

VIEWS AND REVIEWS

Introducing Zazen into Christian Spirituality

KADOWAKI KAKICHI

Parallels between Zen and Christian mystical thought have been demonstrated theoretically by many scholars. Similarities have been pointed out not only on the plane of thought but of practice as well. Use of the method of zazen practice has been introduced into Catholic practice by several priests, notably Father Makibi Enomiya (Lasalle), the founder of the Akikawa Shinmeikutsu (a Catholic Zen Hall), who has been applying himself assiduously to the practice of zazen. Fr. Enomiya relates the following experience:

A Zen monk once said to me, "Just the practice of zazen will help you to get a thorough understanding of your Catholicism." I thought these words strange. I could not imagine, after all my philosophical and theological studies, not to mention the long years I spent in the practice of the priestly life, what Zen could add to my understanding of Catholicism. And yet, now I must confess that the monk was right.
(The Zen-Way to Enlightenment)

My own meager experience verifies the truthfulness of Fr. Enomiya's statement. There are also many among the Catholic laity diligently practicing zazen in order to deepen their experience in the Christian life of prayer. Several of them have been confirmed in enlightenment. These examples indicate that in practice the zazen method can contribute much to Christian spirituality. Could we, then, draw the conclusion from these examples that the zazen method is effective for every Christian? As in the area of natural science, so also in the practical life of faith, a general law cannot be drawn from only a

few examples without a reliable theoretical basis. Catholic theologians and priests are inclined to be cautious about such a generalization.

I would like to compare Zen and Christianity from the viewpoint of practice, bearing the following questions in mind: What problems will arise if zazen practice is introduced into Christian spirituality? What would be possible solutions to those problems?

I will develop my discussion by taking up two points in the method of zazen practice which are considered opposed to Catholic thought. In comparing two heterogeneous religious thoughts and methods, it is necessary to discard one's defensive attitude and assume a posture of wanting to learn from the other. When one encounters thoughts or methods which seem to run counter to one's own, it is all the more necessary to have this "posture of dialogue."

In this paper I will attempt to contribute to such a dialogue. The first step of dialogue is to listen to and learn from the other party. In this short article, when facing thoughts and methods which seem to run counter to Catholic experience, I will try to heed the words of Dōgen and other Zen masters, that my own thoughts and experience may grow deeper. This will help to break down the wall between the two religions and discover similar points in them. If their thoughts and methods surpass traditional Catholic modes of prayer, there is something for Catholics to learn from them. In introducing zazen into Catholic spirituality, it is necessary to recognize differences between Zen and Catholic doctrine.

I. REPENTANCE (*ZANGE*) REACHED THROUGH UPRIGHT SITTING AND METANOIA IN CHRISTIANITY

From the Great Death (Taisbi) to Life Renewed (Kattatsu)
From the Crucifixion to the Resurrection

What corresponds to metanoia or atonement in Christianity would be repentance (*zange*) in Buddhism. Yamada Reirin, a Sōtō Zen master, explains repentance (*zange*) in the Zen sect as follows: "In Zen, we do not speak of crucifixion...or redeeming. We just say 'repentance' (*zange*). We say, 'without repentance (*zange*) you will not be saved from your sins.' Perfect repentance is ultimately sitting erect....Just sit uprightly, and you will be rid of erroneous thoughts (*akucbi*) and perverse feelings (*akkaku*), presumption (*sbiryō*) and discriminative reasoning (*fumbetsu*), passions (*bonnō*) and illusions (*mōsō*). Speak-

ing more practically, they get modulated in rhythm, rather than disappear. They are taken up, just as noises are, as it were, turned into music."

Hearing these words, the average Christian would immediately conclude that Zen Buddhism is a religion entirely foreign to Christianity. He would doubt whether mere upright sitting could induce such tremendous effects. However, any Christian who actually practiced zazen would know the truthfulness of these words. Here, followers of Zen might say that no one needs Christ's redemption or the sacrament of penance and that contrition and confession are needless. To counter this, Christians, in an effort to claim the authenticity of their standpoint, would refer to Scripture and the existence of original sin inherent in all men, and say that one can be saved from it only by the redemptive act of Christ's death on the cross. Then is dialogue between Zen and Christianity cut off?

Can these opposing arguments be reconciled? I think so. The way is first to deepen our own spiritual life and then to reflect upon the new thoughts and experiences gained from Zen. Here begins the second stage of the dialogue.

As one goes deeper in Zen practice, he notices not only the truthfulness of Master Reirin's words, but also an important omission in his statement. As indicated in the *Rinzai-roku*, "the person who dies the great death will, paradoxically, live." This is it. Harada Sessui, another Zen master, says, "It must not be forgotten that such a thoroughgoing state of mind is reached only through true death to self, that is, absolute denial of self in everyday life."

Hearing this, most Christians would recall Christ's words, "Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it brings forth much fruit" (John 12:24). He would remember that Christ went from the crucifixion to the resurrection in living out these words. Christian repentance or "metanoia" in the New Testament does not imply only contrition or expiation of sins as in the Old Testament, but the turning of one's whole being in the direction of "the Kingdom of God." And, "the Kingdom of God" being a reality hidden from man's eyes like a "treasure hidden in a field" (Matt. 13:44), one has to give up everything, "sell all that he has" in order to enter into this universe of freedom.

Compared in this way, we can understand that *zange* in Zen and metanoia in Christianity share the same structure in the sense that man must pass from the "great death" to "life," or from the crucifixion to the resurrection.

Thus it can be realized that there are great resemblances between the two religions in spite of seeming differences. Admitting the similarity, what about

the Christian doctrine that corruption fell upon the whole human race as a result of the original sin, and that Christ had to be crucified because of it? Although it is true that there is a sect like Shin Buddhism (Jōdo Shinshū) whose followers are as keenly aware of man's sinfulness as Christians are of the original sin, in the Zen sect the sense of guilt is not stressed. Rather, emphasis is on transcendence of the dualism of good and evil. Zen, we must submit, perhaps differs from Christianity in this respect.

The Phenomenology of the "Body-as-a-Subject" and Zazen

To Christians, however, the following question still remains unanswered: Supposing that the "great death" (*taishi ichiban*) is a prerequisite, how can a physical position like upright sitting drive away passions and conduce contrition? How can upright sitting straighten up one's soul? To solve this problem we must reconsider our idea of the "body-ness" of man. For this purpose let us turn to Dōgen's words again. "It is often said in medicine that physical well-being accompanies mental betterment. How much more so with those who study the true way. If they purify their deeds and identify themselves with Buddha's conduct with adequate care of the body, their interior life ought to be purified, too" (*Shōbōgenzō zuimonki*).

Even the doctors of Dōgen's time must have known about psychosomatic phenomena and taught people that if they took care of themselves physically their mental condition would improve too. In citing the doctors' words, Dōgen explained by way of analogy the effectiveness of the "body-mind" method of Zen practice. I think that here is a clue to solving the aforementioned problem. Modern psychiatrists have incomparably more information, both theoretical and practical, and are of course able to offer deeper knowledge about psychosomatic phenomena than the doctors of Dōgen's time. Out of this mine of information, to shed light upon our problem, we will take up the idea of so-called "body language."

A neurotic patient in some cases will communicate by means of his body the inexpressible desires buried deep in his heart. A young woman patient of Ludwig Binswanger for instance had been suffering great anguish because, forbidden by her mother to go to a ball or meet her sweetheart, she developed unbearable attacks of violent belching, hiccups, and vomiting. Repeated interviews revealed that unable to vent her anger by either attacking her mother or confiding in her, she was expressing herself in these physiological ways. Being unable to swallow her mother's prohibitions, she had to vomit them.

This shows us that the "body-as-a-subject" is related to the "mind" much more closely than we realize.

According to Descartes, man is a thinking substance with a body that is subject to laws of nature (the principle of extension). However, psychiatrists belonging to the Daseins-analytic school do not consider the "body-as-a-subject" on the basis of the Cartesian dualistic idea that man is comprised of "spirit and body." The "body-as-a-subject" is man's whole being. It denotes man's whole being as far as it can be grasped from the standpoint of "body-ness." When we are talking with someone we are face to face with his whole being existing in front of us as a "body-as-a-subject." And this "body-as-a-subject" starts speaking to us before a word is uttered. Man with a living body does not begin to speak by uttering words. His being there in person is already a "speech" (*Rede*) (Heidegger). The "body-as-a-subject" is fully engaged with the world and other people, and its relationship to them is expressed some way or other in its "posture." This information which modern psychology offers us with regard to psychosomatic phenomena and the "body-as-a-subject" helps us to understand the "body-mind" method of Zen practice. Upright sitting does not only imply straightening of the physical body. Zen's fundamental standpoint is that "body and soul are one and the same thing." The word "body," when used by Zen authorities, implies the soul which has a unity with body. Therefore, to sit uprightly is to straighten the body which is inseparable from the soul; that is, if expressed in the terminology of modern psychology, to straighten up the "body-as-a-subject." Since the "body-as-a-subject" comprises the relation the soul has with the world and other people, to straighten the "body-as-a-subject" is to straighten the relationship of the soul with the world and other people. Considered this way, the Zen master's contention that sitting leads to repentance (*zange*) is not in any way incomprehensible. Rather, it is a most natural phenomenon for man possessed of "body-ness."

The above discussion serves to clarify logically that the "body-mind" method unique to Zen practice is an excellent method. It is eminently well suited to man's nature. One not content with mere theory, i.e., one who actually practices zazen, will understand that this method is virtually superb in disposing the soul towards a deep religious stage.

In the traditional Christian methods of meditation not much attention was paid to the "body-as-a-subject." Just as in the "prayer of Jesus" called Hesychasm in the Eastern Church and in St. Ignatius' "prayer by rhythm" (*Spiritual*

VIEWS AND REVIEWS

Exercises No. 258), only the breathing rhythm is made use of. I testify to the excellence of the zazen method from experience, and think that there is a possibility for Christian spirituality to make great strides if this method is adopted. Christianity can best learn the "body-mind" method from Zen.

II. THOUGHTLESSNESS (*MUNEN MUSŌ*) IN ZEN AND CHRISTIAN PRAYER ADDRESSED TO A PERSONAL GOD

Now I would like to turn to the second point in Zen practice which seems heterogeneous to the Catholic method of practice: that Zen meditation is void of all thoughts or ideas. Beginners in zazen learn first to count their breaths or to focus attention on their breathing. Sitting straight in full or half lotus position, they breathe in the prescribed way. When they have mastered the practice of counting inhaling and exhaling breathing movements without thinking of anything, they are given a koan. If, for instance, the "Mu" (nothing or absolute emptiness) koan is given, one has to devote oneself to "Mu" not only while sitting in meditation (zazen) or walking in meditation (*kinbin*), but while doing manual work, taking meals, or even when resting. To devote oneself to "Mu" is to become nothingness itself.

Such a method is quite a contrast to traditional Catholic modes of meditation. As an example, let us take the "contemplation on the birth of Jesus Christ" from St. Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises*. After a preparatory prayer begging God to direct all one's thought, deeds, and actions to His service and glory, one calls to mind the birth of the Lord as a historical event, then sees, according to the imagination, the cave where the Saviour was born, as wide or narrow, on a level with the road or in a hollow, and "asks of God a grace to know better the Saviour who became man for love of" him (No. 104). This preparation done, he contemplates Mary, Joseph, and the new-born Child who enter there. He who contemplates considers himself "a poor, miserable, unworthy servant, and looks upon and contemplates them with as much respect and veneration as possible, as though he were there in front of them, sometimes wondering how he could minister to their needs. He then reflects within himself in order that he may receive some spiritual fruit" (No. 114). In St. Ignatius' contemplation, powers of the soul such as memory, imagination, sentiments, will, and reason are thus used in order that interior understanding and love of Christ may be obtained.

From what we have seen above, we cannot help but say that the method employed in Zen and that employed traditionally in Christianity are extremely heterogeneous. If those who are accustomed to the traditional Catholic way of prayer are told to "stop thinking; be empty of all thoughts and ideas," they must feel at a loss, doubtful as to how that could constitute prayer towards a personal God. As a matter of fact, initial efforts to incorporate Zen meditation into Catholic spirituality met with strong opposition from many Catholic theologians. Even now Fr. Sudbrack, a well-known German authority in spiritual theology, protests against Zen being introduced into Christianity. Although it stems from ignorance and misunderstanding about Zen, one of the main reasons for the objection is that a Christian prayer itself should be a dialogue (*das intentionale Gebet*). In other words, it should be addressed to God who is a Person, who revealed Himself through Jesus Christ and gave Himself over to mankind. This argument is certainly difficult. It appears irrefutable. As far as I am aware, no attempt has yet been made to give a proper answer to it.

In groping toward a solution to this difficult problem, perhaps Dōgen can be helpful. It is supposed by most people that thinking is never allowed in zazen. Contrary to this commonplace presumption, however, Dōgen recommended different ways of using reason in different stages of training. So, let us examine the way Dōgen allowed reason to function (*sbiryō*) and the way he put a stop to the functioning of reason (*fusbiryō*).

Reason (sbiryō) and Unreason (fusbiryō) in Dōgen

According to Dōgen the first point to watch in Zen practice is "to arouse the Way-seeking mind" (*Gakudō-yōjinsbū*, "Points to Watch in Training"). This is "the mind that sees into the flux of the world's arising and decay." Though zazen is generally supposed to be the practice of sitting in thoughtlessness, Dōgen teaches that what is of prime importance is *watching* transitoriness. "Watching" is not the same as reaching a conclusion by discursive reasoning. Rather, it is getting insight into and fixing one's gaze upon "the flux of the world's arising and decay." Dōgen writes in the *Sbōbōgenzō zuimonki* that "life, transfigured by time, defies stopping even for a moment—this is the truth right before our eyes." What is pointed out here is intuition in having a total view of all beings in flux. It is unmistakable that the concrete and intuitive reason is exercised here.

By "seeing into transitoriness," one can uproot his ego-centered attach-

VIEWS AND REVIEWS

ments. Dōgen says, "When we see into impermanence, the selfish mind does not arise; the mind that seeks fame and profit does not arise" (*Points to Watch in Training*). He adds furthermore that one who has his mind fixed on impermanence should grudge even a moment away from zazen, knowing as he does that time is swifter than an arrow in flight. From this alone, we cannot tell whether impermanence is to be seen into before or during zazen. But the following passage clearly shows that Dōgen encouraged the use of intellect during zazen. He counsels that "when an ego-centered view arises, sit quietly and watch." He goes on to explain:

Consider what is fundamental within ourselves and without. We have received this body, this hair and this skin from our parents, but if we trace the origin, we find two droplets of red and white, the mother's egg and the father's semen, joined together to make a beginning. The two droplets are from beginning to end empty. There is originally no self to be attached to. There is no self in the mind either. There are various functions of the mind and thanks to them our life is maintained, but watch your exhaling breath and inhaling breath closely, and you will realize that life lasts only as long as this continues. Life begins and perishes at each thought-instant. Therefore, there is nothing to cling to as self. Watched in this way, there is no thing to cling to as self either in body or in mind. (*Points in Training*)

The important word for our present interest in the above passage is "watch" (*kansatsu*). What is the exact meaning of *kansatsu*? "Kan" is to see with the mind's eye and "satsu" is to have an unshakable conviction with one's entire being. What is taught here is that one must know, not by logical reasoning but by intuition in looking straight at the mind and body concretely, that there is no self to be attached to, and that one must abide in that conviction of the truth. We might note that here too is the teaching that intuition of the truth leads to non-attachment. Does that mean Dōgen did not teach "thoughtlessness" (*munen musō*)? The following passage illustrates that he did indeed. "In practicing Zen meditation and studying the Way, remember that Buddhism is beyond presumption, discriminative reasoning, divination, imagination, intellectual knowledge, or ordinary understanding. If it were something attained through such things, it would have constantly been with you from birth. Yet why is it you haven't yet awakened to Buddhism?"

How, then, are "seeing into transitoriness" and "seeing into emptiness,

egolessness" related to "unreason" (*fusiryō*)? The answer is to be found in *Points in Training*. After repudiating the idea that the Way-seeking mind is "meditation containing the 3000 worlds within an instant of thought," or "the mind in which not a single thought rises," Dōgen says, "The non-arising mind and the 3000 appearances are the marvelous practice after the emergence of the Way-seeking mind." As explained here, Dōgen thinks that seeing into impermanence belongs to the beginner's stage, while the mind in which not a single delusion arises and the mind endowed with the 3000 worlds within a thought-instant are attained only after the Way-seeking mind has been aroused. However, since the Way-seeking mind should be aroused not only in the beginner's stage but throughout one's practice, it is necessary to see into impermanence "whenever ego-centered views arise," even during zazen. That is why Dōgen recommends that his disciples "sit quietly and watch" the reasons for their egolessness.

Based on the above, perhaps we may draw the following conclusions: Dōgen thinks that in the early stages of practice, one needs to perform the activities of his practical intellect, to exercise the intuitive reason, in one's own self. Dōgen encourages the use of other intellectual activities too. "Those who master the Way must first know whether the Way they face is right or wrong." It is by exercising the intellect that one knows whether his approach is right or wrong. What, then, is "facing the Way" (*kōdō*)? After explaining that the Buddha's unequalled enlightenment was transmitted to other Buddhas and patriarchs and that even today the transmission has not been disrupted, Dōgen says, "To face the way is to know precisely the ultimate goal of Buddhism and to have a clear understanding of how to proceed and what the course is like." What he is asserting is that truth-seekers who practice Buddhism with unbending spirit must have a clear understanding of the goal of Buddhism and the process leading to it, and must know how to discern the right and wrong approach to Buddhism. For this kind of recognition, intellectual activity must be engaged in.

In Which Stage of Training is Unreason (fusiryō) Required?

Let us look for an answer to this question by examining the following passage from *Points in Training* in which Dōgen describes the process of Zen practice.

Those who train themselves in Buddhism must first believe in Buddhism. To believe in Buddhism means to believe that one is inherently within the Way and is not lost, deluded, or upsidedown, and that there

VIEWS AND REVIEWS

is no increase or decrease and no error. Train yourself by arousing such belief and clarifying the Way. This is the basic foundation for studying Buddhism. It is the method of cutting off the function of consciousness and facing away from the road of knowledge. This is how to guide novices. After that, we free ourselves from the dualism of body and mind and forsake the dualism of delusion and enlightenment. This is the second stage. Those who believe that they are within Buddhism are quite rare. If only you believe that you are within the Way, you will understand naturally the opening and closing of the Great Way. You can also understand the root of delusion and enlightenment.

The process in the practice of Zen may be extracted from the above passage: (1) The fundamental ground for the Way is to have faith in Buddhism, to have a clear understanding of the Way, and to discipline oneself sustained by this faith and understanding. (2) The way to practice zazen is to cut off thought activities of the mind and to keep on one's guard against discursive reasoning. This is the method for guiding beginners in the right direction. (3) One's body and mind fall off (with the dualistic idea of seeing oppositions such as body and mind being shed, one is liberated from the fetters of body and mind) and the dualism of ignorance and enlightenment is thrown aside. This is the second stage of training. (4) The state of mind in which the trainee is permeated with firm faith and identified with Buddhism regardless of what he is doing—walking or standing, sitting or lying—is the highest stage. In this state he knows precisely how one can become entangled in a cul-de-sac, and he knows how to lift the bar and get around the obstacle. He also understands where delusions and enlightenment stem from.

One more thing must be added here about the training process. In *Points in Training* Dōgen writes that a trainee is required to do two things in order to keep himself from going astray in zazen: "Hear the instruction of a Zen master and concentrate on zazen. Hearing the instruction makes your thinking-mind work. Zazen has reign over both training and enlightenment" (i.e., visit a Zen monastery, hear the instruction of a Zen master on the true Dharma, reflect on it, achieve a mastery of zazen by practicing and following the instruction given). Here the ordinary process of reasoning is used in listening to the teaching of a true teacher and reflecting on it. Such use of practical intellect is necessary for training in zazen practice. Dōgen's thoughts may be summarized on the basis of the above considerations as follows: In the stage prior

THE EASTERN BUDDHIST

to enlightenment (body and soul falling off), “unreason” (*fusiryō*—thinking that which is beyond thinking) is required. But this is only the method for guiding beginners. In other stages, reasoning is allowed and sometimes even necessary: That is, (a) first of all, to “watch transitoriness” in order to arouse religious awakening; (b) to watch inside and outside one’s body in order to understand the truth of egolessness, even during zazen, if ego-centered thoughts rise up; (c) “to examine through one’s body-as-a-subject” in order to understand the reasons presumption and analytic reasoning should not be used; (d) to listen to a true master and make reflections with the heart and reason. (e) Those who are already “indefatigable of spirit in pursuit of the Way” should have a clear understanding of the goal of the Way and the process leading to it, and also of the right and wrong approach to Buddhism. (f) Enlightenment itself is a sort of wisdom called “reason of unreason” (*fusiryō no shiryō*). (g) The one who has completed training knows how one can entangle himself in a cul-de-sac, but also knows how to get past it. He knows too where delusions and enlightenment come from.

What in Christian Practice Corresponds to Zen

From the above we can reach the conclusion that if Christians adopt the Zen method as it is there will be no problem in using whatever corresponds to the activities of intellect described above.

What in Christian prayer, then, concretely corresponds to the activities of intellect used in Zen? In order to find a clue to answer this, let us consider the characteristic of the activities of intellect in Zen practice, then I will demonstrate that these activities are ultimately similar and fundamental to Christian prayer as well.

What is most characteristic in Zen practice is that reasoning is exercised in a very practical manner in thinking concretely or acquiring intuitive knowledge through one’s body and soul. Dōgen says, “The Buddha Way is right at the feet of every man.” Enlightenment itself is a concrete and direct wisdom. This is affirmed for us by the following words of Dōgen: “Through this body and soul we directly enlighten Buddha. This is called receiving the teaching” (i.e., if one directly realizes one’s Buddha-nature through his body and soul, he has received Buddhism—the Tokugawa Sōtō priest Menzan). It is understandable that enlightenment is such a concrete and direct experience of recognizing reality from the fact that the trainee is exhorted from the beginning to “believe that he is inherently within the true Dharma” as part of “faith in

VIEWS AND REVIEWS

Buddhism." If this "faith" runs through, supports, and gives life to all the process of the training, it is unnecessary to look for Buddhism outside. It is enough to look for it at one's feet.

A similar thought is found at the root of Christian spirituality. It is the faith that "the Kingdom of God is within us" (Luke 17:21); we are already "children of God" (I John 3:2); and that our bodies are "the temple of the Holy Spirit" (I Cor. 6:19). Paul was able to say, "It is now no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). Paul elsewhere said, "We were buried together with him in Baptism, and in him also rose again through faith in the working of God who raised him from the dead" (Col. 2:12). Of course, realization of "the Kingdom of God" has not reached its completion, but it is a dynamic reality "at hand" (Mark 1:15) and will be accomplished in the future.

If "the Kingdom of God" is thus being realized in us in Christian practice, we ought not to seek "the Kingdom of God" outside, but turn our thought to things "at our feet." As previously seen in "the contemplation of the birth of Christ," in certain types of Christian prayer one calls to mind the words and deeds of Christ, reflects upon them, applies them to himself and draws from them some spiritual fruit. Its ultimate end is to become aware of the hidden mystery of "the Kingdom of God" which is being realized in us, in order to devote one's entire being to "the Kingdom of God" in renunciation of all. Though it would be necessary for beginners, whose faith in "the Kingdom of God" is not so strong, to first recall Christ's words and deeds through Bible reading before giving thought to "the Kingdom of God," those who are more advanced in spirituality need not think about "the Kingdom of God" with imagination or inference, because "the Kingdom of God" is a close and intimate reality to them. For such persons, to pray is to become aware of the reality of "the Kingdom of God" by reflecting upon themselves, who live here and now. By looking for the Kingdom at their feet, they enter straight into it with all their body and soul. Such a Christian needs only to have concrete and direct wisdom at work. Intellect is used here in a way very similar to the concrete and direct experience of recognizing one's self-nature in Zen.

Having found parallels between Zen and Christianity with regards to the use of reason, we can now proceed to an answer to the question stated above.

1. What reasoning in Christian spirituality would correspond to that of recognizing "transitoriness" for the purpose of arousing religious awakening? To see with resignation that, in words from the Old Testament, "vanity of vanities, and all is vanity" (Ecclesiastes 1:2). Just as one begins to discipline

himself industriously in zazen after the Way-seeking mind rises through the realization of transitoriness, emancipating itself from ego-centered attachments and honour-seeking, so also in Christian spirituality, through realization of the emptiness of the world one is led to faith in God and begins to discipline himself, eliminating evil passions and overcoming his self.

2. What in Christianity corresponds to the Zen way of watching within and without oneself for the purpose of realizing the truth of egolessness? I think that "meditations on the punishment of sins" can help Christians to become so detached. For example, in the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius, one is told to consider the horrible sight of one's dead body putrefying, covered with sores and abscesses exuding innumerable sins, uncountable vices, and odious poisons (No. 58). Also, Christians who from daily reflection know their sinfulness are simply to remain awake to the awareness that they are "sinners." Like seeing egolessness in Zen, such Christian awareness of sins and meditating on them can lead to the detached mind, the unprejudiced mind, from which springs the spirit of service and devotedness to God.

3. What in Christian spirituality corresponds to "examining with one's body-as-a-subject" in order to understand the uselessness of presumption and discursive reasoning? It would be the understanding that Christian mystical experience can never be realized by the ordinary process of reasoning. According to St. Thomas, "We in this world do not know what God is even with the help of the grace of revelation, and are united to God as an unknown Person (*Summa Th.* l.q. 12, a. 13, ad 2). How much less, then, can we know God under the light of mere natural reasoning. Through reason, we know little about his relationship to creatures, and we know almost nothing of His interior life. Through the immanent nature of God the Holy Trinity became known to us through Christ's revelation, even the theological theories regarding the Holy Trinity are "nothing but a gesture to point to the grandeur of the mystery which baffles all descriptions" (J. Ratzinger, *Einführung in das Christentum*, p. 117). Therefore, in the first stage of Christian practice, while one should study the hidden mysteries of Christianity by using one's reason, will, and imagination, he should at the same time have a thorough understanding that nothing of God's immanent nature is known through theological reflection.

Most especially, those Christians who have reached the advanced stage of prayer called "prayer of silence," those who are, as St. John of the Cross said, "disabled" to pray by the ordinary process of reasoning, will find zazen a great help.

4. In Catholicism, what corresponds to Dōgen's advice about listening to a

VIEWS AND REVIEWS

true teacher is consulting one's spiritual director and through the Holy Scripture obeying the only true master, Jesus Christ. In this respect Dōgen's attitude towards the studying of sutras is quite interesting. In contrast to many Zen masters who seem to be firmly against the study of writings of the patriarchs and the sutras, Dōgen recommends the path of the Middle Way. Though he severely rejects study that attaches to the letter or becomes conceptual, he says that studying of sutras is necessary, providing one studies in the thought that each word and phrase is "Buddha's loving body and soul." And he adds that since the sutras, together with Buddhism itself, were authentically handed down through the hands of the patriarchs from the Buddha, true Buddhists should know the sutras and the writings of the patriarchs.

Dōgen's attitude towards sutras could be said to be compatible with the attitude Christians take in reading the Bible. For Christians, reading the Bible is nothing other than meeting Christ, listening to Him, watching Him act, and identifying oneself with His speech and action.

5. If we look in Christian spirituality for something corresponding to "knowing the right and wrong approach to Buddhism," we can find examples in the "Principle and Foundation" (23), the "Contemplation to Attain Divine Love" (230-237), and the "Rules for the Discernment of Spirits" (313-336) of the *Spiritual Exercises*. The "Principle and Foundation" and the "Contemplation to Attain Divine Love" refer respectively to the starting point and the goal of Christian spirituality. Christian spirituality can be said to be a journey from the former to the latter. "Rules for the Discernment of Spirits" serve as signposts and as a compass along the way; in other words, these rules constitute the methods of discerning "the right and wrong approach."

6. Enlightenment, or "the reason of unreason" could be said to correspond to a mystical experience in Christian spirituality. Since I have discussed the parity between the two in my article "Mystical Experiences in the East and West and Their Meaning for the Modern Age," I will not go into further detail here.

7. The free, unrestrained, and lucid state of mind attained by those accomplished in Zen resembles that of those who have achieved Christian perfection. Since this point too was discussed in the above article, I will not touch on it here.

It may be said that the thought of Dōgen mentioned above and the tenets of Christian spirituality both have the same structure in a global framework. In both of them trainees are divided into three groups, beginner, advanced,

THE EASTERN BUDDHIST

and accomplished, and each group is required to exercise the process of reasoning most appropriate to it: (a) a beginner is encouraged to "watch" and "see" by the use of concrete and practical reasoning, to choose a true master, and, if he finds one, to follow the master with his whole body and soul; (b) the advanced, whose chance for immersing himself in deep religious experience has ripened, is taught "unreason" (*fusiryō*), that is, to become void of all conceivable thoughts and ideas so that he will be led to a direct experience of recognizing reality by a higher dimension of intellect; (c) when one reaches the state of perfection, he can discern the right course in spiritual life with higher spiritual judgment and can abide in the free, unrestrained, and thoroughgoing religious state of mind.

Can Meditation in the Zen Style Be a Christian Prayer?

The most difficult question concerning zazen being taken into Christian spirituality is whether sitting straight up void of all conceivable thoughts and ideas (thoughtlessness: *munen-musō*) can be a Christian prayer, a prayer addressed to a personal God. From the previous considerations, we can formulate an answer to this difficult question from three different aspects.

1. The first clue to a solution is the fact that in Zen practice listening to a true master and studying sutras are not only allowed but needed. Here we will consider the case of Christians who aim at enriching their Christian experience through zazen, putting aside the question of their intention of realizing an enlightenment experience (*kenshō*) through zazen. For this purpose of enrichment, Christians have to watch (see with the eye of the soul and become unshakably convinced of) Christ's mystery being realized in their concrete body-as-a-subject and in the world at their feet, especially through Scripture reading. If this is done, their existence will receive Christian orientation whether they are aware of it or not. For through God's grace given to all Christians, the dynamism of faith, hope, and love towards God dwells in their soul, and this dynamism is strengthened and animated in the subconsciousness through Scripture reading.

2. Moreover, as mentioned above, sitting (zazen) is the straightening not only of the body but also of the soul. Therefore, when someone prepared by Christian orientation sits erect in zazen, his whole existence cannot help being orientated in the right Christian direction. As his activities on the surface of consciousness are quieted down by Zen meditation, Christian dynamism buried in the sub-conscious should be strengthened and come up to the surface of

consciousness. Since this dynamism orientates itself towards God, it may be said that sitting (zazen) void of all thoughts and ideas (*munen-musō*) is a Christian prayer. As mentioned earlier, "the body-as-a-subject" is always speaking without uttering a word. A Christian's "body-as-a-subject" is addressing itself to God even when he himself is not aware of it.

3. Some persons, who have heard only the above explanation, might ask this question: If one sits thoroughly void of all thoughts (*musō*) and turns into mere "nothing or absolute emptiness" (*mu*), may not God vanish and his own personality disappear. Behind this question seems to be a misunderstanding about "empty-mind-ness" (*mu*) in Zen and the Christian conception of personality. The state of "no-mind-ness" or "emptiness" (*mu*) in Zen does not imply complete loss of consciousness and it is not a state of impersonality. In the state of "no-mind-ness," although ordinary mental activities are set at rest, intellectual functions of a higher order are activated. Another expression for "no-mind-ness" is "thinking of that which is beyond thinking" (*fushiryō no shiryō*). As the latter expression denotes, in such a state of mind the ordinary process of thinking is abandoned so that thought of a higher order can burst forth. Moreover, since "thoughtlessness" keeps the mind free and uncaptured by anything, a person in this state of mind can accept others most genuinely. To be in the state of "no-mind-ness" (*mu*) is nothing but to accept others as they are, not hampered by prejudice and without clinging. Consequently "no-mind-ness" implies an ability to have a most close personal relationship with others, and in this sense it could be said to be personal.

Meister Eckhart's thought on spirituality helps us to understand this. Eckhart expounded that in order to be united with God one must thoroughly negate all mental actions, such as making use of images, symbols, and conceptions, and he stressed that the soul must be emancipated from and stripped of all creatures. "The more man frees himself of all things and the self returns to itself, the more he clearly recognizes all things with the intellect. And he becomes more authentically human" (DWI, 489). According to Eckhart, the essence of spirituality is in the returning of the self to itself and in becoming void of all things and all images. Eckhart's thought bears a great resemblance to "no-mind-ness," the "emptiness" (*mu*) of Zen. Though negative terms such as "no-mind-ness" or "void" are used, for all this, they imply spirituality.

I hope that the above considerations have shown that spiritual exercises performed by Christians with the Zen method remain in the realm of Christian prayer, provided appropriate measures are taken. My personal experience of

having made four Zen-style retreats during the past two years certainly testifies to this.

A Response to Rev. Kadowaki

Ueda Shizuteru

In this constructive analysis of a current topic involved in the meeting of East and West, Rev. Kadowaki affords us a valuable personal document based on his commitment to the encounter between Catholicism and Zen, in which the ground of encounter is the author himself, a Catholic father who is at the same time a devoted practitioner of zazen.

His stated concern here is the question of "introducing zazen practice into Christian spirituality" (p. 107). In exploring this subject, he does not confine himself simply to ascertaining similarities and dissimilarities between the two traditions, but proceeds on to advance the following two proposals backed by his experience with Zen practice: (1) Through the practice of zazen, Christian spirituality could be deepened; although (2) in actual practice, "some appropriate measures" are needed to assure the practice "remains in the realm of Christian prayer" (p. 121).

However, Zen is being considered here, theologically as well as practically, within a Catholic context, so what is actually being discussed is not Zen itself in its total reality. For example, the Zen the author characterizes as "Just the practice of zazen will help you to get a thorough understanding of your Catholicism" (p. 106), is the very same Zen that at any moment might even insist, "Throw away your God!" or, on the other hand, might demand suddenly, "Show me your God on the palm of your hand!" How to respond at such a moment? Only then will one come face to face with Zen as Zen. What is Zen that will demand even such things as this?

As an example of the "appropriate measures" Christians might take when they practice zazen, a "Christian orientation" by way of Bible reading is recommended. The author states:

When someone prepared by Christian orientation sits erect in zazen, his whole existence cannot help being orientated in the right Christian direction. As his activities on the surface of consciousness are quieted