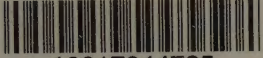
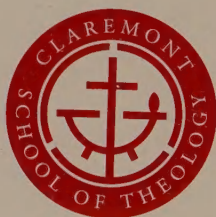


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ZEN—WAY TO ENLIGHTENMENT

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ZEN—WAY TO
ENLIGHTENMENT

by

H. M. ENOMIYA-LASSALLE, S.J.

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PREFACE

MODERN life has become mechanized. Unrest is the consequence. Especially is there an unrest of the human heart. Former times have been criticized for being unscientific. This criticism is no longer valid because most of the deficiencies of the past have been fortunately overcome. Yet, the change has brought not only gain, but also loss. Man has lost that calmness and peace of heart which he once had and which he needs now more than ever before. In spite of all his technical progress, man cannot be happy unless he rediscovers this inner rest. In his present state, man's physical health suffers and, worse still, he is afflicted with neuroses and psychic disturbances which make his life difficult. It is no secret that man is looking for a cure. His search is so insistent that it can be said that he shouts for silence. 'Try this for a change,' he says to himself; 'do this for relaxation.' And he knows, as he says these things to himself, that the means readily available for change and relaxation, films, radio, and television, are not able to soothe him. On the contrary, they drive him from one unrest smack into another.

The surprising thing is that Western man, having imparted to Eastern man all sorts of scientific and technological achievements, is now turning to the East. And his gaze is

humble. He is looking for help in the East. He has been told that in the East there are methods of acquiring that inner silence and rest which the West does not know. Because these methods are embedded in the religions of the East, many a European, after a previous estrangement from Christianity, has adopted not only the method but also the religion, becoming, for example, a Buddhist.

There is also, of course, the man who is thoroughly Christian. 'I have', he says, 'the absolute and eternal truth in my faith which has been revealed by God. What have I to gain from Oriental religions? The doctrine is false.' Yet, even this type of man is a child of his age. Though he has not the slightest doubt about his faith, nevertheless he has the same sort of anxiety and inner unrest. He finds it hard to live his faith and to rejoice in it. He cannot concentrate. He finds an intensive life of prayer almost impossible.

What is true of worldlings is no less true of those in monasteries and convents. Neither the external forms of life nor the spiritual trends of the age are kept at bay at monastery gates. No one can completely escape from the influences of his times. Even those consecrated to God in a special way are looking for new ways to meet the restlessness of the age. For these, of course, it is only a question of overcoming natural difficulties by natural means. They are looking for psychic methods to clear away the obstacles which modern life has piled up. They look for methods that will help them lead a life of prayer and religion in spite of the mechanization and unrest of their daily surroundings. Nobody can reasonably object to such efforts. In the religions of the East, such methods have been emphasized more than in Christianity. They are more developed there and are, in

effect, practised there today. It is no wonder, then, that non-Christians, for psychological reasons, and Christians, for religious reasons, are both trying to find in the religions of the East new inspirations.

Of the many methods, one is ZEN meditation. For many years I have been engaged in a study of Japanese Zen. In the beginning, my objective was not so much to enrich my own spiritual life as to gain insights into the Japanese character through Zen, and I considered this an adaptation necessary for a missionary. The more I studied Zen, the more clearly I realized its deep influence on Japanese thought. Not content with mere theory, I also practised Zen, taking part in Zen meditations. It was then that I came to realize that Zen was a great help to my own spiritual life. My conviction grew that, practised in the right way, Zen could be useful to anyone regardless of his religious conviction and denomination. The experiences and impressions which follow are offered for publication because I think that this method should be made accessible to others. I wish to show others that, in spite of the unrest of modern life, they can obtain a profound sense of inner restfulness. I have another reason: Zen is the key to the understanding of the Japanese soul. It is, therefore, my sincere hope that this modest contribution may help towards a better understanding of the East.

In regard to this English edition I wish to add a word of sincerest thanks to all those who kindly helped with the translation from the German and in making the text ready for press. Very specially I wish to express my gratitude to the Rev. David F. Casey, M.M., Instructor at Kyoto University, who devoted so much of his precious time to this work.

I

ENLIGHTENMENT

ONE Zen retreat which I made took place at Hosshinji, a monastery overlooking the Japan Sea. It was a retreat of seven full days and was attended by Buddhist lay-people and monks. Each morning we rose at three o'clock and each evening we retired at nine o'clock, though one was allowed to use the hours of sleep for further meditation in the garden, if he so desired.

THE FIRST STAGE

But what is Za-zen? Za-zen is the Zen meditation which is supposed to lead to enlightenment in three main stages. In the Japanese language 'enlightenment' is called *satori* and means 'understanding'. Enlightenment also means *kenshō*, i.e. 'intuition of essence'. Any attempt to define either *satori* or *kenshō* is doomed to failure and has to be considered mere personal interpretation. To define it would mean that enlightenment can be grasped in well-known and familiar concepts. Yet, enlightenment is essentially an inward experience which defies expression in unequivocal concepts or words. Therefore I shall not even try to give a proper definition. I shall rest content with a description of the Zen meditation.

We were called at three o'clock in the morning. Physical exercises followed a short morning prayer. Then we entered the Za-zen hall. The hall was thirty-six feet long and eighteen feet wide. Along the walls, to a width of six feet, the flooring had been raised about two feet. Only the entrances were left open. There were straw mats, which are called *tatami* and are commonly found in Japanese houses, on the raised platform. The floor of the hall was of hard earth. One walked on it noiselessly without effort. The hall was always kept dim. During the day this was effected by Japanese paper windows, and in the evening by weak electric lights.

In this hall everyone had his assigned place. Facing the wall, we squatted on a round cushion, three or four inches thick, which had been placed on the straw matting. The legs did not rest on the cushion but rather on the straw matting in front of the cushion. We were allowed to spread a blanket beneath the cushion and extending in front of it, in order to relieve the pressure on our ankles and knees. The legs were crossed in such a way that the right foot rested on the left thigh and the left foot on the right thigh. If one was unable to sit this way, he was allowed to put his right foot on his left thigh, placing his left leg forward on the straw matting or the blanket covering it. For the beginner either position is difficult and painful. Even after long years of practice, the joints hurt very much if one meditates for several days. Thus we squatted with crossed legs, keeping the trunk of the body straight as a bolt. The head was inclined a bit, the chin drawn in so that the tip of the nose was in a straight line with the navel. Our eyes were kept open, and we stared at a spot about three feet ahead on the

mat or on the wall, depending on whether we squatted in front of a wall or not.

The meditation began. We inhaled deeply several times and exhaled the breath slowly. Then we swung the trunk pendulously from left to right a few times and back into a resting position. After this movement we were not allowed to move again until the meditation was over. This position of the body is essential for enlightenment.

The meditation lasted about forty minutes, after which we rose and, at a normal pace, walked around the Za-zen hall three times. The hands were kept folded on the breast. (In some monasteries this walk is performed so slowly that the retreatants seem motionless. In either case the inner attitude of Za-zen must be preserved.) The walk is a continuation of Za-zen under another form; it is not a diversion.

A ten-minute recess followed. We remained near the hall in strictest silence. A neighbour of mine was smudged with dust from the wall, but I did not brush him off. One must not care for anything or anyone. The next session began immediately after the ten-minute recess. And so it went all through the day. Time for meals and necessary rest were generously allotted. However, the meals were taken in the Za-zen hall in the same squatting position, and thus we seemed to have spent the entire day in meditation.

What is one's spiritual attitude during Za-zen meditation? The spiritual attitude is much more difficult than the physical posture. One is supposed to stop thinking. Nevertheless, one must not daydream. To the uninitiate, this sounds like nonsense. How can one be awake without thinking? To achieve this mental attitude is very difficult.

There are various ways to help achieve it. One is to count your breathing movements from one to ten and then start again from one. Or you can concentrate on a *kōan*. A *kōan* is a pithy story from the life of some famous monk. Deep wisdom is expressed in a *kōan* paradoxically. A *kōan* seems nonsensical upon reading or hearing. It is a puzzle which cannot be solved by logical thinking. You must pass beyond thinking and get to intuition. The more you think the more unsolvable the puzzle seems to be. One monk explained it with the following image: 'You must chew on the *kōan* time and again, until the tooth with which you have chewed comes out.'

A famous collection of *kōan* has been entitled *A Pass without a Gate*. As an illustration, let me quote the first *kōan* of this collection. Master Chao-chou (778–897: China) was asked by a monk whether the Buddha-nature is also in a puppy or not. Chao-chou answered, 'Mu.' (Mu means 'Nothing'.) 'But does the dog have the Buddha-nature? Or does he not?' That is the whole *kōan*. The puzzle remains unsolved, and yet it is solved by the answer which, literally, says nothing.¹ But it is enough to solve just one *kōan*. In solving one, one has solved all. One has reached the goal where all *kōan* become superfluous.

It is not easy to stop all intellectual activity. But one can try. One can succeed in detaching oneself from any thought and, *a fortiori*, from any accompanying feeling that might arise. First of all, we had to exclude all thoughts concerned with the ego. Whatever worries, whatever wishes, whatever plans (good or bad), ambition, envy, fears—all had to cease. In order to maintain in us the proper attitude of mind, we

¹ Heinrich Dumoulin, *Der Pass ohne Tor* (Tokyo, 1953), 8ff.

were urged time and time again: 'Your own ego must die! He who dies entirely will rise entirely; who dies partly will rise partly. A speck of an ego that you can call your own, even that does not exist.'

There were other suggestions. All things, we were told, even the smallest drop of water, or the shortest moment of time, are identical with the universe. We know all this only in theory. To us the truth is like a rice cake painted on paper; it has no taste. In enlightenment, we experience this truth and this truth will give a great certainty and inconceivable happiness. A man who is without enlightenment is a captive of his own empirical ego. He thinks this ego is his own true self, but it is only something temporary. It is not his true self. On the contrary, he has not yet discovered his true ego or self. He must step out of his imagined ego, out of this self-consciousness. Only then will he be able to grasp himself as he is, in his essence, and thus attain to true reality. To get there he must empty his mind. It can be seen, then, that this spiritual emptiness is in no way akin to daydreaming or sleeping with one's eyes open.

I soon understood that no topic or matter for meditation was given. Even the words quoted above are only meant as a kind of encouragement. Hence the term meditation cannot be interpreted in the meaning hitherto commonly used in the West. If, in spite of all our efforts, some ideas should force themselves on the mind, they simply must be put aside. Very often one will not succeed in doing so. However, such failures should not be taken too hard. One should not get angry at the thoughts which one cannot rid oneself of. To do so would be to tie oneself to one's anger, which, in the long run, would be more harmful. Dialectical thinking

and logical reasoning must also be given up. In fact, they form the greatest obstacle on the way to achieving enlightenment.

The prescribed posture of the body is to facilitate the proper spiritual attitude. It is not going too far to say that only by means of this posture is the 'emptiness' of the mind made possible. Some say that this posture influences blood circulation in such a way that the activity of the nerves of the unconscious is stimulated. However, the point is mooted. Yet, a result can be noticed. It is typical of the Eastern religious to use the body skilfully for its influence on the spirit.

But let us return to the *Za-zen* hall. During the sessions we were constantly supervised. A monk walked around the hall. He corrected our posture and gave us necessary instructions. Above all he instigated us to our meditation; at times by scoldings and at other times by blows. The blows caused pain for the moment, but there was no injury because the tip of the staff is flattened. The blows were given on the shoulder. Early in the morning, at the beginning of the first meditation, everyone received a strong blow. If the monk thought it advisable, he struck more blows on all of us or, at times, only on some. We could ask to be beaten. The sign for this was to fold the hands on one's breast without, of course, saying a word. The monk walked behind us so quietly that, even in the silent hall, we could hardly hear him. One day someone fell asleep, as might easily happen during these very straining exercises. A thunderstorm of blows and scoldings fell upon him. It would be absolutely wrong to imagine that this was done in scorn or resentment. On the contrary, it was true kindness.

The more one is beaten, the more grateful one should be. If anyone cannot understand this, he had better not begin the meditations at all. Another point difficult to understand for the uninitiated is that during the whole retreat not one single word is spoken.

During the retreat there is what is called the *dokusan*, which means 'going-in-single-file'. One goes to the *rōshi*, the master, in order to be directed by him. This is of great importance. The purpose of this spiritual guidance is to keep the retreatant from going astray in Za-zen. Its purpose is also to bring forth enlightenment, when the time has come for it. The practice of *dokusan* in Zen is very old.

I went as a disciple to his master. From the Za-zen hall, a long corridor led to the room which had been set aside for *dokusan*. A bell sounded and I entered. The *roshi* sat on a large cushion with a rod in his hand. I greeted him in the prescribed way and squatted directly in front of him on the floor, less than a foot from the edge of his cushion.

The disciple should enter into the master, as it were. He should be close enough so that the master can strike him or shout at him, with the effect that either striking or shouting, or both, is literally shocking. Someone may object, saying that this method is barbarous; nevertheless, it is of great importance. The master should not only guide his disciple by word, but he should also try to arouse enlightenment, and herein is the difficulty. Enlightenment cannot be obtained through intellectual efforts. It is a sort of intuition. Let us say that the master feels, somehow or other, that the disciple is ready for enlightenment. It is at this time that he strikes or shouts at the disciple. He thus frightens the disciple out of his darkness. Inside the disciple a light breaks through, like

■ spark from struck flint. Without this assistance of the master, the disciple will be delayed in his enlightenment or may possibly never get it.

At the end of the exercise I asked the *rōshi* what advice he could give me for the future. He told me that I should make Za-zen every day in the morning and evening for twenty or thirty minutes, my regular duties so permitting. He also said that I should occasionally return for retreats. To attain enlightenment, it is necessary to make Za-zen outside of retreats.

Thus far I have described my first experience with Za-zen at the retreat which was held at Hosshinji. The squatting with crossed legs, the attempts to empty one's mind through acts of reason and will—these are the first stages on the way to enlightenment. Even though one should not have reached enlightenment, yet these first attempts do have real value. And lay people practise these things for their own sake and even take part in Zen retreats yearly. They are certainly not the least valuable people of their nation. To make the retreats they must often sacrifice the short holidays which others use for amusement.

Here the question may be raised: Does it make any sense to squat for hours just to think of nothing? It certainly does. To rid oneself of all egocentric thoughts for a few days is, in itself, of great value. Such retreats do not dull the mind, as some may be led to believe. On the contrary, the mind is stimulated to new activity. To cite an example: I once made a retreat for laypeople only. At the end of the retreat we met together for tea; this is called a *zadankai* in Japanese. We talked over our impressions. There was an editor of a magazine there who told us that after each Zen retreat he

returns to his work ■ new man and is able to write much better than before. A painter said that she received new inspiration because of the retreats. For these reasons it seems that the very emptiness proves to be fertile.

These retreats also have effects on the moral-ascetical plane. Liberating one's self from inordinate passions is ■ constant endeavour during them. The ego must die. The *mu-ga* (the non-ego) is a topic which is stressed time and time again. Fear, pride, envy, and other feelings must die with the ego. Christian retreats have a similar purpose, but in Christian retreats one meditates on some doctrine of faith and makes appropriate resolutions to eliminate evil inclinations. In Zen the procedure is completely different. One does not meditate on anything. One simply empties his mind, and in so doing he destroys the obstacles and everything else which is inordinate in him.

It is during this first stage that a man learns to control himself and to dominate his evil passions. This self-control is a valuable natural virtue, and one for which the Japanese are famous, though the virtue has, at times, degenerated into fatalism. This quality of self-control, so characteristic of the Japanese, is closely connected with Za-zen. Be that as it may, this first stage on the way to enlightenment has a value of its own, prescinding from whether or not the second or third stages are reached. This first stage of Za-zen was practised by the *samurai* (knights) of old. They desired to obtain perfect equanimity towards life and death. Their principle was simply this: Life and death are one. Japanese militarists, up to the end of World War II, also practised Zen in its first stage and for the same reason that the *samurai* of old did. This equanimity towards life and death also

helps to explain the mentality behind the suicide pilots of World War II.

Considering these effects of Za-zen, one cannot help but compare the methods of Zen with the therapeutic methods of modern psychoanalytical schools. Autogenous training, for example, does not seem to be much different from Zen meditation. However, Zen monks would certainly consider it a profanation to put their meditations on the same level as a method for the cure of mental illness. It is strange that Japanese doctors are not more interested in Zen as a therapeutic method. This is all the more surprising for the fact that we know certainly from history that cures of illnesses have taken place through Zen meditation. The classical example of this is the monk Hakuin, who suffered from tuberculosis in his youth. Regardless of the fact that he was close to death and in contempt of his health, he practised Za-zen zealously and was cured of tuberculosis. He lived to the blessed age of eighty. It is quite possible that Za-zen will find its place in Japanese medicine, as a therapy, by way of a detour through European and American medicine.

THE SECOND STAGE

One does not have enlightenment in the first stage. One does not even know what it is. Nor does one have it at the second stage, though it is here that the first traces are seen. There is a famous illustration of the way to enlightenment which consists of ten pictures of a farmer in search of his ox. In the first picture the farmer searches aimlessly, here, there, and everywhere. This is the first stage: one has not the slightest idea of enlightenment. Whatever one imagines is bound

to be wrong and will only hinder one from obtaining enlightenment. I have to admit that this was true in my case, in spite of all the books I had read about Zen and enlightenment. During the retreat at Hosshinji which I have described, I did not reach the second stage. I did, however, experience the fact that Za-zen of the first stage has a lasting effect in terms of a certain inward liberation. Anyone who makes a similar retreat of several days will confirm this, unless his patience is tried too much by the squatting. And for most beginners this squatting is a very real problem. 'Painful' was the answer I received when I asked some laypeople for their impressions. Therefore, if the pain can be borne, the total effect will definitely be beneficial. And yet, one does not yet know what enlightenment is. Like the farmer in search of his ox, one must search until one has found traces of the ox.

During the second stage, the spiritual powers are even more passive than they were during the first stage. To explain this is most difficult. I shall simply try to describe the symptoms which may or may not appear in this second stage.

He who continues Za-zen in its first stage and does so for some time will sooner or later have an inner experience which he has never experienced before. At least this is true normally. The exact time of this experience cannot be determined and expressed in a general rule. Much depends on how often and how zealously one has made Za-zen retreats and practised Za-zen privately. It is not unknown for some people to have these experiences during the very first retreat. These experiences differ with each person, and they are always new. For example, with the eyes

wide open one may see figures and forms. A Buddhist would call these *Kannon*, i.e. the 'goddess of mercy' or some bodhisattva. I was told the story of one monk who, before obtaining enlightenment, saw a procession in which all the Buddhist saints marched before him. He could not rid himself of it. Even after jumping into a large container filled with water, the procession still continued. Generally, apparitions of saints are pleasant experiences. But there are other kinds of apparitions in which wild beasts glare menacingly. One monk whom I know rather well saw a big eye staring at him. It may also happen that one hears voices so distinctly that one instinctively looks in the direction from which they seem to come.

Other apparitions are less vivid. My own experience was that I felt that I had been tied to the point at which I looked. Then dark shadows passed in front of my eyes. I also saw violet specks and sparks bursting like fireworks. All this was repeated several times. How are the apparitions of such figures to be explained? The monk who initiated us gave this explanation: at *Za-zen* the normal activity of the mind recedes gradually and the subconscious is freed. It is from there that the figures arise.

These phenomena are called *ma-kyō*, which means 'the world of spirits'. Really, however, they are not spirits and no one claims them to be so. On the contrary, one is always cautioned against paying attention to these phenomena. Whoever allows himself to become entangled in them will not obtain enlightenment. He must free himself from them.

Frequently there are other psychological happenings; things which are not seen but felt. They are difficult to describe and are conditions different from anything in the

first stage. It is no longer a question of a mere activity of the reason and will. This experience is much more passive; it has been called a psychic ecstasy. One may well be justified in the use of such an expression by the strength of the experience itself. I should prefer to call it, however, a profound recollection or immersion. In this experience one feels occasionally an urge towards something unknown, something unconscious. It is an urge to step out of one's self. And the further one pushes this inward attitude of not thinking, the stronger this urge seems to grow.

It can be seen, then, that the second stage is not enlightenment, and therefore, one must not stop there. The second stage is a sign that one is on the right track. The Zen master is always happy to notice when his disciple enters *ma-kyō*. Moreover, all these phenomena disappear just as they came, if, that is, one does not worry about them but only continues his efforts in thinking about nothing. One now stands a good chance of obtaining enlightenment. He can take new courage to continue, no matter what the sacrifices may be. This is the second picture of the collection mentioned above: the farmer discovers a trace of the ox.

The second stage is of great value. Contained in it are all the proper values of the first stage though in a more perfect degree. This is not all; the condition of the second stage continues after the *Za-zen* is over. I do not mean to say that the powers of reasoning are somehow tied up. On the contrary, they are completely at one's disposal and one's professional work is in no way hindered. Actually it is facilitated. Furthermore, there remains a certain peacefulness in the soul, much like the feeling one has after an hour of good prayer. One also feels less dependent on things

which one ordinarily takes to be indispensable. The inward man has become free. He is not so easily thrown off balance by adversities and trials. How often, for example, do we tell ourselves that it is unreasonable to ponder over such and such or that it is useless to get angry over such and such. And yet we find ourselves unable to get rid of the thought, and we do find ourselves getting angry. *Za-zen* seems to change all this in this stage. One is surprised at the change in oneself, and wonders if one is not a new man. What was very difficult to solve before, for example, is now readily solved, or should this not be the case, at least the solution comes more quickly than it did before. We become less impatient with our neighbours, and we also become more pleasing to others. We no longer blow up, nor are we whimsical, nor melancholic, depending on what the bad trait is by which we are a burden to our fellow men. We are much more balanced. We are also more accessible. *Zen* is, therefore, not solipsism; it has definite social values.

Another effect of *Za-zen* is that it becomes much easier to concentrate, and while reading, one notices this. *Za-zen* is also helpful for the religious life. Before practising *Za-zen* one was, let us say, often distracted during oral or liturgical prayer. After *Za-zen* one gets along in prayer much better. A priest overburdened with apostolic works or works of charity will, after *Za-zen*, succeed for the first time in reciting a whole psalm of his breviary without a single distraction. In a word, at the second stage, the spirit begins to gain advantage over the body and its senses. And this is achieved not by way of a detour through knowledge and resolutions, but rather, directly and immediately. This is the unique and surprising effect of *Za-zen* asceticism.

Naturally, these effects are all the stronger, the deeper and longer one remains in the state of immersion during Za-zen.

And shall we mention one more effect which happens at this second stage? It is here that the union with the cosmic forces takes place. Man is here enabled to perform superhuman deeds. Such phenomena are sufficiently known from Indian Yoga. However, these phenomena only appear to the extent that they are intended. Currently in Zen to use this stage for the performance of superhuman deeds is condemned. It was not so in former times. Dōgen (1200-1253), the founder of the Soto sect of Zen in Japan, devoted his whole life to Za-zen as the way to enlightenment and condemned the magical practices which flourished in his day. Yet, even in present-day Japan one finds that magic powers are sometimes used.

THE THIRD STAGE

By way of transition to the third stage I wish to report an experience which I had six months after making the Za-zen retreat which I described at the beginning. At Sōjiji, a large Zen monastery near Tokyo, I was making the exercises privately under the direction of an eighty-eight-year-old monk with great experience. On the third day of the retreat during Za-zen, I was concentrating on the words of Dōgen: *Shinjin datsuraku*, i.e. 'body and soul have fallen off'. The master had given me these words shortly before the meditation. All of a sudden I felt as though I was being pulled up into the air. My breathing became quite deep, and after a few inhalations I felt as though I was being

raised spiritually to a higher level, a level wherein deadly silence prevailed. The change into this condition was not easy. Rather, it seemed to be done by force than anything else. But once in this condition I felt no force nor anything unpleasant. Yet, there was no spiritual joy. During this transition and after it, that is, while in this condition, I felt no pain in my legs, although before this condition the pain had been unbearable. I also no longer felt the cold even though it was the middle of November, and the unheated Za-zen hall had only paper windows. Time also passed very quickly. I felt able to remain in this condition as long as I wished to. It was like climbing a mountain. One reaches the top and can stay there until one decides to go down. Thinking was not impossible, but it was like something very dim and seemed far in the distance. I had this experience several times that day and also on the following day. It always happened after I had squatted for some forty minutes or more. It was not left to my arbitrary decision to put myself into this condition. On the contrary, any direct efforts to do so on my part seemed to turn into obstacles. But, as I have said, once reached, I felt free to remain there as long as I liked. It was like trying to push a heavy ball to the horizontal top of an inclined plane. If one does not succeed in pushing it to the top, it will always roll back again. But once it has been pushed to the top, it can no longer roll down by itself.

When I told the Zen master about this, he seemed to understand what was going on. He said that it was a sign that I was getting inside Za-zen. But I knew that it was not enlightenment. It might be called psychic ecstasy.

Now I shall try to describe the third stage. It is the stage

of enlightenment or, if you will, the stage of the intuition of essence in its proper sense. This stage is much more difficult to describe than the second stage. As a matter of fact, it is almost impossible to describe it. Only one who has experienced it himself will be able to understand it. Nevertheless, I shall try to get to the facts as closely as I can. I wish to describe the experience in ordinary words and not in technically psychological terms. Later on, I shall attempt a psychological explanation and, after it, a conceptual explanation.

1. *Description of the Phenomenon*

Kōsen Imakita, a famous monk of the Meiji era, was a votary of Confucianism. He describes his experience in Za-zen in this way:

One night while I was immersed in meditation, I suddenly found myself in a very strange condition. There was no before and no after. Everything was as though suspended. The object of my own meditation and my own self had disappeared. The only thing I felt was that my own innermost self was completely united and filled with everything above and below and all around. An unlimited light was shining within me. After some time, I came back to myself like one risen from the dead. My seeing and hearing, my thoughts and motions were quite different from what they had been until then. When, gropingly, I tried to think of the truths of the world and to grasp the meaning of the incomprehensible, I understood everything. Everything seemed to me quite clear and real. Spontaneously, I threw up my arms in an excess of joy and danced. And all of a sudden I exclaimed, 'A million sutras are only a candle in front of the sun. Marvellous, really marvellous.'

And then he composed the following poem:

It is true, Confucius,
 We have not met for a long time.
 To whom do I owe this grace
 of seeing you in such a world?
 But no, I myself have introduced myself.¹

These last words remind us of Novalis' distich:

One succeeded. He raised the veil of the goddess of Sais.
 But what did he see? He saw, wonder of wonders, himself.

They also recall to memory his words from the Third Hymn to the Night:

Above the ground glided my unshackled, newly born spirit.

This state of enlightenment may also be described as a 'pull' up to a higher level. The object with which one felt united to before has disappeared. There is absolute emptiness and silence. The current of consciousness in common sense is interrupted. Dōgen pointedly said when he had this experience for the first time, 'Body and soul have fallen off'. And his master answered with profound wisdom, 'A fallen-off body and soul you have'. Here we have a much deeper psychic ecstasy than that of the second stage. If the explanation which is to follow is correct, then this third stage might well be called an enstasis, as some authors have termed it.

The third stage is clearly different from the first and second stages. The transition is sudden. Perspiration breaks out. All contrasts seem to be abolished. There is no longer any difference between a 'yes' and a 'no'. Those who have not

¹ Kōsen Imakita, *Senkai-ichiran*. Minetarō Yamanaka, *Zento wa nani ka* (What is Zen?) (Tokyo, 1958), 71-2.

experienced this must think it pure nonsense, and justly so. But whoever has had the experience will know what is meant. When we described this condition as a 'pull' into emptiness, the inference is that it is unfree. It is correct to say that the 'pull' is passive. It is also correct to say that in this condition dialectical thinking and conceptual distinctions cease. Thinking, in the ordinary meaning of the word, does stop altogether. And there is a true liberation of the mind, a liberation from the world of sense and a liberation from the world of concepts based on it. With the exception of the relation to God, one may apply to this state the word which Thomas Merton uses to describe the entrance into mystical experience in his *Ascent to Truth*.

At that moment, the consciousness of our false, everyday self falls away from us like a soiled garment, heavy with moisture and mire. The 'deep self', which lies too deep for reflection and analysis, falls free and plummets into the abyss of God's freedom and of His peace. Now there is no more advertence to what goes on within us, still less to what happens around us. We are too far below the surfaces where reflection was once possible.¹

Far be it from me to identify enlightenment with the mystical union in the supernatural order. But men who are well versed in Zen and have obtained enlightenment have told me that Merton's words depict their own experiences very well.

In the East many who have had this experience of enlightenment have described its eminent values, calling it a liberation from all fear, a perfect and supreme happiness. In Japan this experience is often expressed in poetry, in painting,

¹ Thomas Merton, *The Ascent to Truth* (Clonmore & Reynolds, Dublin, 1951), p. 176.

and in other arts. Less so is it expressed in terms of descriptions of spiritual conditions. When I asked my Zen master (he had the experience two or three years after his first retreat) if the individual concerned could determine with certainty whether or not he had obtained enlightenment, he laughed and answered, 'Of course. You see a hundred times more than before.'

On the other hand, we find historically famous and greatly enlightened monks answering paradoxically or in such a way that one cannot see a connection between answer and question when asked what enlightenment is. The story is told of the monk Chuh-chih (ninth century) that he raised a finger in silence as answer. The monk Chao-chou answered, 'The oak tree in the garden'. Hakuin clapped his hands and then lifting one hand answered the question with a question: 'Do you hear the clapping of one hand?'

Even today one does not receive a satisfying answer from Zen experts. Usually their answers consist in traditional sayings which are not explanations but rather the refusal of an explanation. Most likely this angers the beginner, but, should he practise Za-zen and get the inner experience, he will realize that enlightenment cannot be explained to one who has not had the experience and that paradoxical answers are the best. The easiest way to judge enlightenment is from its fruits. But before discussing the effects of enlightenment, we should try to grasp the psychological qualities of enlightenment.

2. Psychological Interpretation

I should like here to recommend the book 'Mystical Experiences in Non-Christian Countries' by Louis Gardet,

and in particular the excellent treatise in it entitled 'Experience of Self'. Gardet therein speaks of the return of the self to itself. What he writes is primarily meant for Raja-Yoga, but it is equally true of Za-zen. (As far, that is, as it is possible in this connection to use the terminology of psychologists.) Indeed, the highest experience of Yoga is the same as that in Zen.

In this treatise Gardet says:

I do not intend to speak about the rational cognition of the psychic or moral ego. It is not a question of a man submitting his acts or his conditions of consciousness to a contemplation which, by its very nature, tends to express itself in thoughts. Let us suppose that it has the highest degree of intensity. It will proceed to an outspoken mastery of the ego and at the same time it will be continuously enriched in its intuitive perception as well as in the rational cognition of its acts. Whether the contemplation proceeds along the lines of an intellectual analysis or in an intensification of emotional conditions, it always remains on the plane of acts of intellect and will, of senses and imagination. If the desired aim is a profound emotional state, the act which is its origin may become almost imperceptible. The subject may have the impression that he has reached the centre of his ego. In reality, however, all this still remains on the level of a rational perception of acts, an indication that something primarily existing, something at the roots of the acts and from which they emanate, has not yet revealed itself.

But here we are concerned with quite a different matter. We are no longer dealing with a descent into the inmost folds of subjectivity. On the contrary, it is a question of transcending the subjectivity, sensed as such, into the absolute for which it is the sign. Insight into the ego, the experience of self introspection, is a normal human cognition, as normal as contemplating the exterior world. A radical reflection of the

self upon itself moves in an exactly opposite direction to the normal cognition of man. It begins just beyond the sensed conditions of consciousness, psychic as well as moral. It is the opinion of the great experimenters of the self that their way only begins after they have got beyond the usual acts of the cognizable ego.

To the modern occidental, rooted as he is in the Graeco-Latin tradition, it may seem impossible to understand that one can arrive at a clear appreciation of the absolute centre of one's self, luminously and inexpressibly. Nevertheless an entire culture and one which, spiritually speaking, belongs to the richest of the world, emphatically affirms and testifies that this is possible. I mean Indian culture and its manifold formations (similar statements could be made of Zen in Japan).

Undoubtedly, the shape of this experience, especially the attempt to put it into concepts, will differ, depending on certain fundamental suppositions, e.g. whether the existence of an absolute ego is affirmed or denied. Nevertheless, the experience itself is there, painstakingly described and affirmed in its existence and aim, i.e. a 'being-for-itself' and a liberation.¹

Enlightenment may justly be called a mystical experience, but a mystical experience which remains within the natural order. It is accessible to man by his natural powers. If the explanation I have attempted is correct, then it can readily be understood that one has to renounce all cognition, in the common meaning of that term. The only cognitive act permissible is the act which extinguishes cognition. Some wag has described this as 'a *salto mortale* from a mental diving board'. Here it is a question of experiencing pure existence. The self must transcend itself. It is a 'before' and a 'beyond' all acts of cognition. It must go to the very

¹ Louis Gardet, *Mystische Erfahrungen in nichtchristlichen Ländern* (1959), 20ff., 44.

source of being. For this reason Zen experts say that the original form of man makes its appearance with enlightenment. Hence the expression: intuition of essence.

One might say that in this activity the spirit becomes independent of the body, and one sees the truth as a pure spirit would see it. Man cannot, normally, have any cognition without the co-operation of his body. Man is, after all, body and spirit. Nevertheless here this condition is somehow removed. What St Thomas has said of infused contemplation: that one is active in that state in the manner of the angels, seems to be confirmed by the personal experience and the reports of those who have had the experience of 'intuition of essence'. To repeat some of these reports:

Kōsen Imakita: 'I was like one dead . . . an unlimited light was shining within my self . . . (I was) like one who had risen from the dead . . . I understood everything.'

Novalis: 'My unshackled, new-born spirit'.

Dōgen: 'Body and soul have fallen off.' ['Body and soul' here means everything that constitutes man.]

With unique evidence of overwhelming power, this experience reveals the existence and superiority of the human spirit.

3. *Conceptual Interpretation*

We have thus far attempted to describe the phenomenon of enlightenment and have also tried to give a psychological interpretation of it. But, so far, nothing has been mentioned in detail of the contents of enlightenment. In fact, the content is less than nothing, being best described as absolute emptiness. Repeatedly we have talked about the riches of this emptiness and maintained that these riches manifest

themselves in valuable effects. All this has been mentioned before and will be explained later on in detail.

Now, what are these riches? Is it impossible to say anything more of enlightenment, other than it is absolute emptiness? Strictly speaking, one cannot even talk about a content of enlightenment. The word 'content' denotes limitation, and this is, therefore, a doomed word because enlightenment is essentially unlimited. It is an experience of the absolute and the unlimited. If 'content' is a poor word, 'concepts' does not fare better. Enlightenment cannot be grasped conceptually. And yet, when anyone asks what enlightenment is, he does expect to be given an answer couched in conceptual terms. He wishes to know, for example, whether enlightenment is an intuition or not. If it is, he wants to be told the object of the intuition. If we experienced difficulty trying to explain the phenomenon and attempting a psychological explanation of it, we fear that conceptualization of it is a well-nigh insurmountable problem. Nevertheless on with it! What is enlightenment, conceptually speaking?

When talking about enlightenment, we want to convey an idea of what has happened. This something that has happened is crystal clear to us. To express the experience we may say, 'I see light'. Or, for example, someone has recognized the transitoriness of all things with a clearness never before experienced. Then and there, he decides to begin an entirely new life directed exclusively towards the eternal. What, then, is this something that one recognizes so clearly in Zen enlightenment?

Previously I mentioned that, according to the doctrine of Buddhism in which enlightenment is embedded, a man

believes he experiences in enlightenment the oneness of all being, the identity of the ego with the universe and with nature, and sees in this experience a proof for the monistic philosophy and *Weltanschauung*. A monotheist can have exactly the same experience, but he will not call it an experience of being one with nature. He will, perhaps, believe that he has experienced being one with God, or even that he has seen God. It is beyond doubt that for the same experience there can be only one correct interpretation. Since, however, a satisfactory explanation in words is actually impossible, or next to impossible, it is obvious that everyone tries to explain it according to the concepts of his own *Weltanschauung* unless he prefers to abstain from all explanations. In any case, the *satori*-experience is neither proof for the monistic *Weltanschauung*, nor can it be called an intuition of God in the proper sense of the word. If one can call it an experience of the 'to be' (*sein*), that is to say, of the self in the 'to be' which is proper to it, and in its relation to the 'to be as such', then the *satori*-experience lies at least in the direction of an experience of God; for God is the origin of every created being and the experience of the 'to be' must necessarily in some way include its origin.¹

Enlightenment as such is accessible to all, as long as one chooses the right way. In itself it is neither Buddhist nor Christian nor necessarily connected with any religious confession. In India the phenomenon of enlightenment antedated Buddhism. It is found in Islam and in Christianity,

¹ We are well aware that what we have here said on the question of the meaning of *satori* is far from an exhaustive treatment. Such a treatment would require a review and discussion of various opinions. Such a thorough explanation is outside the scope of this book and must be postponed to the future.

although not so isolated and methodically intended to the degree that one finds in Yoga and Zen. Theoretically, at least, a connection with a religion is secondary, though one can hardly imagine anyone's undergoing such rigour and hardship, not to mention the most radical sort of renunciation, without a religious motive or an urge for the absolute.

There are two answers to the question: How does one conceptualize enlightenment? The first answer says: Enlightenment is the activation of a spiritual power which is normally found in everyone but has hitherto been hidden and therefore unused. The fact that there is such a power in man can be confirmed by the experience of others. However, the activation of it must be attained by each person within himself, otherwise the power remains theoretical and is of no use. The newly discovered power does not belong to the conscious psyche, but is beyond it. (One may give 'beyond' the direction of above or below.) This discovery is immediate, and it is in the form of an experience. Call it what you will, it is the discovery and activation of a spiritual power which was not previously known or experienced, nor ever used.

Anyone who has any experience in Zen will allow that the question can be answered in this way. And if one understands the matter in this light, then he will understand that everyone interprets enlightenment according to his own *Weltanschauung*, and uses this power to deepen and strengthen his *Weltanschauung*. Things which formerly were known merely theoretically or by reason, or by religious faith, are now experienced and appear to one in an entirely new light. He sees them with a new spiritual eye. Moreover, this power raises him above his sense impressions

and liberates him from the serfdom of sensuous appetites. There are many other effects which we have already seen and others which we shall see later on.

Positing enlightenment as a spiritual power, one is enabled to understand the various opinions which are found among representatives of Zen Buddhism. A monk well versed in Zen was asked whether enlightenment is a super-conscious, intuitive cognition or not. He answered that it was a matter of interpretation. Another monk answered the same question by saying that enlightenment is not an intuitive cognition but is a continuous perfection of man. If one posits enlightenment as a spiritual power, one can also understand the distinction between *Kai-go-zen* and *Tai-go-zen*. The representatives of the former say that man has enlightenment from his birth, but that it must be developed. They compare it to a diamond hidden in the darkness of a mine and which, upon discovery, must be polished in order to shine. Representatives of the latter opinion claim that no one has enlightenment innately. If a man strives for it and perseveres long enough in his efforts, he will succeed one day in obtaining it. It is simply that the power exists but is buried under and covered up by conscious forces.

Most likely the representatives of these two opinions would not be satisfied with my explanations of their positions, but for our purpose it is not necessary to go into further details. My Zen master, a man of eighty-eight years, was quite distressed when I asked him about these two opinions. He told me that the distinctions were purely academic, out of place, and would only hinder people from coming to Zen. In fact, he is right. Such distinctions are pointless in regard to the *praxis*. Every Zen master cautions his disciples

against a preoccupation with future enlightenment. To be preoccupied with such thoughts obstructs the emptiness of the mind which is absolutely necessary if one is really to obtain enlightenment. This possibly explains why Zen masters judge so differently on the time that enlightenment begins. Some see enlightenment in their disciples from the very first, though weak yet genuine experience of this power; and for this they are criticized by other masters. Some masters are very strict and recognize enlightenment only after a longer period of time and at a higher degree. A certain disparity in judging the first experiences is quite understandable, but the mutual criticism is rather striking. This criticism holds true for schools of Zen and also for masters of the same school. There are principles common to all, but basically all masters have their own methods and own *kenshō* (intuition of essence).

Here I would like to give an example of mutual criticism in Zen. One of the best-known masters now living in Japan was criticized by another master with these words: 'What he acknowledges as *kenshō* is just the last hair on the tail of the ox'. The reference is to the ox of the ten pictures mentioned earlier. It must not be misunderstood; this criticism among the masters of Zen is not surprising. Contradictory as it may seem, it is precisely because they all have enlightenment that they criticize. This experience gives them absolute certainty and fearlessness. They also take the criticism of others without bad feeling. One Zen master told me to throw him aside if I found a better master.

Hence, the first answer that can be given to the aforementioned question about the conceptual meaning of Zen enlightenment says, in effect, that enlightenment is the

discovery and the activation of a power, some way or other already possessed and manifested prior to enlightenment, ■ we indicated in our description of the second stage. Add to this the reports from personal experience mentioned above, and we find that this answer is not quite satisfying. It certainly remains true that this power reaches its full effect only in enlightenment, but this is not all.

The second answer says that enlightenment is an intuition in the sense that it is a total view of all being, not merely the seeing of something new and in detail. Independently of Zen one can prove that there is such a total view of all being which is possible by our natural powers. To illustrate, let me quote two sources. One is Carlos Maria Staehlin, S.J., and the other is Thomas Merton.

Staehlin compares the human soul to a wide vista of sea and sky. In the middle there is a thin line which divides the two immense areas, the upper is of air, the lower is of water. In this image the horizon is psychic consciousness. Above the horizon and to ■ great unknown height is the superconscious. Below the horizon and to depths almost unfathomable there is the subconscious. Our consciousness is a slice of the lowest limits of the height and of the highest reaches of the depths. What Staehlin says about the entrance into the superconscious (he contends that few people ever experience this) seems to coincide with Zen enlightenment. He writes:

According to repeated observations, the entrance into the superconscious—not the mere approach to this closed garden—usually is a very strong experience which we may call enlightenment. According to the written and oral reports of which we could get hold, this religious experience is preceded by ■

real preparation where the ardent desire of finding God is the central power. In reports about non-Catholics or non-Christians, we notice exactly the same immediate preparation. But the irruption of the extraordinary happens all of a sudden. It does not wait for the proper time or the proper place. The one concerned is perhaps completely inadvertent at this decisive moment. He leans out of the window, walks up a staircase or rests in a garden. And the impression he receives is just as if a veil is drawn away and a horizon opened. There is no exact comprehension of details, but the entire cosmic order is suddenly grasped. Man feels the Creator in the creatures; he comprehends in one single moment what he has been studying so long without ever understanding it. This lightning of fire does not extinguish itself too quickly. It allows time to analyse the spiritual experience in its living performance. The soul feels like being in its centre. It possesses what it desires. In the case of beginners, a conversion takes place and in their whole life norms and ways of living change. The strong impulse emanating from the higher region usually finds its echo in the lower one, and normally in optically perceptible pictures or it is accompanied by acoustic signs. But we could also register some cases where this echo in the lower regions of the soul evidently did not take place.¹

Staehlin also calls this experience a natural phenomenon, as it undoubtedly is, even in Zen.

Thomas Merton expresses his conviction that there is a great natural intuition of all being. In *Ascent to Truth* he writes:

But all the reality and all the goodness of everything that exists and is good can be spiritually tasted and enjoyed in a single metaphysical intuition of being and of goodness as such. The clean, intellectual delight of such an experience makes all the inebriation procured by wine look like a hang-

¹ Carlos Maria Staehlin, S.J., *Mystische Tauschungen in Geist u. Leben* (Heft 4, 1954), 276ff.

over. I am not now talking of anything mystical: merely of the natural intuition of pure being, pure goodness. Here, the being and goodness which are shared by all particular things are grasped in a single luminous intuition which floods our whole spirit with light and exhilaration. It is a kind of natural ecstasy in which our own being recognizes in itself a transcendental kinship with every other being that exists and, as it were, flows out of itself to possess all being and returns to itself to find all being in itself. In a moment of rich metaphysical illumination we rise above accidents and specific differences to discover all things in one undifferentiated transcendental reality, which is being itself.

The foundation of this experience is, no doubt, a sudden intuitive penetration of the value of our own spiritual being. It is a profound metaphysical awareness of our own reality—not of the trivial, psychological surface-self that is engaged in the pursuit of many temporal desires and in the flight from many fears, but the deep substantial reality of our own personal being. In this moment of light, the soul may taste something of the inborn liberty that is due to it as a thing of spirit. It may even pass from this to an intuition of the Absolute Being who infinitely transcends our highest concept of being and of spirit. In this metaphysical intuition of being of which I speak, the intelligence does not enter into an immediate vision of the Infinite Being. If God is realized, He is still realized by inference from created being. He is known as reflected in the vital depths of our own spirit, of which He is the Creator and which is the mirror that receives His image.

And yet, the metaphysical intuition of being and of its transcendental properties is a very great thing. It cannot be arrived at without some moral purity, and its natural effect is to strengthen the soul and help it to get free from dangerous attachments. Beyond this intuition is another—the intuitive appreciation of the Absolute Being of God, an intuition which is not only speculative but qualitative, tinged with affectivity, by virtue of the analogical light shed on the idea of the

Creator by the intense vitality and joy which the spirit realizes in itself as His creature. So great a thing is this intuition that the pagan philosopher thought it was the highest beatitude: and indeed it is the highest beatitude that man could ever arrive at by his natural powers alone. This pleasure, this intellectual fulfilment which is a partial answer to the deepest need of man's spiritual being—his need for contemplation—is accessible to nature . . .¹

Now the question remains whether or not Zen enlightenment coincides with the experience of which Staehlin and Merton are speaking. This seems to me to be the case. It is true that in Zen one speaks of *Shō-kenshō* and *Dai-kenshō*, the former being the 'little intuition of essence' and the latter being the 'big intuition of essence'. However, both are essentially the same, with one small difference. The little intuition of essence is not so deep as the big intuition of essence. It does not last so long and is eventually extinguished completely. The ox is seen, but then it runs away and remains hidden from the eyes of the farmer. With the great intuition, however, the experience is deeper and leaves a lasting impression. You see the ox and do not lose sight of it any more. The little intuition is easily obtained; more so than the greater. Those who practise Za-zen continuously have the great intuition, if ever, only once or twice in their lives, but the little intuition is more frequent. Of Hakuin, the greatest mystic of Japanese Zen, it has been said that he had the great intuition thirteen times during his life and the little intuition innumerable times. Be that as it may, even those who have had only the little intuition say that they saw all things as one. Hence the impression that

¹ Thomas Merton, *The Ascent to Truth* (Dublin, 1951), pp. 145-6.

they experienced the oneness of the ego with the universe.

If it is correct to say that enlightenment is an intuition of being, one can then begin to understand what the enlightened of India, China, and Japan say about the unlimited riches of the experience. One will also understand why it is that experts of Zen in Japan differ on the point of enlightenment's coming suddenly or gradually. If one considers enlightenment as the discovery of a hidden power, then this discovery will take place at a definitely fixed moment, after long practice, of course, and in such a way that the experience may be weak or strong. If the experience is weak, the enlightened will only gradually realize that he has the power and at the same time the power is steadily growing within him. If, however, enlightenment is considered to be an intuition of being, then it will show forth the characteristics of a sudden great experience.

With regard to some other aspects of the entrance into enlightenment, the reports of those who have had the experience agree that enlightenment is always enkindled around a certain object, be this object material or spiritual. The object may be quite trivial, but it is always quite personal. It is an occasion for just this particular man and leaves all other men unmoved at that moment. Kasyapa, a disciple of Shakyamuni, received enlightenment when he saw the sublime one twirling a flower in his hand. He was not alone. There were many disciples around the master at that time. All saw him twirling the flower, but only Kasyapa was enlightened. Had ten thousand men been assembled there, only one man had been enlightened. It was Kasyapa's occasion. It is told of a monk of later times that his enlightenment was occasioned by his master's pushing him off a

porch so that his leg was broken. Another came to enlightenment when his master blew out his candle, leaving him alone in the dark of a darker corridor. Trivial? Yes, but these things can be the occasion for enlightenment. Musō Kokushi habitually made Za-zen at night in a dark room. One evening he felt sleepy and decided to lean backwards against the wall of the room. But there was no wall and he tumbled over. He obtained enlightenment then and there. Chiyōben received enlightenment while sitting at his desk. He was startled by a thunderbolt. Gensa was walking along a mountain path. He stubbed his toe and wanted to cry out for the pain of it. Instead of crying 'Ouch!' he was enlightened. A woman who is still living reports that she was often close to death from illness, yet she persevered in receiving direction from a Zen master, always searching for truth. One sleepless night she heard the whisper of a wind through the leaves of a tree outside her window. At that moment she received enlightenment. Many other examples could be quoted, but it must be remembered that a long period of preparation preceded the enlightenment. Enlightenment must ripen. Some people receive enlightenment by means of a *kōan* over which they have been pondering in vain for many years. Whatever it is, something is always necessary to enkindle enlightenment.

As in any mystical experience, so also in Zen there can be self-deception. One may think that he has had enlightenment whereas, in reality, this is not true. If he sincerely continues to practise Za-zen, the day will surely come when he will realize that what he had thought to be enlightenment was not the real thing. In Zen some speak of an enlightenment which consists only in the realization that one has not

yet had the true enlightenment. For this reason there is an unwritten rule in Zen which says that anyone who thinks he has received enlightenment should have his experience of enlightenment confirmed by someone who has been enlightened. But how can a master know that his disciple or any other has been enlightened? He cannot look into the heart of another. And yet it is uncanny the way an experienced Zen master can determine whether his disciple has enlightenment or not, without even questioning. One day the master will say to the disciple, 'Congratulations, you have enlightenment.' I have heard of such cases repeatedly. The experience is so unique that it is reflected in the face of the enlightened. There are no tense lines in the face; there is relaxation and the aura of supreme joy. This cannot escape the master who has lived through each suffering day with his disciple, and endured with him the same hardships. Moreover, there seems to exist some sort of spiritual communion between master and disciple. And this communion makes the master feel immediately all the changes going on in the mind of his disciple. Therefore, it is impossible to deceive an experienced master, no matter how cleverly one may answer his questions, especially if the answers to the master's questions are not one's own but learned from others, not from personal experience.

From the day of enlightenment, the relation of disciple to master is changed. Both are now on the same level and try to help each other. In a somewhat drastic way, Rinzai, the founder of the Rinzai sect of Zen, expressed this change by calling upon his former master. He had often been beaten by his master and upon visiting his master he slapped him firmly on the face, whereupon both of them laughed

heartily. Nowadays, it is not done in the same fashion, but essentially the matter is the same.

Truly enlightened monks are not proud. On the contrary, they are very humble and congenial. Anyone who lives in a Zen monastery for a short time will confirm this. In a monastery there prevails an atmosphere of benevolence and charity which is not often found elsewhere. And for all this, the Zen masters are very strict with their disciples. There are endless beatings and scoldings, and disciples often do not have the courage to visit the master. They have the impression that whatever they ask the master only rouses his wrath. At times, the disciples are close to despair and would like to run away. Some do. For these reasons entrance into a Zen monastery in olden times was very difficult, and hard tests had to be passed before permission was granted for entrance. Today it is somewhat relaxed, but one condition is the same as in olden days: one must surrender himself unconditionally to his master. Should he not have this attitude, the goal will not be reached. The Zen master must, therefore, be efficient and also full of understanding. The disciple must be able to put his trust in him. However, if the master is efficient but not congenial, the chances of succeeding are slim. If one has found an efficient and congenial master, he should not go to another, but should stay with this master until he has reached enlightenment. This is a hard-and-fast rule. However, if for serious reasons one must change masters, then he must begin all over with the new master because each master has his own ways, and the disciple must accept or refuse the master entirely. Otherwise, nothing is accomplished. This unconditional surrender of the disciple to the master is proverbial in the Orient.

II

AN EVALUATION OF ENLIGHTENMENT

SO FAR we have dealt with the essential qualities of enlightenment itself. Now we should discuss the time following upon the experience, a time to evaluate and apply the experience. During the Za-zen exercises this time is constantly emphasized.

First of all, it must be remembered that the experience does not last permanently. With the end of the meditations one retires from his ecstasy or enstasis. He becomes free again to use his reason and will in the ordinary way, even more freely than ordinary people. And yet it is not as though all recollection of the experience were wiped out or disappeared. We have already mentioned the after-effects of the second stage and how valuable they are. All that and more holds true of the third stage. One possesses a certain quietude. Difficulties are overcome more easily and strong ties with the senses are slackened. One acts more spiritually and the spirit is more noticeably in control of sense impressions. These after-effects are felt by all after the very first experience of enlightenment. Yet it would be incorrect to think that all striving has ended and that now one can do without Za-zen. There would be no greater mistake than this. Surely whatever has been acquired will not be lost, but unless one continues to practise, the good achieved will

wither and become useless. Take someone who has learned how to swim, and directly afterwards he stops swimming. After ten years or so without swimming, he could hardly be called a good swimmer, even though he may not have lost the knack of it. It is the same with enlightenment. Left uncultivated, one leaves it to waste and sterility, though one has experienced it and knows what it is. Of the monk Chao-chou, whom we have mentioned previously, it is said in the nineteenth *kōan* that 'although Chao-chou obtained enlightenment, he did so only after thirty years of practice'.

The time after the experience, then, is even more important than the time preceding it. One has acquired an entirely new power, and the main task is to make use of it. First of all he must learn how to reactivate it without much effort. A mere wish or resolution is not sufficient to call it back. During the exercises he has concentrated on meditation for several days, making Za-zen without interruption. Then he goes home to his daily tasks and all its distractions. He may be able to spend a quiet half-hour making Za-zen, but he will not succeed in getting so far as he had at the end of the retreat. It certainly will not be without value if he practises Za-zen for some time every day. And, possibly, he will only be able to regain the former experience by practising it for several days in succession. Doing so, he is sure to succeed one day in experiencing during his daily Za-zen something similar to the enlightenment he had during the retreat.

In order, then, to obtain the beneficial effects of Za-zen, one must practise it continuously, otherwise everything acquired at such pain will be lost. However, this is not the only reason why Za-zen should be practised daily. En-

lightenment is not and should not be a final end in itself. The intuition of essence, the experience of self should be a means leading to a greater perfection in morals and in religion. The former because, through enlightenment, man is made morally perfect. I shall leave the latter and its explanation and proceed to explain the former.

The intuition is not obtained without a long period of arduous preparation. However, once achieved, it does not mean that one is perfect. It is like receiving a mystical grace which is supernatural. One is not a saint because he has received it. He has only received an effective means to strive for perfection. With regard to Zen, another look at the series of ten pictures of the ox may help here.

We remember that the first picture shows the farmer searching aimlessly. The second shows him discovering traces of the ox by a stroke of good luck. In the third we see how he discovers the ox itself, which means that he has caught sight of himself. Somehow, this is already the intuition, true enlightenment, but it would be wrong for him to think that he has reached the goal. In the fourth picture the farmer seizes the bridle. To get this far has cost him much trouble. But the animal is stubborn and does not follow him. This indicates that, after the intuition, not all the unruly impulses in man are dead. The ego is not yet completely under control, nor is the mind free. In the fifth picture the farmer succeeds in leading the ox by the bridle. Gradually, man becomes master of himself, but the effort is still troublesome. In the sixth picture the farmer is astride the ox and he is playing his flute leisurely. Now he has succeeded. He need no longer worry. He has become truly enlightened. But the series of pictures continues. In the

seventh picture the ox is no longer seen; the farmer is by himself. He is sitting contented in front of his house. Man, this picture tells us, has not only come to agreement with his ego, he has become united with it. Perfect quietude and ease have taken the place of former troubles and worries. The eighth picture shows neither the farmer nor the ox, only a circle with nothing inside it. This means that all contradictions have been abolished. One is no longer even in the position to say: 'I have enlightenment'. He is no longer attached even to enlightenment. There are no longer any contradictions between enlightenment and non-enlightenment. Everything has become one. The last two pictures represent the full effect of enlightenment. In the ninth, there is a lovely scene of flowers. This indicates that outside of the enlightened one nothing has changed. The hill where the farmer caught the ox with so much trouble is exactly the same as it was before. Only the man himself has changed. He has learned how to see things with different eyes. Now everything is at peace. All the things from which he detached himself with great effort now return to him in a new light. In the tenth picture the farmer goes to town and on the way talks to a man who is carrying a bottle of rice wine and a basket of fish. To the enlightened one, this means that he must now mix with people in order to help everyone obtain true freedom and enlightenment. Neither a fishmonger nor a wine dealer is excluded from enlightenment. The enlightened man now devotes all his energies to the service of his fellow man. In this way, enlightenment should not only be made more easily obtainable but, above all, it should be put to good use, in order to make men more perfect. This must always remain the main and true purpose

of enlightenment. Zen is not a kind of sentimental illusionism or mysticism. Against such insinuations, Zen monks protest vociferously. Derisively, they call such 'Zen of the wild foxes'. With enlightenment, man is supposed to begin a new life and for this he now has an excellent means at hand.

Undoubtedly, there are other ways of obtaining enlightenment, but Za-zen has its well-founded speciality which we would like to explain a little more in detail. Every man is, more or less, dependent on his sensitive perceptions; many people up to eighty per cent. They react spontaneously to such perceptions. In the remaining twenty per cent, they are directed by their minds. They are unfree eighty per cent of the time and free only twenty per cent because only the mind makes man free, not the senses. Through enlightenment and, somehow, even while *en route* to it, this proportion is changed. If man is directed one hundred per cent by his mind, he is then one hundred per cent free. He is then a spiritual man (*homo spiritualis*). Through the practice of Za-zen and especially through enlightenment, the external senses are drawn inside, as it were, and are brought under the control of the spirit.

There is an interesting parallel to all this in Augustine Baker, the English mystic and Benedictine monk (1575-1641). He writes:

In the works of Tauler, Harphius, and other mystics, we read that everybody who wants to become spiritual must draw his external senses inside; he must lift these inner senses into the faculties of the higher or intellectual soul, and there he must lose or destroy them. Then these faculties of the higher soul must convene in a unity which is the beginning and the

source from which these faculties emanate and flow. And this unity which alone is capable of being completely united with God must be directed towards God. And now I ask myself whether all that which our disciple [Baker refers to himself] has told you about his continued movements which tried to draw all his activities into the inner part of his body is not the same thing of which the mystics speak. I have no doubt that for our disciple, as well as for all others, a complete liberation of the soul from all bodily things is the best prayer and the best active contemplation. I think that the exercises of the will in our disciple tended upwards and, consequently, drew behind it everything low. . . . According to my opinion it seems . . . that he will make himself more and more spiritual, like when the soul works without a body.¹

This process or activity may also be called ■ purification. Once a Zen monk tried to explain it to me by a comparison. He said that man can be compared to the water that comes out of a well pure and clear, but the further it flows the more dirt it picks up. Man is originally clean, but in the course of his life he picks up plenty of disorder and wickedness. Through the practice of Za-zen, he ought to return to his original purity. This monk usually gives his disciple, as soon as noticeable progress has been made, a *kōan*, which is always adapted to the individual and intended for his securing a continuing progress. In this sense Zen or the enlightenment is a means towards moral perfection.

Now let us turn our attention to religious perfection. How does enlightenment help to achieve religious perfection? First of all, it disposes a man for religious belief or faith. It is even quite possible that through, or while preparing for, enlightenment man can come to believe in God or

¹ Paul Renaudin, *Quatre Mystiques Anglaises* (Paris, 1945), pp. 136-7.

come to some general religious belief. This will be especially true of those who wish to have religious belief but cannot seem to get it. The second stage disposes man in this way, and even more so does the third one because at this stage there is nothing left of the numerous doubts which a materialistic age forces on a man, even, at times, against his own will and inclinations. In the state of enlightenment, doubt, fear, envy, hatred, and all the other emotions opposed to faith disappear, for the enlightenment is oneness, whereas those emotions divide and separate. Therefore, when setting out on the road to enlightenment, one should try to get rid of these feelings. In the state of enlightenment they simply disappear. Man has freed himself from the regions of the sensitive-spiritual. He has entered into the inmost room of his self where those feelings cannot follow. They remain outside the door. They are waiting there for him, and as soon as he goes out they try to force themselves upon him. But the more frequently and thoroughly he liberates himself from them by entering into that inner room of his self, the freer he shall be also on the outside. Hence the serenity and peacefulness of those who have received enlightenment frequently and for many years.

Furthermore, enlightenment helps, or at least can help to get a deeper understanding of religious truths. We have already stated that our reason must extinguish itself in order to obtain enlightenment. This sounds as though our reason is put completely out of action. But in reality this is not so. As in any mystical experience, the reason must not be completely inactive. Once the state of the higher plane is reached, the reason works in an intuitive way. How this is done depends on the free will of the one concerned. If he

has, for example, a monistic *Weltanschauung*, then he will direct his reason to the oneness of being. He will feel himself at one with nature and the universe. He will be convinced that he has experienced this oneness. And this conviction of his will be possible because he has actually reached a certain final Absolute. The monotheist, like Baker, will direct his reason to God, i.e. the absolute and incomprehensible God. A Christian may turn his mind to Christ, the God-Man, or to any other revealed truth of his faith. But it must always be an intuitive activity. Any reflection on religious truth in a dialectical way makes enlightenment impossible.

In enlightenment man should turn his attention to God or to some revealed truth. Here we mean man's turning his mind to God by his natural powers, yet we do not exclude the ordinary assistance of grace which is present in and during any religious exercise, at least in a man who is in the state of grace. In other words we are not talking about mystical graces in the strict (supernatural) sense. Positing the assistance of grace, one will find it very easy to think of God in a simple way, as though he were looking at him. One could term it a simple, loving look at God. Likewise, one will find in this state that it is very easy to contemplate intuitively the mysteries of the Gospel, especially the Passion. What is said of this, the third stage, is also true of the second stage, the state of intensive recollection.

How important all of this is, is apparent. Especially is this practice important for modern man, suffering as he does from all sorts of business pressures and undue haste. Modern man's nerves are worn out and the means for relaxation which he seeks only help to enmesh him further

instead of improving his condition. The cinema, for example, stimulates the eye and ear. It excites the feelings, leaving the recipient nothing to do but sit idly and watch until the reel has run itself through. There is no quietude here, no peace. Nor in newspapers, magazines, radio, and television. All these means (notwithstanding their good points) rend the inner man asunder. Strong religious faith helps to keep man and his spirit together, despite all these disquieting forces. Should man lack a strong faith, then he cannot have a strong hold on his inner self. Spiritually he will be like a rudderless fishing boat tossed about by mountainous seas.

Is it any wonder, then, that people today are desperately seeking quietude? How is it to be obtained? One cannot take to the woods permanently. It seems well-nigh impossible, in this modern age, for man to live a life of perfect solitude. Ruthless competition is the ordinary rule of daily living. Whoever falls behind is doomed to fail at earning his living, and he will be caught in a web of horrible worries. It may happen that he then becomes a burden to society. But prescind from these material worries over his daily needs, imagine the state of his inner life, where his thoughts will not leave him, where he knows that he has to take part in social life. It is for these reasons that I think that Za-zen is a method that will greatly help modern man, especially if it is practised with sincerity and perseverance up to the state of enlightenment. Modern man needs to balance his enforced superactivity with a healthy passivity. And enlightenment is such a passivity, one that can be acquired, and one that is worthy of man. It is not a lazy passivity, a being led around by the nose by one's instincts,

which is, ultimately, unworthy of man. It is ■ passivity that lifts man above his instincts and demands a heroic struggle on his part against everything low and mean in him. At the moment of being lifted to the higher plane, the experience seems to be something passive, but it has been brought about by a hard struggle over a long period of time. Enlightenment itself is a state of quietude, a true 'coming to one's self', not only in the ordinary meaning of the word, but as an experience of the self in its own pure existence. Enlightenment gives true freedom, unity, and peace.

The effects are even more far-reaching. There is a natural content and joy. This joy may well be ■ result of the harmony which has been brought about between body and spirit. It is also felt to be the result of a harmony with nature as such. This joy is difficult to express in words. It is neither purely sensitive nor purely spiritual, and it is something not continuously felt, unless one is far along the road of enlightenment. Sometimes it is experienced before enlightenment and becomes more intensive and lasting the more one progresses in *Za-zen*. It often comes upon one quite unexpectedly and under external circumstances not pleasing to the body. As one instance, a motorcyclist had this experience on a cold, foggy morning in winter when he was riding about the countryside among the rice-fields. His hands were frozen with the cold, and while driving in the cold air he experienced an intensive joy. He felt himself to be one with his surroundings in a manner he had never known before. This is merely a small example to show that intensive joy can go hand in hand with violent pains of the body. Christian martyrs also testify to the existence of joy with severe pain. A classical example from Zen history is

that of the feudal monastery which was besieged. No one was allowed to leave. After the monastery was set on fire, the abbot addressed the monks and in ■ short poem he told them:

When heart and senses cease,
Fire is but a blissful breeze.

III

ENLIGHTENMENT AND JAPANESE CULTURE

IT happened during the Tokugawa era. A certain *daimyo* was en route to Yedo (now Tokyo) to pay his official visit to the shogun, the supreme commander. Lest he be deprived of the tea ceremony during the journey, he also took along a tea-master, and this man was a monk, according to the customs of the times. For reasons of safety, in those times, the monk was disguised in *samurai* dress and with two swords on his left hip. One day while he was walking by himself through the streets of the capital, he was accosted by a warlike *samurai* and challenged to a duel. The real *samurai* never imagined that he was facing and challenging a monk. The *samurai* justified his challenge by saying to the monk that he had made a vow to fight a certain number of duels. The monk could not reveal his true identity, much less the fact that he carried the two swords as a formality. For that confession he would have been killed ignominiously on the spot. He was not afraid of dying. He was ashamed of the manner of it. Knowing that he had never had training in fencing, he accepted the challenge and a time and place was arranged.

The disguised *samurai* immediately sought out a famous fencing master and begged the master to teach him the

first posture for a duel. He wished to stand up with his sword in the proper position in order that he might be killed with honour at the first stroke of his opponent's sword. The fencing master was greatly surprised, and since the monk was insistent he finally agreed to give the monk the desired instruction. The monk thanked him and went away. At the appointed time, he presented himself to the true *samurai* for the duel. With firm grace the monk held his sword high, bowed his head and waited for the blow from his opponent's sword. The fatal blow never came. The real *samurai* dropped his own sword in wonder and admiration of the stance of the monk and asked the monk to allow him to be admitted as a disciple. The monk's posture had been so perfect that the *samurai* thought himself happy to become a disciple in fencing to such a master.

What does this story show? It shows the influence of Zen on the Japanese *dō*, i.e. ways. There are many: the way of tea, *cha-dō*; the way of the bow, *kyū-dō* (archer); the way of writing, *sho-dō*, calligraphy of Chinese characters; *ka-dō*, the way of flowers, flower arrangement; *jū-dō*, the way of wrestling or *jū-jitsu*; the way of the sword, *kendō* or fencing; the way of Arts, *gei-dō*; and finally, the way of the knights, *bushi-dō*, Japanese chivalry. Originally all of these were practised in Japan, but not in the manner of sports or arts or tricks. They were expressions of an inner spiritual attitude. In all these 'ways' there lives one spirit and that is the spirit of Zen. For this reason the Japanese language has expressions like *Ken-zen ichinyo*, which means 'fencing and Zen are one and the same thing'. All of these 'ways' have the same purpose: a unity of spirit and a unification

of spirit with nature and with the universe. All of them presuppose *mu-ga*, the non-ego or the surrender of self. They attempt to confer on the practitioner a perfect inner harmony and peace of soul. For this reason Yagyū, a fencing master of great fame in Japanese history, placed himself under the spiritual direction of the monk Takuwan. In his letters to Yagyū, Takuwan gives detailed instructions about the inner attitude to be kept in fencing and how to keep this attitude in daily life.

Now back to the monk disguised as a *samurai*. He was a master of the 'way of tea', but the spirit in the 'way of tea' is the same as the spirit of the 'way of the sword'. In each and all is the spirit of *mu-ga*, that is, perfect self-control. The monk had perfected the spirit of *cha-dō* (tea ceremony), and with only short instruction he was able to assume the perfect posture for fencing.

Here is another incident to illustrate the same idea, though the circumstances are different. A Japanese dancer was invited to the home of a rich patron to exhibit his skill. On his way home he was spotted by a robber on a lonely road. The robber followed after the dancer, weapon in hand. But the gait of the dancer was so perfect that the robber was hypnotized in admiration. The dancer never suspected how close he was to death. As he was about to enter his house, the robber jumped in front of him and, throwing himself at the feet of the dancer, asked to be allowed to become a disciple. Through *gei-dō*, the way of the arts, the dancer had achieved perfect harmony and self-control. Both stories show the same harmony of body and spirit as practised in Zen. '*Mens sana in corpore sano*' is applied in all of the 'ways' to the smallest and most delicate emotions.

With surprising accuracy many Japanese can judge the inner dispositions of a man from his external behaviour. Non-Christian Japanese, for example, judge the ascetical perfection of a Catholic priest by his external behaviour during the celebration of Mass. I have been told that before the last war some masters of the tea ceremony preferred to attend Mass at the chapel of the Catholic University in Tokyo because the comportment of the priests reflected their long ascetical training as Jesuits. In a similar way many Japanese judge the moral character of an artist from his work. A morally pure work of art, they claim, can only be executed by a morally pure artist. An artist friend of mine told me that after one of his exhibitions he received a letter from an unknown Buddhist monk who lived in northern Japan. The monk had been to the exhibition, studied the pictures and had admired the pure character of the artist. He wrote a letter to the artist saying so and promised to send periodically to the artist a herb in token of his admiration. The artist told me this story as he had the famous herb brewed and served.

Much more than Europeans, the Japanese consider art to be a way of life. And this is so because art has a connection with Zen. Only one who knows what enlightenment is can fully understand Japanese arts or, for that matter, any item of Japanese culture. Zen and Zen enlightenment are the keys, as it were, to an understanding of the Japanese soul.

Louis Gardet, writing about Yoga, says:

The experience of Raja-Yoga is of a high spiritual attitude, and the masters who have been formed by it have reached a wisdom that constitutes the greatness of India's culture. Even

those who no longer practise Yoga have still, more or less, been influenced by it.¹

What Gardet says of Yoga is true of Zen. The centre of Zen is enlightenment. Although those who have obtained enlightenment may be comparatively few, and the number may possibly be smaller still today, yet there have been and are today few Japanese who have not been influenced by Zen in their inmost feelings.

Often it is said that it is difficult, if not impossible, for a European to understand the mentality of the Japanese. One reason is that the origins of Japanese culture are quite different from those of European culture. In a nutshell, it can be expressed this way. European culture is based on thought; Japanese culture is based on non-thought, that is, on intuition and feeling. The Japanese do not like to think dialectically, and in theoretical discussions they easily pass over logical contradictions. The Japanese mentality has a strong understanding of mercy and revenge, of sacrifice and selfishness. But there is little of a proper understanding of justice. The concept of God's justice is extremely difficult to explain to Japanese non-Christians. This lack is felt to some extent even in the application of justice in Japanese law and became apparent in talks on politics during post-war years. Feelings and excitement prevail, and a quiet and objective discussion is often impossible and, at times, one simply cannot discuss the topic at all, be it private or public. There are cases where, in great excitement, a person admits that he is wrong, apologizes and immediately and with no difficulty accepts the opposite opinion. The reason for this ready acceptance of the contradictory is that he has acquired,

¹ Louis Gardet, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

through Zen, an inner freedom. It does not mean that he cannot be zealous, in an emotional way, over something he holds to be true.

The strict rules of Japanese etiquette regulate everything to the least detail, and this counterbalances the predominance of feelings. The importance of these rules was proved by the conduct of the young of Japan after the last war. Co-education was introduced, and boys mixed with girls more freely than ever before. The change was drastic to the morals of the young. Strict rules of conduct fell into disuse and, given the strong emotional nature of the Japanese, the effects were disastrous. The predominance of feeling over reason also helps to explain some of the mistakes of Japanese foreign policy. The Second World War is a classical example. The Japanese experts knew and admitted that they did not have a chance against the technically superior enemy.

With regard to the obtainment of enlightenment, India and Japan are far superior to Western nations. Enlightenment is perhaps the highest thing that man can achieve by his natural powers and efforts. Europe and America have not achieved it, at least not to the extent that it has had any influence on Western culture. On the other hand, a culture centred around enlightenment and determined by it is not suitable for obtaining scientific and technological success unless it were by chance or after a long evolution. And the Greco-Roman world should realize that with the exception of some individuals, barring some unforeseen development of Western culture in the future, it would be impossible for it to get sight of the enlightenment without the influence of the East. These fundamental facts should be recognized clearly by both sides and by recognizing these

facts, the presently strong contrasts between East and West, caused by mutual ignorance and disavowal of one's own limitation, would largely disappear, giving way to a new spirit of understanding and unification. This would be a sure step, and a giant one, in the direction of true progress for all mankind. A new culture of world-wide dimensions would be created which would be vastly richer than either one is now. So far the East has assimilated only Western science and technology. There has been practically no spiritual assimilation, either of the West of the East, or of the East of the West.

The main strength of the Japanese culture undoubtedly rests in its possession of the intuition of enlightenment. Feelings, arts, and everything else has a connection with enlightenment. There is hardly another nation on earth that has developed such a genuine understanding of the arts as have the Japanese. This can be noticed even in the smallest items of everyday life. Europe and America are, in this respect, far behind Japan. The Japanese realize this, and for this reason they are determined to hold on to their priceless treasures. After the war some Japanese hastily abandoned their traditions, labelling them old-fashioned and militaristic. Unbridled freedom of thought and freedom from basic morals came into vogue. However, it did not take long for the Japanese to realize their mistake and to return to the 'Japanese Way'. There was a certain relaxing of the former rigid forms, but it became soon evident that quite a few eminent Japanese personalities continued to live by the standards of the past. Some foreigners saw in this a return to the former extremes: State Shinto, Emperor worship, and military nationalism. However, their fears seem to be

hollow alarms. The Japanese are too progressive to return to the mistakes of the past.

The Japanese have realized in the past and still do realize that they must keep in step with the West in material things. They have succeeded very well in absorbing the material culture of the West, and they have done so with great zeal and with an ability that is unique. In this, their intuitive powers have proved to be their best asset. No other country has adapted the material culture of another so rapidly. They have not been so successful with the spiritual side of Western culture. Where they have made the attempt they have remained superficial, not penetrating to the sources of the culture of the West. This shortcoming, though, is not completely the fault of the Japanese. So often the Europeans with whom they came in contact knew no more of Western culture than the latest scientific advances and had forgotten the cultural sources of Western scientific and technological achievements.

Ninety years ago Japan began to assimilate European culture. Today practically ninety per cent of the teaching at Japanese universities is bound up with the culture of Europe and America. The study of Japanese culture is almost entirely neglected. Students swallow whole chunks of Western culture, but they are unable to digest spiritually what has been offered them. They study diligently prior to examinations and, after the examination is over, proceed to forget what has been learned. The main objective for most of them is to complete university studies in order to secure a good position for a good living. Studies very often do not become a means for cultural enrichment. The Japanese have accepted only the material side of Western culture and even that

imperfectly. Because they lack the spiritual culture (*Geistes-kultur*) on which Western material culture is built, the little they have adopted of that spiritual culture is confined to a materialistic sceptical philosophy which will, in the long run, prove fatal to the development of traditional Japanese culture, for it is not conducive to a positive spiritual reconstruction of culture. For this reason Japanese spiritual life is at present undergoing a severe crisis.

The younger generation is pitiable. While the older generation may still be able to live by the light of traditional culture, the younger generation has been cut off from the sources of Japanese culture, without having made the spiritual basis of European culture their own. The younger generation with rare exceptions has no *Weltanschauung* and few ideals. Some have tried their luck with Communism and gave up in disappointment. Democracy and freedom, so widely advertised in post-war Japan, have also disillusioned the younger generation. The consequence of all this is that university students see studies as stepping-stones to an economically good life and no more. Also, with regard to morals, many go astray. Serious young men see an escape from the situation in suicide. Few find their way to the Christian religion.

Japan is also facing a severe crisis in the religious field. When Buddhism came to Japan, it spread rapidly and widely, more so than in any other country. It has a true treasure in enlightenment. But now it is divided into many sects and is steadily losing ground and influence with the people. For quite some time now a materialistic philosophy has been gnawing at its very marrow. Moreover, because of the agrarian reforms put into effect after the last war,

many temples which were formerly rich have now lost the greater part of their wealth. The temples were allowed to keep only as much property as was necessary for their livelihood. Very often bonzes have to till the fields with their own hands in order to feed themselves and their families. Naturally, they get as much help from their faithful as they can, and this has led to the criticism that they perform their religious duties perfunctorily and are interested only in religion as a business, in order to make money. Often one can hear ordinary people say that Buddhism is a good religion, but the bonzes have no zeal.

Occasionally there is talk of a revival of Buddhism. Various sects make great efforts to start social or cultural activities, but the results are poor. In the past, over the course of many centuries, Buddhism has given Japan many things. This is undeniable. The present poor state of Buddhism has a connection with its intellectual, that is dialectical weakness. The young are sceptical. They wish to know the why of everything. This questioning method they have learned from the West. Science is idolized, and the young are now facing the problems of faith and knowledge. But Buddhism and its philosophy is not suited for logical and dialectical reasoning, which is the foundation of modern science. Buddhism should not be condemned outright for its lack of dialectic, but the young are impatient and think that Buddhism is backward and that it is impossible to reconcile its teaching with modern science, especially the natural sciences.

In education this tendency is actually encouraged from the first grade of grammar school. Teaching of religion is forbidden in all public schools. For the family, Buddhism

is more a family tradition than something of personal conviction. Presently a cold war is being waged between Buddhism and materialistic philosophy, and the outcome is not too sanguine. Were it not for the social ties of family to the temple, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the temples would be completely empty. Even a non-Buddhist cannot help feeling sad when he sees a run-down temple, centuries old, constructed with great skill in a spot of scenic beauty, being slowly destroyed by wind and rain and the incumbent bonze unable to do anything to halt the destruction.

A revival of Buddhism seems as unlikely as a revival of Shinto and Emperor worship. Anyone who knows the Japanese of today and their character will have to admit this. Many bonzes see the difficulties clearly. Some are clamouring for an adaptation of Buddhism to the mentality of the modern Japanese. The question is: How far can this be done without destroying the essence of Buddhism?

For the sake of completeness, a word or two about the new religions (*Shinkōshū-kyō*), that is, religions founded in recent times, is in order. These religions claim great numbers of followers. They are growing steadily and much faster than Christianity. Most of these religions are concerned primarily with earthly advantages, such as health and property. They do not have the depth of true Buddhism and for this reason cannot be expected to last too long.

In spite of the grave crisis now facing Buddhism, its Zen sect (or more exactly speaking: Zen sects) is still, by and large, in possession of the great treasure of enlightenment. Today few bonzes are as respected as Zen monks. Even today they have authority. This is not to say that they

all have enlightenment. Really enlightened monks are extremely rare, and most of them are very old. Some are eighty years or older. These are the few in whom the great traditions of the past are embodied. They are all serene and sympathetic men, and most of them are unmarried. Until the Meiji era (the second half of the nineteenth century) no Zen monks were allowed to marry. However, at that time, a general permission was granted to all allowing them to marry. Today almost all are married. Those few who have remained unmarried have made the greatest progress in their spiritual life. And they usually regret the relaxation of the former strictness, considering it a kind of degeneration. One of them told me that nowadays in the Japanese Zen sects it would be impossible to practise an austerity like that found in contemplative monasteries of the Catholic Church.

These unfortunate developments of the last few decades also make it doubtful that in the future enlightenment will have a strong influence on the Japanese national character. There is no doubt about the influence it has had on the Japanese character. It is an essential factor of the Japanese mentality and culture. Anyone familiar with Japanese culture knows what an immense treasure enlightenment is, and what a gain it was and can be to the individual and what a rich source of life and culture it can be to society.

What I have said so far may give the reader the impression that I think that all these values are doomed to perish. Nothing could be further from the truth. I merely wonder whether, in the long run, Buddhism will be able to preserve these treasures for the Japanese people. It is not too late because the spirit of Zen is still alive in the character of the Japanese nation. Under the ashes the fire still burns, though

materialism threatens to smother it. Is there not in all this a great task for the Christian mission? Should not Christianity take these values and fill them with a new life? And would it not be easier for a Japanese to embrace Christianity if he should find therein something of his own, something of the best that he inherited from his ancestors? But these are questions beyond the scope of this book. Whether, in fact, the acceptance of Zen can be an enrichment of Christianity we shall see in the following chapters.

IV

ENLIGHTENMENT AND BELIEF IN GOD

WE now turn our attention to enlightenment and its relation to a monotheistic belief in God. In itself, enlightenment contains nothing about monism, pantheism, or monotheism. Everyone who experiences enlightenment will interpret it according to his own *Weltanschauung*. Without some ideological or religious motive it is difficult to imagine anyone taking upon himself the great efforts necessary to reach this experience. Once, however, he has received this experience, he will desire to have it again and again and to deepen it. He will try to connect this experience with his *Weltanschauung*. Such efforts may seem absurd at first, since enlightenment is an experience of being lifted into emptiness. Nevertheless, after a time, one will succeed in doing so. Then he will be perfectly united and steadily enriched. This is proved amply by the riches of Indian and Japanese culture. And here we may well quote again from Thomas Merton:

The 'ignorance' of the true mystic is not unintelligence, but superintelligence. Though contemplation sometimes seems to be a denial of speculative thought, it is really its fulfilment. All philosophy, all theology that is vitally aware of its place in the true order of things, aspires to enter the cloud around the mountaintop where man may hope to meet the living God.

All true learning should, therefore, be alive with the sense of its own limitations and with the instinct for a vital experience of reality which speculation alone cannot provide.¹

Buddhism has made wide use of enlightenment to deepen its *Weltanschauung*, which is monism. According to the rules of Dōgen, there should be no religious ceremonies in the Za-zen hall itself. By this, he did not intend to deny any and all religious belief. He himself was a deeply religious man. The same holds true for enlightened monks today. There were always some religious exercises connected with the Zen exercises, though not in the Za-zen hall. And both got along in fine harmony. Also, to the Buddhist, Za-zen is not a substitute for religion but is religion itself. But our question is: How can a man make use of enlightenment for his monotheistic *Weltanschauung*? (The word *monotheist* is used here in a wide sense to include Jews and Moham-medans along with Christians.) Undoubtedly he can make use of it indirectly by accepting it in its original sense of an experience of his own self with all that this entails. And this is equally true of the second stage, that is, before enlightenment, as will be shown in detail in the following chapter.

A monotheist can also make use of enlightenment as a help to a radical detachment from everything created with the aim of finding God. In connection with the quotation from Baker, it has already been pointed out that this method is very well suited for making one's self independent of the senses and to bring these under the control of the spirit. And this is true whether one believes in God or not. It is equally true of the monist, as Buddhism proves. To ■

¹ Thomas Merton, *The Ascent to Truth*, p. 44.

Buddhist, at least to a follower of Zen Buddhism, redemption is exactly the perfect liberation from the dependence of senses and concepts, as it is practised in *Za-zen* and as it reaches its climax in enlightenment. To speak in Buddhist terms: in this way the rescue from the chain of rebirths is obtained. We need not enter any further into the question of Buddhist beliefs. It may only be mentioned that Zen teaches that one will never acquire complete freedom of the senses and that even the Buddha continues to practise *Za-zen*. We are just not concerned here with the question of man's obtaining complete freedom from the senses or not. We merely wish to ask if *Za-zen*, by means of enlightenment, can be a help to man, enabling him to come nearer to God.

For the sake of clarity, let us here explain what we mean by the expression 'coming nearer to God'. In the Christian sense, and perhaps in any true monotheistic sense, the aim is the direct vision of God in a union of love. Therefore, to come nearer to God means to advance towards this goal. According to Christian teaching, no one is able to see God while on this earth. 'Nobody has seen God' (John 1.18). But it is possible to make progress towards this end. No doubt revelation and mystic contemplation lie in this direction. Let us not at this moment raise the question as to whether or not enlightenment also 'lies in this direction'. Let us only ask if it can be indirectly helpful on the way towards this end. To this question the answer seems to me to be 'Yes'. To come nearer to God, detachment is necessary and in the sense of a detachment from all created things. All mystics teach this, and in particular does St John of the Cross. There seems to me to be no more radical detachment

from created things than that which enlightenment means and leads to. For enlightenment means to give up everything so thoroughly that only mere existence remains. One cannot go further in detachment. During the experience of enlightenment, detachment is complete. As soon as one comes out of this state one goes back to the ordinary state of mind, and in most cases will notice that one's detachment is not so perfect and that one has his bad inclinations, which did not die during enlightenment. But this does not deny the fact that during the state of ecstasy or enstasis one is in a state of acquired passivity of complete emptiness. And the more one practises, the more one will become free from attachments outside the state as well as during it. There is no better disposition than this for 'coming nearer to God'. Thus enlightenment can be made useful for coming nearer to God because the detachment required for it is the same necessary detachment for coming nearer to God.

There is another question. If we can go so far as to say that enlightenment can be made useful for getting closer to God, can we go a step farther and say that enlightenment leads us along the line that ends in the vision of God? This is not to do away with the necessity of supernatural grace in order to have a vision of God. To say so would be contradictory and would mean that one can, by merely natural powers, obtain a supernatural effect of the highest possible kind.

For the answer to our question the experience of the mystics of Islam is very valuable. Theoretically, we may consider Islam to be a type of monotheism, purely natural, whereas in Christianity, with which we shall deal later on, we must always include the supernatural element.

Mohammedanism may therefore serve the purpose of an intermediary.¹ In Islam there have been experiences similar to those found in Yoga and Zen; and with Mohammedan mystics one can find the 'being for one's self', which is, psychologically speaking, the essence of enlightenment. The Mohammedan mystic will not stop with the 'being for one's self', nor does he interpret it in a monistic sense but in a monotheistic sense. He feels the necessity and the urge to meet with God. The well-known mystic-martyr, Halladj, can serve as an example. He, no doubt, had the experience of the self, of 'being for one's self'. But he did not stop there, and said that one should not stop there. He went so far as to say that stopping there was the sin of Lucifer. The temptation to stop there is a true danger because the experience of emptiness is so full of riches. This danger has always been recognized by Zen masters and has been mitigated by the Buddhist religion, since belief in any and all religions demands humility on the part of the believer. Halladj speaks of the glow and the inebriating nature of the riches of this state, but adds that man must go forward to the next state which is a becoming one of the self *within* God.

This transition, however, does not take place automatically. Man must make the effort to go there. It may happen that one has the impression that he has already arrived at the state where the self has become one within God. In reality this is only a more profound grip on the self. The soul must go out of the state of mere 'being for one's self' (*Für-sich-Sein*). According to Halladj, the soul must be placed by God himself, so to speak, in the solitude in order

¹ For further details, see Louis Gardet, *loc. cit.*, second reference.

that it may take part in the mysteriously divine solitude. Thus blind ontological love is changed into a dialogue between persons, between man and God. Halladj says:

I have embraced with my whole essence your whole love,
You Sanctity! You have revealed yourself to me, so much
so that it seems to me that it is yourself who is within me.

Even if the being-placed-in-the-solitude-of-God is considered a supernatural grace, it nevertheless remains true that the entering into the emptiness of the self is, in itself, an excellent preparation for it and is a first step in the direction of it.

According to Halladj there is a third state. The state of the solitude in God is not closed up in itself. God loves his creatures and makes the soul participate in this love. The soul loves all creatures with a wholly unselfish love, and in doing so everything from which the soul had formerly detached itself comes back to the soul. And in this there is no egoism, but rather pure love of God. It seems therefore that enlightenment may work in a monotheistic prayer life. What has been said of Islam so far finds an echo in Zen, where there is an expression which says: everything is 'enlightened'.

We shall not go into the question of the supernaturality of some of the experiences of some Islamic mystics, supernaturality being used in a Christian sense. It is enough for us to note that enlightenment in itself has been experienced in Islam and described, and therefore, also as an experience independent of supernatural grace. This is evident by Halladj's warning that one must not stop there but go forward. On the other hand, it is also evident that this experience can and should lead us on to God.

It is interesting to note that with the exception of Ruysbroeck hardly any of the Christian mystics speak of enlightenment, even in other words, as something independent of grace. They always presuppose grace, although, no doubt, some of the mystics must have had the experience of self, called enlightenment in Zen, and must have had this experience included in their mystical experiences.

Let us now go on to another question. Have there ever been Zen monks who have come to a belief in God by means of the experience of enlightenment? In Islam there is a belief in God prior to enlightenment. In Zen this is not so and, therefore, we wonder if anyone who did not believe in God could come to belief in God through enlightenment. We have seen that detachment from creatures, as it is realized in Zen, can definitely help one approach God indirectly. But we wish now to ask if there is not a connection still more direct. In Buddhism the experience of enlightenment is interpreted in a monistic sense. The Buddhist thinks that he has experienced his unity with nature, with the universe. In Zen one does not speak of God as such. And yet one does not wish to be labelled an atheist. The explanation of this apparent contradiction seems to be that Zen Buddhism refuses to express God and the existence of God in concepts and words. For that matter, true Christian mystics also find it impossible to express God. He is incomprehensible and, therefore, beyond concepts. Should, therefore, an enlightened man of Zen come to a belief in God, he would not express his experience by our Christian concepts. But he could gradually come to the conviction that what he had hitherto considered to be the Christian conception of God is different from the true Christian

conception of God, and this could very well be reconciled with his own experience. In most cases, though, a Zen monk will probably not feel any necessity to conceptualize the experience or to reconsider his ideas of Christian beliefs with a view to correcting them. He is just satisfied, being persuaded that he has found the truth. Up until recent times, there was another reason that hindered further investigation in Japan. Most people thought of the Christian God in terms of the Shinto gods, and the votaries of Zen considered the gods of Shinto to be too anthropomorphic to be equal to the experience of enlightenment. Fortunately, the Christian concept of God has gradually penetrated the Japanese religious consciousness to the extent that there are many more believers in God than official statistics would lead one to believe. As time goes on, this fact will become more and more a reason why a man enlightened by Zen could connect his experience with the Christian idea of God. At least there is a better chance for this eventuality today than in former times. One Zen monk, far advanced in enlightenment, told me, 'Everything is denied, but in the distance one sees God.' He believed very clearly in the existence of God.

One must never forget that Buddhist terms do not have precise meanings, not like the clear and definite meanings of words in Western philosophical and logical works. Anyone who tries to argue with a bonze will soon learn this. Often there is no meeting of minds because the same words are used in different senses. The words are the same and yet not the same. The sense must be grasped by feeling. Even if the Zen enlightened one refuses to speak of God in connection with his experience, we are still not justified in

calling Zen atheistic. This is true of the actual religious situation in Japan.

Personal experience and some personal acquaintances have suggested to me that highly enlightened monks have come to a belief in the true God through enlightenment and have also come to love God. This took place, no doubt, on that higher level where enlightenment is obtained. Whether these monks identify their experience with the Christian belief in God is another question. Probably they will not do so in the beginning. It would be different if they would go still one step further and arrive at a mystic union with God. Of course, this would be a big step and would be a pure grace of God. And yet one does not have the right to exclude such a possibility. It is certain that there are in Japan monks who have practised Za-zen for a long time and who have come to a belief in God. They speak of God with great reverence and devotion. One could not expect better from a devout Christian. Because of the reticence of most monks to speak about their internal experiences, much less to write about them, it is extremely difficult to find out whether someone has arrived at a belief in God or not. Only after the death of famous monks do their disciples study the nature of the master's experience and write about it. And the studies of the disciples are usually conjectures. This is especially true with experiences which have led to a belief in God; where there is a danger of being misunderstood by his co-religionists, the monk who has come to a belief in God will prefer to maintain silence. Only the deepest of mutual confidences will draw from a monk his innermost thoughts and secrets. Neither tourists nor professors, no matter what the fame of their

university, can expect to get anything other than classical answers when and if they attempt to report on the personal life of some famous monk.

When the Zen Buddhist does come to a belief in God, he comes to it in exactly the opposite way from that of a Christian. The Christian starts with a belief in God and with this foundation he strives for moral integrity and perfection. For him the voice of conscience is the voice of God, the Supreme Legislator. In Zen, however, one starts without God in the direction of morality and perfection and arrives at God in the end. The more one strives for perfection, the clearer does the belief in God become. In this sense enlightenment is really a direct way to God and the love of him.

There are certainly some monks who, according to their own interpretation of their experience of enlightenment, become one with nature and the universe and in this union experience an immense joy. This joy is so deep that it cannot be diminished but is, rather, strengthened through suffering and adversity. On speaking to such people one gets the impression that there is only a difference of words, not of matter. When they use the words 'nature and universe' is it not really 'God' whom they mean?

There is another reason for the silence of enlightened ones in regard to their expressing their love of God. The Japanese consider it disrespectful for an inferior person to love a superior person. This attitude is rooted in a misunderstanding, and when the non-Christian Japanese understands what is meant by love of God, this difficulty disappears. A Japanese layman told me (he had practised Za-zen for many years and was enlightened) that after reading a book

of St John of the Cross he understood for the first time what the love of God meant. A very old monk once told me that enlightenment was the becoming-conscious-of the oneness with nature. Spontaneously, I replied: 'For us it is oneness with God.' He bowed his head with a glance of agreement. This does not mean that Buddhist monism is to be equated with Christian monotheism. It only means that there are some outstanding monks who in their experience of enlightenment succeed in meeting us.

There is still another characteristic of the love of God which is also found in enlightened monks—the love of neighbour. To retire completely into one's self and to seek only one's own satisfaction is a constant danger to any mystic. True Christian mystics have never yielded to this temptation. On the contrary, they have always combined a great love of God with a great love of man. There are some exceptions; but in Japanese Zen this danger is also overcome. The mere fact of the great influence of Zen on Japanese culture is proof enough. Monks who have practised Za-zen are, especially in their old age, very sympathetic people. Besides, should they show the least sign of arrogance they would prove to others that they never had enlightenment.

The opinions expressed in this chapter on the spiritual condition of enlightened monks will perhaps not win the approval of some who have made studies in Zen. At least these opinions are not *a priori*. On the contrary, these opinions have been formulated only after constant communication with monks of ascetically high standards. And I have found my opinions confirmed, experientially, time and time again.

V

ENLIGHTENMENT SERVING THE CHRISTIAN ASCETIC AND MYSTIC

A ZEN monk once said to me, 'Just the practice of Za-zen will help you to get a thorough understanding of your Catholicism.' I thought his words strange. I could not imagine, after all my philosophical and theological studies, not to mention the long years I had 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 method of Za-zen did help me, and it can help one to add a new dimension to his knowledge of his religion.

In Christianity, a clear distinction is made between ascetic practice and mysticism. Ascetical practice is accessible to all and is normally the prerequisite for mysticism, properly so called. Nevertheless, these two fields cannot be completely separated from each other. They overlap. For the sake of clarity in the following explanation, we shall separate them each from the other. Our first concern, therefore, is the question: How can Zen and enlightenment further the progress of the Christian ascetic? And after this question is answered, we shall investigate to what extent Zen can be used to arrive at the state of mysticism, properly so called.

Zen is practised in Japan by non-Buddhist religions with good results. Zen consists in using purely natural forces. In Christianity, also, purely natural forces are supposed to be used for the religious life. The history of the Church testifies to this. One does not, of course, accept without hesitation everything that falls under the name of Eastern meditation. Even in Japan there are false mysticisms which cannot satisfy and which fail in the long run. In some religious gatherings, for example, the devotees get themselves into a frenzy and lose their senses. Serious people in the Orient are opposed to such behaviour. In Zen such states of mind are neither sought for nor encouraged. They are rejected. It is true, however, that the practice of Zen has its dangers. But in any striving after a more profound method of prayer there are dangers. Any wholehearted effort of the interior life is full fraught with risks. And without such risks, probably no one could ever have become a saint. We are urged to strive for sanctity, and the risks this entails should not be side-stepped because the cause is a noble one. But risks there are, like the danger of falling down into the depths when one thinks one has reached the mountain-top.

The experience of Christian asceticism is centuries old. With an experienced director, one should not suffer too many setbacks on the road to asceticism and a life of prayer. The same can be said of Zen in Japan. Here also is an experience of a thousand years, and it is interesting to notice that the principles for the guidance of souls have a certain likeness to those of Christianity. The same pitfalls are pointed out time and time again. There is the same insistence on the necessity of a spiritual director, for example, the daily visits called *dokusan* (going alone to the Zen master)

during the Za-zen exercises. Perhaps also in Europe one could make much faster progress in the effort to find the way to interior quiet, if he adopted the long experience of Zen instead of trying to find it by a hit-and-miss method. All one need do is to make the experiment to prove to himself that the method of Za-zen would be effective for a deeper life of prayer. In the case of a Christian, the Zen method would be admissible only in so far as it is a psychophysiological method; that is to say, it must be separated from its Buddhist contents. Since in itself it is neither a prayer nor even something strictly spiritual, it can never replace Christian meditation, which must always somehow terminate in a dialogue with God. On the other hand, this does not exclude the fact that the Zen method can coexist with Christian meditation and even render the good service of disposing for prayer.

In any kind of prayer, interior recollection is very important. One should free himself as much as possible from all other thoughts beforehand, otherwise he is distracted and cannot pray well. Even Christians with deep faith and profound piety often find it very difficult to recollect themselves properly. This is particularly true of those people who are working in society, and it is also true of those in Christian monasteries if they are not contemplatives, but are engaged in apostolic activities, such as education, social work, and pastoral work.

When the hour for prayer, for meditation, or for the Divine Service comes, it often finds one unprepared. It is difficult to free one's self completely from other thoughts. One may succeed for a time, but the distracting thoughts soon crowd back in on him. Disturbing as these thoughts

are, they do not make the hour of prayer useless before God, so long as they are not wilful. The effort expended in trying to subdue these thoughts is, in itself, something meritorious. And yet we surely realize that the hour of prayer was not intended merely as a battle against distractions for the purpose of earning merit, but rather to aid one's spiritual life by reason of the fruits it offers. This is true also of meditation. If one is often distracted during it, then the special values of this prayer are lost, and faith can hardly be deepened by an exercise of prayer throughout which one hardly thought about the truths of the faith or did not remember the subject for meditation after the exercise was over.

Dryness is another difficulty. Dryness during meditative prayer is a common complaint, and there are several reasons for this. Fatigue may be one reason, lack of preparation another. Or it may be that one has fallen into a monotonous routine. Normally the beginner will make swift progress in meditation if he has the necessary zeal. There are several methods of introduction for meditation, and all of them place strong demands on the powers of the soul, memory, reason, and will. It is a common experience that after a certain time, perhaps after a few years, the formerly effective methods of meditation begin to pall. Presuming that this is not due to one's laziness, it can be said, then, that the time has come to change the manner of making the meditation. A more simple and more affective way of meditation would seem to be called for. But even here one will run into difficulties, for it is not always possible to sustain a movement of the heart over a long period of time merely because one wishes to do so. One could try saying ■

short prayer over and over, but this hardly is the spirit of true meditative prayer. A special grace of God could help one out of this difficulty, but one cannot count on such a grace with certainty. And when distractions continue, there is the very real danger that one will give up meditation altogether.

To overcome these difficulties Za-zen could be used to advantage. It is an excellent means for freeing one's self from everyday thoughts, and it is conducive to prayerful recollection. This is especially true of the third stage of Za-zen where one gets enlightenment, by the power of which one is raised to a higher level and set free from the shackles of thoughts and disturbing emotions. If one has the freshness of mind which is demanded by any mental work, then one can make use of this method at any time, since it works by mere natural forces.

It also is highly suitable for a simple contemplative prayer. It has been my experience that this is true, and I am inclined to think that anyone could come to the same conclusion by his own experience. And he will find this all the more true, the more he penetrates the method of recollection proper to Zen. Meditation there becomes contemplation in the sense of 'acquired' contemplation. What formerly was a hindrance, that is, the fact that meditation began to pall due to over-familiarity with matter and manner, is now precisely a boon, for in Za-zen the conscious activities of the soul are excluded.

The method of Za-zen is also very helpful for oral and for liturgical prayer. What has been explained in detail above is applicable to these two forms of prayer.

The method of Za-zen, therefore, and enlightenment,

could become an enrichment of the Christian religious life. In addition to what I have already written, it is a known fact that some people, right from the start, have great difficulties with meditation. But these same people have a facility for a more simple and contemplative type of prayer. This is due largely to the person's disposition and should not be considered a special grace of God. This kind of person would find his meditation vastly improved if he used the methods of Za-zen from the beginning. In Japan one finds this type of person quite often. And the Japanese have many difficulties with a discursive sort of meditation, much more so than a Westerner has. The reason is largely one of cultural atmosphere. But in spite of the difficulties everybody who wishes to make the truths of Christianity his own must also meditate discursively. It is important that he frequently recalls the truths of faith. A Zen monk once told me that the Catholic Church has a distinct advantage over other religions in having a clear and firm doctrine, that is, dogma. The Japanese also must use their reason, and by thinking over the truths of the faith they will come to esteem the truths. Reading and study also help. They could use Za-zen to 'incorporate' the doctrine, as a monk once told me.

We are right to be convinced of the truth of our faith and its unique value. We should not think that the dogmas are in need of correction or could ever be corrected. The object of faith is the absolute truth revealed by God. Nevertheless, we should not be afraid to use the methods of other religions if by these we can make the truths of our religion more surely our own. The boundaries must be set out clearly and seen clearly. But we can recognize, I think, that

the Oriental religions have made much better use of the natural faculties of man than the Christian religion has done. This is easy to understand. The Christian religion is a revealed religion, and therefore heads immediately in the direction of the supernatural. According to Christianity only one thing is necessary, and that is, that man reaches his final end. Maybe that he has to pass first through a long and painful purification of all that is not perfect yet, and perhaps even sinful with him at the moment he dies. Provided that he is in the state of grace at that moment he eventually reaches his true end. Therefore, the Church makes sure that man receives the grace of justification through the sacrament of regeneration, namely baptism. So long as he does not lose this grace through serious sin he is sure to reach his last end, even should death come suddenly and find him otherwise unprepared. Once this safeguard has been obtained he should of course strive with all his strength for virtue and moral perfection.

With the non-Christian the order, at least in Japan, is reversed. He does not seek his last end with any clearness of vision. Perhaps he never thinks of it at all. For him the first thing is to free himself, by natural powers, from sin and bad inclinations and gradually become a morally good and interiorly free man. For him this is his end, and he considers it important and unique. And in striving to attain this end he in some sense comes nearer to God, who is still largely unknown to him. Since this man has no knowledge of the supernatural, he is forced to rely on his natural powers to accomplish the tasks necessary for his reaching his end. Zealous people have found out how, with tremendous efforts, one can reach moral perfection and

interior freedom by dint of natural powers. In most cases they consider this a sort of redemption because, in their opinion, redemption consists in man's becoming free from all his bad inclinations. How far and to what extent the individual is helped by the grace of God, no one knows. He knows no other way than that of using his natural powers and for this reason some religions, especially Zen Buddhism, have succeeded much more in developing these powers, of body and soul, for religious purposes than Christianity has done. This is of course not to be understood as an assertion that Zen asceticism, in general, is thought to be of higher value than Christian asceticism. On the contrary, the former lacks essential elements of the latter, noticeably the imitation of Christ, which is the next aim of the Christian transcending natural virtue, and which is consciously directed towards the love of God as its final aim.

From the Christian point of view, one should see the finger of Providence in the fact that methods such as those of Zen have made good use of natural means for religious purposes. The good that is in non-Christian religions can be seen as a substitute for the disadvantage they suffer from being so late in hearing of the revelation of God. God wishes all men to be saved, and, therefore, there has never been a man nor ever will be whom God does not follow with great love and with a tender concern, as though that man were the only man on earth. Non-Christians are not excluded from this love of God.

The Catholic Church has never rejected the use of natural forces for the sake of religion. This has always been a principle of the Church. The monks of olden times understood this more than we do today. In his book

Christian Yoga, Fr. Déchanet, O.S.B., has duly pointed out this fact.¹ It is a feature of our times to shorten and simplify liturgical actions. We seem to look down on bodily movements in the liturgy and carry over this feeling to purely natural actions in relation to the supernatural. Former generations, the ones that made use of bodily movements in the liturgy, were wiser than we. And in that respect they were closer to Oriental religions than we are today. It does not detract from the supernatural to use bodily gestures in the liturgical services. Nor should it go against the spirit of the Church to make use of natural forces in prayer and the religious life. And along these lines we have much to learn from non-Christian Oriental religions.

To proceed to the next question: Can Za-zen, then, help us in relation to mysticism, properly so-called? First of all, we must remember that mysticism is essentially a supernatural happening, and enlightenment is, at least theoretically, a purely natural phenomenon. We wish to emphasize the word theoretical because in Christian belief human nature cannot be simply separated from the supernatural element. No man is in the state of pure nature (*status naturae purae*). No one can prove, for example, that one who has arrived at the state of enlightenment has done so without the help of grace. The contrary is probably more likely. But it is also very certain that no extraordinary grace is required for receiving enlightenment. In this sense it is a purely natural phenomenon. For the mystic, the supernatural is essential because it is an immediate working of

¹ J.-M. Déchanet, O.S.B., *Christian Yoga*, London, Burns and Oates, 1960 (paperback edn. 1964).

God in the soul. The substance of the mystical experience is an experience of the life of grace. By experience, however, we do not mean that we can prove the effects of grace. It is an immediate 'becoming-conscious' of a participation in the divine nature. Since this supernatural fact is utterly hidden from all natural knowledge, we know of it at first only by faith through revelation. In the mystical experience we see somehow directly what, up to that time, we had known only indirectly and by faith. For example, one knows by faith that God dwells in the souls of the just. In a mystical experience one becomes aware of this unutterably and directly. One is, so to speak, directly touched by God. During the experience one has no doubt of the fact of it, which hitherto he knew of only through the dark light of faith. And because this experience is like being directly touched by God, it results in the highest joy and the deepest peace of mind. Its highest point, among all the various phenomena, is known as infused (supernatural) contemplation. To define it: it is a simple loving glance at God by which the soul is rapt in admiration and love of God and knows him experientially and tastes in him a deep peace and a foretaste of eternal happiness.

No natural forces could account for the Christian mystical experience. Even an assist of grace to natural forces would not suffice. Therefore, enlightenment, sublime an achievement as it is, cannot be identified with the mystical experience. Nor can it be guaranteed to lead to mystic experience. For this reason, our question about enlightenment and the mystic experience must be re-phrased. Is enlightenment not only a negative preparation for mystical graces, or does it create a favourable disposition in the soul for the reception

of the extraordinary free grace of mystic union with God? That seems to be the case precisely, perhaps you had guessed from our previous remarks. We have already said that the Islamic mystics did not stop with the 'self in itself' experience but went on to the 'self-in-God' and finally to the 'God-in-self'. At that point we refused to consider whether the Islamic enlightenment actually led to true mysticism or not. And we shall continue to limit ourselves to an answer to the question of how enlightenment and the use of Zen methods pave the way to mysticism.

Previously we quoted Augustine Baker. He said:

These faculties of the higher soul must unite themselves in that which is called their unity . . . and this unity, which alone is able to unite itself perfectly with God, must be applied to and directed to God.

With the mystics this union is called the 'acumen of the soul' (*Seelenspitze*) or 'the bottom of the soul' (*Seelengrund*). To be more exact, the mystics say that the mystical union with God takes place in the *Seelenspitze* or *Seelengrund*. However, the fact of the unity of man is very much insisted upon in Zen, even though one does not speak of *Seelenspitze* or *Seelengrund*. In Zen enlightenment, this perfect unity of the interior man is achieved exactly.

Furthermore, the Christian mystics say that the prayer of recollection is an entrance into the first state of mystical prayer. This prayer of recollection consists in this, that the faculties of the soul are all turned inwardly. True it is that all this happens under the influence of grace while the soul is passive. It is also true that in this state the soul cannot function according to the normal rules of meditation, since the activity of meditation is opposed to the nature of the

passive recollection. For meditation divides, compares, etc., while the recollection unites, and is said to be a sign saying that God wishes to lead the soul farther in the direction of contemplation. Such privileged souls are usually advised to make efforts to prolong this recollection and not try to return to meditation, unless the recollection ceases entirely. This is the practice which Baker describes in the places mentioned above, and justifies by mentioning such great mystics as Tauler and Teresa of Avila.

Baker himself obtained the best of results by putting his own opinions into practice. In another place, he writes that when he was overwhelmed with writing and the direction of souls, he had little time for prayer and had to use what time he did have well. He writes: 'However, this short time [it also included the time for Mass] seemed as fruitful for his soul as formerly many hours had, so efficient and elevated was his prayer.'¹

It is also clear that Baker's method was not only passive but also required a great active exertion before he finally arrived at such a degree of affective prayer. He says about himself, 'If he had tried to do more, he had surely lost his mind.'² To be fair about Baker, it must be added that prior to his using this method he had received a rather special mystical grace. But for the purposes of our inquiry this does not seem relevant, because he neglected this grace for many years. The words we have quoted from his works are taken from those which he wrote after his second conversion. Augustine Baker has never been canonized by the Church, nor beatified, but he is recognized as a very capable

¹ Paul Renaudin, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

² *Idem.*

and highly esteemed director of souls. He advocated authors of such stature as Teresa of Avila, whom the Church highly regards for her mysticism. Those who have received from God, passively, the grace of recollection should exert themselves to empty themselves for the continual reception of this grace of recollection. Yet, should one not have received this great grace, this does not mean that he also cannot exert himself, making use of his natural powers as far as they will carry him. Original sin makes weaklings of us all, but man is still capable of great achievements. Consider the achievements of science, wherein man uses his natural powers to their utmost. What would be the wonders if men were to use an equal effort of the natural powers, equal, let us say, to those expended by scientists for science and technology, on the spiritual life? Man should not leave these powers uncultivated and depend on grace alone. And he should realize that the natural powers which he possesses should be used towards the development of his spiritual life. At times fervent Christians and even religious overlook this fact. In the East, where little is known of grace and its workings, good use has been made of man's natural powers. Enlightenment proves this conclusively.

In the method of Zen, there seems to be something which is not only beneficial for the Christian in the sense of general asceticism, but could be also a great help for him towards a better and more contemplative type of prayer. Among the various ways of meditation there is one called acquired contemplation. This means that one can arrive at a more simple and a more affective prayer. Za-zen can also be considered as a way to acquired contemplation, and becomes it the better the nearer one comes to enlightenment. The

activity of the faculties of the soul, in particular the reason, is kept in the background; and man is raised to a higher level where the faculties of the soul immediately are united. This unity, which is acquired in Zen meditation, can direct itself without difficulty to God. We may go so far as to call this activity a simple and loving look at God, though we hasten to add that we do not assert that it is the same as infused contemplation. This looking at God is not possible unless the soul is united in the way described. And this unity may be a grace or the result of one's own efforts. Because everyone who applies the method of Zen assiduously can achieve this natural unity. Whether or not the soul goes on to infused contemplation would of course depend on the utterly free choice of God. No one could demand the gift of infused contemplation, even had he achieved the unity of the faculties on this higher level, even though this unity is a necessary condition for infused contemplation. And this movement is accomplished not only indirectly, by detachment and sacrifice (these are indispensable for any higher grace in prayer), but directly and *formaliter* as well, by the natural powers inherent in the soul.

One may wonder what this method has to do with love of God which is the end of all mystical union and in which it takes place. To that we answer that we are speaking here of the Christian who uses this method out of Christian motives. His affair is just a loving desire for God himself. He wishes to become one with God in love, and for that purpose he is willing to make all the sacrifices which are required by this method. Apart from the physical sacrifices, this method demands a complete detachment from all

inordinate self-love, and this detachment must be made out of love of God. Pure intention, which is really love of God, is presupposed here, as it is in any method of Christian asceticism.

Some will possibly be afraid of the method of Za-zen because it is a new one to Christian asceticism. They would rather stay with the already approved methods of Christian asceticism and look askance at any method which comes from a different religion. Such a fear is easily understandable and well founded. For it would be a mistake and senseless from the Christian side to propagate Eastern methods of meditation in Christian countries, where such methods do not appeal to many Westerners. Even the Oriental way of sitting is very difficult for Europeans, whereas Asiatics are used to sitting on mats and carpets placed on the floor. From an early age their limbs have become more flexible than those of a Westerner. In addition to this, because of the undeniably great cultural differences of East and West, it would be a mistake to force on anyone this kind of asceticism and meditation. But, on the other hand, experience indicates that there are Westerners, Catholics included, for whom this kind of meditation exerts a strong appeal. Even when they cannot attain the prescribed bodily posture in every respect, they find appreciable help for their religious life. Thus, in our present exposition of Zen meditation, we are stressing its positive aspects, in order to make clear what it consists of, and not in order to suggest that it is the best method for everyone without exception. Actually, the Zen sects themselves have never engaged in propaganda as a customary feature. On the contrary, Zen masters are often very loath to accept pupils, and often accept them only after

several prior refusals. Their motive seems to be the conviction that success crowns this method only if the applicant perseveres in his resolve. It would be a mistake to consider Eastern meditation methods as magic and hypnotism, and this is certainly not the case with Zen. But do we not have here a good chance to link the East with the West? To join the East with the West is a very difficult endeavour, but in showing the Easterners that they have things which the West could adopt with profit, we can bind ourselves more closely to them. We do not intend to compromise our faith, but there are definitely some things that we can learn from the East. It would be a mistake to think that we cannot learn from Zen. Here is a method that has been in the world for centuries; it is well consolidated and has much experience behind it. To practise it properly, one needs a spiritual director, and in the Catholic Church, so used to various forms of asceticism, a spiritual director could be found; even though he did not have experience with Zen, as such, he would surely be able to advise and caution and lead a Christian in the way of Zen. In mysticism one does not demand of the spiritual director that he be a mystic. The same could be said of Zen for one living in the West.

Has God called all men to be mystics? It is a moot question. But that he desires the natural happiness and supernatural happiness of man is something one does not doubt. God makes sure that everyone has the chance to come to the state of grace and to take part in the divine nature, which is the preliminary stage for the final end of man, the beatific vision. Although man will enjoy the beatific vision only in the next life, it is God's will that man have a foretaste of it in this life. God is prodigal. He gives man his best always

and is not like man, who exhausts himself when he gives his best, and therefore has to save up something, so as not to stand there with empty hands afterwards. It certainly seems that God wishes that man should not only come to the state of grace but also, in some way, be aware of it.

If a man should not go far along the road of divine grace, the reason for this should not necessarily be attributed to God's not sending such a man extraordinary graces. It is unlikely that God will refuse even extraordinary graces to one who is properly disposed, and by extraordinary graces we mean the first states of mystical experience. After a man has been raised to the state of sanctifying grace, he is also called to experience this grace up to its highest effects . . . to come to a vision of God. God does not force, so to speak, everyone to unite his faculties of the soul before he strives for this himself. But should man strive for it and should he reach enlightenment after much sacrifice, should not, then, the supposition be that God wishes such a man to go on to the further experience of contemplation? We do not mean the highest form of contemplation because for this a special purification, which God himself makes, is necessary.

At times, some people fail to advance to mystical prayer because of mistaken spiritual direction. This happens even to people who have had passive recollection. Does this not indicate that God lets his working in the soul depend not only on the good will of the soul itself, but to some extent also on the skill with which natural forces are used? Now in Zen the natural powers of man are used to a high degree of skilful efficiency in order to lead man to a simple and contemplative prayer. Many people who have tried in vain to get to this state of prayer by the traditional ways

would succeed if they tried the way of Za-zen. For this method has the advantage of being independent of many circumstances which render meditation difficult.

Za-zen, then, presents itself as an opportunity and a help to priests and religious of the active orders and also to laypeople, immersed as they are in all sorts of activity. It opens the way to a deeper life of prayer, without the necessity of having a vocation for high mystical graces. It also offers a concrete way to bring man back to God in this over-busy age. Only by finding his way back to God will man be able to consider material progress a blessing. Not all men, to be sure, will come to a deep life of prayer either by this method or by any other but the more who come to it, the more society will be marvellously changed.

To write about the relations between Zen and Christian mysticism and not to mention St John of the Cross, the *Doctor Mysticus*, would be a horrible oversight. Writing about the way to mystical union with God and indicating the conditions under which this takes place, the mystical doctor says that the soul must not only be free from all attachments to the senses but also should be free from attachments to the reason. For this opinion, some have classified him with Plotinus (†270). If so, then St John can be claimed for Zen too. But this is obviously a mistake. Anyone who has had experience of the enlightenment and has read St John of the Cross attentively could never hold that opinion. But enlightenment does create a climate wherein the attachment to the senses and to the reason is so nullified that a truly necessary disposition for mystical graces is created. For this reason one can say that both Plotinus and St John of the Cross had enlightenment and

that with St John it was enlightenment in a perfect degree. But that was not all. In St John's special experiences, enlightenment was included.

Louis Gardet expresses it this way:

The making empty of the Yoga [read Zen] experiences itself in a fullness which, at any time, is in the depths of the being. The 'nothing' of John of the Cross does not lie on the level of the natural to be. To reach the original act of existence is not at stake here, but to answer to the grace which purifies and surmounts (*überhoht*) the acts of intellect and will in order that an abundance penetrates into them, which does not come from man but from the transcendent God and Saviour.¹

That certainly is correct and, precisely because it is correct, the emptiness of Yoga and Zen seems to be a most favourable disposition for mystical graces. John of the Cross says:

I say, in reality it is so, that God must put the soul into this supernatural state, but also that the soul, as far as it depends on her, must herself prepare for it, and that can be done by natural ways, especially with the help that God gives to the soul.²

¹ Louis Gardet, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

² John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Book II, Chap. 2.

VI

PRACTICAL DIRECTIONS FOR ZA-ZEN

IS ZA-ZEN practicable for the professional man, especially one who comes from the Occidental culture? Does not the whole tradition and mentality behind Zen present obstacles which are surely insurmountable? People of the West are rational and logical. They are not intuitive like the people of the East. And would a man of the West be able to endure the physical discomfort of Za-zen? These are questions which must be asked, as I once did. But I came to the conviction that neither the physical nor the spiritual obstacles are insurmountable. One must first of all have the will to start and then the will to persevere. In these two volitions achievement is contained. Of course there are degrees of achievement. In practice, one must first of all distinguish whether Za-zen is being made in order to get help for one's moral-spiritual life or in order to obtain real enlightenment. Anyone who is prepared to go through the strict exercises of Za-zen for the purpose of bettering his moral-spiritual life will certainly come away a better man and one fully rewarded. The longer he continues the exercises, the closer he will come to enlightenment. It may take years, but he has this consolation: he will be constantly enriching his moral and spiritual life. Striving for enlightenment is not like a lottery where one has staked his money

and lost. It is, rather, more like the example of the dying father who told his children that he had buried a treasure in the family field. The sons ploughed up the field looking for the treasure and enriched the field by doing so.

One must have a Zen master. This is a most important rule. In Europe or in America, it will be difficult to find one, and even should one find a master, the theoretical directions he gives will be very few, and, precisely because the directions will be so scant, some, or perhaps most, Westerners will lose heart. But it should be kept in mind that this method is a principle of Zen. One should learn through his own experience. Now we shall proceed to give some directions for Za-zen, presuming that whoever is reading this will be without a master.

The position of the body during the meditation will cause considerable pain. Under these circumstances, good results seem hopeless; and at times European and American beginners ask if there is no other way of sitting other than this painful one.

Enlightenment is a purely natural phenomenon. It is not supernatural. For this reason one cannot claim, *a priori*, that it can only be obtained through Yoga or Za-zen. Plotinus, for example, knew neither Yoga nor Za-zen, and yet he obtained enlightenment. He chose a way quite different from the bodily exercises of Yoga and the sitting of Za-zen. One may say that he achieved enlightenment through thinking. He wished to reach the absolute and finally did reach it by constantly thinking anew and by going into himself. He does not seem to have had a method, properly so called. Most likely he had a desire to visit the wise men of India, but never did. For Plotinus the problem over

which he thought and thought became his *kōan*, and through this *kōan* he finally obtained enlightenment.

Others arrive at enlightenment through ways completely opposite. In most cases these are people who are simple, who live in the country and who do little mental work. Year after year they work on the fields, tend the cattle and hardly speak to anyone. Sometimes they are considered odd. In reality they are truly inward people, and one day they receive enlightenment without having done anything to get it and without even expecting it. Such cases are known in Zen. And then there are those who, by natural disposition, obtain a certain interior recollection which, in some cases, leads to enlightenment. And at times these people, precisely because of the natural disposition, are inclined to go astray and never receive enlightenment.

In any case, neither Plotinus nor the types of people mentioned had a method for obtaining enlightenment. They entered enlightenment individually and in an individualistic way; and for this reason they cannot be imitated except by certain rare people. To try to imitate these people will slow one down, and one will surely arrive at enlightenment as a latecomer.

Yoga or Zen is a proved method. And in the methods are included bodily exercises and physical disciplines like breathings and sitting postures.

Admitting the necessity of physical means, there still remains the problem of the pain involved. Could not something less painful be devised? Chemical injections into the body can, no doubt, influence the activity of the mental faculties; and spiritual dispositions can be obtained by these means. But they would surely be limited and temporary in

their effects. One would not grow by them morally and spiritually. Man, after all, is not a machine. One can anaesthetize the mind and paralyse the will or stimulate the mind and will of man, but one cannot artificially improve it morally. Even if some sort of these means could be used for enlightenment, they would be merely preliminary. The radically spiritual detachments prior to enlightenment have to be made on another plane. Anyway, so far no such experiments have been used in Zen.

For practical purposes, it seems that we do have to look about to see if there is a less painful way of sitting which would give the same results as the prescribed way of sitting for Za-zen. The experts say that Japanese *suwari* (usually translated by 'squatting') could be as effective. But if one squats, the torso must be kept straight, and the eyes must be fixed on one spot as in Za-zen. This position is much better than others, for example, kneeling. It is done in this way. One kneels on a blanket and then descends upon his heels, the heels being slightly dovetailed under the buttocks, the toes of each foot crossing each other. In this way the outer side of each ankle will touch or almost touch the floor. Since in this position the shanks are lying flat on the ground and the body is perpendicularly erected above them, the whole body can be relaxed in a way that would not be possible sitting on a chair or kneeling.

In Japan, the Western way of sitting is quite general in schools and offices, but *suwari* is still the usual one in the home. *Suwari* will be difficult in the beginning because the tendons are uncommonly stretched and the blood circulation is somewhat hindered. Any foreigner who tries to adapt himself to the Japanese way of sitting find this out for

himself. After sitting this way for a while he loses all feeling in his legs and should he stand up suddenly he is quite apt to fall down. But this way of squatting is comparatively easy to learn.



FIG. 1. *Suwari*, front view



FIG. 2. *Suwa i*, back view

Since the traditional way of sitting is observed in all Za-zen halls in Japan no instance has become known of one who has reached enlightenment by using the *suwari* position. But if one observes all the other rules of Za-zen, there is no reason why he should not reach enlightenment using the *suwari* position of sitting. We do not recommend sitting in a chair. However, if one must sit in a chair, we caution him not to lean against the back of the chair: The back must be kept straight. At times in Zen temples foreigners are allowed to sit on a chair, should they find it impossible to sit the prescribed way, but even here they must not lean against the back of the chair. If all the other rules are kept, the position used in sitting should not become a source of worry. It will be helpful to put a round cushion on the chair

and to sit very near to the front edge of it. After a few experiments, one will discover the best way of sitting and keeping the back straight.

One should, however, not lose sight of the fact that the best way is the way recommended by Zen. And it is a safe way so long as one has reasonably good health and is not too old. In Japan, people of all classes and occupations, including women and students, practise Za-zen, and though they are used to the position of *suwari*, still in all they find the Za-zen way of sitting a bit difficult, though not so difficult as Europeans and Americans find it.

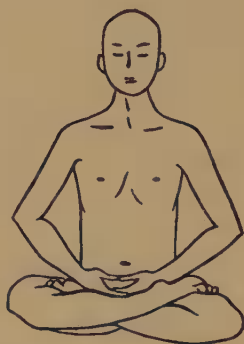
In the beginning one should be satisfied with the *hanka*, which means to sit with the right foot placed on the left thigh. One may alternate by putting the left foot on the right thigh when and if one should get tired. After one has mastered the *hanka*, one is ready for the *kekka*. This means sitting with the right foot on the left thigh and the left foot on the right thigh. Though the *kekka* is much more difficult than the *hanka* the psychological difference is negligible. For this reason, should the *kekka* prove too difficult, one can remain with the *hanka* without worry. Most Zen bonzes use the *kekka* method, but there are some who use the *hanka* method with the same results.

Once one has learned these sitting positions of Za-zen and has grown accustomed to them, he quickly finds that they are less tiring than other ways of sitting, and is surprised at this discovery. Sitting on a chair, one constantly changes his sitting position. In Za-zen, once accustomed to the position, one rarely changes it because he is very comfortable sitting in the same position. Of course it takes time to overcome the difficulties of the beginner, all the more if his

professional occupations leave him only five or ten minutes a day for practice. However, constant practice is much better than non-regular practice, even if it is shorter.

The place one selects for Za-zen should be as quiet as possible. Zen monasteries are usually built in the mountains and woods and usually do not face the sun. Light should be moderate. Natural sounds, such as a running river, rustling leaves, the song of birds, or the murmur of a natural spring, are no hindrance. On the contrary, natural sounds aid meditation. They quiet the person meditating and help him towards his union with nature. However, should one not have ideal conditions, he should not despair. He should choose a place as ideal as he can find; for people living in crowded cities, this may mean that they have to choose a time early in the morning for meditation, a time before the noise of the city begins, or in the evening when all is quiet.

Spread, then, a carpet on the floor. Three feet square is sufficient. On it place a cushion (a blanket may be spread on the carpet, folded as much as is desired), round, square, or oblong; it does not matter. The cushion should be about three or four inches thick, though if it is not considered high enough, another may be placed on top of it. Each one must find the best arrangement by experiment. One then sits on the cushion in such a way that the feet come to lie on the blanket or rug in front of it. Then one draws the left leg towards the body, bending the knee in such a way that the outside of it touches the blanket, and the foot, as far as is possible, is drawn towards the thigh of the other leg. Then one puts the right foot on the other thigh, turning the sole of the foot upwards.

FIG. 3. *Hanka*FIG. 4. *Kekka*

The torso should be kept as straight as a bolt, but in such a way that the point of gravity lies in the belly an inch and a half below the navel. The shoulders should not be pulled upwards in strain. The head is kept high, but the chin is drawn in towards the 'v' of the collar bone. The head may be slightly inclined to the extent that with eyes open one sees about three feet in front of him on the floor. Without strain the hands should be held in front of the belly. The traditional way of holding the hands is to place the left hand palm up in the right hand palm up and the thumbs should touch each other. But one may hold the hands in any way so long as the hands are together.

Although the torso is held straight, it should not be strained. Pictures of this position are sometimes deceptive on this point. Except in the belly, there should be no strain anywhere. If one does not observe this rule, he will find that he has pains in the chest, back, arms, and legs. Above all, every precaution must be taken that the back is kept straight. If it is not, nothing is more detrimental to *Za-zen*. The

position thus described is certain of helping one to interior quiet. To prove the truth of this to one's self, one should, when excited and wishing to become quiet, try the position, looking at a fixed point for five minutes and trying to think of nothing.

The Eyes

The eyes are kept open. One looks at a fixed point in front of one on the floor or on a wall, if one sits near a wall. Keeping the eyes open is as important in Za-zen as keeping the back straight. Some are accustomed to meditate with the eyes closed because it is thought that this aids concentration. For this reason the rule about keeping the eyes open may be found a hindrance rather than a help. But one will get used to this quickly if he obeys. For years I made the mistake in practising Za-zen of not keeping my back straight and my eyes open. As soon as I obeyed these two rules, I noticed a great change. Needless to say one must not allow his eyes to wander. In ordinary meditation one may find it useful to look at a picture or another object. In Za-zen this is not allowed as it would interfere with the emptying of the mind. As the German mystics used to say: one must be freed from all pictures (*entbildert*).

The Breathing

The breathing is very important, though it is not so much insisted on as in Yoga. Complex exercises in breathing are not demanded. One should breathe in and out deeply and quietly but without overdoing it. It should be done normally through the nose, not the mouth. There is one exception: at the beginning of a meditation one should

inhale through the nose deeply and press the air towards the belly, keeping it there for a moment or two. Then the breath should be let out slowly through slightly parted lips until the lungs are completely empty. Should one not be accustomed to this, he need not keep the breath back so long because there is a danger that he will become giddy. In winter, without heat in the room, this will produce a pleasant sensation of heat in the whole body. It is enough if one does this once or twice at the beginning of a meditation. Should one feel the necessity of doing it more than twice at the beginning, this is all right; but one should not be preoccupied with breathing once the meditation has begun. One can improve his breathing by placing the linked hands behind his head and inclining the torso deeply after an inhalation. He should stay in this position for some time and then, straightening up, should exhale slowly. This exercise is fraught with danger, and for this reason one should not take to it precipitately.

After the breathing exercise the body should be swayed gently from right to left a few times. In the beginning this should be like the wide arc of a pendulum and should become shorter in span until one comes to rest in the proper position. During *Za-zen* one should breathe in the usual way deeply and exhale slowly. The body should not move once the meditation has begun.

The Interior Attitude

In the beginning, the beginner should count his breathing, and this must be done mentally only. One counts from one to ten (not beyond ten) and then begins again from one during the whole meditation. It is done this way. The first

inhalation is one, the first exhalation is two, the second inhalation is three, the second exhalation is four, and so on up to the count of ten. In Japanese this is called *sūsokukan*. One must concentrate on the counting and not be distracted by anything else. And, of course, one must take care not to fall asleep with the eyes open. The counting gives one an object for mental activity without, however, stimulating one to think.

There are two difficulties attached to this practice. The first is that one may become absent-minded or sleepy. The second is that one will be distracted. To fight against sleepiness, I suggest that one only count the exhalations from one to ten. If this does not have the desired effect, then one can get up and walk around for a while and during the walk continue the breathing and the counting of it. Should one be making the exercises with others, he will not have this freedom of getting up and walking around as he pleases because it would disturb the others. In this case, one folds the hands before the breast asking the monk for a stroke of his stick. And this will usually prove helpful.

For the second difficulty (distractions) one is advised only to count the inhalations, the same way as was suggested for overcoming the first difficulty in regard to the exhalations. In both cases after the difficulty has been overcome, he should go back to the ordinary way of counting. But if he prefers to continue with counting only the exhalations or inhalations, he may do so.

After practising the *sūsokukan*, one can turn to a new method. After a couple of weeks one will have mastered the *sūsokukan* to the extent that he can do it automatically. Though one must not hurry like students studying a new

language who rush on to the next lesson without having mastered the previous one.

The new method is called *zuisokukan*. This consist sin not counting the breathing but only directing one's attention to it. When inhaling one thinks only of inhalation and when exhaling only of exhalation. By doing this the inhalation and the exhalation become one with the mind, hence the word *zuisokukan* which means, 'following up the breath'.

After this one may turn to the method called *shikantaza*, which means 'only to sit'. In this method one is absorbed with Za-zen and does not use other methods. Here one tries to think about nothing directly and without helps of any kind. Actually this is the end of the other methods too. If one can do without helps, then that is all the better. All these methods may be compared to a stick a man uses for climbing a mountain. If he does not need it, he leaves it behind.

If one finds from the beginning that he does not like the counting method, then he can try to get along without it. However, should he find himself in difficulty due to many distractions, then he had better take to the counting to overcome this difficulty. And it will have a good effect. Although there are many methods, one should try to stick to one method, just as one should follow one Zen master. 'Who runs after two hares will catch neither' was the way a Zen monk expressed this truth to me.

We have already said something of the *kōan* and here we should like to add a few more words on its application in Za-zen. In Zen itself there are many opinions about the use of the *kōan*. In the Rinzai sect of Zen, one receives a *kōan*

shortly after the first introductions. And as soon as the master thinks that the disciple has solved the *kōan* to a satisfactory extent he gives him another, then a third, etc. This goes on until the disciple gets enlightenment. Some Zen masters do not give *kōan* at all. Other masters take a middle course, first giving their disciples a workout in *susokukan* and *zuisokukan* and *shikantaza*. If the master should then judge that the disciple is determined to go as far as enlightenment, he will then give him a *kōan*. This *kōan* is to be always before one's mind, not just during Za-zen but night and day until one comes into enlightenment. Even after enlightenment one should consider this *kōan* to be one's own *kōan* and work with it all during his life. And for the different ways of working over a *kōan*, a Zen master is indispensable.

One of the best Zen masters in Japan today uses the *kōan* in a unique way.

Let us recall here the *kōan* we mentioned some time before. A monk asked the master, Chao-chou, if the nature of the Buddha is also in a little dog or not. The master answered, 'Nothing'. One does not know whether the Buddha-nature is in the puppy or not. This 'nothing' is the *kōan*. It is no yes and no no. Therefore, one should think nothing. In Japanese nothing is called *mu-ji* which means 'character-nothing'. This does not mean that one must present to his imagination the ideograph 'nothing' or the word 'nothing'. It means just 'nothing' quite objectively. One might say 'absolute emptiness'. In this sense one thinks the 'nothing'.¹

¹ This method has, psycho-technically, a striking likeness to the Hesychasm of the Eastern Church (*Jesusgebet*) by which the union of reason and heart is intended. Cf. Jacques-Albert Cottat, 'La Spiritualité de l'Orient chrétien' in *Le Rencontre des Religions* (Paris, 1957).

Before we suggest a practical programme a few practical hints are in order.

1. During Za-zen one should not do any reading. In the Za-zen hall any reading is strictly forbidden. In this Za-zen is different from ordinary meditation where one occasionally uses a book to help the memory or to stimulate the mind. In Za-zen the only object you think about is the *kōan* which is expressed in a very simple way and is thought over again and again, so much so that one does not forget it.

2. One should not practise Za-zen immediately after a meal but should wait about an hour. If one practises Za-zen several times during the day, then he should eat two-thirds of his usual meal, no more.

3. One meditation should be at least forty minutes long. If anyone makes many meditations in succession, then he should stand up between meditations and walk around for twenty minutes or rest in some other way. But this rest must not be a distraction. Even shorter meditations of five minutes or so have good results.

4. If one does not have a guide, he can try the meditations with the directions given here. Those who are leading a spiritual life and have some experience in it will profit from the Za-zen exercises, if they carry out the instructions faithfully. If one has success with the first methods, then progress will become easier because he will be able to see in which direction the goal lies. And even the best direction is only an imperfect description. However, one should not deceive himself. Until he discovers the footprint of the ox, he needs much perseverance. Certainly it will not be like what he imagined it would be like. Only experience can

teach what it is like and through this experience he will find himself more and more rewarded and will understand how he can grasp religious truths intuitively and more deeply by following this method. Thus everyone should be and should feel quite free to work things out according to his *Weltanschauung*. A Christian, for example, will look on God simply and with great spiritual profit. God, then, becomes his *kōan*, the riddle. He is the most incomprehensible and the most inconceivable. He is the One who can be seen only in higher contemplation and even there only dimly and in a dark manner.

5. How long the period of time will be before one reaches the goal is almost impossible to determine. The more zealous one is, the sooner he will reach enlightenment. Whoever practises Za-zen for several days in succession will come to it quickly. But one must first get into the proper physical position and keep this position faithfully. For the religious person, the pain involved will have its own reward if done out of religious motives. And if the pain proves to be too much, one may take up the *suwari* position or sit on a chair, preserving the rules outlined above.

Now for the practical programme of Za-zen.

1. One spreads one's blanket, puts a cushion on it and then sits on the cushion in such a way that the feet rest upon the blanket. Then the left foot is drawn towards the body in such a way that the outside of the knee touches the blanket. Now the right foot is put upon the left thigh, the sole of the foot turned upwards and the heel drawn up against the body. The right knee, as far as possible, is pressed down so that it touches the blanket. One may not succeed

in the beginning but, after practice, it will become easy. Then the upper part of the body is straightened in such a way that the tip of the nose and the navel are vertically one above the other. The chin should be drawn in so that one looks with eyes open at a spot about three feet from one's self on the floor. One should keep this position for five or ten minutes, making sure that the back is held erect. After a week or so, one will be able to hold this position rather easily.

2. After that one prolongs the daily meditations a few minutes each day and continues doing this for a couple of weeks, until one is able to sit without too much difficulty. In the beginning twenty minutes may be considered satisfactory. At the same time one should constantly be striving to get into the proper interior attitude. For this, it is good to start with the *sūsokukan*, the counting from one to ten. After one has practised this way of Za-zen for twenty minutes each day for three months he may then try to say slowly a prayer which has been memorized. Very simple prayers are to be preferred. One should pronounce each word with interior understanding, trying, so to speak, to look at the inside of the word. One may also try to look interiorly at God or Christ or any mystery of his life. If one is accustomed to make his meditation each day, he may, in order to save time, use the first twenty minutes for Za-zen, in the manner described, and the remaining time he can use for ordinary meditation. By doing this, his ordinary meditation will not suffer. For the ordinary meditation, if he takes a position different from the Za-zen position he must be sure to keep his back straight.

3. After three months counting will possibly become a burden. If so, continue Za-zen without counting but keep the attention on the inhaling and exhaling as was explained in *zuisokukan*. However, if desired, one may change from *sūsokukan* to *zuisokukan* earlier. Keep with the *zuisokukan* for about three months. If anyone can practise Za-zen more than twenty minutes a day, he should so so. It would be better, then, to spend twenty minutes in the morning at Za-zen and twenty minutes in the evening. The results will be more than doubled. At the end of each Za-zen, one should say a short prayer as mentioned in §2.

4. If one should want to use the 'nothing' for a *kōan*, one must think of nothing continually. One inhales deeply and exhales thoroughly. The exhaling should be longer than the inhaling. With the inhaling one pushes the 'nothing' down deeply into the belly until it is below the navel. At the same time one may pronounce the 'nothing' interiorly and if one is alone he may pronounce it aloud, dragging it out: noooooooooothing, pulling as long as possible with the exhaling. *Muuuuuuu* is much better than noooooooooothing.

In this exercise one can perhaps find a help in the Buddhist teaching of the different kinds of consciousness. According to Buddhism there are nine kinds of consciousness. The first six include all sense and spiritual states of consciousness, that is the five senses and the spiritual realm of consciousness. Below this complex of six lies the subconscious and below it is the eighth which is the warehouse of everything that one has ever experienced. Nothing, it is said, escapes this warehouse, even after a million years. This seems to be the empiric ego. On the deepest level is found the ninth, which may be called the consciousness of the absolute universe.

To reach there one must pierce through and destroy all other kinds of consciousness. The eighth one is most obstinate. In order to pierce it one must not deviate a jot but keep pushing and pushing the 'nothing' down. If one perseveres he will surely reach the ninth and, once touched, the spark leaps and there is enlightenment.

We do not intend to pass a scientific critical judgment on this Buddhistic psychology. But it certainly can help us to have the right attitude in Za-zen. One must stay with this *mu-ji*.

5. Should it have not been possible before, one should now try to take a few days off for Za-zen meditation. During this time one will practise Za-zen for several hours a day and the knee joints and other parts of the body will ache considerably, but in time the pain will cease with practice. The first exercise should be made in the morning before breakfast or before Mass, if one says it or attends it. However, it need not be at three in the morning as it is usually done in a temple. After breakfast one should interrupt the regime for an hour, and after that three sessions of meditations should follow of forty minutes each with an interval of twenty minutes between meditations. During the intervals one walks or rests, but he should not allow his thoughts to descend from the high level of Za-zen. After lunch and after an interruption of one hour, he should make three forty-minute meditations, the same way as was done in the morning. After supper and a rest, two more meditations, separated by an interval of rest, should be held. All told, this comes to nine meditations a day, which should be sufficient. One must keep in mind, though, that the rests in between the meditations should be not filled with

duties connected with his professional work. One should try to commit himself wholly to the spirit of Za-zen. Liturgical or other religious exercises, however, will not disturb one's Za-zen attitude. If possible, and to avoid sleepiness during the meditations, one should try to take a nap during the day. From five to seven days should be allotted to these exercises. Less than five days and one runs into the danger of ending the exercises just at the time he is about to enter the true spirit of Za-zen. Over seven days and one becomes too tired, not to mention the fact that his professional duties will suffer. Whoever observes these directions will, sooner or later, enter into the deep recollection which we have previously described. Gradually the experience of this recollection will occur more often, and one will grow into the facility of reaching it whenever one wants to. We are not now speaking of consolation in prayer, which is a special grace of God and utterly independent of one's own efforts. We are merely saying that, following these directions, one will enter this state of recollection, but, how far one succeeds in getting closer to God in a perceptible way is another question entirely and does not depend only on one's own efforts.

If one has acquired the skill of Za-zen recollection, then there are two ways open to him for his progress. The first way is to make use of this skill in his life of prayer. After entering the state of recollection, he can now make a meditation which is a meditation in the sense of contemplation. This meditation, however, should be made not only with the head, so to speak, but with the heart as well. This can be called a prayer of recollection or acquired contemplation in the sense that I previously described. But perhaps it

will be easier still to say an ejaculatory prayer, such as 'Jesus, have mercy on me', and to repeat it as often as one pleases. Even though prior to Zen meditation such ejaculatory prayers have often been used, they will take on a new power to unite us to God if they are spoken from the depths of the soul. Such fruit can certainly be obtained through the practice of Zen. However, it can also happen that a depth of the soul is reached where even ejaculatory prayers are felt to be disturbing, and where interior silence alone is the only fitting disposition of the soul. Whether God will lead one beyond this impasse depends on him alone.

The second fruit of this Za-zen recollection will be an ability to recollect one's self more easily, no matter what the distractions of everyday life are. This will be a great help for one's life of prayer and for one's professional life.

The third fruit is an ability to hold on to interior quiet and self-control in all adversities.

The fourth fruit is that annoying doubts, spiritual depression, fear, and other disturbing feelings disappear more and more.

The fifth fruit is an interior harmony and joy which gives permanent satisfaction and permits one to enjoy all good and beautiful things with one's whole being.

Needless to say, there is also a good effect on one's bodily health and professional work.

All these effects are felt before one enters enlightenment. In the beginning they are weak and irregular, but with practice they become stronger and more regular. If man would only use this method he would spare himself many problems and troubles. And the greatest of all results is the increasingly intimate union with God through prayer. The

dispositions of this first way can be suitably expressed by the opening words of a prayer of Father Lessius, S.J.:

I pray that You will turn my heart to You at the bottom of my soul, where, with the noise of creatures silenced and the clamour of bothersome thoughts ended, I shall stay with You, where I find You always present and where I love You and adore You.¹

The second way consists in holding back, restraining oneself from using the state of recollection for the purposes of contemplation and continuing to practise the 'nothing'. And one does this in order to come to enlightenment. One does not rest until he has enlightenment. Whereas the first way, as we have previously explained it, can be recommended to anyone who seriously wishes to use the Zen method, the second way cannot be recommended to Christians without some reservations. To be sure, as in the first way, so too in the second. The ascetical effects on one's striving for perfection and on one's dispositions towards prayer are the same; in fact, possibly even deeper, for, because of the greater reserve towards God, perhaps a still deeper union may be granted. Should this be the case, such a grace should be used. Apart from other reasons, a Christian would perform in this way a 'counter-act', so to speak, which would eliminate the danger to stop with the self, in the case of a true *satori*-experience. A Christian, of course, makes such 'counter-acts' in all his religious exercises, such as the liturgy and oral prayer. So, too, in the case of the

¹ Lessius, S.J., *De Perfectionibus divinis*, lib II, cap. 4, no. 28: 'Converte, obsecro, cor meum ad Te introrsum in fundum animae meae, ubi silente creaturarum strepitu et importunarum cogitationum cessante tumultu, Tecum commover, Te semper presentem cernam, Te amem et venerer.'

second way of using Zen meditation, such a 'counter-act' is necessary.

The question, now, is only this: will one ever get enlightenment? Will the professional man be able to spare the time to meditate? How many unavoidable circumstances will arise? Will one have the necessary perseverance? Can one do the Za-zen exercises by himself for seven days? All these are true difficulties.

Should one, then, be satisfied with the first method or should he choose the second method? We do not need to investigate that problem here. One should decide for himself. It is a matter for personal decision. One could, however, steer a middle course, using the first way when feasible and freely changing to the second way when that is practicable. An example of a practicable change to the second way would be the chance to consult with a Zen master. In that case success would be more likely. Unless the Zen practitioner is himself well versed in Christian doctrine, the Zen master himself should be a Christian—which will hardly be the case—or at least someone who in giving direction really abstains from problems of *Weltanschauung*. This is, in fact, more than a possibility; there are Zen masters in Japan who do give such direction, when Christians come to them for Za-zen. However, in Europe neither of these ideal forms of direction is likely to be possible. And so, for the sake of completeness, I am offering some directions for those, perhaps not a few, who could try Zen meditation with profit and without danger, in spite of the absence of a suitable director. But if one wishes to start with the second way, from the beginning, then he must practise the 'nothing' not only during the Za-zen exercises but also during his

professional work and in all his dealings with other men and, as one monk once said to me in the earthy and dramatic way common to Zen monks, even when going to the toilet. This monk also added that the 'nothing' should and could be continued even while sleeping. If this is done thoroughly, then enlightenment might possibly come at a time when one is not making Za-zen and when he would have least expected it. If one derives no benefit from the second way of Za-zen meditation, there is, of course, no objection to his reverting to the first way. It is not impossible that enlightenment can be obtained by the first way alone. But usually the attaining of authentic enlightenment is difficult even under the most favourable conditions; the individual with a natural propensity for such experiences is, of course, the exception to these generalizations.

In regard to the second way, we wish to call attention to two matters. One is the danger of thinking that one has enlightenment when, in reality, he does not. He may have undergone some very strong experiences with good effects, and everything that he had imagined to be attendant upon enlightenment seems to be verified. And yet it is not enlightenment. One should, therefore, remain humble and modest in relation to the experiences he has. He will soon get to know that what he had thought to be enlightenment is not enlightenment and will continue to persevere with confidence.

The second point for our attention is that one may run into the danger of (before or after enlightenment) being satisfied with the self in the self. The reason for this is simply that the enlightenment is so rich experientially that one at times gets a foretaste of it and remains there, satisfied with

the foretaste. For this reason it is imperative that one consult a spiritual director the more one advances. Even in Zen this is insisted upon. Without a guide one should not attempt to scale a high mountain. The spiritual director need not have had experience in Zen. It will be enough if he has a general knowledge of the spiritual life. With this knowledge he can guide his disciple away from dangerous pitfalls. Therefore, one should report to his spiritual director from time to time and should follow his advice. In this there will be no danger of going astray from God. Not the self in the self but the self in God must always be the aim. And any road that leads away from this is sure to end in ruin. The Islam mystics knew this to be so.

EPILOGUE

A FAITHFUL Christian may feel hesitant about venturing so far into the realm of another religion. This hesitancy is understandable but rather fainthearted. There is no dogma at stake in Za-zen, but only the development of the natural powers of the soul. The fact that these powers can be developed is undeniable, as is the fact that the way to enlightenment is open to everyone. The man of the West should, therefore, try to take possession of the achievements of the East in relation to enlightenment, just as the man of the East has adopted the technical advances of the West. The West will certainly find the adoption of the enlightenment of the East much more difficult than the East found the adoption of the West's science and technology to be. It is more difficult to enter into enlightenment when one has a dialectical mind than when one is not burdened with dialectical processes of thought. Nevertheless, the very difficulty of the hindrance to be overcome will prove to be the reason for an equally deep enlightenment. And the dialectical powers will be improved by enlightenment.

At present it looks as though the people of the East are stepping out of the stream of their traditional wisdom. They are neglecting it in order to master the wisdom of the West. The Japanese, for example, are more eager to master

the scientific techniques of the West than they are to attain enlightenment. On the other hand, the West is showing a desire for the enlightenment of the East.

Mutual understanding is the basis for the peaceful cooperation necessary to unite the world. And mutual understanding means learning from each other, the West from the East, the East from the West, not only theoretically but also practically. Soul speaks to soul, heart to heart, and in this dialogue all prejudices are dissolved and the more the noble future of man is assured. And this future will surely be one in which a new spiritual culture is born and valued above all material things.

