

Ultimate Crisis and Resurrection

Part I: Sin and Death

HISAMATSU SHIN'ICHI

I *Religious Time*

THESE days I have been thinking of a three dimensional problem concerning man's way of being. Perhaps it may best be expressed in terms of depth, width, and length. By depth I mean probing man as deep as the bottom of his self-awareness and, finally, awaking to the *Formless Self*.

While by form one can mean either physical or mental, what is ordinarily called the "self" has both these forms. Getting free from such a self and realizing the Self that is in both ways formless is what I mean when I speak of the problem of depth. This is of course something which cannot be easily understood by means of theoretical explanation. At this time I will not go beyond what I have just stated.

What I call width has some immediate connection with the Formless Self. For now, however, let me put aside the question of this connection and, about the width dimension, simply say that it is being liberated from the egoism of nationality or race, expanding it to the entirety of the human race, and thus standing on a perspective of *brotherly love for all humanity*, while still paying due respect to the particularity of all nations and races. That is the problem

* Translated from the original Japanese article included in *Zen no Honbutsu to Ningen no Shinri* ("The Essence of Zen and the Truth of Man"), Tokyo, Sōbunsha, 1969, and in *Hisamatsu Shin'ichi Chosaku shū* (Collected Writings of Hisamatsu Shin'ichi) Volume 2, Tokyo, Risō-sha, 1972. In the translation the italicized parts except foreign words and the headings are those the author himself marked for emphasis in the original text.

of width. Of course this comes to be the problem of the relationship between the whole and the individual.

Length, the direct meaning of which is chronological, of course also includes spatial extension as well. Length, then, means *forming history* on the basis of the other two dimensions of man's being. Therefore, this kind of length comes to have a different meaning than history in the ordinary sense of the term, because it is length which issues from the first and the second perspective, depth and width. In other words—speaking from the point of self—the self reaches to its depths, from out of which it moves in width or extension. It is this kind of extension, as extensive as to cover the whole human-kind which forms history, that I mean by length. To summarize then, length means *living the life of history while transcending history*. However, it is only when one is free—even while constantly forming history—not only from what has been formed but also even from the work of formation itself that we can speak of forming history while transcending history.

Religion is varied in its actual forms, but I think true religion ought to be something that is possessed of the above structure. Therefore, such religion is not a mere religion; it comes to mean history as well as religion, or religion as well as history. In the aspect of its transcending history it is religion, whereas in its aspect of formation, it is history. In history as ordinarily understood, however, the aspect of transcendence is not thoroughgoing. Of course, relatively one could speak of the possibilities of such an aspect, but not in the ultimate sense.

Religion must of necessity have the meaning of transcending history. But when people speak of transcendence, I think that in most cases they believe that religion transcends what we ordinarily call history so as to cross it transversely. By crossing I mean that religious time of a completely different order from historical time intersects the latter. The intersection itself is actual time, according to this way of thinking. This actual time is the present of religious time; the part before it crosses the present is the past; the part after the crossing is the future. Certainly I do not assert this kind of religious time which crosses historical time to be the true religious time. But this way of thinking is what people usually have in religion.

In Buddhism, for example, we see such a way of thinking. The Buddhists' so-called "three lives" are never the past, present, and future of historical time.

They are rather the time originating from somewhere completely beyond history and entering this human world of history, which, after entering, finishes and leaves the actual historical time. They consider this actual historical time to be the present life, the part before entering it the previous life, and the part after leaving it the coming life. In religion such a form of time is established ideationally, and this seems to have its own reason. It is a necessary result of an idea that a Buddhaland or a Pure Land cannot be sought within this actual, historical world of man. When people consider man's originally being a Buddha on the basis of such religious time, they may naturally think of the original Buddhahood in the previous life. On the other hand, they naturally think of attaining rebirth in the Pure Land as a matter of a future life in the course of religious time. Therefore, in religion, apart from what we nowadays call the world of history, we must acknowledge this form of time to be the regular notion.

However, is such a form of time to be accepted as the ultimate nature of time? Is it not a mere postulate or a rationally deducted conclusion? One may possibly conceive of such time by analogy with the causal relationships which are established in historical time. Or it might be that such time was actually separately established, and that then its relationship with historical time was elaborated. In any case, however, such religious time never coincides with historical time; and religion of this kind is isolated and is an escape from the actualities of life. For example if becoming a Buddha or having rebirth in the Pure Land is a matter of a future life, since it occurs after this actual time in which we live is completely terminated, that is, in the future after death, then to attain it would be absolutely impossible. If attainment be in the future after death, then the religious world cannot but be isolated from the actual world, and this latter will consequently be left behind by religion. This is far from convincing to us. Religious time ought necessarily to be what coincides with historical time. I do not think that religious time is established in its relation to historical time by crossing the latter. I rather think that *historical time is established with religious time as its fundamental subject*. In other words, with Formless Self, or Self without form, as its basis and fundamental subject historical time is established. Therefore, the length dimension, as I mentioned above, comes to mean a Supra-historical formation of history, a Supra-historical living of history.

II *The raison d'être of Religion*

As I have mentioned above, I am considering the problem of man from the three aspects of depth, width, and length, through which I hope to solve various problems. Here I should like, first of all, to consider the first, that is, the aspect of depth, that is, to probe deeply into man's self-awareness. This will be seen to have a connection with the problem of death and sin. While I have taken a keen interest in religion both scientifically and practically, for me the problem of depth has been the problem of religion.

Since there are various kinds, or forms, of religion, it may be dogmatism to take up only one kind or form from among them and call it religion. On the other hand, to look upon all those which are called religion as religion would not be very convincing. Some of them appear to be far from deserving to be so called, often, it must be said, with some reason. One cannot affirm everything that is called religion, although it is not easy to say which to deny. According to the positivistic approach to the history of religion or the science of religion, one must study as many forms of religion as possible, affirming them all to be religion. In such a case the problem of which religion is genuine and which not is not considered. However, when we concern ourselves with the various forms of religion, we really cannot help making judgments and evaluations about them. That is, one must investigate whether or not this or that particular form is a developed religion or a primitive one, and, going one step further, examine whether or not it is really religion.

Especially when one seeks to enter religion, that is, when one wishes to "seek the Way," which religion one should choose should not be a matter of each person's merely subjective opinion. This, the most important problem, is an objective one. Taking a false step in this regard will lead one into serious difficulties. Therefore, for those who seek religion, what true religion is should be a matter of greatest concern. Further, besides the problem of what religion one should seek, problems such as the objective value religion has for us and the *raison d'être* of religion become very important. Those who can feel satisfied with their own firm, subjective belief in some religion may feel themselves safe. However, to seekers of the Way in modern times who are very critical, and who refuse to be persuaded by anything that lacks objectivity,

the problem, the true religion that has its own reason, is really a grave matter that can hardly be left unattended.

For me also, as one who seeks religion, if the religion were without a *raison d'être* not merely for me as an individual but for man *per se*, I would not be able to have a firm commitment to that religion. I would readily relinquish it. Should one want to preserve religion and feel obliged to find out some reason for it, that kind of preoccupation would stand in the way, and one might come to defend religion without reason. This would actually mean one's defending some already established particular form of religion. Looking at the matter from the viewpoint of a free man—who feels no need to defend religion—I go so far as to think that if religion has no *raison d'être* at all for man *per se*, it has nothing to do with us.

Where in man does one find the "moment" whereby he needs religion? Where in mankind—not in a particular individual—does one find the reason that religion must exist? This is a very grave concern for me. Only when it is settled can we say that religion has a *raison d'être* for any and all persons. Or rather we had better say that we can call religion that which has such a *raison d'être*. If it has such a *raison d'être* and hence must of necessity exist for man, then it can be called true religion. To tell the truth, that is a very difficult problem. Is there any reason at all why religion ought to exist for man? In other words the problem is: Where in man does one find the "moment" which prevents man from remaining merely man? Where is the objective reason for which man cannot abide at ease with merely being man? If one can find any such objective reason, then one will be sure that man cannot remain a merely ordinary man, that man cannot help going beyond that, and that at this point religion is established objectively and reasonably. In conclusion the problem will be, whether or not man can ever remain simply man.

As for ways of thinking about man, there are many, needless to say, wherein both man and transcending man are spoken of; but it is not clear what kind of man is transcended and in what manner. Inquiring into the problem of what man is is extremely difficult, hardly to be settled easily. However, in our present times, in the modern age of uneasiness in which we stand, perhaps we can say this: When one speaks of transition from the Middle Ages to the modern world, Theonomous men such as those of medieval faith can no longer be called modern men. Let me use the term "Theonomy" here to characterize the medi-

eval type of faith which finds its ultimate shelter in the divine law. Certainly it is not that there is no reason for the existence of Theonomy. But in modern times, and in the present age which is its vanguard, man has gotten rid of the kind of man that lives according to such Theonomy. Man has become autonomous. Even more clearly then, types of religion which precede Theonomous religion, such as animism and fetishism, certainly belong to the past, and have no *raison d'être* today. If one calls them religion, it is only by name; they cannot be living religions with their own *raison d'être*. Concerning religions of the medieval type I cannot afford now to go into detail, but since modern man's autonomous self-awareness has become central, even though such religions exist today they cannot truly be called present-age religion. Religions of the medieval type have lost their *raison d'être*, and have already died out or are dying. Anyway, I believe that in the present age when man is awake as autonomous man, the medieval type religions can no longer continue to exist, and are going to die out. Even though medieval type religions survive today, this is an age when autonomous man's self-awareness is the subject. In other words, the present age is *the age of humanism*. If one calls religions of the medieval type theism, the self-awareness of today's autonomous man is humanism. Further, this autonomy is not narrow intellectualism; it is *rationalism in a broader sense*. Today's man, therefore, is a rational man in the broad sense of the term who overcomes bondage to the senses through Reason. Such men of reason, we can in a sense say, are engaged today in forming the world.

Today is an age when the man with humanism or humanistic idealism is coming into control of things, and he will continue to do so in the future. In this regard, we can say that the fields where such humanistic activity is assumed are distinctly realized as science, morality, and art, and that the development or advancement of such fields has become the matter of concern. All this apparently leaves no room for the standpoint of religion, which is spoken of as transcending reason. Even if from the "humanistic" standpoint one may speak of transcending man, one speaks so not from the standpoint of religious faith, but from that of reason. By this I mean that that which transcends man, although not yet actualized, cannot but be thought of as the ultimate of reason, like Idea. Here is a way of life in which, while rationally approving of the transcendent nature of Idea, one goes on working toward

its actualization. Thus, to regard as religion the way of life which is considered ultimate as regards the relation between actual life and its ideal—this can be called the standpoint of “idealistic humanism.”

From such a standpoint, however, even if one speaks of religion or faith, the world of such religion or faith becomes only relatively actualized, and will never absolutely become actual. Rather in its never absolutely becoming actual history is thought to be established. Do we not here find the reason why the present age does not find satisfaction with itself? The ideal world is after all never actualized, and the actual world is the one that constantly suffers from the tantalizing glitter of the ideal.

However, it ought to be asked here whether or not this faith or religion of humanism can establish itself firmly. I mean, I should like to consider whether or not the very hope of attaining of such an Idea, or being resigned to its unattainability, has any validity at all. This will also serve as *criticism of humanism itself*, so that it will become criticism of the religion that is established on the ground of humanism. Where can we find the reason why the standpoint of “reason” ultimately becomes untenable?

Our problem now focuses itself upon that of the “moment” in man which necessarily leads him to religion. I should like to clarify this by considering it in relation to the problems of sin and death.

III *The Religious Moment in Man*

In religion—not primitive ones, but those established out of a highly developed awareness of human nature—what moment in man is regarded as leading him to religion? In many cases, *death and sin*. Christianity regards Original Sin as the moment in man which keeps him from remaining man, and which inevitably leads him to religion. Besides, since it is called “original” sin, it is the basic sin, and is considered to indicate something different from ordinary sin. Today, however, for us who attempt to understand original sin, the myth which attributes it to Adam and Eve is completely unacceptable. Therefore, such a myth cannot but be interpreted differently, perhaps, as a symbol. Never can it be accepted literally.

Perhaps there may still be people who accept it as it has been accepted, and in the Middle Ages it may have been sincerely taken literally on faith. Theirs is, however, pre-modern faith, which is unbelievable for modern man. For

ULTIMATE CRISIS AND RESURRECTION

modern morality, it is unthinkable in terms of individual responsibility that the burden of the sin thus committed by man's ancestors should be borne even today by their descendants. And yet in its emphasis of sin where not only particular individuals but all human beings are guilty, it is considered to have universality.

A direct confrontation with sin is found not only in Christianity but in Buddhism as well, and there too it is seen as a religious "moment" in man. In Buddhism, among various schools, the Jōdoshin (True Pure Land) school emphasizes *contemplation upon man's sinfulness*, considering sin as an important religious "moment" in man. Not only in the Jōdoshin school, however, but in Buddhism at large sin is considered to be a religious "moment" of man. Therefore, we can say that sin is regarded as a very important "moment" which leads man to religion.

Besides sin, especially in Buddhism, death is considered to be the other, equally important religious "moment" in man. Death, in this case, first means physical death. Certainly one cannot abstractly think that physical death is all that death means; it includes mental death. In any case, when death is said to be a religious moment, it is also called into question. In Christianity, death may not be given as much weight as sin, but it cannot be supposed to have been neglected.

These two, *sin and death*, which ordinarily are separately considered, since they are each spoken of as the single or the grave "moment" for religion, can both be said to be the inevitable for man, and to point up man's limitation. In other words, when *the moment for religion in man* is said to be sin and death, this means that sin and death constitute man's limitation, and that they are what man can never overcome. We ourselves face death. There is no one who does not die. Death is negation of life; no man or no living being can overcome it. The same is true of sin. No man can escape or overcome it. We must first separately take them up to consider what each means.

The terms sin and death are taken in various ways. They have a variety of meanings and can never be defined in any single way. However, when one speaks of sin, ordinarily one is likely to think of the term in its moral sense. When there is some sin committed in the moral sense, it is natural to think about avoiding sin. From the standpoint of morality, one must take the direction of overcoming sin. Getting free from sin or overcoming sin can be

achieved only by the moral conduct necessary to overcome sin, not by anything else. Sin, from a moral perspective, must always be overcome by moral means. However, morally speaking, one can only be negative about the possibility of completely overcoming sin. In other words, moral strength is like the limitation of idealism. Although, relatively, one can overcome each single sin, one can never get rid of sin itself, no matter how long one may try.

IV *Sin*

Ordinarily sin may be considered to belong exclusively to morality. But when we consider it well, *we come to wonder whether we can limit sin to morality alone*. I rather think that sin exists in science and art as well, and not just in morality. Certainly it is not of a moral type, but just as we have evil against good, we have falsity against truth, ugliness against beauty, and defilement against purity. Even if we could get rid of sin in a moral sense, we could not be free from the contrast between ugliness and beauty in the world of art, or opposition between falsity and truth in the world of science. Therefore, *sin ought to be extended to include the problem of reason per se*.

To summarize in a general manner, the concept of sin ought to be extended far enough to separate rationality from irrationality. Meanwhile, the opposition of rational and irrational is basic to the structure of reason, so that to remove what is irrational and to leave behind only what is rational is, one must say, impossible. This becomes clear when one considers the *structure* of reason itself. For this reason, getting free from sin or being redeemed from sin is, speaking from the standpoint of reason, impossible.

However, by this I do not mean any impossibility of removing what is irrational in the *process* of rationalization. In the process one must promote individual rationalization, and in this respect reason has its own life. It is not that difficulties met with in the process make it impossible to be liberated from sin in the broader sense of the term as indicated above. I mean rather that the impossibility of being freed from sin is indubitably based on the structure of reason itself.

Distinguishing the basic *contradiction, dilemma, or antinomy* which is considered to exist in the structure of reason from the relative contradiction, dilemma, or antinomy which reveals itself in the process of rational activity, we will deal with the former, which is the antinomy inherent in reason itself. This

ULTIMATE CRISIS AND RESURRECTION

more basic antinomy is an ultimate one which concerns the structure of reason, and, as such, is the ultimate antinomy.

The antinomy in the process of rational activity cannot but be of a relative nature; it cannot be ultimate. Distinguished from that, the basic, ultimate antinomy is no other than the fatal limitation of reason. Here we see the extremity-situation of reason itself. Here we see the ultimacy of sin. In other words, it is here that sin is said to be the unavoidable limitation of man.

This is especially *the limitation of modern man* who today depends on the standpoint of reason. Even though he has this in the depths of his own being, he *is not aware of it himself and so continues to rely on this antinomic standpoint*. Herein, fundamentally, lies the direction of history in modern times and also the direction of human life. It is in this light that I interpret the easy-going nature of human life in the modern world or in modern history. To think that by relying on the standpoint of reason we can dissolve sin is to consider possible what is really impossible.

Only when sin is seen to be such as I have been explaining, does it become the sin of man which covers the whole field of man; and unlike ordinary transgression, it comes to mean the root of all sins. In other words, sin arises because man has ultimate antinomy in the very structure of his being. Insofar as the basic antinomy is not solved, we are fated never to be redeemed from sin. In this sense, I feel that so-called original sin really does exist (although its myth is far from being convincing to us today). This original sin is that which no one has been able to escape since man's beginnings—by which I mean since man became highly developed. To remain unaware of this would be nothing but *religious ignorance*—although ordinarily few will refer to this as religious. This is *man's most basic kind of ignorance*. If one should look for man's darkest spot, perhaps this would be the place to look. Man's fate, the deep chasm from which he cannot escape, *the abyss of man*, lies there.

Realizing this kind of sin differs from the case in which I get obsessed with the idea of my sinfulness because someone else tells me I am guilty. It also differs from the case in which one categorizes each individual transgression and considers it to be extremely wicked. A question from which we cannot escape is, *what makes so-called extreme wickedness possible?* When we speak of original sin, which aspect of man do we point to? No mere dogma or doctrine or words—arrogant as it might sound to speak thus—attributed either to

Śakyamuni or Jesus Christ or anyone else, would ever convince me that I have committed original sin. In this very respect one might well insist that I have *karma* accumulated from previous lives or that I have the stains of original sin on my soul. However, I have never been ashamed or worried that I might have such *karma*-accumulation or effects of original sin. I rather think that because I am affected thus the real situation of man becomes apparent and, far from feeling penitent, I take delight in it.

It seems that ordinarily people emphasize relative guilt out of some sentimentality, and taking it as categorical or ultimate feel themselves to be sinful or ultimately guilty. The feeling of being unable to keep on living and nihilistic feelings, in ordinary cases, prove, upon careful examination, to be only of a relative nature. Situations in which one is really and ultimately nihilistic will prove rarely to exist if one calmly investigates them rationally. Nowadays, there are said to be a great number of suicides. But there does not seem to be any distinct reason which may have made these suicides inevitable. In most cases relative reasons given too much emphasis seem to have brought them on.

I wonder, however, whether we can approve of such a situation. To say on such grounds that man is nothing merely reflects a very shallow understanding. Man is said to be nothing. But where should we locate this nothingness? Today people often speak of nihilism, but the basis for that, in my view, is simply in the ultimate antinomy of man. I believe that it is in this ultimate antinomy that the ground for ultimate negation of man is found. I would rather speak of the ultimate antinomy as sin than say that sin constitutes antinomy. That is the way I should like to define original sin. For all the various ways of understanding sin, I should like to think that inevitably all of them stem from this ultimate antinomy.

V *Death*

In Buddhism it is said that man does not enter religion only because of the "moment" of sin. For it is said that, apart from sin, there exists the "moment" of death. If sin is spoken of not in its ordinary sense but according to the above interpretation, then our next problem is how we should think of death in a manner similar to our treatment of sin. I need not mention here that when one speaks of hating death one has hope in life, and this indicates that death is inseparable from life. There is no death as such alone; *death, after all, is not to*

ULTIMATE CRISIS AND RESURRECTION

be separated from life. It is death as the other side of life. In this sense, one must say that death is invariably *of the nature of life-and-death.*

From the viewpoint that death is that which has the nature of life-and-death, it must be said that there is no life apart from that which has the nature of life-and-death. Life which has the nature of life-and-death cannot possibly acquire a life which has the nature of life alone. In other words, for life which has the nature of life-and-death it may be possible to relatively overcome death but is ultimately impossible to do so. This is true because at the bottom of life there exists the antinomy of life-and-death. It is only in the case of ordinary life that living or dying can become a question. According to my view, one should fear not death but life-and-death. Then our sharing in the nature of life-and-death comes to be the basic problem of our life. In other words, our life stands on the basis of the ultimate antinomy which is life-and-death. Therefore, *the meaning of death ought to be deepened to the extent that not mere death but life-and-death is death.*

Besides, this life-and-death nature can be spoken of in relation to all living beings, that is, in relation to all that which is alive. In this case life-and-death means origination-and-extinction, which is not necessarily limited to man's life-and-death.

The term origination-and-extinction is an all-inclusive one. It applies to man as well as to everything else. However, we must extend the content much further than life-and-death or origination-and-extinction, and bring it to the very point of *existence-and-nonexistence.* In other words, it comes to mean the life-and-death of man's life in its being-and-nonbeing or in its existence-and-nonexistence. Therefore, if one speaks of getting rid of death as redemption from mere death, he is not very exact in his way of expression. Rather it should be getting rid of what is of the nature of life-and-death.

Consequently as regards death, one must say that the very ultimate antinomy of life-and-death is death. This is what I consider to be *ultimate death* or ultimate extinction. This is what is called *Great Death* in Zen. Ultimate death, which can also be called ultimate negation, is evidently not any mental negation as an abstract idea; it ought necessarily to be fundamentally subjective.

VI *Sin and Death as Inseparable, and Emancipation*

As I have mentioned above, by sin I think we should mean the ultimate antinomy of the rational-irrational, which is found in the structure of reason. Nothing else, I should like to say, is the real, ultimate sin. As for death also, it is nothing but the ultimate antinomy of existence-and-nonexistence, which lies at the bottom of life, and which I consider to be ultimate death. That is how I should like to interpret sin and death; or rather, extreme though it may sound, I think *that is the way they really are*. They ought to be so; they cannot but be so. In Buddhism, in the case when death is said to be the "moment" for religion in man, if the death is to be man's extremity-situation, it ought to be deepened to the kind of death I am referring to. The interpretation of sin also ought to be as thoroughgoing as the one which I have outlined above.

In the above I have mentioned separately the ultimate antinomy of life-and-death and that of the rational-irrational. This may have made them appear separate from and unrelated to each other. But the truth is that these two cases of ultimate antinomy are never two in us; in the concrete, actual man they are one. The ultimate antinomy of life-and-death and that of the rational-irrational are not separable from one another; they are indivisible. To take up either life-death or the rational-irrational alone, apart from the other, is evidently an abstract matter. In their concrete reality these two are one; there is never one apart from the other. To ask why the ultimate antinomy of life-and-death becomes pain or suffering in us is already a question based on the judgment of reason. Not only because one feels that pain is detestable but because *one judges* that it is to be detested, does liberation from pain come to be a really objective problem. Further, sin without a sinner is a mere idea; it is the concrete man of life-and-death who is the sinner.

Such ultimate antinomy really pressing upon us is the true "moment" of religion. A death or a sin which one can look upon is an abstract one, a mere object of thought. We are confronted by ultimate death, ultimate sin. This ultimate antinomy is the very self-awareness in which existence and value are one; it is not anything to be known objectively. It is original to man; it is at once my way of being and that of all human beings.

The "moment" of religion for man ultimately lies here. And any kind of religion should be brought home here, should be pursued to this depth. As

ULTIMATE CRISIS AND RESURRECTION

for relative religious moments in man, there may be a variety of them. It is only when one goes from relative moments to the ultimate moment that there prevails the ultimate antinomy which is fundamentally subjective. It is there that there obtains the true religious "moment." This is so, I believe, whether we know it or not.

In Buddhism when one speaks of sin, one calls into question not only evil or sin but the three antinomies: good-evil, right-wrong, and pure-defiled. Again, since death is ultimately of life-death nature, and since liberation from death is liberation from life-and-death, Buddhism regards the kind of ultimate antinomy which I refer to as the "moment" for religion. Further, in Buddhism, when one speaks of the liberated state of man, liberation from origination-and-extinction is also called "nonorigination-nonextinction," "No-birth-No-death," "birth-and-death as one truth," and so on. Freedom from discrimination of good-and-evil, right-and-wrong, pure-and-defiled, is called "No-good-No-evil," "true-and-false as one truth," "pure-and-defiled as non-duality," and so forth. Here that which has been liberated from the moment of ultimate death, ultimate sin, is considered to be man's true way of being. As remarked by the Sixth Patriarch of Zen in China:¹ "At the very time when you do not think of good or evil . . . your original face." Through and through this is a case of the Not-thinking-either-of-good-or-evil. Also, in the expression by the Sixth Patriarch:² "The face that you have before your parents gave you birth." The self prior to birth from one's parents means the Self without the nature of life-and-death. Such a question the Sixth Patriarch posed to a monk, saying, "At the very time you do not think of good or evil, please give back to me the Face that you had before your parents gave birth to you." This constitutes the basic task of man. Without the solution to this problem one cannot help falling into anxiety and desperation.

Similar expressions are found abundantly among the *kōan* of Zen. Such a problem, which has become one with the person who wrestles with it is the "great doubting-mass" (*dai-gi-dan*), i.e. the self as ultimate negation. Here my

¹ From the *Platform Sutra* 六祖大師法寶壇經 by Enō (慧能) the Sixth Patriarch. *Taishō Tripitaka* 48, p. 349b.

² As recorded in *The Pivotal Point of Mind-Transmission Set Forth by the Zen Master Tuanchi of Mount Huang-po* 黃檗山斷際禪師信心法要. *TT* 48, p. 384a.

whole body and whole mind is one as fundamental subject. Such a basic "great doubting-mass" is itself the ultimate antinomy. Although ordinary doubts are intellectual, this "great doubting-mass," despite the intellectual term "doubting," is no mere intellectual doubt. It means *something total*, in which emotional anguish and volitional dilemma, as well as intellectual doubting, are *one fundamental subject*.

In this regard, the "great doubting-mass" *completely differs quantitatively and qualitatively* from the "doubt" in Descartes' *de omnibus dubitandum* ("Concerning the necessity of doubting everything"), which served as an important moment in the change from the Middle Ages to modern times. The "great doubting-mass" is all-inclusive, total, and ultimately and radically subjective. Here, *what is being doubted is the very doubter himself, and the one who doubts is that which is doubted; there is no distinction between that which acts and that which is acted on, between subject and object*. This is the *one great mass of doubt* to which all the doubts are reduced and upon which all the doubtings are based. Therefore, clearly enough, this is far from something like a sum total of possible particular doubts.

In Zen from very early days there has been a term "great doubt" (*dai-gi*). In my view the "great doubt" of Zen ought to be what I mean by the "great doubting-mass." If the "great doubt" of Zen were to mean, as it has tended to be mistaken in the tradition of *kōan* Zen heretofore, a doubt or a *kōan* which concerns some particular, individual thing or matter, we must say that it would be unworthy of being called the great doubt. As for the well-known *kōan* of Jōshū's *Mu*, which is presented as the first case of the *Mumonkan*,³ even if the *kōan* becomes, as Venerable Mumon said, "the doubting-mass (given rise

³ *Wu-men-kuan* 無門關; by Wu-men Hui-hai (Mumon Ekai 無門慧開, 1183-1260), first printed in 1228.

Once a monk asked Jōshū (Chao-chou 趙州, 778-897), "Does a dog have the Buddha-nature?" Jōshū said, "Mu".

Let me, Mumon, remark upon this. For the practice of Zen we must necessarily go through the Patriarch's Barrier. For attaining wondrous Awakening we need to exhaust our reasoning mind and have it extinguished. Insofar as the Patriarch's Barrier is not penetrated, insofar as the reasoning mind is not extinguished, we will all remain no other than the ghosts abiding on blades of grass or attached to trees.

Now let me ask: What is the Patriarch's Barrier? Simply it is this single *Mu*, the single barrier of our school. Therefore we call it the gateless barrier of the Zen school. The one*

ULTIMATE CRISIS AND RESURRECTION

to) with your whole being," should it remain *a particular doubting-mass*, it could never be called "great doubting-mass." Insofar as it is not great doubting-mass, even when it is broken through and awakening opens up, it would be no more than *particular satori which has form*; it could never be called *Great Awakening* or *Awaking-Mass*, which, Rinzai said,⁴ "Without any form, penetrates throughout the ten directions and right now is working in your presence." Because the doubt is exhaustively thoroughgoing, totally single, and fundamentally subjective, the Awakening also can be exhaustively total and fundamentally subjective.

For the overcoming of this doubting-mass, the bottom of man ought to be broken through. The way of breaking through it is only this—to be awakened

*who has been able to penetrate it will not only personally see [Master] Jōshū, but will walk hand in hand with the successive patriarchs, one's eyebrows tied together with theirs, seeing through the same eyes and hearing through the same ears. Isn't it delightful and joyous? Why is it not necessary to go through the barrier? Using up the three hundred sixty joints and eighty-four thousand pores, with your whole being, give rise to the doubting-mass and practice this *Mu*. By day and by night take this up. Do not mistake it for voidness. Do not take it for negation as against affirmation.

It should be as if you had swallowed a hot iron ball which you cannot vomit up no matter how hard you try. Exhaust all the wrong knowledge and remembrances you have had. You will thus achieve final purity and maturity. And self-effectedly the 'in' and the 'out' will become one single piece. You will be aware of all this by yourself just like a dumb person is aware of his own dream.

Then flashingly Self-awakening will open up. It will surprise heaven and will shake the earth. It will be as if you snatched the big sword from the hand of General Kan'u (Kuan Yu) and, if confronted by Buddha, you will kill the Buddha; if confronted by a patriarch, you will kill the patriarch. Thus on this side of birth-and-death you will acquire great freedom, and in all the six ways of life and four kinds of birth you will enjoy yourself the sportive *samādhi*.

Now, how would you take up this case? Summoning up all your energy and vitality, you take up this *Mu*. If you go on without a break, you will see it is very much like the dharma lamp, which upon being lit will immediately light. Here is a verse:

"The dog," "the Buddha-nature":

Total presentations of the Right Command.

With slight involvement in Yes or No,

You will lose your being and life.

⁴ From the *Lin-chi lu* 臨濟錄 *Rinzai-roku* (The Record of Zen Master Lin-chi I-hsüan: Rinzai Gigen 臨濟義玄 d. 866). *TT* 47, p. 498a.

to the True Self, the self in whom the doubting-mass is resolved. Here is a leap. The self in ultimate antinomy cannot become the True Self with continuity. Only when the self which is ultimately antinomic breaks up, does the Self of Oneness awake to itself.

Therefore, we must say that there is a leap, a discontinuity. Moreover, this does not mean that one is saved by someone else or that redemption comes from God or Buddha. The self of life-death nature breaking up and becoming the Self without life-and-death means that the self of life-death nature becomes awakened to its original Self. In this sense the Self without life-and-death has continuity with the self of life-death nature. In this Self-awakening, as between the doubter and the doubted, there is no separation between the awakened and what one is awakened to. While the doubting-mass breaks and the True Self is awakened to, the former is related to the latter in a very special manner as the darkness of night which is dark through and through is to the brightness which prevails after sunrise.

By the True Self I mean the Self that is not the ordinary self, the Self that has become free, in the true sense of the term, from death and sin, the Self that is not limited by either time or space, the Formless, egoless Self.

The leap from the ordinary self to the True Self, however, is no mere leap. A special method is established there. Through its application, I believe the theological dispute between the Swiss theologian Emil Brunner (1889–1964) and Karl Barth (1886–1968) also can be solved.⁵ The method I refer to is

⁵ The Encyclopaedia Britannica (ed. 1966) Vol. 4, under the heading BRUNNER, (HEINRICH) EMIL, has this:

The close link between Brunner's theology and that of Barth was broken early in their theological careers when in 1934 Brunner wrote a monograph entitled *Natur und Gnade: Zum Gespräch mit Karl Barth* ("Nature and Grace: a Conversation With Karl Barth"). Brunner held that while God's saving revelation is known only in Jesus Christ, there is a revelation in the creation; this revelation is reflected in the "image of God," which man bears and which is never wholly lost. This provoked a vigorous reply from Barth, who attacked Brunner's view that the image of God remains formally but not materially in man after sin has entered. Brunner replied, insisting upon the sense of responsibility as the "point of contact" between sinful human nature and the divine.

... The discussion with Karl Barth was published under the title *Natural Theology*, introduction by John Baillie (1946). A critical review of this discussion is given by Baillie in *Our Knowledge of God* (1939).

the Self-awakening in no other sense than getting awakened to the True Self. It is not the heteronomous-Theonomous method, which has completely gone beyond the limitation of autonomy. Rather, it is the method of establishing the Self on the basis of criticizing modern autonomy.

Besides, since this is the original way of being for us human beings, it can be effected no matter where, when, and for whom. Being formless itself, it takes every form and is free. While rationally ultimate freedom is one thing and ultimate freedom as fundamental subject the other, the latter, which may also be called the standpoint of Existence, since it has no form, is Nothingness. This Nothingness is no mere logical negation but the way of being of the Self that comes breaking out through the bottom of ultimate antinomy. This is fundamental subject in the sense that only from this does infinite positiveness arise. Although referred to as fundamental subject, this is not any particular, limited being, but Reality as the most basic, Self-awaking being, emancipated and redeemed.

Moreover, this *being redeemed is the very way-of-being of the Self, not a mere feeling or a state of consciousness*. This Self may well be called Creator because God or Buddha exists not outside but inside the Self and because it is present. In our being this kind of Self we are all equal. *It is not that in the presence of an external God we are equal*, which would be heteronomy. We all have Buddha-nature; we are originally the Buddha.

"All beings are of the Buddha-nature."⁶

"All sentient beings originally are the Buddha."⁷

In this respect human beings are all equal. This is the field of "width," the standpoint of all humankind.

As I have initially mentioned, *it ought to be that in the point of depth we become the True Self, emancipated from the ultimate antinomy of sin and death, that in the point of width we solve various problems standing on the standpoint of brotherly love of humankind, and that in the point of length, i.e. history, the Self of No life-death nature goes on living in the midst of life-and-death, forming history while transcending it.*

(To be continued)

Translated by Tokiwa Gishin

⁶ From the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* (No. 374) 4-4. *TT* 12, p. 405b; (No. 375) p. 648b, et al.

⁷ From the *Zazen-Wasan* by Hakuin Ekaku 白隠慧鶴 1686-1769.