese word *anshin* written with the same Chinese characters which expresses an affective state of repose, *anjin* denotes the spiritual. Although the word has resonance in all schools of Buddhism, it appears in early Chan writings including the manuscripts found at Tun-huang such as the *An-hsin fa-men* (J. *Anjin hōmon*) 安心法門 attributed to Bodhidharma, the *Leng-chia shih-tzu chi* (J. *Ryōga shiji ron*) 楞伽師資論, as well as the influential *Ching-te ch'uan-teng lu* (J. *Keitoku dentō roku*) 景德傳燈錄 from the early Sung, etc. It is also well known for its usage in Pure Land, where *anjin* (a synonym for *shinjin* in Jōdo Shinshū), is found in the basic writings of T'an-luan, Tao-ch'ō, Shan-tao, Hōnen, Shinran, Rennyo, etc. In both Zen and Pure Land writings, *anjin* indicates a final state of assurance within the individual wherein the most critical questions of one's relationship to the sacred have been resolved.

<sup>b</sup> *Ālaya-vijñāna*. Usually rendered as "storehouse consciousness," the *Ālaya* is introduced in the Yogācāra tradition of Mahāyāna Buddhism as the eighth level of consciousnesses. The first six consciousnesses correspond to the perceptual apparatus of the five senses plus that of thinking. The seventh consciousness, called *manas*, is the locale of the origins of both the specific defilements (*kleśa*) of thought, speech and ac-

## NISHITANI: THE PROBLEM OF ANJIN IN ZEN (I)

tion as well as the false notion of a permanent self. Unlike the *manas* level which can be made the conscious object of thought, the *Ālaya* cannot be recognized as such and despite different notions of its functioning, roughly corresponds to Western notions of an "unconscious."

<sup>c</sup> *Great Doubt*. A term coined by Zen master Hakuin (1685–1768) to refer to a state of mind completely overwhelmed by existential uncertainty regarding the validity of the self and the world, including one's religious orientation. For Hakuin passing through this stage is crucial to the attainment of the liberation, and he is famous for proclaiming that the depth of one's doubt determines the depth of one's enlightenment.

<sup>d</sup> *Shōbōgenzō* "Shōji" [Saṃsāra]. See *Eastern Buddhist* 5–1 (1972) for a translation by Norman Waddell and Abe Masao, who also add a note regarding the fact that this passage has been traditionally interpreted as reflecting Dōgen's affinity to Pure Land Buddhism.

<sup>e</sup> There are three "bodies" of the Buddha in Mahāyāna, the transformation-body (*nirmāṇakāya*), enjoyment-body (*sambhogakāya*) and dharma-body (*dharmakāya*). In contrast to the transformation-body representing the Buddha manifest in history, the enjoyment-body is a vision available only to those who can reach advanced meditation states. The *dharmakāya* is conceived as a formless representation of Truth unable to be perceived until it manifests in one of the other two bodies.

<sup>f</sup> The word Saṅgha traditionally refers to the Buddhist monastic community. As one of the so-called three treasures of Buddhism in addition to the founder and his teachings, the concept of professional religious community here appears to represent for Nishitani the weight of precedent in Buddhist practice and attainment.

<sup>g</sup> *Divided for millions of years . . .* This phrase is traced to the Japanese Zen master, Daitō Kokushi (also called Sōhō Myōchō), who lived from 1282–1338. It was also a favorite quotation of Nishida Kitarō (1870–1945), Nishitani's mentor, who refers to it several times in his final treatise, *Basho-teki ronri to shūkyō-teki sekaikan* (1945; NKZ 11:371–468; for a translation, see Michiko Yusa, trans., "The Logic of Topos and the Religious Worldview," in *Eastern Buddhist* 19–2 [1986] and 20–1 [1987]: 81–119). To Nishida it well expressed the paradoxical logic of his so-called logic of place, of which he writes: "Eternal life is found in the identity of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*. The relationship between our self and God, the absolute, is best expressed by Daitō Kokushi's words which I often quote" (NKZ 11:420; Yusa trans., II:87).

<sup>h</sup> *The four shouts and the four outlooks*. Two expressions from the *Lin-chi lü* (J. *Rinzai-roku*) used in the Rinzai Zen school. The first, *ssu-ho* 四喝 (J. *shikatsu*), refers to the four different ways Lin-chi would shout in response to his students' questions, depending on the student and the question. The shout has been understood as his way of trying to dispel doubt among them. The second, *ssu-liao chien* 四料揀 (J. *shiryōken*), denotes four categories of judging the nature of the self and world: the subject is subsumed in the object of perception, the object is subsumed in the subject, both subject and object have been subsumed and do not exist, neither subject nor object have been subsumed and both exist.

<sup>i</sup> Ku-yin Yün-ts'ung 谷隱蘊聰 (J. Kokuin Unsō; also pronounced Yü-yin Yün-ts'ung); his dates are 965–1032. Shih-t'ou Hsi-ch'ien 石頭希遷 (J. Sekitō Kisen) lived

from 700 to 790 and was a student of Ch'ing-yüan Hsing-ssu 青原行思, a direct disciple of the Sixth Patriarch, Hui-neng.

<sup>j</sup> The term *sawari* さわり is here being rendered in the sense of *bandha*, thus one has no binds, fetters, attachments to *samsāra*.

<sup>k</sup> This encounter occurred sometime in the T'ang dynasty, but there are no known dates for the life of either Liang-sui 良遂 Ma-ku 麻谷. They are thought to be in the Ma-tsu line. Ma-ku is actually the name of a mountain in Shanshi province taken as the sobriquet for the monk Pao-ch'ê.

<sup>l</sup> The expression is actually "dead grass," which in Zen refers to someone in terrible straits—i.e., feeling as low and worthless as cut grass.

<sup>m</sup> Yün-men Wen-yen 雲門文偃 (864 to 949) lived during the period of decline and eventual collapse of the T'ang empire. This is a paraphrase of a story that can be found in the commentary to case six in the *Pi yen lu* (Hekiganroku), translated as *The Blue Cliff Record* by Thomas and J. C. Cleary, pp. 37–38. See also Urs App, *Master Yunmen* (New York: Kodansha, 1994), pp. 19 and 220 for two other versions of this story. The teacher in the story is Yün-men's first Chan teacher, known by various names including Mu-chou Tao-tsung (陸維赴道蹤), Mu-chou Tao-ming, Reverend Ch'en, etc.

<sup>n</sup> Nan-ch'üan P'u-yüan 南泉普願, a disciple of Ma-tsu, lived from 748 to 835. The dates of layman Kan-chih 甘贊 are unknown, but the dates of the monk Hsüeh-feng I-ts'un 雪峯義存 are 822–908.

<sup>o</sup> *dropping one's hands*. In this context, dropping one's hands refers to a monk departing from the prescribed deportment in which the hands are always held up against the solar plexus when walking. Thus letting them fall signified taking a more natural approach in open defiance of the precepts. According to Morohashi 3.169a, in the Ming Period, dropping one's hands for laymen became an expression of respect in contrast to this posture previously indicating arrogance.

<sup>p</sup> *The realm of the interpenetration*. . . . 事事無礙 *jiji-muge*. A term from the Hua-yen tradition which refers to the highest stage of realization, beyond the relationship between principle and phenomenon in which phenomena are mutually and equally connected in and of themselves, and not through the mediation of any law or principle.

<sup>q</sup> *Great Activity* 大機大用 (*daiki daiyü*) refers to the spiritually exalted work of a person of Zen.