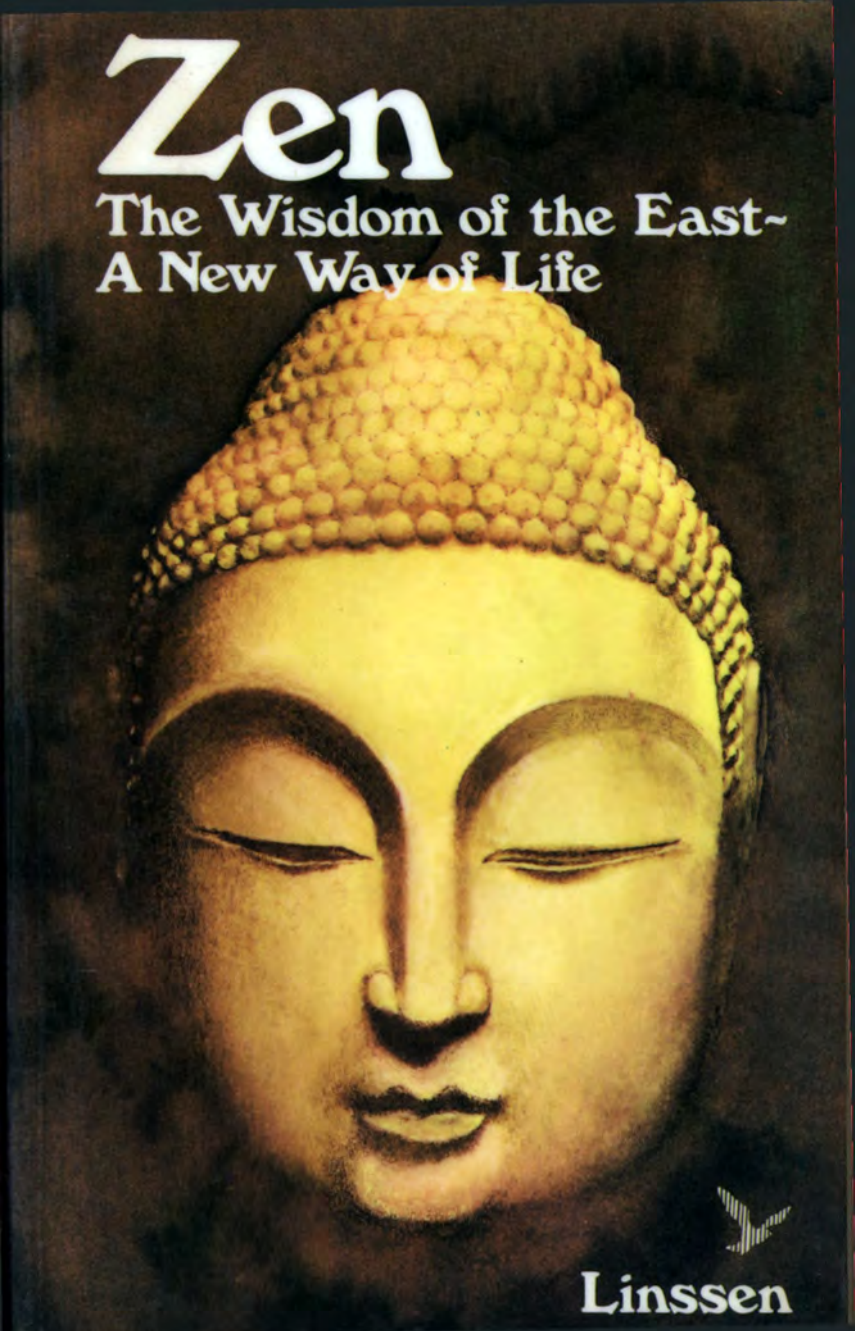
Zen

The Wisdom of the East~ A New Way of Life



Linssen

WHAT IS ZEN?

Zen Buddhism is the most concrete, yet most elusive of disciplines. It mocks intellectual understanding, yet has influenced some of the world's greatest thinkers. It makes a fool of reason, yet deals in hard practicality.

In one of the clearest, most comprehensive books ever written on Zen, oriental scholar Robert Linssen presents a philosophic and historic view. He guides the reader through Taoism, Confucianism, Amidism, Buddhism—the I Ching, satori, cosmic mind—the works of Lao Tzu, Alan Watts, D. T. Suzuki, Teilhard de Chardin. He shows how Zen affects painting, poetry, intellectual endeavor and everyday life. Superbly written and beautifully illustrated, this book opens a door to an exciting world of enlightenment and self-transformation.

Robert Linssen

Zen

The Wisdom of the East- A New Way of Life

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INTRODUCTION

The French academic, Jean Paulhan, once remarked that the appearance of Zen thought into the western world is quite as significant as the western assimilation of Cartesian thought. In a preface (devoted to the works of painter Georges Braque, an adept of Zen), Paulhan writes, while commenting in a work on the German philosopher Eugene Herrigel: 'It is difficult to speak of (Herrigel's) *Art of the Bow* as a book. I prefer to think of it as an event: one of the great events which will be the pride of our epoch (1)'.

At the same time, English writer Alan Watts, member of the American Academy of Asian Studies, has said that: 'The interest shown in Zen Buddhism has increased considerably during the last twenty years. Since the last World War the diffusion of Zen thought into the western world has developed to such a point that it has become an important factor in the intellectual and artistic life of the western world (2)'.

Noted psychologists and psychiatrists such as Dr Erich Fromm and Dr Harold Kelman (United States), Dr Sacha Nacht and Dr Hubert Benoit (France) contend that Zen can be of enormous help in modern psychology and psychoanalysis.

In a study of the work of American writer Henry Miller, Denise Greindl writes: 'The confrontation of Zen teachings has made a great difference to the life and work of Henry Miller. Miller once wrote that: 'This old world which I detest is in fact a world of magic and bewitchment since I have become enthused for inner silence wherein lies the inexhaustible (3)'.

Zen has had most success where it was most unexpected. The high rate of technological development within economically sound countries has given the latter a poor rhythm

(1) Jean Paulhan, Preface to *Tir a l'arc,* ed. Louis Broder, Paris, 1960.
(2) Alan W. Watts, *The Way of Zen,* ed. Thames & Hudson, London, 1957, p. 9.
(3) D. Greindl, *Etre Libre* Magazine, July, 1968, no. 236 (Brussels).

of life, characterized by a growing sense of anxiety. The art and literature of these countries expresses this fundamental anguish. Recent statistics reveal that suicides occupy the third place in the causes of human mortality.

Can Zen help us with valuable solutions to the problems engendered by our modern civilization? It is difficult to say, though Zen can bring, when it is practised seriously, an inner relaxation amidst the most intense outside activity, and this of course is one of its most precious benefits and one which has prompted many Westerners to adopt Zen. Another cause for Zen's increased popularity could be that people now question the values which preside in western civilization and are searching for an inspiration.

The age of technology has brought with it disadvantages for man. This is not to throw discredit on the achievements of science in our age. But Zen advocates (as Socrates did) the necessity to know ourselves fully in order to establish in ourselves a psychological maturity. This should be emphasized just as much as progress in technology. The proper use of such power as atomic energy depends on our inner evolution. Zen and modern psychology teach us that ignorance of ourselves and the deep nature of all things orients us towards abnormal and inadequate behavior. Our sense of spiritual values are degraded under the influence of a too intellectualized development. Intellectuality and spirituality are not synonymous.

Zen recommends to us to listen not to theories but to the facts in all circumstances. Evidence in medical magazines from the United States, and other western countries, tell us that many business executives are 'finished' at forty-five or fifty years of age. Nervous depressions and suicides are ravaging countries with high-living standards and booming economies. Technical progress results thus, and the problem of the accelerating of rhythms in living will soon be a world problem as poorer countries become more prosperous. If this is not resolved, nervous and psychic disorders will become widespread.

The safeguard of physical and psychic equilibrium for man depends on one condition set forth by Zen: to remain inwardly free while developing intense activity on the outside.

How can we do this? By constant exercise of a certain quality of attention and a vigilance of the mind. We shall try to show you the way to do this, though it is not easy to write on the subject of Zen. Lao Tzu, evoking the Reality which Zen brings, has said: 'The one who knows it can not speak of it and the one who speaks of it can not know it'.

Zen, Taoism and Buddhism are the culmination of human thought realized in a psychological climate completely different from ours, by people whose sensitivities, ways of thinking and values are not familiar to us.

For us the comprehension of Zen means that we must adapt ourselves so that a kind of inner bond can be realized within ourselves. The inner voyage undertaken to learn the wisdom of Zen is perhaps the healthiest and most vital of all adventures. According to the eastern sages, we travel to 'the other bank of the ocean of the Being, at the heart of ourselves'. Unknown horizons are revealed to us, where the divine and the human are the same.

N.B. The fundamental inspiration of this work was provided by Ch'an Buddhism which spread in China between the 4th and 10*th centuries A.D. The title should perhaps have been 'Ch'an and Zen' since Zen is the extension of Ch'an Buddhism in Japan. It should also be mentioned that Ch'an is a direct emanation of Mahayana Buddhism from India, mixed with Taoism.*

It is quite impossible to dissociate Zen from the three other schools of thought which will be mentioned here. We have used the term 'Zen' because it is the best known in the west. This expression has become the symbol for a current of thought becoming more and more popular in the United States and Europe. The reader will benefit in his understanding of Zen by knowing that Indian Mahayana Buddhism, Taoism and Ch'an all figure prominently in Zen thought.

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ORIGINS AND HISTORY

CHAPTER I

Indian Thought Before Buddhism

Before embarking on the study of Zen Buddhism, a panoramic view of the principal currents of Indian thought is necessary. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, it was in India that Buddhism initially appeared, and secondly, Buddhism is in part a reaction against the ritual practices, sacrifices and superstitions of the Vedic epoch and against certain notions of Brahmanism.

Indian thought largely emanates from a mixture of two currents: yoga, established before the Vedic period and Brahmanism, which belongs to the period of the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Vedanta.

1. Yoga

Professor Masson-Oursel points out that the Science of Yoga comes well before the Vedas, even though it may have been mingled with Vedic and non-Vedic currents. At the time of the Mohenjo Daro excavations in the Indus basin, the John Marshall expedition discovered ceramics, still intact, dating from about five thousand years ago. On them are found representations of the various postures or asanas of Yoga and some manifestations of the cult of Shiva. At that time India was at the height of the sacrificial period of its religious history.

What is Yoga? The Sanskrit root *yuj* means to join. The yogi is *joined,* he has bound together and harmonized all the different parts of his being. Yoga is more of a discipline than a current of thought. It is only later that it takes on both of these aspects. Yoga, Professor Masson-Oursel tells us, is a discipline of psycho-physiological behavior. It is the permanent

basis of Indian culture[1]. Later on it mingles with Brahmanism, Jainism, Buddhism and in fact with most schools of Indian thought.

As a discipline of psycho-physiological behavior, Yoga can be classed with most of the variants of religious thought. As proof of this we have the fact that it is practised by numerous Catholic priests in the West.

It is from the time of Patanjali, between the 2nd and 5th centuries, that Yoga underwent one of the main attempts at codifications in the form of the famous Yoga-Sutras. This may be traced in the work of the American scholar of Indian culture, James Houghton Woods[2]. The text of the book is made up of four chapters: 1. Concentration, its use in spiritual life; 2. Practical concentration; 3. Psychic and spiritual powers; and 4. Independence.

In the beginning of the history of Yoga, in a period which some authors place between 3000 and 5000 B.C., Yoga is a discipline of psycho-physiological behavior. It then mixes with the Vedic and non-Vedic streams of thought. Since the time of the first Upanishads it has been inserted between rites and gnosis. In the course of the later, more elaborate Upanishads, the Vedanta and the works of Patanjali, we see the emergence of a plurality of Yogas.

As Professor Jean Herbert writes[3]: 'For the purposes of Yoga, the Hindus divide men into several categories, according to the predominance in them of conscious intellectual activity, the need of work, discernment, affective aspiration, thirst for ascesis, etc'. To each of these categories corresponds one of the principal Yogas.

In the assiduous search for unity, man can grapple directly with the infinite multiplicity of the cosmos in order to embody it into a single whole or to reduce it to a single essence. This is the Jnana-Yoga or the Yoga of knowledge.

If one takes one's self as the object of study and analysis, one must also disassociate oneself from all that is subordinate and incidental (physical body, thoughts, feelings, desires, etc.). One must also disassociate oneself from all that

1. Professor Masson-Oursel, *Yoga,* P.U.F., Paris, 1954, pp. 9 and 13
2. J. H. Woods, *The Yoga System of Patanjali,* Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge, 1914
3. Jean Herbert, *Spiritualité hindoue,* Albin Michel, Paris, 1949, p. 355

constitutes to us the outside world, directing our minds inwards. These are the essential outlines of Raja-Yoga. Its aim is to grasp the very essence of our true being, firstly in its coarsest manifestations, and then in its most subtle.

Karma-Yoga is the Yoga of action. Its aim is to achieve the gratuitousness and total unselfishness of action.

Bhakti-Yoga is the Yoga of devotion and of love. It involves the eradication of the difference between the imperfect being that we know ourselves to be and the absolute perfection that we wish to realize in ourselves. In the minor forms of Bhakti-Yoga, the yogi personifies his ideal in a *God* whom he fashions to his taste (ishta devata) and strives to achieve total union with him by means of love and adoration. In the superior forms of Bhakti-Yoga, the yogi raises himself to the level of divine realization by the progressive dispossession of objects of love. He retains intact and alive the flame of human love while at the same time liberating it from all attachments in order to eventually achieve total disinterestedness. At the peak of Bhakti-Yoga is Para-Bhakti. At this stage there is no longer any duality between the worshipper and the object of his worship. The yogi attains the state of love 'which is his own eternity' according to the expression of Krishnamurti.

In Hatha-Yoga, the yogi seeks to effect the fusion of two classes of psychic current, prana and apana, absorption and rejection, the duality of which creates the differentiated life. However, the grand masters of modern India, such as Sri Aurobindo, teach that the perfect spiritual awakening is obtained by the synthesis of all Yogas.

2. Brahmanism

Professor Masson-Oursel explains, 'Yoga has the stamp of Brahmanism in its Sutras, the Sutras of Patanjali[4]'.

It is necessary for our study to examine summarily the nature of Brahmanism which, combined with Yoga, preceded the advent of Buddhism. Professor Masson-Oursel writes[5]:

4. Professor Masson-Oursel, op. cit., p. 51
5. Ibid., op. cit., p. 36

'The use of Yoga by the theoreticians of Veda very soon developed into Brahmanism . . . In the ancient and strict sense, Brahmanism is the theory and practice of ritual efficiency, of which the Brahman caste retain the monopoly and of which the methods are described in detail in the brahmanas'.

Brahmanism embodies the teaching of the Vedas, the Upanishads and the various schools of Indian thought, such as Vedanta, Samkhya, etc. The first origins of the Vedic cult are obscure. Noticeable are Sumero-Dravidian and Iranian influences. The Iranian Zend Avesta pays homage to the God of Cosmic Light. 'The Vedic Vishnu was the omnipenetration of Light[6]'.

The Vedas are considered as teachings revealed by Sages or Seers. The Sanskrit root of the term *Veda* i, the same as that of the verb *to see.* There is the same demand for an art of seeing in the doctrines of Mahayana Buddhism, Ch'an Buddhism and Zen.

The most ancient of the Vedas is the Rig Veda, meant to have been revealed at the time of the Chandas period of Indian history between 1500 and 1000 B.C. It deals with various rites and sacrifices. The Rig Veda is followed by Sama Veda, Yajur Veda and Atharva Veda, generally dating from the Brahmanic period of Indian history between 1000 and 800 B.C.

Each Veda is divided into two parts. The first part concerns the rites and diverse practices of ceremonial magic; the whole of these teachings together bears the name Karma-Kanda. The second part, which is more important in the later Vedas, concerns problems of spiritual life. This in Jnana Kanda.

A large number of Vedic teachings are found in the Upanishads. There are more than a hundred of these but only eleven of them are studied in the Vedanta. The main Upanishads have the names Brihadaranyaka, Chandogya, Taittiriya, Katha, Maitri, Prashna, Mundaka, Kena, Isha, Aitareya and Mandukya. The term 'Upanishad' evokes the fact of listening in a sitting position. It designates the

6. Ibid, op. cit., p. 42

teachings given by masters or gurus to their pupils sitting around them, usually in the forests. The metaphysics and gnosis of the Upanishads, in Brahmanism, followed after ritual techniques.

Between the 3rd century B.C. and the 3rd century A.D., Indian thought was divided into various different schools and great encyclopedias were elaborated, such as the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, which were extended by the Puranas. Gradually the six principal currents of this increasingly elaborate system of thought were formulated. These are: Nyaya, Samkhya, Vaisheshika, Yoga, Mimansa, and Vedanta.

These six modes of Indian thought, or 'darshanas', are complementary. As A. K. Coomaraswamy[7] writes: 'The six darshanas of the later Sanskrit philosophy are not really *systems,* mutually exclusive, but rather as their name shows, they are *points of view* which do not contradict each other any more than do botany and mathematics'.

Side by side with Samkhya and Yoga, Vedanta may be considered as one of the summits of Indian thought. Three variant forms developed out of its original substance. The best known is that of Advaita Vedanta whose founder is the famous Shankaracharya. It is a form of integral monism: for all eternity, man and the universe are the sole, indivisible Brahma, 'the one without a second' (a-dvaita). Spiritual awakening is realized through the discovery of the real nature of man and the world, whose essence is divine.

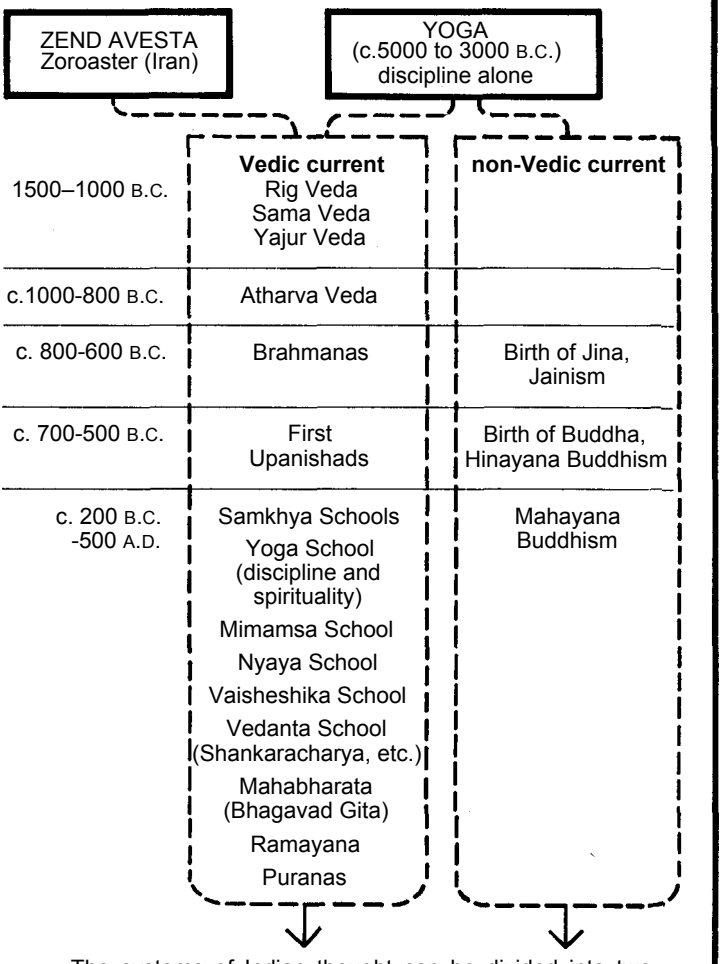
Indisputable similarities exist between Brahmanism, especially Advaita Vedanta, and Buddhism. However one need not adopt the point of view of the Indian scholar, A. K. Coomaraswamy, who writes: 'Buddhism differs so much from Brahmanism that it is studied more superficially'. The author, although very well-known, pretends to ignore the historical importance of the Buddha.

Although there are similarities there are also important differences between Buddhism and Brahmanism. They appear less clearly if one takes for point of comparison the Indian Buddhism of the Small Vehicle (Hinayana) and Brahmanism. When we compare the latter with the Buddhist teachings of

7. A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Hinduism and Buddhism,* Gallimard, Paris, 1949, p. 16

the Great Vehicle (Mahayana) and its developments in China under the form of Ch'an Buddhism, the divergences are considerable. Numerous forms of Brahmanism teach the existence of a supreme and permanent Self, the Atman. Certain schools present the existence of a *monad* or individual divine spark at the heart of every living being. Buddhism denies categorically the whole notion of Atman, of superior or inferior Self. As we shall eventually see, this negation does not lead us to nothingness but rather to the discovery of a different fullness to that with which we are familiar.

The Indian Philosophical Schools



The systems of Indian thought can be divided into two currents: the Vedic current influenced by the Iranians, and the non-Vedic. Yoga considered as a physical discipline, has influenced both currents of thought. It was not systematized until the time of Patanjali.

CHAPTER II

Short History of Buddhism

Zen is an extension of Mahayana (Great Vehicle) Buddhism, of Ch'an and of Taoism. A short look at the history of Buddhism and Taoism will help in understanding some notions of these disciplines.

The Buddha was born at Kapilavastu, the capital of the Kingdom of the Cakyas in Northern India, about 560 B.C. The date of this birth varies according to the traditions and authors. The Indian tradition gives 543 B.C. and other specialists say 483 B.C. An author, whose authority is undeniable, has just published a work entitled *The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India*[1]. The author, D. D. Kosambi, states that many legends have surrounded the birth and life of the Buddha and gives us, for the first time, a new and quite unexpected version of the circumstances in which the life of the master of Buddhism was passed.

The Buddha's father is meant to have been a simple peasant. He worked the fields himself and was elected the administrative leader of the Cakyas tribe. An important fact, of which the consequences are stressed by certain specialists, is that the ancestors of the Cakyas are meant to have been not Indians but in fact Mongols. Doctor Andre Migot's[2] thesis on this subject is most interesting.

Then again, some Nepalese scholars think that before the coming of the Buddha six hermits had carried out an experiment very similar to his own. Although linked to Brahmanism by their origins, they broke away from its rites and from certain of its beliefs.

The most widespread historical version presents the Buddha as a prince called Gautama Siddharta, son of the queen Maya

1. D. D. Kosambi, *The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India,* Routledge & Kegan, London, 1965
2. Dr. A. Migot, *The Buddha,* Club Francais du Livre, Paris, 1957

Devi and Sudbhodana, king of the Cakyas. The kingdom of the Cakyas formed a small state situated at the foot of the Himalayas, in a region which is now part of Nepal. The legend tells that the mother of Buddha, the queen Maya Devi, loved the palace of Kapilavastu and the immense park which abounded in ravishing exotic flowers. The king Sudbhodana adored her and they longed to have a beautiful child. At times the young husband would caress his wife's beautiful hair and ask her about her dreams:

'Have you ever dreamed that we would have a child?'

'Yes', she said, and her smile had the quality of ecstasy. She had seen a star of the sky, the color of pink pearl, with six beams of light, on which a white elephant walked, white as the nectar of the Hindu gods.

'And what was the star doing?' asked the husband, eager to learn the end of the story.

'It glided through space and entered my breast!'

A superhuman happiness filled the couple that evening and they went to sleep wishing that this vow be realized!

The days passed: an immense peace spread around the royal couple and a great joy in the land. The dream had been made public and everyone believed it. At last, the queen announced that she was pregnant. Her people acclaimed her and felt that the child would deliver men from ignorance and suffering.

When the pregnancy was at an end, the queen found herself alone under a giant tulip-tree in her garden, she had stretched herself out on a palankeen and felt the moment of delivery approach. Thousands of flowers sprang up of their own accord to hide her, and from the rock flowed the cool water she thirsted for. Without pain, she gave birth to her son who indeed bore the thirty-two signs of blessed birth.

When almost twenty-nine years old, although he was married and the father of a son, Gautama Siddharta left his palace and lived the life of wandering monks called *sannyasins.* Every precaution had been taken throughout the prince's life to spare him the sight of anything connected with pain, misery, sickness and death.

However the time came when, after living a life of

pleasure, he made an unexpected encounter. Having escaped the vigilant surveillance over him, he took a walk outside his palace. By a curious coincidence, he saw, all in the same day, an emaciated old man, a sick man, a corpse and a monk. The sight of the suffering which had been so carefully concealed from him aroused deep thoughts in his mind. The realization of the non-permanence of all things, of the fact of misery and death, directed him towards the study of spiritual problems.

He went to study with the Brahmans, the scholars, and frequented various schools of philosophy, but was disappointed. The Buddha then engaged in a series of practical ascetics. His mortifications brought him no benefit, despite the harsh experience he had of them. The intensity and the fervor of the spiritual research of the Buddha are evoked in the *Lalita Vistara.*

The *Lalita Vistara* is a biography of the Buddha edited by the masters of the Mahasanghika school of Buddhism. It tells of a vow that the Buddha made before attaining his illumination[3]: 'Were my skin to dry up, were my hand to wither away, were my bones to dissolve, as long as I could not penetrate knowledge I would not budge from this seat'.

Illumination or *interior awakening* came to him, according to tradition, while he was sitting in meditation at the foot of the Bodhi tree. The Buddha sought the key of the great mysteries of existence, of life and of death, in himself and through himself. It was necessary for him to forget everything in order to better follow the direction of his own mind. Vigilant concentration permitted him to discover the fundamental cause and the meaning of all existence including his own. He arrived at the experience of Nirvana and was henceforth called Buddha, which means *The Enlightened One.*

At the time of his first sermon at Benares, the Buddha declared[4]: 'Monks, know that all existence is only pain: birth is pain, old age is pain. As is death, union with that which one does not love, or separation from that which we

3. M. Percheron, Le *Bouddha et le bouddhisme,* du Seuil, Paris, pp. 26 and 31
4. M. Percheron, op. cit.

do love, and the impossibility of satisfying one's desire. The origin of this universal pain is the thirst for existence, the thirst for the pleasure experienced by the five exterior senses, and even the thirst for death'.

One of the Buddha's statements illustrates well the enigmatic quality he gave to his origin and his existence. When he was asked what was his lineage, he replied[5]: 'I am not a Brahman, I am not the son of a prince, I am not a townsman and, really, I am not anyone'.

Shortly after his illumination, he met five Brahmans who went up to him and, recognizing him, said to him: 'Cakya Muni! Welcome'. The Buddha lifted his hand and said: 'I am no longer Cakya Muni, but the Buddha. Lend an attentive ear to my words. I want to preach to you the doctrine by which you will attain salvation. For salvation has been found[6]'.

'Before everything else I have fixed my thought on a single point. And when it was fixed there I attained the first meditation, free from vicious and corrupt doctrines, and accompanied by judgment, action and memory, and endowed with the joy and well-being which are born of spirit.

'Then, suppressing judgment and action, I attained the second meditation which is accompanied by memory and endowed with the joy and the well-being of the spirit. And I remained there.

'Suppressing the joy and well-being born of the spirit, and retaining only the well-being born of the body, and memory, I attained the third meditation and remained there.

'Then, having abandoned the well-being born of the body, and memory, I attained the fourth meditation, which comprises wholly pure contemplation . . . and I remained there.

'He who recognizes the Doctrine will be pure among all . . . peace will never leave him again but will follow his footsteps.

'The *ego* alone is cause of all illusion and of all evil. And yet it is nothing but a slight feverish shadow. Whilst truth is salutary, sublime and eternal[7]'.

5. Ed. Conze, *Buddhist Texts,* B. Cassirer, Oxford, 1954, p. 105
6. Cl. Aveline, *Le merveilleuse légende du Bouddha,* Artisan du Livre, Paris, 1928, p. 135
7. Cl. Aveline, op. cit., p. 136, 141

The Buddha devoted himself to preaching for almost fifty years. His influence was considerable Among his disciples were the flower of India and several kings. He died at the age of eighty-one. He had refused to listen to the advice of his disciples begging him to stop and take care of himself. Knowing how difficult it is for most men to liberate themselves totally from sentimental worship and realizing their need for gods conceived in their own image, the Buddha said to his cousin Ananda:

'This thought, Ananda, might well occur to you: the word of the Master is no longer, we no longer have a Master. This is not the way you should think. The doctrine and the discipline which I have taught to you, therein is your Master once I have disappeared.

'Hear me, I tell you this, that dissolution is inherent in all formations. Work unremittingly towards your own salvation[8]'.

When the Buddha died, about 480 B.C., various monastic communities formed in Northeast India. Some authors place their formation two or three centuries later. The doctrine taught by the Master was not immediately set down in writing, the monks transmitted it orally for several centuries. The Indian scholars estimate that the first Buddhist scriptures did not appear until about three or four centuries after the death of the Buddha.

The Buddha did not intend to found a rigid and codified religious system. It is the successors or disciples who have refounded his teachings, insisting on certain aspects which they think should be stressed more than others.

This is the role played by Sariputra, especially. The tradition tells us that he entered the religious life at an early age, under the direction of Sanjaya, an integral sceptic. He made contact with the teachings of Buddhism shortly afterwards and obtained illumination in the two weeks following his entry into the order. Sariputra was a great scholar. The Buddhist authors attribute to him a certain interior dryness linked with the over-analytical tendencies of his mind.

Although he died six months before the Buddha, his fashion

8. A. David-Neel, *Buddhism,* du Rocher, Monaco, 1947, p. 6

of understanding the doctrine inspired Buddhist communities for fifteen to twenty generations. However the Abhidharma of which he was the founder did not receive unanimous support among monks. Among the opponents to the interpretations of Sariputra, let us mention the Sautrantika group whose influence was greater. Ananda, one of Buddha's oldest disciples, also had an important role to play.

Numerous Buddhist traditions present Mahakasyapa and Ananda as the first two successors of the Buddha. Professor D. T. Suzuki relates the succession of the Buddha in the following way:

'The Buddha was one day on the Mount of Vultures, preaching to a congregation of disciples. He did not resort to a long verbal harangue to explain the subject he was treating. He simply raised up before the assembly a bouquet of flowers that one of his disciples had offered to him Not a word left his mouth. No one understood the meaning of this attitude except the venerable Mahakasyapa who smiled serenely at the Master, as if he fully understood the meaning of this silent teaching.

'The Buddha, noticing this, solemnly proclaimed: "I have the most precious spiritual treasure which at this moment I am transmitting to you, O venerable Mahakasyapa[9]'.

The Buddhist master placed little importance on the historical or legendary reality of this anecdote. Mahakasyapa's succession to the Buddha as chief of the faith is generally admitted. Certain allusions to this happening are found in the writings of Chinese historians. A Chinese monk called Chih Chu has written a work entitled *Pao Lin Chuan,* discovered about 1930. It indicates a succession of several patriarchs. The most complete study of the succession, of the variants of which we are reproducing, has been made by Yampolsky[10].

The succession of the Buddha is generally presented as follows:

9. D. T. Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism,* Albin Michel, Paris, vol. I, p. 299 (Luzac, London, 1927; Rider, London, 1949)
10. Yampolsky, *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch,* Colombia U.P., 1967

1. The Buddha
2. Mahakasyapa
3. Ananda
4. Shanavasa
5. Upagupta
6. Dhritaka
7. Micchaka
8. Budha Nandi
9. Bodha Mitra
10. Bhikshu Parshva
11. Punya Yashas
12. Ashvagosha
13. Bhikshu Kapimala
14. Nagarjuna
15. Kanadeva
16. Arya Rahulata
17. Samgha Nandi
18. Samgha Yashas
19. Kumarata
20. Jayata
21. Vasubandhu
22. Manura
23. Haklenayashas
24. Bhikshu Simba
25. Vashasita
26. Punyamitra
27. Prajnatara
28. Bodhidharma

The Scriptures

The Buddhist Scriptures are generally divided into *vinayas* dealing with monastic discipline, and *dharmas* or *Sutras* which expound the doctrine.

A Sutra is a text which the Buddhist tradition considers as formulated by the Buddha himself It often begins with the words: 'Thus have I heard at one time . . . When the Master was living at . . . The first person here usually designates Ananda, the main disciple of the Buddha who reported all the Master's words. However, in India all of the writings of very great masters are considered to be Sutras. Such is the case of the Sutras of Patanjali.

As for the *Sastras,* which must be distinguished from the Sutras, these are works written by a known author. They can be considered as commentaries possessing less authority than the Sutras.

In the eyes of most Buddhists, one thing above all was important: to live the Dharma, and so attain salvation and illumination. The importance of texts was secondary. A section of Buddhist scholars tended in spite of this to attach themselves to the texts with ever-increasing rigidity. These facts produced two opposing tendencies. Their differences, though slight in the beginning, became more marked in the

course of centuries and different schools were formed.

Among the most important of these were the Ancient School of Wisdom or Hinayana Buddhism and the New School of Wisdom or Mahayana Buddhism. Within the bounds of these two great schools, different sects have been set up. Those who have made a special study of this generally set down the following as the most important differences[11].

1. In Hinayana Buddhism, also called Small Vehicle (based on texts written in Pali language), Nirvana (or experience of spiritual illumination) can only be realized outside the Samsara (manifest world and wheel of successive births and deaths). The schools of the Small Vehicle are generally attached to texts and rituals. They are less supple and less adaptable They often teach that Nirvana is inaccessible during physical life.
2. According to the school of the Great Vehicle or Mahayana Buddhism, Nirvana and Samsara are the opposite but complementary sides of a single and same reality. There is no opposition or separation between mind and matter. The superior schools of the Great Vehicle, including Ch'an and Zen, tend to disengage themselves from the control of texts and rites. They advise active participation in life while insisting on detachment from material appearances. Nevertheless certain sects of Mahayana Buddhism have become deformed by mixing with rites, magic practices and sorcery.

   About four centuries after the Buddha's death, the literature of Mahayana began to develop. The Prajna-paramita means literally the fact of going beyond wisdom. Certain Tibetan authors, such as the Yongden Lama tell us that the first texts of the Mahayana are supposed to date from the first and second centuries of our era. The first translations of the Prajnaparamita Sutras have been done in China by Kumarajiva. Ch'an and Zen are adaptations of these doctrines in China and Japan respectively.

   The authors generally consider three groups important among the Scriptures which have survived up to the present time.

11. A. David-Neel, op. cit., p. 223

1. The Pali Tripitaka: contains the Scriptures of a school of Hinayana Buddhism (Small Vehicle) known by the name of Theravada. It is written in Pali.
2. The Chinese Tripitaka. According to an ancient catalog dating from 518 A.D., the Chinese Tripitaka contained 2113 works of which 276 survive today.
3. The Tibetan Kanjur and Tanjur.
   The Tibetan Kanjur contains a hundred volumes; Among these, 13 deal with Vinaya or monastic discipline, 21 comprise the Prajnaparamita Sutras devoted to spiritual life, 45 are medleys and 21 are devoted to tantrism (mixture of Buddhism, Yoga and sometimes magic).
   The Tanjur, composed of 225 volumes, is made up of diverse commentaries and Sastras.

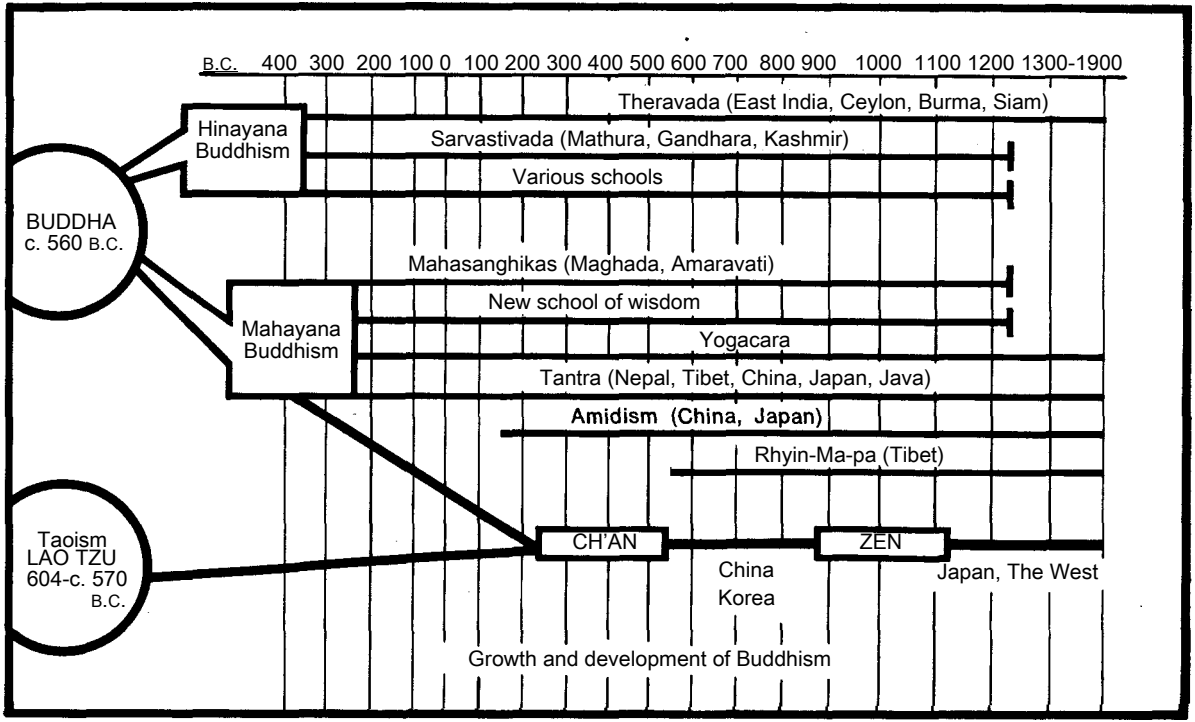
Subdivision of the texts and schools

The diversity of the texts, the great difference in the importance accorded to them by Buddhists, and their many shades of interpretation, have brought about the subdivision of schools and consequently the writing of new texts. Specialists often consider that these subdivisions result from the very individual character of a rule of conduct promulgated by the Buddha in the Paranibbana Sutra[12]: 'Be for your selves your own flame and support. Let the truth be your flame and support, do not seek any other support. He who, from this moment, or after I have disappeared, is his own flame and his own support, will be a real disciple of mine, a disciple who knows how to conduct himself well'.

By its very potent character, such a precept accords the current Buddhism at any given era to him alone. Mahayana Buddhism seems to have completely accepted this whereas Hinayana seems to want to entrench itself in a climate more concerned about orthodoxy.

Hinayana or Small Vehicle split into two branches. The first, known by the name of Theravada, originated in eastern India and still is dominant in Ceylon, Burma and Thailand. The second branch, known by the name of Sarvastivada was

12. A. David-Neel, op. cit., p. 6


B.C. 400 300 200 100 0 100 200 300 400 500 600 700 800 900 1000 1100 1200 1300-1900
Theravada (East India, Ceylon, Burma, Siam)
Hinayana Buddhism
Sarvastivada (Mathura, Gandhara, Kashmir)
Various schools
BUDDHA c. 560 B.C.
Mahasanghikas (Maghada, Amaravati)
New school of wisdom
Mahayana Buddhism
Yogacara
Tantra (Nepal, Tibet, China, Japan, Java)
Amidism (China, Japan)
Rhyin-Ma-pa (Tibet)
Taoism LAO TZU 604-c. 570 B.C.
CH'AN
ZEN
China
Korea
Japan, The West
Growth and development of Buddhism

established in Western India and developed in the regions of Gandhara, Mathura and Kashmir.

The New School of Wisdom or Mahayana was formed in a more precise fashion between the second and first century B.C. Most authors have differing opinions on the subject of these dates. Mahayana issued from a branch known by the name of Mahasanghika (the great assemblies). The latter would have come directly from the original doctrine. During the reign of the emperor Asoka about 240 B.C., Mahasanghika broke away from an ancient conservative tendency, Sthaviravada, and its development became important. Four centuries afterwards, Mahayana gave rise to the Madhyamika tendency founded about 150 A.D. by Nagarjuna and Aryadeva. Between the 4th and 5th centuries the important school of the Yogacaras was formed, which is preceded by the strong personality of Ashvagosha (2nd century) and of Asanga.

The term Yogacara signifies practice of Yoga training, with the underlying intention of obtaining Buddhist ends: individual salvation and zeal for the salvation of others. The Yogacaras represent one of the most elevated forms of Indian Buddhism. They soar to the pinnacle of idealist discipline in *pure thought.* Their thesis, called vijnavanavadin, is in many ways linked with Berkeley's motto, *esse est percipere aut percipi.*

Such affinities merit the attention of historians of philosophy. The passage from the pure idealism of Berkeley to the idealism according to Fichte and Novalis (constructive and absolute idealism) is found in 7th century India. It was then that the Abhidharmakoca of Vasubandhu (Great Vehicle) was followed by the thought of his brother Asanga, which is recorded in the Mahayana Sutralamkara[13].

Tantric Buddhism came last. Professor Masson-Oursel writes[14]: 'The last three centuries of what we in the West call the Middle Ages terminates this vast speculative effort: the spiritual vocations of India; the 16th century there is almost quite barren. The fall of Vijayanagar (1565) marks

13. Bréhier, *Histoire de la philosophic,* supplementary number, *La philosophie en Orient,* P.U.F., 1948, pp. 102–104
14. Professor Masson-Oursel, op. cit., pp. 62–64

the final political decay of a civilization which objected to politics . . . The spiritual literature of this final period is called tantric'.

The *tantras* are sectarian treatises on ritual and liturgy. Some concern the cult of Vishnu, these are called samhita; others concern the cult of Shiva, these are the agama. There exists a third variety: the Shakta cult. These three varieties of tantras are Brahmanic but they have profoundly influenced the Buddhist tantras. They have had latterly an unfortunate reputation of abstruseness and obscenity. Up to then, Buddhism confined itself to preaching continence, and the Brahmans to esteeming the mastery of the senses. The tantric yogi, Brahman or Buddhist, possesses absolute mastery of sexual energy. He uses it to transmute it into psychic or spiritual energy. He 'knows how to check sexuality because he has a virtuoso's command of it'.

Tantrism developed in numerous different forms in Nepal, China, Tibet, Japan, Java and Sumatra.

CHAPTER III

The Development of Buddhism in China

Buddhism could not continue in India. The Buddha's teachings denounced superstitions, magic practices which were very widespread in the Vedic epochs, and as well, some of the ideas of Brahmanism. Some Indian authors, such as H. Inayat Khan, master of Sufism, consider Buddhism as a reaction against the practices of brahmans. Having known an extensive period of development in India and having favored one of the most beautiful civilizations of history in the reign of the emperor Asoka (c. 274–236 B.C.), Buddhism then witnessed its influence decline rapidly. Numerous persecutions on the part of Moslems and brahmans forced the monks, especially of the Great Vehicle, to expatriate themselves towards China,

Although Buddhism developed in India, it is undoubtedly in China that it knew the highest summit of its development in the form of Ch'an Buddhism. The progressive expulsion of Buddhism out of India and its unparalleled burgeoning in China give more and more weight to the argument put forward recently by certain authors. According to this argument the deep psychology of Buddhism was foreign to that of India. It was more far-eastern than Indo-European. Some authors, such as Dr. Andre Migot[1], emphasize the Mongolian origins of the ancestors of the Cakyas lineage. Of course, at the time of the birth of the Buddha, the Cakyas spoke an Aryan language and called themselves Aryan. However, the Sanskrit term *arya* means free born or of noble character, and indicates a caste more than a race. For her part Mme. A. David-Neel[2] states that 'the real natives of Nepal—the

1. Dr. A. Migot, op. cit.
2. A. David-Neel, op. cit., p. 2

Newars—are of yellow-skinned race'. It is curious to note that Buddhism attains the culminating point of its evolution in the 8th century in China through masters belonging to rather similar ethnic groups. The embalmed face of Hui Neng, the sixth patriarch of Ch'an, exhibited at the Chinese monastery of Ts'ao Ch'i, is particularly eloquent in this respect.

About the year 65 of our era two Indian monks, Matanga and Bhorana, introduced Buddhism into China in the town of Loyang. At this period, the religion of the Chinese people was the result of a syncretism of complex origin in which are found some elements of Confucianism and Taoism. The dominant current of Chinese thought was represented by the philosophical school of Lao Chuang which was succeeded by the mystic school. The latter originated and developed during the Wei and Chin era, between the 3rd and 4th centuries. Both underwent the influence of the masters of Taoism: Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu on the one hand, and Confucius on the other.

Among the fundamental works of the Chinese mystic school one must mention the *Commentaries of Lao Tzu* attributed to Lap Tan, the *Commentaries of Yi* and the *Chung-Yung.*

The position of the Chinese mystic school can be defined as follows: it aspires to realize the synthesis of the oppositions existing between spirit and matter, between the supreme essence of the Universe and outward appearances. Nevertheless it considers that these two aspects are sharply different.

It is to the school of Interior Light (Ch'an Buddhism) (following on from the mystic school) that the merit is due of having effected perfectly the synthesis between the two opposite aspects of the universe: the sublime and the common, the spiritual and the material. Chan Buddhism appeared in the 4th century. It flourished in the Kumarajiva period (343–413) with Tao An (312–385) and developed up to the end of the T'ang period (618–907).

Tao Cheng (360–434) and Seng Chao (384–414) succeeded Tao An. Their thought was a synthesis of Taoism and Buddhism. They refer, in fact, to the commentaries of the works of Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu and Lieh Tzu as well as to

the Sutras of Mahayana Buddhism translated by Kumarajiva (384–413).

The teachings of Tao Cheng and Seng Chao comprised three fundamental propositions. They were imbued with great spiritual elevation. In them are the essential ideas common to Taoism and Buddhism: the spontaneity and total gratuitousness of action, which must be stripped of all egoism in order to express the 'supreme Principle'.

Tao Cheng and Seng Chao referred—as did Bodhidharma later on—to the Sutras (texts) defining the characteristics of Buddhahood (state of interior awakening). The affiliation between Ch'an and the superior forms of Mahayana Buddhism is incontestable. Most specialists agree on this point, except for the Indian authors committed to Brahmanism. Such is the case of the Indian philosopher A. K. Coomaraswamy who does not hesitate to state[3] that 'Ch'an and Zen represent nothing more than a degeneration of Buddhism'. (!) It goes without saying that such a judgment is, at the very least, rash.

The masters of Ch'an have indeed referred to the texts of the Prajnaparamita Sutras, the Vajracchedika Sutra, the Lankavatara Sutra, and the Hridaya Sutra, etc.

This reference to the texts, as just cited, is likely to cause a misunderstanding. In fact this could give the impression of strict conformism, which is indeed totally foreign to Ch'an Buddhism. A certain reserve is imposed and the essentials are found expressed in a statement by Prof, D. T. Suzuki[4]:

'I would like to formulate some comment on certain learned men who consider that the philosophy of 'Shunyata' (the void) is really the foundation of Zen. This is to entirely misconceive the essential content of Zen, which is primarily an experience and not a philosophy or a dogma.

'Zen can never be constructed on a mass of metaphysical or psychological conceptions: these can be formulated after the experience of Zen has been carried out, but never before'.

The meaning of this is confirmed by the severe and

3. A. K. Coomaraswamy, op. cit., p. 95
4. D. T. Suzuki, op. cit., vol. I, p. 269

paradoxical advice of the Chinese master Hui Neng[5]: 'Do not let yourself be *bowled over* by the Sutra, you must instead *bowl over* the Sutra yourself'.

There are three propositions presented in the teaching of Tao Cheng and Seng Chao. Firstly: at all costs to transcend the notion of personal reward in all acts, spiritual or otherwise: this attitude is regarded as mean. The accomplishment of good actions is only deserving of merit for that ephemeral appearance which is the ego. It encourages the ignorant people who believe in its existence. Spiritual interest, of which calculated acts are evidence, reinforces egoism and cannot bring interior liberation. Evidently, there is no room for encouraging actions which are not inspired by total disinterestedness.

Secondly: spiritual illumination (interior awakening) is untemporal, abrupt and sudden. In other words, the discovery of our real nature is not the object of a progressive and gradual process. The sudden character of the spiritual awakening or Buddhahood is one of the specific bases of Ch'an and Zen Buddhism. It involves a real transformation during which the personal conscience, having become passive and transparent, lets itself be fertilized by the cosmic conscience. The latter bears different names according to the author: Cosmic Mentality, the Body of the Buddha, the Dharmakaya, the basis of the World.

Thirdly: a proposition demonstrating the presence of the nature of the Buddha in the heart of every human being and at the root of all things. Every human being carries in him a hidden treasure residing in the depths of his conscience. Thus we have nothing to *do* in the accumulative sense of the word. It is enough for us to remain lucid, available and transparent. We have instead to *undo* the numerous complexities which imprison us.

The essential elements of the school of Interior Light (Ch'an Buddhism) are in the writings of a contemporary of Tao Cheng and Seng Chao: Hui Yuan (334–416). This script is entitled *Discussions illustrating the reward-process.*

5. Dr. Hubert Benoit, *La doctrine supreme,* Cercle du Livre, Paris, 1953, p. 204 (*The Supreme Doctrine,* Pantheon, N.Y. & Routledge, London, 1955)

The five fundamental points of Ch'an are expounded in this and scholars sum them up in the following way.

1. The fundamental principle of the Universe is inexpressible.
2. Spiritual perfection cannot be cultivated (it cannot result from an act of will of the ego nor of its intellectual construction, since this ego, such as we know it, is only illusion and ignorance).
3. In the final analysis, nothing is achieved (we are and have always been the supreme Reality, but we do not know it, because of our fundamental distraction).
4. There is nothing else of much importance in Buddhism.
5. The simple fact of drawing water and breaking wood encloses the marvellous mystery of Tao.

Parallel to the development of the teaching of the school of Interior Light, Bodhidharma, coming from the Indies, started his work about 500 A.D. The essential work of Bodhidharma (480-c.528) is entitled *Contemplation of the Wall in Mahayana* (T'ai-tcheng-pi-kouan). One thing is supremely important to him: the effective realization of the state of awakening. In the opinion of this Indian master, Buddhism had to be a living religion freed from rites, magic, scriptures and intellectual speculations. He felt deep disenchantment at the time of his first meetings with the Chinese scholars.

Bodhidharma brought together the principal Buddhist leaders in China, in the presence of the emperor Wu, and explained to them his conceptions of the living Buddhism. He found himself facing total uncomprehension. He was greatly saddened and withdrew for nine years in a monastery in northern China. Enriched with a much deeper spiritual illumination, he resumed his campaign in favor of a renaissance of the living Buddhism. He defined the spirit and the aim of Ch'an in the following way:

An oral transmission without scriptures.
No dependence on words and letters.
A direct search aimed at the essence of man.
To see into one's own nature and attain the perfect awakening.

Contrary to Tao Cheng and Seng Chao who often gained

inspiration from Taoism in parallel with Buddhism, Bodhidharma referred mainly to the Prajnaparamita Sutras and to the Lankavatara Sutra. A whole line of outstanding patriarchs succeeded Bodhidharma. Huei K'o (486–593) and T'sen T'sang (c. 606) are just two of them.

T'sen T'sang is the author of an immortal poem, the Hsin-Hsin-Ming. This poem suggests better than any other writings the spiritual climate of Ch'an Buddhism and of Zen. Professor D. T. Suzuki has published an excellent translation[6], some extracts of which are included here.

'The perfect way knows no difficulty
Except that it shies away from any preference
Only once it has been freed from hate and love
Does it show itself plainly, unmasked.
A difference of a tenth of an inch.
And the heaven and earth are found apart.
If you wish to see the perfect way manifest
Conceive no thought either for or against it.
To oppose that which you love to that which you do not
Therein lies the infirmity of the spirit.
When the deep meaning of the way is not comprehended
The peace of the spirit is troubled and nothing is gained.
The way is perfect like the boundless space.
Nothing is lacking in it, nothing is superfluous.
It is because one makes a choice
That its absolute truth is lost.
Do not pursue exterior complications.
Do not dally in the interior void.
When the spirit remains serene in the unity of things
Dualism vanishes of its own accord.
And when the unity of things is not completely understood
The loss is endured in two directions.

Phraseologies, games of the intellect
The more we pursue them, the farther we stray
So let us leave behind phraseology and games of the intellect
And there is nowhere where we cannot pass freely.

The moment we are illumined within ourselves

6. D. T. Suzuki, op. cit.

We bypass the world's void which is opposed to us.

Do not try to seek the Truth
Simply cease to cling to opinions.
Do not linger in dualism.

Let go, leave things to be as they can
Obey the nature of things and you are in harmony with the way.

If the eye never falls asleep
All dreams will cease by themselves.
If the spirit retains its unity
Then ten thousand things are of one single and same essence.
When the profound mystery of this essence is sounded
In a single instant we forget exterior complications
We return to the origin and remain that which we are.
Let us forget the why of things
And attain a state beyond analogy.
The final end of things, there where they can go no further,
Is not limited by rules and measures.
The spirit in harmony with the way is the Principle of identity
Where we find all actions in a state of quietude.
Nothing is retained now
There is nothing which one must remember.
All is empty, lucid and bears in itself a principle of illumination.

In the highest realm of true Essence
There is no *other* or *self*'.

T'sen T'sang was followed by Tao Shin (580–651), known as the Fourth Patriarch. The Fifth Patriarch Hung Jen (601–675) can be considered as the spiritual father of Hui Neng (638–713).

The sermons of Hui Neng are considered along with those of the Buddha as Sutras. Hui Neng is known in Japan by the name of Wei Lang. The original way in which he made himself known locates one of the specific attitudes of Ch'an and Zen.

The Fifth Patriarch Hung Jen had recognized in Hui Neng

a man who had perfectly achieved the awakening. He secretly wished that Hui Neng should become his successor. But there was one great difficulty to resolve. Hui Neng was only a simple lay preacher, illiterate and lacking erudition. Hung Jen, the Fifth Patriarch, was the chief of a large monastery where five hundred educated monks lived. Most of them were imbued with the so-called superiority conferred by erudition. Some of them coveted the succession of the Fifth Patriarch.

Hung Jen, perfectly aware of the delicate circumstances of the problem, suggested to Hui Neng to present himself at the monastery as a simple laic looking for work. He could pick and grind the rice for the monks, in the granaries of the building. This he did immediately.

At this time, the Fifth Patriarch announced solemnly to the five hundred monks living under his direction that he wished to name a successor. He declared that whoever could present him with a stanza or a poem expressing perfectly the spirit of Ch'an would be immediately designated as Sixth Patriarch.

The monk Shen-Hsiu, the wisest of the congregation, composed the following verses:

'The body is the Bodhi Tree;
The mind like a bright mirror standing.
Take care to wipe it all the time,
And allow no dust to cling'.

However this stanza was not supported by Hung Jen. The Fifth Patriarch deemed that it was not the expression of a genuine spiritual illumination. In addition, this image had been used by Chuang Tzu, the principal successor to Lao Tzu.

Whilst all the monks at the monastery discussed among them the refusal of the verses composed by Shen Hsiu, Hui Neng asked one of them to show him the inscription on the wall of the assembly hall. Being illiterate, he could not manage to read it, and asked a monk to decipher it for him. After having listened attentively to Shen-Hsiu's poem, Hui Neng took someone with him during the night and dictated the following verses:

'There never was a Bodhi Tree,
Nor bright mirror standing.
Fundamentally, not one thing exists,
So where is the dust to cling?'

The very next morning the amazed monks saw and read the inscription of Hui Neng Some thought it insolent. The following night the Fifth Patriarch gave to Hui Neng the robe and bowl of Bodhidharma, these being considered as the. symbols of spiritual transmission of which the Sixth Patriarch must be the carrier. Hui Neng left the monastery during the night, in the greatest secrecy. Then he undertook numerous voyages in the course of which he managed to give to Ch'an the fullness of its radiance.

The majority of his sermons discuss the most profound texts of Mahayana and particularly the Nirvana, Vajracchedika and Vimilakirti Sutras. But Hui Neng simply takes these as introduction. In his famous sermons, he accords a quality of constant priority to the living experience of the Awakening.

Hui Neng died at the age of sixty-six in August, 713. After his death Ch'an, already divided into two schools, subdivided into various tendencies of which some still exist today in China and Japan.

The first division of Ch'an, the northern branch, was known by the name of *Lanka Doctrine.* It was inspired principally from the Lankavatara Sutra and taught a gradual and progressive process of illumination. This school was supported by the Emperor but had scarcely any success.

The second division, the southern branch, insisted on the abrupt and sudden character of the interior awakening. This tendency, more in conformity with the teachings of Hui Neng, had a much more significant development. Its principal interpreters were Shen Hui (668–760), Ma Tsu (c.788) and Huang Po, who died about 850. Huang Po left a remarkable work, entitled *The Nameless Doctrine,* some of which has been translated into French and discussed by Dr. Hubert Benoit[7]. Huang Po was the surname given to the master Hsi Yun by his disciples, because he lived for many years on the mountain Huang Po.

7. Hsi Yun, *Le Mental Cosmique,* Adyar, Paris, 1950

A great confusion has existed on the subject of the way in which the two schools of Ch'an were formed, then separated only to eventually integrate in the epoch of Hui Neng. It has only recently become more lucid.

Hung Jen was the Patriarch of the sect called *Lanka,* also known by the name of the Northern School (the way called Positive). Hui Neng, on the other hand, as the Chinese tradition tells, had achieved spiritual awakening by listening to the Diamond Sutra (Vajracchedika Sutra) which is part of the Prajnaparamita Sutras (the way called 'negative', Southern School, also called school of the Abrupt Way). The verses composed by the monk, Shen Hsiu, represented the doctrine of the Lanka sect (way of gradual illumination). Hui Neng, already instructed by the negative Southern School, replaced the verses of Shen Hsiu with his own. The latter were inspired by the purer doctrine of the Abrupt Way.

Hung Jen, knowing that Hui Neng was capable of comprehending the truth in its most naked form, gave him secret instruction every night (and not just once as the ancient tradition taught it). He gave him the robe of Bodhidharma as soon as he acknowledged the spiritual awakening of his successor.

Hung Jen, very astutely, realized that the monks of his sect would never accept any tradition other than their own. The monks were partisans of the Northern School and seemed to be unaware that their superior, Hung Jen, more advanced than they, adhered secretly to the Southern School. Hung Jen begged Hui Neng to leave discreetly, advising him to wait in the south for a propitious moment to declare himself and continue the propagation of the pure doctrine of the Abrupt Way. This was done, but much later on.

It was necessary to wait for the great Shen Hui—who alone among those who were with Hui Neng at the moment of his death had understood—for the doctrine called Ch'an to be organized completely and carried to its zenith. Shen Hui was born in 668 A.D. at Siang Yang, in the province of Hu Peh. He met Hui Neng around the year 700 at Ts'ao Ch'i in the province of Kwan Tung. Some time before his death in 713, Hui Neng had made a prophecy. He announced that a little more than twenty years after his death someone would

establish, in a definitive fashion, the principles of the Southern School of Ch'an. This prediction was fulfilled by Shen Hui, on the 23rd of February 734, the day of the great conference of Hua T'ai. Shen Hui was then sixty-six years old and his prestige was considerable. He died on June 30, 760, at the age of ninety-two, and was buried in a Stupa at the door of the 'Dragon' of the town of Loyang. It was here that the emperor Su Tsong built the monastery of Pao Ying. The prestige of Shen Hui was such that the emperor decreed to him, posthumously, the title of Chen Tsong, meaning the 'spokesman of the true doctrine'. In addition he commissioned the composition of an *Elegy to the Seventh Patriarch* which was distributed far and wide.

In 796, at the time of a conference brought about at the invitation of the emperor To Tsong, Shen Hui was declared the Seventh Patriarch of Ch'an. At the same conference Hui Neng was officially declared Sixth Patriarch, eighty-three years after his death. It is thus that the conflict relating to the succession of Hung Jen, the Fifth Patriarch, was officially and definitively resolved.

Without Shen Hui, the southern doctrine of Hui Neng would never have been admitted as the authentic doctrine of Ch'an. In fact, the school of Bodhidharma was officially represented to the Emperor, whose sympathies at this time went to the Northern School. This situation came to an end in 734 due to the efforts of Shen Hui.

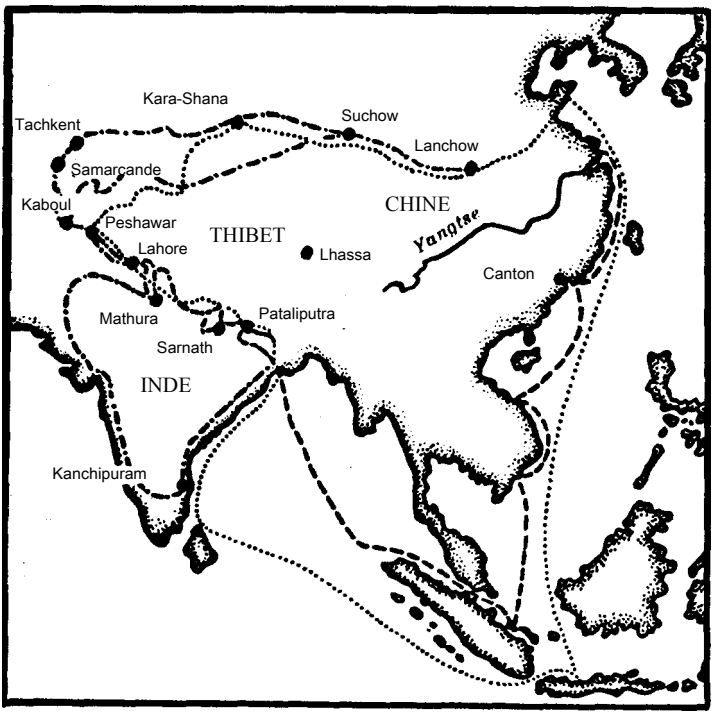
It is in this way that the doctrine called *Prajnaparamita* was transmitted momentarily across the Lanka sect, only to finally absorb it. To those who ask themselves the question of what happened to the Prajnaparamita tradition after the Kumarajiva period, there is only one answer to be given: in the absence of external organizations, the practitioners or adepts of Prajnaparamita remained scattered either as hermits or else in very small groups. They have left behind works which some Chinese scholars know perfectly but have never been translated. The few fragments which are cited at rare intervals are truly remarkable.

Around the year 845, Buddhism was persecuted in China by the emperor Wu Tsung. Most of the Buddhist sects of the end of the T'ang period were annihilated, with the exception

of Ch'an. At this time, and during the period of the Five Dynasties (907–960), southern Ch'an Buddhism developed, giving rise to several schools often called the Five Houses.

Two different lines of thought were expressed in these various schools. One was the line of Ch'ing Yuan Hsing-ssu, and the other was the line of Nan-yueh Huai-yang.

In the first line of thought there are the following schools: the Ts'ao Tung, founded by Tung Chan Liang-chieh, 807–869 (in Japanese, Tozan Ryokai), which is at the origins of the famous Japanese Soto Zen; the Yun men, founded by Yun-men Wen-yen, 862–949 (Ummon in Japanese), which is at the origin of the Japanese Ummon Zen; and the Fa Yen,



The three main routes for pilgrimages between India and China.

founded by Fa Yen Wen-I, 885–958 (Hogen in Japanese), which is at the origin of the Japanese Hogen Zen.

The second line of thought includes the following schools: the Kuei Yang, founded by Kuei-shan Ling-yu, 771–853 (Isan Reiyu in Japanese), which is at the origin of the Japanese Igyo Zen; and the Lin Chi, founded by Lin-chi I-hsuan (Rinzai Gigen in Japanese), which is at the origin of the famous Japanese Rinzai[8].

8. R. F. Sasaki, Zen *dust,* Harcourt, Brace and World, New York, 1966
H. Dumoulin, *A History of Zen Buddhism,* Faber, London, 1963

CHAPTER IV

Zen in Japan

The majority of historians teach that Ch'an Buddhism penetrated into Japan during the Kamakura period of Japanese history. In fact, there is evidence of numerous infiltrations in the 6th and 7th centuries through Korea. Ch'an, in Japan, bears the name of Zen. Various schools formed; the most important of which are Rinzai, Soto, Kegon, and the Hogen and Igyo sects.

1. Rinzai

Among the monks mainly responsible for the penetration of Ch'an into Japan must be mentioned Myoan Eisai (1145-1215). At the early age of fourteen this Japanese monk took himself to the main temple of the Tendai sects situated near Mount Kiei and was ordained there. This sect was the Japanese extension of the Chinese sect of T'ien-t'ai, introduced into the country about 804. D. T. Suzuki is of the opinion that it was part of a form of Ch'an Buddhism which separated slightly from the line of Bodhidharma. Eisai made an exhaustive study of the doctrines of the Tendai sect and went to China in 1168. After visiting T'ien-t'ai-shan and other Chinese Buddhist centers, he returned to Kyoto in the autumn of the same year. He brought back numerous Tendai (in Japanese) or T'ien-t'ai (in Chinese) texts. In the course of studying these texts, he noticed many references to Ch'an Buddhism. These Ch'an texts made a great impression on him. Eisai decided to return without delay to China and make a pilgrimage to India. He left for China in 1186 but when he arrived there he found a situation of political unrest and gave up his voyage to India. He went once more to T'ien-t'ai-

shan. There he met a Ch'an master, Hsu-an Huai-ch'ang (in Japanese, Kian Esho). The latter was the master of the eighth generation of the line of Huang Lung, representing the school of Ch'an founded by Lin Chi (c. 867 A.D.).

During the summer of 1191, when he was getting ready to leave China, Eisai received from his Chinese master the gifts and diplomas which gave him the necessary authority to transmit the teachings of the master Lin Chi whose school was known in Japan by the name of Rinzai.

After his return to Japan in 1191, he went to Ryoto with the intention of founding a Zen temple devoted to Rinzai. He was not able to carry out his projects and met with much opposition from the priests of other sects. Then he went to Katata in 1194 to found the Shofukuji there. This was the first Zen temple built in Japan; it still stands today. In 1202, Eisai became the principal of Kenninji at Kyoto. He had a great number of disciples and was later considered as the founder of Rinzai in Japan.

In the 13th and 14th centuries, a great number of eminent monks of the Lin Chi sect completed the work begun by Eisai. They belonged to the Chinese sect Yang-ch'i. Between 1235 and 1358, there were twenty Rinzai masters who had great influence. Eleven of these were Chinese, and nine were Japanese who had studied in China. They had received, like Eisai, the 'seal of transmission of the Lin Chi masters'. Most of them created original schools of thought, some of which survived for several generations. Towards the end of the 17th century, all the Zen masters of Japan followed the Yang-ch'i tendency (attached to the Lin Chi school of Ch'an) with the exception of the masters of the independent school of Ts'ao tung (Soto) and those of the school of Ming Ch'an, who arrived towards the middle of the 17th century.

At the beginning of the 18th century the Japanese monk Hakuin (1685–1768) played an important role in the consolidation of Rinzai. The present masters of this school are all successors of some ninety disciples to whom Hakuin had given the 'seal of transmission'.

2. Soto Zen

The school of Japanese Soto Zen is the continuation of the Chinese school of Ts'ao-tung founded by Tung Chan Liang-chieh (807–869). He was the successor, after five generations, of Ch'ing-yuan Hsing-ssu, direct disciple of Hui Neng.

Tung Chan had transmitted to his disciple Ts'ao Chan (840–901) the secret teaching which he had received from his master, the famous Yun yen T'an Sheng (780–841). This teaching was known by the name of the 'Five categories'. Ts'ao Chan systematized and developed this doctrine, but it petered out after four or five generations.

A second strain of thought developed in the School of Ts'ao tung. This had been developed by another disciple of Tung Chan: Tao Ying, who died in 902. This tendency, contrary to the preceding one, developed strongly. For several generations the masters of Ts'ao tung had accorded no importance to the doctrine of the 'Five ranks'. It is only at the beginning of the Sung period of the south (1127–1279) that the attention of Buddhists was drawn by these complex teachings.

The School of Tao Ying was introduced into Japan in 1227 by the Japanese monk Dogen Kigen (1200–1253), thirteen generations after Tao Ying. The experts consider that Dogen profoundly changed the Chinese practices and doctrines after his return to Japan, For this reason, Japanese Soto Zen differs considerably from the Chinese school from which it must have developed.

Dogen was born in 1200. His family belonged to the Court nobility. He lost his father at the age of two and his mother died when he was seven. He had a very sensitive nature and the loss of his parents at this tender young age provoked a very deep spiritual shock. He was adopted by an elder brother of his mother. His uncle had appointed him as his heir. But Dogen was not happy. At the early age of twelve he ran away and took refuge with another, younger uncle. This man lived as a hermit at the foot of Mount Hiei where he devoted himself to the study of Buddhism. It was during this asso-

ciation, about 1213, that Dogen decided to become a monk. He was thirteen. But he was soon tormented by problems which he could not manage to resolve. In short, the two doctrines of Buddhism taught that all living beings participate in the nature of the Buddha and that he formed in them the only worthwhile reality. Since all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are already the 'nature of the Buddha', why do they desire to obtain spiritual illumination and why do they devote themselves with so much effort and perseverance to a quantity of ascetic practices?

This question concerning the paradoxical relations between the nature of Buddha, already present in all beings, and the efforts that each exerted to obtain it, had long preoccupied Dogen's mind. This question in fact related to the difference existing between the innate illumination which the Buddhists claimed to be latent in each human being and the authentically achieved illumination. Dogen left Mount Hiei very disenchanted; no one had given him an answer which he could believe suitable.

He then went to the famous monk Koin (1145–1216) and this man is meant to have sent him to Eisai. Shortly afterwards, Dogen entered the monastery of Kenninji and became the pupil of the Master Myozen (1184–1225). The latter was master of Rinzai and successor of Eisai. Dogen then received permission to go to China and, in the spring of the year 1223, he went, accompanied by his master. They arrived at a Chinese port in the month of April. It was during the voyage that Dogen received his first impressions of Ch'an when he met a housekeeper attached to a Ch'an monastery. The Japanese tradition tells us that one day an old monk came aboard the boat to buy some mushrooms. He was a cook in a Zen monastery. Dogen asked him to stay on the boat for a while to talk with him about Zen. But the old monk replied: 'That is impossible for me, for I must take care of tomorrow's meal'. 'In your monastery', Dogen said to him, 'there will surely be someone to take care of the cooking while you are away'. 'Cooking is my study', replied the monk. 'Why should I abandon it to someone else?' However Dogen had not immediately understood the deep meaning of this reply. He insisted further: 'Cooking, you say, is your study? But why

do you not rather absorb yourself in meditation or in the study of sacred books? Why do you not tire of domestic duties?' The old monk started laughing: 'Oh, young student stranger, it is regrettable that you do not understand the very essence of study!'[9]

The Japanese tradition tells us that this reply enabled Dogen to understand the real sense of Zen. For this reason, the Soto School attaches more importance to the minutia of everyday practice than to the mental search for interior illumination.

Dogen went to the monastery of T'ien-tung-ssu where he became the pupil of Wu Chi. Tradition tells that he achieved illumination during his retreat with the master Ju Ching (1163–1228). The latter was the successor of the master Wu Chi. It was at this time that Dogen received 'the Seal and the Robe' of the transmission of the School of Ts'ao Tung (Soto). He stayed for two more years with the master Ju Ching and returned alone to Japan in 1227; his former master Myozen had meanwhile died.

Contrary to the customary practice of the other Buddhist pilgrims returning from China with a host of new Sutras and sacred objects, Dogen returned to Japan with empty hands. He did not even wish to create a new sect. His sole ambition was to achieve interior awakening and teach it. With this intention he wrote his first treatise: the *Kukanzazenji* (General instructions for the practice of Zazen). In the spirit of the first Ch'an masters the *Zazen* attitude meant a certain mental silence during which no thought was raised in the mind of the monk. By practising this *transparence* he would discover his profound and genuine nature. Such was the version of Hui Neng. Such also was the meaning necessarily attributed to the expression 'being seated'. It applied more to a state of mind than to the fact of being physically seated in the lotus position[10].

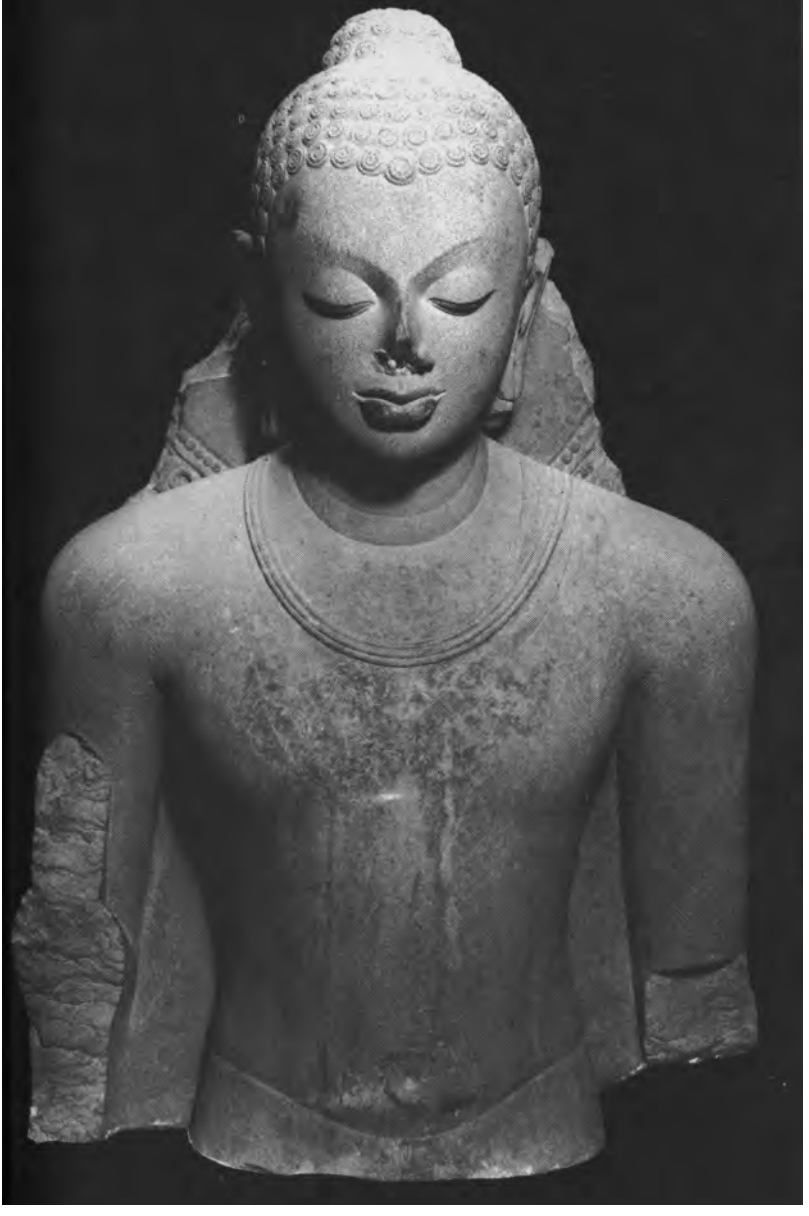
Dogen wished to live in the solitude and tranquility of the small temple of Anyoin (about 1230). But this place very soon became a very important Zen center. Numerous disciples, monks and laymen, came to him. As their number

9. M. Shibata, *Sermons of Tetsugen on Zen,* Risosha, Tokyo, 1960
10. Ernest Wood, *Zen Dictionary,* The Citadel Press, New York, 1962

One of the sources of Buddhism: Hinduism. Shiva and his consort Parvati. Temple of Elefanta.

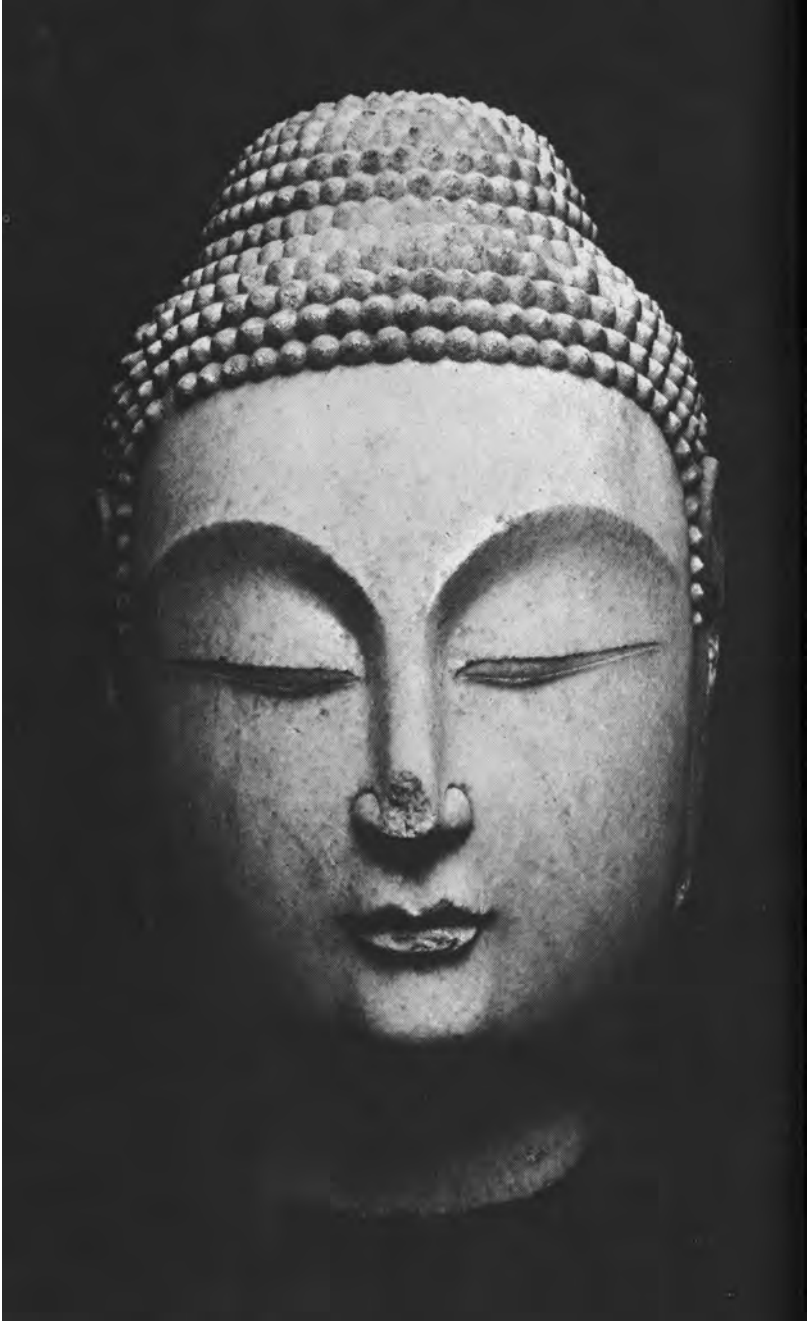
The birth of Buddha
according to
an ancient legend:
Born from the right side
of the queen Maya
'with no blemish
and under a rain
of flowers'.

Statue of Buddha in Cambodia (Khmer art of the 12th Century).



In the 6th Century, Bodhidharma, coming from India propagated > Mahayana Buddhism in China. He is considered, after Tao An (312–385), as one of the founders of Ch'an.

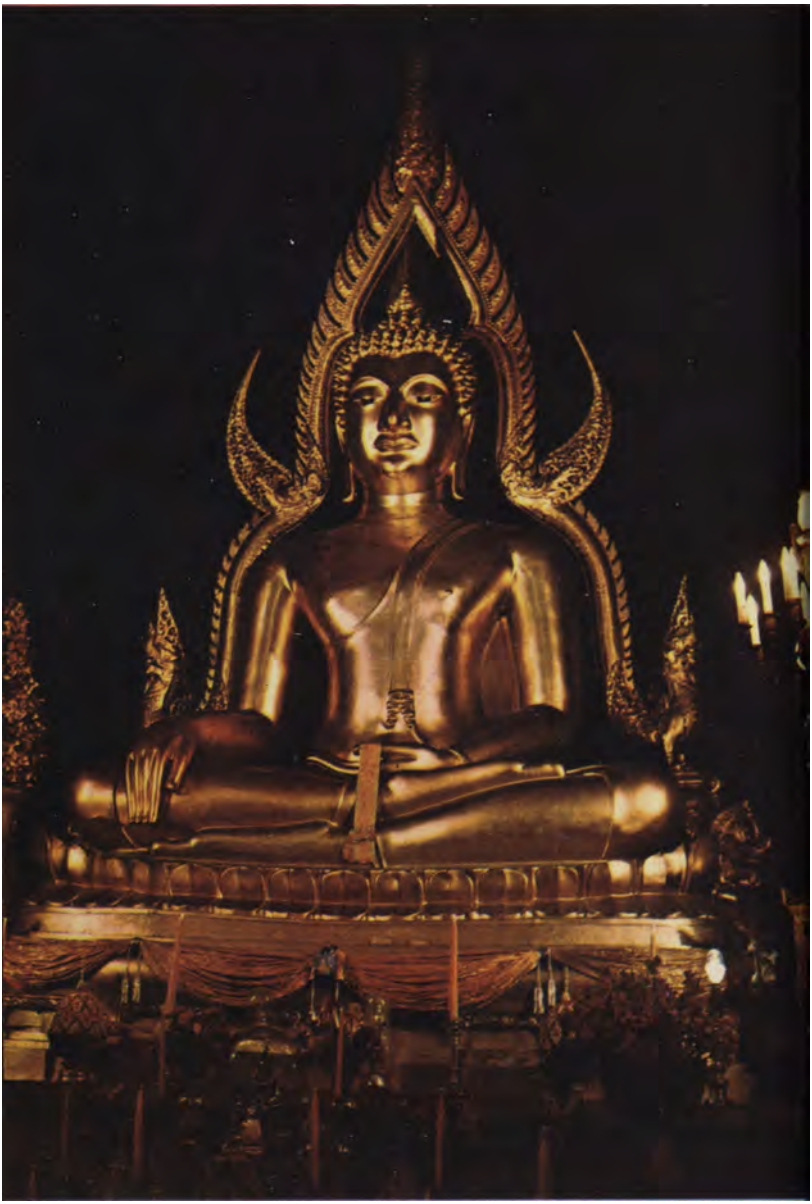
Lao Tzu, Chinese philosopher, a contemporary of Confucius and founder of Taoism. His teachings, combined with Indian Buddhism, opened the way to Ch'an and to Zen.



Head of Buddha. (China, T'ang dynasty, 7th Century.)

Buddha teaching meditation. (China, Ming dynasty, 16th Century.)

The Great Buddha of the temple of Bangkok.



progressively increased he sought to change temples in order to find the solitude which he loved. About 1245 his disciples built for him the great temple of Eiheiji.

It is in 1230 that Dogen wrote the first chapter of his principal work: the *Shobogenzo* (Eye Treasury of the True Dharma). His prestige extended throughout Japan up to his death in 1253. His most faithful disciple was Ejo (1198-1280). He contributed to the extensive spreading of Dogen's work in Japan.

The rules of life of Soto Zen at the time of Dogen, some of which are quite disputable, can be summarized as follows.[11] The mind must be liberated from all attachments: family or otherwise. Moreover, all ideas received from education, acquaintances and reading must be cast off. Personal ideas which would dictate a choice in the way of Illumination must be excluded. One must accept only the teachings bequeathed by the Fathers of Buddhism or received from an enlightened monk. Attendance upon just and good men is recommended for, without one's noticing it, their spirit influences one's manner of thinking. It is useless, even harmful, to be instructed, as knowledge acquired in this way can turn one away from the only aim one must have: the obtaining of the Awakening. Yet it should not be forgotten that Dogen had experience of religious instruction received at the Hiei-zan, as well as from many Chinese readings. The essential thing for him is to not let oneself be absorbed in studies other than that of the Way. The rules of life must be observed and one must observe propriety, avoid idle conversations, banish pride and be amenable to others. The believer must have one objective only (the Awakening) in the course of a life which is so short, so uncertain, that he must never put off until tomorrow the essential practice, the sitting in meditation or zazen.

Later on, Soto Zen evolved, under the influence of Hakuin and Bankei and released itself from a certain quality of rigidity. Several great Japanese masters followed on from the master Dogen. These included Hakuin (1685–1768), Tetsugen (1630–1682) and Bankei (1622–1693).

11. Honen, Shinran, Nichiren and Dogen, *Le bouddhisme japonais,* Albin Michel, Paris, 1965, p. 52

The master Hakuin characterized himself by the method called *koans*. His work is considerable and shows his perfect knowledge of the different Schools of Zen. The koans, as we shall eventually see, are statements of paradoxical truths which cannot be comprehended by the intellect. They force thought into silence, after having excited great tension. This interior silence permits the manifestation of a more advanced level of conscience.

The Japanese schools and the Rinzai have divided the koans, most of which are inspired by Hakuin, into six categories.

1. Hosshin or Dharmakaya koan. This koan allows one to penetrate the mystery of Zen by the discovery of the Dharmakaya or body of Buddha, symbol of the supreme reality.
2. Kikan or the koan of the gate, allowing one to overcome the inertias of egoism and ignorance.
3. Gonsen or the koans studying the power of words on the spirit, and the art of liberating oneself from the influence of words.
4. Nanto or the koans which aim at the piercing of illusions.
5. Goi or the koan of the 'Five degrees'. This koan is based on the Avatamsaka Sutra from which Kegon Zen is inspired.
6. The koans which aim at the understanding of the general fundamentals of Buddhism.

The master Tetsugen was born on January 1st, 1630, in Kyushu in Japan. He became a monk at thirteen and met with the Zen master called Yingen coming back from China. Tetsugen published an important collection of Buddhist books comprising more than a thousand volumes. He died on March 22nd, 1682. A famous poem is ascribed to him[12].

'All the phenomena of the universe, transformed (by True Vision), are eyes.
The earth and the sky manifest the supreme Light
If one departs instantaneously and for ever from the duality of the observer and the observed.
The limitless world of the dharmas is the Diamond'.

12. M. Shibata, op. cit., p. 24

Unlike Dogen and Hakuin, Tetsugen expressed himself in the traditional forms of the Indian Mahayana Buddhism. His commentaries are devoted to the following texts: Prajnaparamita Hridaya Sutra (the Sutra of the Heart), the Surangama Sutra, the Amitabha Sutra, the Nirvana Sutra, the Vajracchedika Sutra (the Diamond Sutra), the Lankavatara Sutra, etc.

The Japanese master Bankei (1622–1693) is the author of numerous poems of Zen inspiration. He insisted on the importance of perfect attention to all the details of everyday life and was opposed to meditative training which could establish a schism between spiritual life and ordinary life. Along with the Japanese master Takuan, Bankei insisted on the fact that the infinite possibilities of the Cosmic Mentality are found in the most ordinary beings and can transfigure their existence.

The position adopted by Bankei concerning the practice of Zen was abstract in the extreme. It is similar in some respects to that of the modern Indian psychologist and thinker Krishnamurti. Both stress the danger of so-called positive *methods* or *means,* which enslave and limit the mind in an attitude of imitation. As A. W. Watts writes[13]: 'The Zen School of Bankei, devoid of all method, could not lead to the creation of an institution. Each adept resumed the labors of farming or fishing. Because of this, very few exterior signs of Bankei Zen have survived'.

3. Kegon

Kegon is the Japanese extension of an important Chinese Buddhist sect, the Hua Yen Tsung. Its initial doctrine is based on one of the principal Sutras of Indian Mahayana Buddhism: the Avatamsaka Sutra. The Chinese translation of Avatamsaka Sutra is: Hua-yen Ching. This is quite an extensive work divided into numerous sections. One of them, entitled 'Sutra of the ten stages' (in Sanskrit, Dasabhumika Sutra) had attracted the attention of the Chinese scholars. The commentaries on the Dasabhumika Sutra by the great Indian masters Nagarjuna and Vasubandhu had been partly

13. A. W. Watts, op. cit., p. 192

translated into Chinese between the 6th and 7th centuries. The commentators and adepts of these fragmentary translations had formed a sect known by the name of Ti Lun. This sect constitutes the principal origin of the Chinese School of Hua Yen of which Kegon is the Japanese extension.

The Indian Sutra (in Chinese, Hua-yen Ching) was not translated in its entirety until later, about the 7th century.

The Chinese master Tu Shun (557–640) founded a school based on the whole of the doctrines developed in this Sutra. Eventually, the most highly reputed adepts of the first sect—the School of Ti Lun—came together around the master Tu Shun who is considered as the First Patriarch of the Hua-yen Sect, the originator of Kegon.

The school of Hua-yen knew its highest point with its Third Patriarch, the master Fa Tsang. The commentaries on Hua-yen Ching by the master Fa Tsang form in all a group of a hundred or so volumes which bear the stamp of great spiritual elevation.

After the death of Fa Tsang the succession of the patriarchs was temporarily suspended. His most important disciple, Hui Yuan, was never recognised by the Sect, since his teachings did not correspond to those of the master. The patriarchal succession was only re-established two or three generations later by the Chinese master Ch'eng Kuan (737–838), well-known in Japan by the name of Shoryo Daishi.

Ch'eng Kuan had been named Fourth Patriarch of the Hua Yen succession because he refuted the heresies of Hui Yuan and re-established the doctrines in all their former purity. The Fifth Patriarch of the sect was the master Kuei-feng (780–841). Kuei-feng was a great scholar, an adept of the school of Confucius. He studied the doctrines of Hua-yen with the master, Ch'eng Kuan. At the death of the latter, he was designated as the Fifth Patriarch.

The teachings of the Hua-yen School (Kegon) were introduced into Japan in 736 by the master Tao Hsuan (in Japanese, Dosen, 702–760). Tao Hsuan had a perfect knowledge of Ch'an Buddhism and of the teachings of the Hua-yen School. His successor was a monk originally from Korea, Shen-hsiang (in Japanese, Shinsho). The latter, in turn, had the Japanese monk Roben (689–773) as a disciple: this

monk played an important role in the development of Kegon in Japan. He taught the doctrine to the emperor Shoma (reigning from 724 to 749) and was one of the founders of Todai-ji, the great Kegon temple at Nara.

The 'climate' of the school of Kegon Zen can be illustrated simply by the chapter titles which show us the depth of its preoccupations. In his treatise on Kegon, the Ch'eng Kuan master had divided the doctrine of the Avatamsaka Sutra into four points: The domain of phenomena; the domain of noumenon (non-manifest spiritual world); the domain of the mutual interpenetration of noumenon and phenomena; and the domain of the mutual interpenetration of phenomena among themselves[14].

To finish off, we will quote a single thought of the master Fa-tsang[15]: 'Because sensitive beings make illusions, they think they ought to abandon what seems illusory to them and find what is *real.* But as soon as illumination comes, the distinctions between the illusory and the *real* disappear'.

4. Ummon Zen and Igyo Zen

These two schools are less important. Ummon is the Japanese translation of the Chinese word Yun-men which designates the monastery where the founder of Ummon Zen, master Yun-men Wen-yen, lived. He died around 945. Yun-men stressed particularly the dangers of an excessively wandering imagination. He advised his pupils to be fully attentive to what they were doing, from moment to moment, by an ever present vigilance of mind. Yun-men is the author of the famous enigmatic reply given to pupils who asked him to reveal the secret of Zen: When you are sitting, be seated; when you are walking, just walk . . . But avoid, above all things, agitation'.

The School of Igyo Zen is the extension of the Chinese School of Kuei Yang founded by Ling yu and Hui Chi.

14. R. F. Sasaki, op. cit., p. 183
15. ibid., p. 181

5. Honen

Honen is a current parallel with Buddhism and with Zen. Honen is generally considered as the founder of Amidism in Japan. Amidism had existed for several centuries in China and in India. It is based on three Sutras: the Muryojukyo, the Kammuryojukyo and the Amidakyo. Amidism is based on the eighteenth of the forty-eight articles listed in the vow supposed to have been made by the Bodhisattva Amitabha before he achieved the state of Buddha. This vow had been expressed in these terms: 'If I cannot come before the man who has believed in me, who has in his last hour expressed the desire to be reborn in my land, then I will not become Buddha'. The land in question here is known by the name of the *Pure Land.* The language is obviously symbolic. Indeed the tradition tells us that 'he who is reborn in the Paradise of Amitabha and benefits from his grace, is delivered forever from the cycle of successive deaths and births'.[16]

In the year 640, the emperor Jomei asked the monk Eon to explain the Sutra of Muryojukyo. From the second half of the 8th century, temples were raised in homage to Amida. The initiative for the creation of a distinct sect came to the Japanese Monk Ryonon (1073–1132). It bore the name of Yuzu nembutsu shu. According to this school, in order to receive the Amidist grace it is enough to think fervently of Amida and to express this thought by the formula called *nembutsu* (adoration of the Buddha Amida). A monk called Genshin (942–1017) had written an Amidist treatise entitled *Ojoyoshu* (the Essential for rebirth in the Pure Land). It is the reading of this treatise which captured Honen (1133-1212) and made him decide to devote himself to Amidism. He did much preaching during his numerous visits to most of the important centers of Japan and had very many adepts. The monks of Hiei-zan and Kofukuji were very jealous of his success. They conspired against him and in 1207 obtained his banishment to the island of Shikoku and the dispersement of most of his disciples. Honen was pardoned a few years later and died in 1212, having written a philosophical testament entitled *One page sermon.*

16. Honen, Shinran, Nichiren and Dogen, op. cit.

The Honen sect, known by the name of Jodo Shu (Pure Land Sect) became subdivided into various branches, the best-known of which is that of Shin Shu founded by Shinran. The present Jodo sect comprises about half a million adherents. Its seat is at the temple of Chion-in. The school of Shin Shu founded by Shinran comprises about ten million adherents. The practices of these sects, the repetition of their invocations and prayers recalls the *japa* of Indians reciting certain *mantras* or magic words. It goes without saying that we are now very far removed from the lofty peaks of Ch'an Buddhism and the other prime origins of Zen. The Japanese master Nichiren realized this and reacted vigorously.

6. The Nichiren School

Born in 1222 in the small village of Kominato, on the Awa coast, Nichiren entered the Kiyosumi monastery at the age of eleven and was ordained at the age of fifteen. He devoted himself to the study of all doctrines and noticed the progressive infatuation with Amidism which dethroned the Buddha in favor of the Amida. Nichiren claimed to find in the Lotus Sutra the purest and most simple expression of the Buddha's teachings. The commentaries on the Lotus Sutra form the most important part of the work of Nichiren, called *Kaimoksho* (The treatise which opens the eyes).

After a long voyage of studies and meditation, Nichiren re-entered the Kiyosumi monastery. He created a disturbance, intentionally, by proclaiming his faith in Lotus Sutra and his disapproval of most of the present doctrines. He did this with such vehemence that the governor of the province, a convinced Amidist, wanted to condemn him to death. Nichiren took refuge in the town of Kamakura but it was not long before he resumed his campaign against the doctrines of Shingon, the practices of the Nembutsu Amidists and other sects.

By a curious coincidence, Japan was deeply upset at this very moment by a series of catastrophes: a very serious earthquake in 1257, a killer hurricane in 1258, famines and epidemics in 1259 and 1260. The rapid succession of these

calamities had plunged the people into feelings of great anxiety. Now some texts had come to Nichiren's notice predicting great catastrophes in Japan when the real teachings of Buddhist wisdom were scorned. Only the re-establishment of these teachings, by means of an energetic stance on the part of the government, could put an end to the present calamities and prevent those, even more serious ones, which were feared from the imminence of a Mongolian invasion. For these reasons, Nichiren addressed to the authorities an historical letter entreating them to prohibit the heretical doctrines, in fact all doctrines other than that of the Lotus Sutra, or else Japan would be exposed to days of even greater peril.

The Kamakura government received this letter in 1260 but, shortly afterwards, a hostile mob attacked the hermitage of Nichiren and set fire to it. He escaped during the night. But it was not long before he resumed his attacks. The government had him arrested and a boat took him to an isolated rock, near to the Izu coast. A fisherman snatched him from a certain death and Nichiren returned to Kamakura where he was pardoned in 1263. In 1268, the Mongolian menace to Japan eventuated. Nichiren took this opportunity to write another series of letters and insults about the Amidist sects.

Finally the Regent, weary of such a tenacious agitator and under the influence of the prominent members of the sects under attack, condemned Nichiren to the death penalty; but he miraculously escaped the punishment. He spent three years on the distant island of Sado where he wrote two important works. Nichiren died in 1282, having received a pardon. He left written works numbering about 400 volumes. The Nichiren sect has retained the pugnacity of its founder.

Unfortunately the Japanese nationalists have seized some of his texts, giving to them an interpretation tending to the temporal and not the religious point of view. For the ultra-nationalists of the period preceding the last world war, Japan had to become the center of the world in the Pacific Ocean. Zen knew a period of considerable increase in Japan, one of the points of departure of which was the establishment of the great Eiheiji monastery. It was at that time that the military dictator Yoromito and his samurai disciples seized power in

the 13th century. They gained inspiration from certain Zen principles and gave rise to a very peculiar school: bushido. This involved a quite paradoxical and questionable application of Zen to the arts of war. In fact, bushido and the pretended application of Zen principles in the martial arts have nothing in common with the real spirit of the original teachings of Ch'an and Zen. It is a very questionable deviation which should be considered as a very subtle and clever treachery. Contrary to the opinion expressed by Th. van Baaren, Zen preaches neither resignation nor the acceptance of the established order[17]. Moreover, it is the very essence of non-violence. Unless one understands this, one could imagine that it might be directly involved in political or ultra-nationalist movements. Such an attitude would be like making Christ responsible for the wars fought in his name. The modern Japanese nationalists and the calamities which they engendered, the infamous Kamikazes, the suicide planes, are not only foreign to pure Buddhism, to Ch'an and to Zen; they are the most evident and absolute negation of it.

It is to the Japanese scholar D. T. Suzuki that the honor is due for having made Zen known in English-speaking countries between 1920 and 1965. His publications, which met with little success at first, between 1920 and 1940, gained a sudden rise in popularity in the post-war years, from 1946 up to the present day.

However it should be mentioned that between the 13th and 20th centuries, the popularity of Zen in Japan has waned and that unanimity over the question of the purity of Ch'an or Zen in certain present day Japanese sects has still not been achieved.

As Alan W. Watts puts it[18]: 'A few Zen communities seem to have survived to the present day, but, so far as I have been able to study them, their emphasis inclines either to Soto or to the more *occultist* preoccupations of Tibetan Buddhism. In either case, their view of Zen seems to be involved with a somewhat complex and questionable doctrine of man's psychic anatomy, which would appear to derive from Taoist alchemical ideas . . .

17. Th. van Baaren, *Les religions d'Asie*, Marabout, Verviers, 1962
18. A. W. Watts, op. cit., p. 107

Both Rinzai and Soto Zen as we find them in Japanese monasteries today put enormous emphasis on *za-zen* or sitting meditation, a practice which they follow for many hours of the day—attaching great importance to the correctness of posture and the way of breathing which it involves'.

The contrast between this present attitude and the teachings of Ch'an at the time of its primitive purity is evidenced by the following dialogue which takes place between Shen Hui (668–760) and the master Ch'eng[19]:

(Shen-Hui): When one practises 'samadhi', isn't this a deliberate activity of the mind?

(Ch'eng): Yes.

(Shen-Hui): Then this deliberate activity of the mind is an activity of restricted consciousness, and how can it bring seeing into one's own nature?

(Ch'eng): To see into one's own nature, it is necessary to practise 'samadhi'. How could one see it otherwise?

(Shen-Hui): All practise of 'samadhi' is fundamentally a wrong view. How, by practising 'samadhi', could one attain 'samadhi'?

Another master, Huai jang, writes in the *Ku-Tsun-Hsun-Yu-Lu*[20]:

'To train yourself in sitting meditation (za-zen) is to train yourself to be a sitting Buddha. If you train yourself in Za-zen, (you should know that) Zen is neither sitting nor lying. If you train yourself to be a sitting Buddha, (you should know that) the Buddha is not a fixed form. Since the Dharma had no (fixed) abode, it is not a matter of making choices. If you (make yourself) a sitting Buddha this is precisely killing the Buddha. If you adhere to the sitting position, you will not attain the principle (of Zen)'.

These texts show us, in a very eloquent fashion, the difference of attitude between the ancient schools of Ch'an and the present-day forms of most of the Zen Schools.

19. ibid., p. 109
20. ibid., p. 110

CHAPTER V

Short History of Taoism

A summary study of Taoism is indispensable for the comprehension of the Chinese mysticism of Ch'an and Zen. The Tibetan master Samtchen Kham Pa once came out with the statement: 'Just as a pure water mixes with a pure water, so the wisdom of Tao and of Mahayana Buddhism have mingled to form Ch'an'.

Contrary to the writings of many authors, the spirit of Taoism is found long before Lao Tzu. The latter lived between the fifth and sixth centuries B.C. Many controversies arise as to the dates and circumstances of his life. The Tao Te Ching is ascribed to him, which is a collection of admirable aphorisms exposing the principles of the Tao.

The little information which we possess comes from a Chinese historian, Seu Ma Tsyeng, who published his memoirs about the year 99 B.C. According to him, Lao Tzu was born about 570 B.C. in the kingdom of Tch'en. His parents lived in the village of Hai. They were of noble family: that of the Lao Che. 'Che' was the name given to the inhabitants of this region. The patronymic of Lao Tzu was Li, and his first name was Eul. He was also given the surname Yuen Hoang Ti. During the years he was called Lao Tzu, the venerable master, more and more frequently. He was archivist of the Court of the Tcheus at the time of the decline of their power and it was after he had left them that he made a summary of his doctrine in the form of a collection entitled *Tao Te Ching*. Chinese scholars insist that Lao Tzu wrote, as well, a vast work which is now completely lost.

The Chinese philosophers assign to Taoism and Confucianism an earlier origin than that generally admitted by those in the West. The works of Lao Tzu and of Confucius (Kong Fu Tzu) are partially derived from the same funda-

mental work, the *I Ching* or Book of Changes. The *I Ching,* dating from about 3000 to 1200 B.C., is considered as the central element of the entire thought, culture and psychology of ancient China.

Westerners originally considered it with scorn as a simple book of divination. In fact the *I Ching* consists of an assemblage of symbolic representations based on the various dispositions of sixty-four figures. Each of these figures is composed of six lines. These lines are of two types: negative when they are broken, and positive when they are continuous. The ancient Chinese taught that these hexagrams were derived originally from the different cracks appearing on a tortoise shell when it is heated.

For the Chinese, the study of the different symbols in question is obviously only a pretext with the intention of obtaining the liberation of the contents of the unconscious mind. It would be wrong to discredit these ancient practices out of hand. The modern psychoanalysts proceed in a similar fashion with the use of the projective tests of Rorschach or others. With the aid of these, the complexes and psychological conditionings of a patient are diagnosed in terms of the images and associations which are presented spontaneously to his mind at the sight of the irregular shape or the colors of a simple ink blot.

As Alan W. Watts puts it[1]: 'It would seem, then, that if the origins of Taoism are to be found in the *I Ching,* they are not so much in the text of the book itself as in the way in which it was used and in the assumptions underlying it'.

This attitude of mind is one of the essential bases of Taoism which shows deep similarities with Zen Buddhism. It is spontaneity, the exercising of pure intuition which expresses itself without any mental interference. Lao Tzu stated that the principle of the Tao is spontaneity. The totality of the Universe is not the result of the execution of a plan, which has been predetermined to the smallest detail. Far from being an absence of intelligence or an incoherence, this non-determination and this liberty are the expression of one of the purest forms of intelligence. It should be stated that the

1. A. W. Watts, op. cit., p. 15

absence of a predetermined plan presiding over the unfolding of the events of the universe does not at all imply the existence of chance.

The second principal of Taoism, giving us the key to Chinese mysticism, is that of the *Wu Wei. Wei* means to act. *Wu* is negative or privative. An attentive study of Taoism or Zen will discount the apparent negative character of Wu Wei. This expression evokes a certain passivity of the ego. It expresses the necessity of silence among the agitations of egoism. If we wish to be receptive and disposed to the presence of the Tao (divine principle), it is essential that our mental agitation, violence, avidity and fear all cease. A similar language is found in the great Indian philosopher Krishnamurti. He says that the habitual agitations of thought must cease in order to permit the development of a creative life.

The creative passivity of the Tao is not negative. Spontaneity and the absence of plans or aims such as we conceive them, bring neither incoherence nor inaction. Lao Tzu stated this idea clearly in the Tao Te Ching, 'Although the Tao has no aim, it leaves nothing undone'.[2] As Henri Maspero expresses it[3]: 'Only the mystic life allows one to obtain the Tao, and the Taoist experience shows its affinity to that of the mystics of all religions when it renounces knowledge and reasoning as a means to finding the absolute'.

In Ch'an and Zen there is a tendency to integrate the riches of the mystical life in the normal activities of everyday existence. A feature that Taoism and Ch'an have in common is that neither is presented as a doctrine, nor a philosophical system. Both denounce the traps of mental activity and incite us to liberate ourselves from the tyranny of names and shapes. Both have an infinite respect for the law of divine spontaneity. The latter takes pleasure in the rhythm of an eternal presence.

The first verse of the Tao Te Ching gives us immediately the tone of the whole work[4]:

2. Lao Tzu, *The Way of Life,* The New American Library, New York, 1955
3. Henri Maspero, *Le Taoisme,* Musee Guimet, Paris, 1960, p. 232
4. Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching,* ed. P. Derain, Lyons, 1951, ed. D. C. Lau, Penguin 1963

'A way which can be traced is not the eternal Way of Tao
A name which can be pronounced, is not the eternal Name
Nameless, it is at the origin of the sky and the earth
With a name, it is the mother of the ten thousand beings'.

Here Lao Tzu evokes the error of rigid and systematized ways. He then shows how analytical thought encourages distinctions and classifications, and reinforces the notion of an extreme multiplicity of beings and things. With such a frame of mind, man loses sight of the profound unity of the universe and strays into sterile thought processes.

In the following extract, Lao Tzu demonstrates the limitations engendered by opposing values such as good and bad, beauty and ugliness. He also evokes the indirect significance of every authentic spiritual transformation[5].

'Everyone under the sky recognizes beauty as being beauty: here is ugliness! Everyone recognizes good as being good: here is evil! It is thus that the being and the not-being are born one from the other, that the difficult and the easy are accomplished one by the other, that the long and the short mutually limit each other.

'This is why the Good Man holds to the practice of Non-action. He teaches without talking. Let all beings act and he will not refuse them his help. He produces without appropriating, works without expecting anything, accomplishes praiseworthy works without enthusiasm, and, precisely because he does not become enthusiastic, the works have permanent value'.

Lao Tzu had various successors, among whom Chuang Tzu and Lieh Tzu (c. 398 B.C.) were the most famous. *The Shih Chi* (Historian's Register) compiled by the Chinese scholar Shu Ma Ch'ien (145–89 B.C.) states that Chuang Tzu lived at the same time as the King Hui of Liang (370–319 B.C.) and the King Hsuan of Ch'i (319–301 B.C.). The historical accuracy of the existence of Lao Tzu's other successor, Lieh Tzu, is disputed by some authors, who consider Lieh Tzu to

5. Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching,* op. cit.

be a mythical character whose writings were compiled around the first or second century A.D.

In his works Chuang Tzu compared the mind of the man who had found illumination to a perfect mirror. The perfect mirror sees everything but does not take anything. *See* corresponds to the *Wei* and implies the passive ego. We will see later on that this attitude does not lead to total inactivity, but on the contrary is the source of all creative action. These statements can be elucidated by reading the prophetic writings of Lao Tzu[6]:

'With uprightness one governs a kingdom; with malice one wages war; but the real Empire, this is gained with the aid of Non-action.

'The more rules and prohibitions there are in the Empire, the more the people are impoverished; the more means the people have to become rich, the more troubled family life becomes in the nation; the more ingenious and skilful the people are, the more one sees the emergence of useless inventions; the more the tide of laws and rules rises, the more malefactors and bandits there are.

'This is why the Good Man says: I practise Non-action and the people are transformed by themselves; I observe complete calmness and the people are enriched by themselves; I am without desire and the people return to primitive simplicity'.

It is difficult for Westerners to understand the exact meaning of the term *Non-action* of which Taoism, Buddhism and Zen speak. The expert of Ch'an who has taken the pseudonym of Wei Wu Wei thinks that the expression *Non-reaction* would be more adequate. It is not an attitude of inertia or incoherent abandon. Non-reaction indicates the interior state of the human being, so well disposed for the pure action of the divine will that he has ceased to react according to the norms of human conduct.

As Rene Guenon writes[7]: '*Non-action* is not inertia. On the contrary it is the fullness of activity, but an activity which is transcendent and completely interior, not manifested, in

6. Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching,* op. cit., p. 81
7. René Guénon, *Taoisme et Confucianisme,* revue 'Le voile d'Isis', Oct.-Nov., 1922, Paris

union with the Principle. Thus it is beyond all distinctions and all the appearances which the common man wrongly takes for reality itself, which are nothing but a more or less distant reflection of it'.

One requirement is common to Taoism, Ch'an and Zen: that of mental transparence and the willing disposition of the spirit, which must be passive to allow itself to be impregnated by the impulse of divine essence.

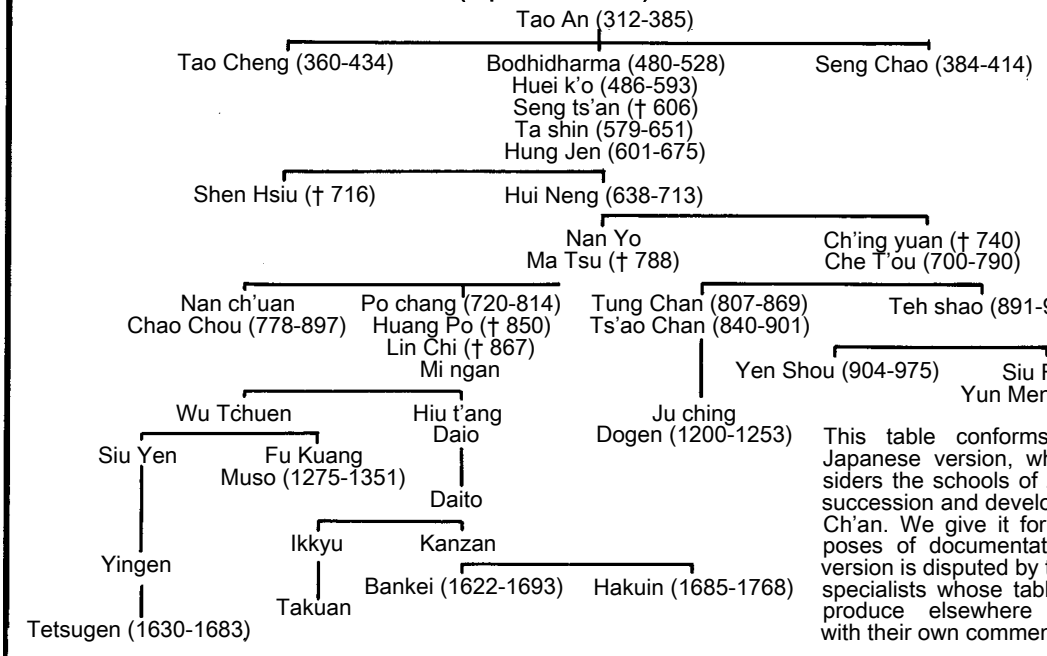
In the light of what has gone before, we are more able to understand the significance of certain myths and symbols of the Bible and the Cabala. In his interesting study of the Bible, Carlo Suares writes[8]: 'In the truth of the Myth, the Wedding is perpetual renewal, for the Bride is none other than our psyche and the Groom is the cosmic energy which fertilizes her when she dies intermittently within herself and becomes virgin and intact once more, and which is always present when the moment comes'.

8. Carlo Suares, *Le Bible restituée,* du Mont-Blanc, Geneva, 1967, p. 256

Summary of the Chinese Dynasties

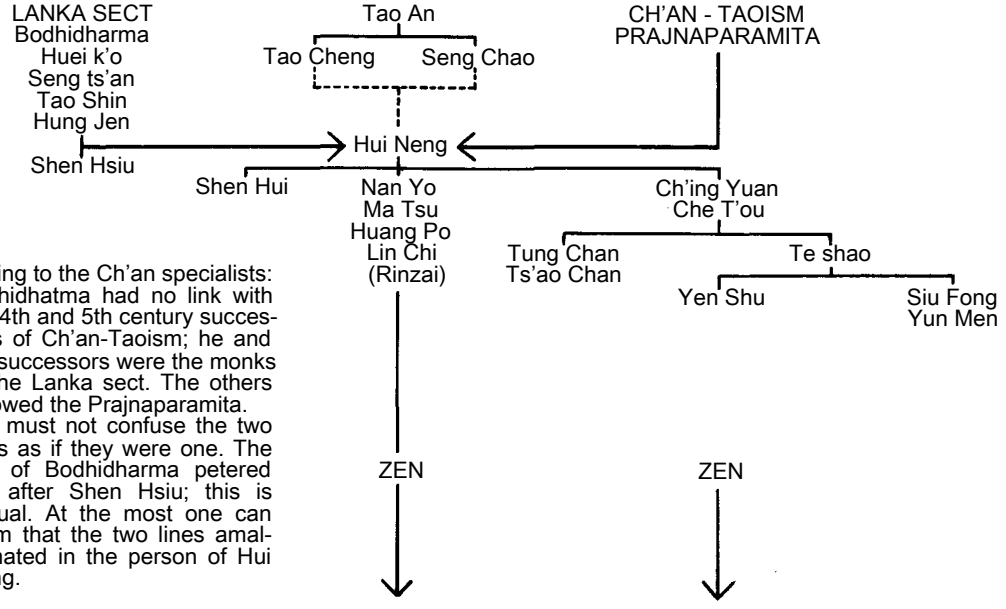
Legendary Times Five Emperors Hsia Dynasty	4000 – 1766 B.C. (approx.)
Shang Dynasty	1766 – 1122 B.C.
Chou Dynasty	1122 – 255 B.C.
Ts'in Dynasty. (Emperor Ts'in Shih Huang)	221 – 207 B.C.
Han Dynasty	
Western Han	206 B.C. – 8 A.D.
Eastern Han	25 A.D. – 221
Period of the Three Kingdoms	221 – 264
Ts'in Dynasty	
Western Ts'in	265 –316
Eastern Ts'in	316 – 420
Dynasties of the North and the South	420 – 589
Sui Dynasty	589 – 618
T'ang Dynasty	618 – 907
Period of the Five Dynasties	907 – 960
Sung Dynasty of the North	960 – 1127
Sung Dynasty of the South	1127 – 1279
Mongol Dynasty of the Yuan	1279 – 1368
Ming Dynasty	1368 – 1644
Manchu Dynasty of the Tsing	1644 – 1911
Chinese Republic	1911
Chinese People's Republic	1949

Chronological succession of the masters of Ch'an and Zen (Japanese version)



This table conforms to the Japanese version, which considers the schools of Zen as a succession and development of Ch'an. We give it for the purposes of documentation. This version is disputed by the Ch'an specialists whose table we reproduce elsewhere together with their own comments.

Chronological succession of the masters of Ch'an (Chinese version)



According to the Ch'an specialists:

1. Bodhidhatma had no link with the 4th and 5th century successors of Ch'an-Taoism; he and his successors were the monks of the Lanka sect. The others followed the Prajnaparamita.
2. One must not confuse the two lines as if they were one. The line of Bodhidharma petered out after Shen Hsiu; this is factual. At the most one can claim that the two lines amalgamated in the person of Hui Neng.

PART TWO

BASES OF CH'AN AND ZEN BUDDHISM

CHAPTER VI

Is Buddhism a Religion?

The experts in Buddhism refute, as far as they are concerned, the cogency of a notion generally admitted in the West: the notion of the founder of a religion. There is no founder of religion in Buddhism, writes Professor D. T. Suzuki[1]: 'Buddhism did not come fully equipped out of the Buddha's head like Pallas Athene out of Zeus' head. In as much as Buddhism is a living religion, and not a historical mummy stuffed with dead and useless materials, it must be capable of absorbing and assimilating everything that comes to the aid of its growth. This is the most natural thing for any living organism to do'.

The Buddha never intended to found an organized religion with carefully codified teachings. Buddhists consider that a genuine Enlightened One would not dare to take upon himself the responsibility of setting up as a dogmatic and codified system a truth which he claims contains the qualities of liberty and spontaneity. The term *Enlightened One* frequently used by Buddhist authors includes any human being who has achieved the experience of interior awakening: Nirvana in Buddhism or Satori in Zen. Most authors are convinced by the depth of the supreme experiences of a Buddha, a Lao Tzu, a Hui Neng, a Master Eckhart and the greatest Christian mystics

The experts in Ch'an and Zen Buddhism consider that the rigid codification and systematization of the teachings of an Enlightened One have never been done by himself but by his disciples. Fear, the quest for easy security, mental inertia and worship of authority are the dominant factors in the progressive deification of the master. Little by little, he who was only ever a perfectly natural man acquires supernatural qualities and becomes a god. The process of the deification

1. D. T. Suzuki, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 55

of the master snowballs over the ages, the disciples measuring their own importance in relation to the importance accorded to the master.

The developed forms of Buddhism, Ch'an and Zen, are reactions against these tendencies that do not conform to the Happy Medium wisdom propounded by the Buddha. Did he not constantly tell his disciples that they must be 'their own lamp'?

The Ch'an master T'sen T'sang said: 'Do not linger where the Buddha can be found, move on quickly to where he is not'. Another Ch'an master, Hui Neng, said to his disciples: 'Do not put any head above your own'.

If, by religion, we mean a collection of dogmas imposed and rites performed, the elevated forms of Buddhism, Ch'an and Zen, are not religions in the accepted Western sense. At most we can only apply this label to certain popular and tantric forms of Buddhism and of Japanese Zen. But, if by religion we mean a living instruction to go beyond egoism and the appearances of the tangible world by liberating ourselves from ignorance and attachments, the elevated forms of Buddhism and Zen could be described as religions. Indeed, this liberation permits us to be *bound* to the supreme Principle.

One of the principal Tibetan texts tells us: 'Practise the art of the complete giving of yourself'. This is one of the crucial ideas of Buddhism which concurs on this point with the superior mystics of the West. However, in the West, the attitude of giving is a means, whereas in Buddhism it is only a consequence.

The best-known Buddhist Scriptures recommend rules of conduct grouped under three principal headings: morality, contemplation, and wisdom. In the popular forms of Buddhism, morality and good conduct are the means. In the elevated forms they are only the consequences.

The fundamental aim of the Buddhist teachings is to dissolve what it calls the illusion of ego. The impression of being a real and continuous individual is illusory. It results from a process of complex concatenation of "aggregates" known as *skandas* which are the body, the sentiments, the perceptions, the impulses and emotions, the acts of conscience.

Where there in fact exists only an impersonal web of causes and effects between these five elements, we think we can see a real and continuous entity. Buddhism considers the belief in the permanence of individuality as an invention of the ego which perforce superimposes itself on the complex concatenation of the five aggregates[2].

As we shall see elsewhere, Buddhism teaches that the personal conscience is not continuous. It is only the rapidity and complexity of our thought processes, and our emotions which gives us the impression of continuity. This is a false impression. It results from a lack of penetration on the part of our minds. Only *true vision* will deliver us from the mirage of the ego and will reveal to us our profound, immortal and unfathomable essence. In the superior forms of Buddhism and Zen, we find a climate of vigilance which imposes on seekers a complete experimental realization of this process.

To the extent in which religion consists of strict conformism as regards certain systematic precepts, it departs from the spirit of Zen. The latter, as we have seen (Bodhidharma), worries little about scriptures. For this reason, although inferior forms of Buddhism exist which conform to the western sense of the word religion, we can no longer say the same about Ch'an and Zen. However we will say that they *are* profoundly religious.

If we consider the term religion from the point of view of its etymology and its basic meaning, that is to say *religare: join, bind again,* Ch'an, Zen and the superior form of Buddhism can be considered as religions. We are dealing with a natural religion. Here, the religious man strives to discover the secret bond which unites him to the divine presence which resides in him and all things.

In this perspective, we can consider Buddhism, Ch'an and Zen as sciences studying the relations possible between the human finite and the divine infinite. But here we are already caught in the trap of words expressing western values very different from those of Ch'an and Zen. Indeed, we would have difficulty in distinguishing the *human finite* from the

2. A. David-Neel, op. cit.

divine infinite. This quite western distinction is devoid of all sense in the eyes of the Ch'an and Zen masters. Their attitude is comparable to that of Carlo Suares who stated[3]: 'In all religions and all philosophies, we can now show that what they were looking for under all possible sorts of names: God, the Absolute, Truth, is none other than human'.

In the view of Carlo Suares and Zen, the accomplished human is liberated from illusion and the limits of strictly personal conscience. The totally religious man is integrated with the fullness of a divine life in which the highest peaks of intelligence and love flourish.

In the view of Ch'an and Zen there is no distinction between Creator and creatures. Interior experience cannot be defined as a communion but as an integration. The interior Awakening or Nirvana sanctifies the dissolution of the personal conscience, which integrates with the universal conscience of the Cosmic Mind.

Religion is often defined in the West as the obligations of men toward God. In this sense, the superior forms of Buddhism, such as Ch'an and Zen, cannot be considered as religions. The idea of any sort of obligation is foreign to Ch'an and Zen, in which we find no allusion to a God distinct from ourselves. The Enlightened Ones teach us that we are the Supreme Reality, the Cosmic Mind, but are unaware of it[4].

The idea of considering religion and the rules which stem from it as an obligation is considered by the Enlightened Ones as a paradox. The true religion, as the Indian psychologist Krishnamurti tells us, cannot come about except in the spontaneity of love and the most perfect liberty of the mind.

The role of monks in Buddhism

Buddhist monks live in communities or as hermits. Experts consider that the spiritual level of the Buddhist hermits is

3. Carlo Suares, op. cit.
4. Hsi Yun, op. cit.

often more elevated than that achieved in communities. The hermits do not necessarily live completely withdrawn into a contemplative life. They can form schools, teach and take on disciples. The organized Buddhist communities, as a whole, are called the *Sangha.*

An important difference exists concerning the role of monks in Buddhism, Ch'an and Zen on the one hand, and Christianity on the other. In the first case, they are not considered as intermediaries between the divine and man. They devote themselves to meditation, the exercise of perfect attention and when Illumination has been achieved, some of them go from village to village preaching the *Doctrine of Awakening.* They limit themselves to showing the way; the disciple must go through the stages by himself, by his own efforts and through his own lucidity.

In the most widespread forms of Christianity, the priest is, with a few exceptions, the intermediary between the divine and the human. He is the minister of God, and the dispenser of the sacraments. In Catholicism, by means of absolution he has the power to efface the sins of the believer. The notions of sin, of original sin, of salvation and of remission of sin are foreign to Buddhism, according to which each human being is alone responsible for his misery and his joy. He alone can untie the bonds that attach him to the wheel of birth-and-death[5].

Many Buddhist schools admit the existence of Bodhisattvas or spiritual instructors voluntarily devoting themselves to the liberation of those who are prisoners of ignorance, but these priests or spiritual instructors are not intermediaries between the human and the divine. In their statements, the Illuminated Ones—whether they be Buddhist monks or hermits—do not make it their purpose nor even desire to influence their audience. Some of them often introduce their subjects in these terms: 'Might I be permitted to suggest to you that . . '.

As Dr. Hubert Benoit writes[6]: 'One of the errors which most surely hinder the realization of man's intemporality consists in seeing in this realization a quality of constraint. Although the realization implies liberation, one arrives at this

5. A. David-Neel, op. cit.
6. Dr. Hubert Benoit, op. cit., p. 57

paradox because man is submitted to the duty which constrains him to be free'.

In the spirit of Zen, the monks cannot help the world except by achieving interior Awakening. While they are waiting for this spiritual realization, they devote themselves to meditation and to practical works. They do their utmost to carry them out as well as possible, gaining their inspiration from the teachings of perfect adequacy, which encourages them to be fully engaged at every moment in what they are doing and to carry it through to perfection. There can exist no distinction between meditation and action.

Absence of dogmatism

The superior forms of Buddhism, Ch'an and Zen, are devoid of any dogmatism. They present certain similarities with the modern trends of free thought. The Zen masters tell us that it is only attachment to an idea which conditions our minds, but that the mere preference of one idea to another enslaves the mind.

The central reality of our being and of all things is the *Cosmic Mind.* Every mental preference implies the bringing and fixing of psychic energy around a privileged point within the infinity of the Cosmic Mind. The Illuminated Ones tell us that as soon as we create privileged points, distinctions and preferences, we exile ourselves from the unity and liberty of the Real. Every undue particularization provides a handhold for the innumerable miseries of relativity and dualism. What we have just said helps to clarify the rather paradoxical statement of T'sen T'sang: 'The perfect way knows no difficulty except that it shies away from any preference. A difference of a tenth of an inch, and the Heaven and Earth are found apart'.

Zen bears the mark of exceptional sensibility and delicacy concerning the problem of the liberty of the mind. Perhaps we could define it as spiritual free thinking. The expansion of the fullness of the conscience is bound to a certain interior liberty.

To conclude this chapter, we will say that Buddhism, Ch'an and Zen are religions of Illumination. They are the ultimate outcome of the admirable words of the Buddha in the Dhammapada[7]; 'Vigilance and lucidity are the ways of immortality. The vigilante do not die . . . Negligence is the way to death. Negligents are already as if they were dead'.

The Illuminated Ones suggest that we liberate ourselves from the state of generalized negligence in which we find ourselves. This negligence results primarily from the abuse and misuse of the intellect.

7. A. David-Neel, op. cit.

CHAPTER VII

Principles of Buddhism and Zen

Are Buddhism and Zen philosophies? The word philosopher, if one refers to its etymology, means lover of wisdom. In this point of view, the adepts of Buddhism and Zen can be considered as philosophers. But if we give the word philosophy its accepted meaning—which for some people is pejorative—of intellectual speculation, neither Buddhism nor Zen can be considered as a philosophy. Neither are they moralities. Both consider with equal disdain any metaphysical speculations about first causes, God or the Absolute. The attitude of Zen as regards metaphysicians concurs with that of Carlo Suares who stated in a humorous tone[1]: 'Metaphysicians are conjurors: they conjure themselves'.

Buddhism, Ch'an and Zen require that we liberate our minds of the intellectual constructions of which most of our philosophies, our metaphysics, our morals and our relative notions of good and evil, are made. Hui Neng, one of the principal Patriarchs of Ch'an, has left us this famous injunction[2]: 'Do not think of good, do not think of evil, but rather look upon what is, at the present moment, your original physiognomy: that which you were before you were even born'.

A master of Tibetan Buddhism, Tilopa, has left us another piece of advice, which calls for mental silence[3]:

'No thought, no reflection, no analysis,
No cultivation, no intention;
Let it settle itself'.

The original Tibetan text is:

'Mi-mno, mi-bsam, mi-dpyad-ching,
Mi-bsgom, mi-sems, rang-babs-bzhag'.

The bases of popular Buddhism are very rarely stated in works dealing with Ch'an and Zen, which being much more

1. C. Suares, *La comédie psychologique,* Corti, Paris, 1932, p. 92.
2. D. T. Suzuki, op. cit.
3. A. W. Watts, op. cit., p. 79.

advanced, deal essentially with the problem of interior Illumination. The *Four Basic Truths,* recorded by the popular Buddhist tradition, are supposed to have been preached at Benares by the Buddha shortly after his illumination. They are generally set forth as follows:

1. Recognition of suffering.
2. Designation of existence and ignorance as the causes of suffering.
3. Possibility of being liberated from suffering.
4. The path which is to be followed.

The last is known by the name of *Eight-fold-Path.* It consists of: complete (or perfect) view, complete understanding, complete speech, complete action, complete vocation, complete application, complete recollectedness, complete contemplation. In the superior forms of Buddhism such as Ch'an and Zen, complete view and complete recollectedness are fundamental. The other elements, such as complete action, complete vocation, complete speech, etc., are only the consequences of the Illumination. In popular Buddhism, these elements are considered as means.

Without complete view or complete recollectedness there is no complete action. Man achieves complete view as soon as his mind is no longer troubled by ideas. No more mental fabrication can come between him and his deeds. He must be 'present to the Present'. This is an attitude of life which is essentially practical and which involves the human being in his psychic and physical totality. This is the reason why Professor E. Conze of Oxford University[4] defined Buddhism as a dialectic pragmatism.

This pragmatic attitude results from the very procedure of the Buddha's interior illumination. He achieved this as soon as he separated himself from the intellectual speculations of the learned men he had consulted. He liberated himself from all his memories, and from all the qualities he had acquired in the past. A penetrating view of the process of his own thought revealed to him the illusory and non-permanent character of the ego. In place of the mirages of his personal conscience, was substituted the direct view of his deepest

4. E. Conze, *Buddhism,* Cassirer, London, 1949

nature, which is called by the authors Body of Truth (Dharmakaya) or Cosmic Mind.

The elevated forms of Buddhism do not waste time on metaphysical speculations about the first origins of suffering. They simply acknowledge the fact and give us practical means by which we can liberate ourselves' in a real way.

Let us remark here upon a difference of interpretation existing between the popular forms of Buddhism and the evolved forms of Ch'an and Zen. For the former, it is very frequently existence alone which is held to be the cause of suffering. For the latter it is rather ignorance. We see that modern Zen masters state without hesitation that the cessation of ignorance would allow man to achieve a paradise on earth.

In the view of Ch'an and Zen, liberation from suffering and conflicts cannot result from a flight from problems by an intellectual rationalization of them. On the contrary it must be a direct approach. Ch'an and Zen limit themselves to acknowledging that suffering comes from ignorance and that this corresponds closely to a condition of drowsiness and lethargy which is both individual and collective. Nirvana is the state of awakening out of this dream.

As Ramacharaka puts it[5]: 'Nirvana is the annihilation of Maya (illusions), an extinction of ignorance (Avidya), it is a state of universal conscience and not the extinction of conscience'. Our understanding of Buddhism and Zen is clarified if we study closely the meaning of the word Buddha and its implications. The term *Buddha* does not indicate a person but rather a state. Buddha means *Awakened*, that is to say delivered from the dream of ignorance and from a fundamental condition of distraction. This Awakening is within the reach of all human beings providing that they devote all their attention to it.

In the state of Buddha or Buddhahood, man has discovered 'the basic unity of the ten thousand things'. He has unmasked the negative role of his mental creations. He knows that they are the expression of *Tanka,* the thirst for continuity, the desire to possess and dominate. The state of Buddha is one of great felicity and incorruptible happiness. It happens in

5. A. David-Neel, op. cit.

every human being who is freed from attachment to the familiar values suggested by contacts with the sensory world, values of time, space and becoming. This does not mean that such a man rejects these values or flees from them. He simply places them in their proper place within a greater mass which includes and dominates them: this unity is called the Cosmic Mind. The realization of interior Awakening demands on our part constant attention and readjustment. Inattention is, in the eyes of the masters of Buddhism, the gravest fault.

If Buddhism and Zen use thought, it is to make one understand that thought must be transcended. In this sense, they are dialectic. A Zen master used to say that one must do a lot of talking before one can attain true silence. Interior silence has always occupied an important place in both western and oriental mysticism.

Jacob Boehme wrote[6]: 'If you can keep silent . . . in your will and your senses, you will hear the words of God, inexpressible. When the senses and the personal will are silent, eternal hearing, sight and speech will be manifested in you: God himself will hear and see through you'. Interior Awakening is not as complicated as our commentaries and efforts to explain it might seem. In reality, all is very simple. But because we are very complicated, it is very complicated for us to become simple.

The masters tell us that all is there. We have nothing to acquire, the supreme reality resides in us. In a certain sense we are it, but we are unaware of it because of our fundamental inattention. There is nothing to *do* in the accumulative sense of the word. Rather there is much to *undo*. Zen suggests that we put order into our interior disorganized state. It considers that the mind is in disorder as long as it remains prisoner of the illusion of personality and believes itself to be a separate entity.

The attitude of Ch'an and Zen is similar in many respects to that of Shankaracharya, the great Indian master of Advaita Vedanta, for which there exists only the indivisible unity of Brahman which surrounds us and forms the single essence of

6. Jacob Boehme, *De la vie super-sensuelle,* Chacornac, Paris, 1903

beings and things. The Indian masters often used the following image: in a healthy body, the internal organs are not sensitive. They remind us of their existence only when loss of balance or disease troubles them.

For the Indian masters of Advaita as for Ch'an and Zen, the so-called normal personal conscience is considered as a loss of balance which brings about suffering. Human egoism and the servitude and misery which result from it, contrast with the peace and felicity of indivisible unity with Brahman. The one difference which renders this comparison imperfect is that the indivisible unity of Brahman is in no way affected by the mirages and nightmares of the personal conscience, whilst the human body can be profoundly affected by the disease of a single organ.

Zen requires us to let go and to be disposed[7]. It is a *maieutic* process similar to that of Socrates. It is a 'science of spiritual liberation' which strives to reunite the psychological elements favorable to the emancipation of the mind. It permits us to achieve this complete psychological transformation which is the Awakening.

The Buddhist texts, and especially the Lankavatara Sutra, teach us that the mind is enslaved by the 'force of habits'. So it is necessary to recognize these and free ourselves from them. Socrates and the Zen masters aim to exhaust the possibilities of the mind by making it demonstrate to itself, and by itself, its impotence to discover or formulate Reality.

The mind can accomplish miracles in technology and the exact sciences. This is the field it can operate adequately. But it cannot comprehend the supreme Reality. When it becomes fully aware of the impossibility of its ever *begetting* the essence of things, it becomes silent. In this very silence, the essence is *begotten.* Such were the essential elements of the maieutic mode of Socrates. They correspond to those of the Ch'an and Zen master, closer to us, of Krishnamurti.

Professor D. T. Suzuki declared[8]: 'All knowledge is an acquisition and accumulation whereas Zen proposes to de-

7. Dr. Hubert Benoit, op. cit.
8. D. T. Suzuki, *Essays on Zen,* op. cit.

prive man of all his possessions. To learn . . . is to grasp . . . When the mind is completely delivered of the accumulated silt of time immemorial, it remains naked, without clothing, without disguises. It is now free, empty, assuming its original authority'.

CHAPTER VIII

Buddhism and Zen as Psychology

Buddhism, Ch'an and Zen project beams of penetrating analysis on the workings of thought, emotions and the acts which result from them. We could consider them as psychologies[1]. For Freud and C. G. Jung psychology is in fact a science of behavior. For C G. Jung, it is also a science of the soul.

Interior Awakening implies a perfect knowledge of ourselves. This knowledge has to be much more vast than we suppose. The awareness which would result from an ordinary psycho-analysis or self-analysis only represents a tiny part of the task which is set for the practitioners of the doctrines of complete Awakening.

The complete view of Buddhism consists in seeing directly —without mental interferences—the profound Reality of the universe and of ourselves, beyond superficial appearances. In order to *see* without mental interferences, one must transcend these. But in order to transcend them, one must first know them.

Buddhism, Ch'an and Zen give us a study in depth of the structure and workings of thought, memory, the emotions and all the phenomena of consciousness. They embrace all the sectors of psychology and parapsychology and lead us to the threshold of unknown spiritual depths.

One of the essential notions of Buddhism is the 'impermanence of the collections of elements'. Everything moves. Everything is transformed. Nothing is stable. The apparent fixity of matter and of our own conscience is illusory. The psychology of Buddhism reveals to us a collection of original information on anatomy and the workings of the human consciousness. This originality takes as its starting point the

1. Dr. E. Fromm, Zen *and psychoanalysis,* Allen and Unwin, London, 1960

observation of a quite elementary and very simple fact: the whole universe is subject to the law of change.

The history of a universe is that of billions of transformations, associations, disassociations, and billions of births, blossomings and deaths. The essential law of the infinitely great and the infinitely small, is above all that of change. This idea is particularly well demonstrated by Professor Edward Leroy of the College de France[2]:

'Wherever our investigations take us, do they ever encounter stationary bodies? Rest is only ever relative and apparent.

'To what extent does the being thus move in front of us?

'The answer given by experience is significant: as it grows in precision and finesse, it no longer finds immobility nor constancy, but only a continual trepidation. No longer any definite term: an unceasing process of becoming appears. Change alone has any intrinsic reality. It is this alone that one finds everywhere as a basic fact. It is impossible to contest this fact. All observable objects move, and the elements of which they are composed are revealed, as soon as their surface is scratched by analysis, as a prodigious interweaving of flux and waves, an incalculable construction of vibratory stages, so that in the strictest sense of the term, we grasp nothing in the universe but movements superimposed on movements'.

We will see, further on, that the study of the behavior of molecules and atoms as well as of their primary constituents, confirms the notion of a prodigious intensity of movement, in spite of any apparent exterior immobility. The latest progresses in physics tell us that there is no independent or isolated object or matter. All things are mutually solitary. Beings and things are interdependent and cannot exist by themselves. The Cosmic Mind alone exists by itself, in us and in all things.

In Buddhism, Ch'an and Zen, beings and things are neither independent nor continuous, nor immobile. These ideas do not apply just to the material world. They concern equally the structure and working of the psychic levels. Our states of consciousness are continually modifying themselves. We are never identical with ourselves. The Indian thinker J.

2. E. Leroy, *L'exigence idéalist,* Boivin, Paris, 1925

Krishnamurti[3] develops the same point of view The idea of a *thinker* as a continuous entity is only, in his opinion, the result of a rapid and complex development of thought. Buddhism teaches us that, where we think we see a permanent entity, there exists 'a mere succession of states of consciousness transforming themselves from instant to instant'.[4]

As Carlo Suares puts it[5]: 'The objects which express states of movement are not only tables, cars, our planet, the stars, but also emotions, ideas and the *I*, the subjective world itself . . . In the final analysis, we find in the subjective world, as in the objective world, the irreducible *something* which expresses itself in movement'.

The experimental approach to this *something* is stated in the commentary of an important work of Tibetan Buddhism, the Tchag Tchen Gyi Zindi[6]:

'A tree, a stone, an animal cease to be seen as solid and durable bodies for a relatively long period of time, and in their place, the trained disciple sees a continuous succession of sudden manifestations which are of shorter duration than a flash of lightning, *the apparent continuity of the objects which he is contemplating and his own person being caused by the rapidity with which these flashes follow each other.*

'Having reached this far, the disciple has attained that which, for Buddhists, constitutes the *correct Way.*

'He has seen that phenonema are due to the perpetual play of energies and do not have as a support any substance from which they emerge; he has seen that impermanence is the universal law, and that the ego is a pure illusion caused by a lack of penetration and perceptive power'.

One cannot help being dumbfounded by the intuition of these texts which were taught many centuries before the discoveries of modern science. We know now that molecules carry out between 4,000 and 19,000 oscillations per second. We know that they result from the combination of atoms and that each atom is comparable to a minuscule solar system of about a millionth of a millimetre in size. This solar system

3. J. Krishnamurti, *Conferences d'Ojai,* Cercle du Livre, Paris, 1950
4. A. David-Neel, op. cit.
5. Carlo Suares, *La comedie psychologique,* op. cit.
6. A. David-Neel, op. cit., p. 66

is formed from a central nucleus around which little planets revolve: the planetary electrons.

Every second, the electrons perform between 200,000 and 6,000,000 turns around the nucleus. In addition, we know that the basic atomic corpuscles, electrons, protons, neutrons, etc., are only the diverse manifestations of a single and same energy. The traditional notion of substance vanishes in the bottommost depths of the material world.

That which has been said about matter is equally true for the spirit. The ancient texts of Buddhism, taken up by Ch'an and Zen, teach us that the impression of the continuity of consciousness is illusory. When we examine ourselves normally, we feel that we are a clearly distinct entity, animated by a continuous consciousness. Our consciousness gives us the impression of a uniform smoothness which is continuous in duration. From yesterday, across today, into tomorrow, we do not generally perceive any break, any changing.

The Illuminated Ones teach us that this results from a lack of attention and discernment. An example will aid us to understand how an appearance of continuity can, under analysis, be shown to be discontinuous.

When we are at the cinema, we see on the screen the gesture of a character lifting an arm. The sight of this gesture gives us the impression of continuity. In fact, this continuity is more apparent than real. The film is formed by a rapid succession of discontinuous images. Each of these images, representing a position of the arm, passes onto the screen for a fraction of a second. For each of the following fractions of seconds, the image represents a slightly more raised position of the arm. The projection of the film slowed down would not give us the impression of a continuous upwards gesture. The raising of the arm would appear discontinuous. It would take place in jerks. It is the rapidity of the succession of the images which gives us an impression of continuity.

The doctrine of *Complete View* teaches that an identical process is responsible for the apparent continuity of consciousness. The impression of continuity and psychological solidity of the personal consciousness results from the rapidity and the complexity of the succession of our thoughts and emotions. Just as there is a fraction of a second between two

images of a broken-down movement giving us, in a film, the impression of continuity, in the same way there is a fraction of a second between two thoughts.

This intervening gap between two thoughts is called the *Turya Void* in Indian Buddhism and in Vedanta. This idea plays an important role in Ch'an, Zen and the teachings of Krishnamurti, These state that the perception of the void intervening between two thoughts is indispensable to the Awakening. We will see elsewhere the reasons for which the existence of this Turya void is hidden from us by mental agitation.

The discontinuous flux of the consciousness which has just been discussed, was commented upon by the Buddha during a sermon in which he was comparing the processes of human consciousness and thought to a flame[7].

If we look casually at a candle flame in a room sheltered from any draughts, we will first of all receive the impression of immobility. We know however that nothing is immobile in the heart of this flame. The clearly defined appearance of its contours is a sort of trap. This flame recreates itself from second to second. In the course of its apparently continuous flame, it is fed by the billions of molecules of stearin which melt and are consumed by combining with the oxygen in the air. Thus the heat of the flame is created and maintained continuously.

The Illumined Ones tell us that it is the same for our consciousness. We *burn* on the surface of consciousness, somewhat as flames burn on the surface of matter. The fuel for the flame of the ego is the *skanda* which we have already mentioned. These are: the body, the sensations, the perceptions, the reactions of thought and will in contact with that which precedes, and the awareness of the totality of this process.

The whole is dragged along in a sort of closed cycle, as much in the example of the flame of the candle as in the ego. The stearin melts in the heat of the flame and combines, again with the help of this heat, with the oxygen in the air.

7. C. Formichi, *Apology of Buddhism,* Nilsson, Paris, 1926

This combustion releases in its turn the heat necessary for the continuation of the process. The Buddha compared the heat of the flame to the *self-conscience.* The flame is maintained by the combustion of the stearin. The self-conscience is fuelled by the very complex and rapid superimposition of perceptions, sensations, thoughts, memories, etc.

In this rapid and complex chain of causes and effects, rigorously bare of any individuality, is introduced the illusion of a permanent individuality. Buddhism, Ch'an and Zen consider the notion of the ego as a psychological mirage resulting from ignorance. The canonical texts of Buddhism, such as the Visudha Magga[8], abound in passages similar to the one that follows, which seem very paradoxical to western minds:

'No one accomplishes the action, no one tastes the fruits thereof, the succession of acts and their fruits just turns in a continuous round, like the round of the tree and the seed, and no one can ever say where it begins.

'Those who do not discern this chain believe in the existence of an ego; some take this to be eternal, others call it perishable'.

Being in the habit of considering ourselves as durable and continuous, we do not wish to recognize our fundamental contradiction. The deep beds of our unconscious, although they lie near to the place where our scorn is elaborated, see it more clearly than we think. It is for this reason, the Illuminated Ones tell us, that we carry, inscribed in the substrata of our being, our basic fear and anguish. We are literally overhanging the true Reality.

Two causes are responsible for our feeling of continuity and for the ignorance of our real nature: firstly, the rapidity and disorder of our thoughts; secondly, the enormous complexity of our accumulated memories.

As Dr. Roger Godel writes[9]:

'As soon as it is born, the lived instant undergoes the common fate: it takes its place in the graphic system of our memories; here it is registered, recorded, classified, compared,

8. A. David-Neel, op. cit.
9. Dr. Roger Godel, *Essais sur l'Expérience libératrice,* Gallimard, Paris, 1952, p. 173

known and recognized, and mummified. Henceforth, it reposes somewhere in the framework of the uncountable memory-marks whence memory alone will know how to exhume it. *The apparent continuity of the ego*—defined by its physical and psychical attributes—does it not rest entirely on these inscriptions in the nervous system?

'The interweaving of memories—with their infidelities, parasites, and short circuits—weave across the organic mass a sub-product: the ego'.

CHAPTER IX

Nirvana or Sartori

The term Nirvana plays a very important role in Buddhism. It comes from the Sanskrit verb *nirva* which means literally to be extinguished. Some of the most ancient texts, notably the Upanishads, used the virtual synonym *udwa* meaning to go away[1]. For this reason the first translators decided upon the negative character and integral nihilism of Buddhism. Nirvana does mean extinction, but should we not inquire of what?

It is a matter of the extinction of the flame of the ego, of its attachments, of its desires and of its ignorance. The result of this extinction is not a void but a fullness. However let us make it clear that the term *fullness* here risks being quite misinterpreted. There is in Nirvana the revelation of a great richness, but it comes about on the condition that we die psychologically to ourselves. As the Ch'an expert Wei Wu Wei puts it, the word fullness can be a deceptive word. It could make one suppose, for example, that Nirvana is the fullness of the ego, whereas it can only come about by the cessation of all affirmation of self.

The Orientals consider that Nirvana is outside all possibility of mental representation. Verbal commentaries on this subject are often forbidden. Despite all this, we have taken the liberty of talking about it in order to belie the opinion that Nirvana is totally negative and destructive. The beneficial nature of Nirvana is evidenced by the replies to the questions of Milinda[2]:

'Nirvana has one property in common with the lotus, two with water, three with the remedy, ten with space, three with the magic stone and five with the mountain peak.

1. A. K. Coomaraswamy, op. cit., p. 127
2. T. van Baaren, op. cit.

'In the same way as the lotus is not blemished upon contact with water, so Nirvana remains unblemished by all impurities.

'In the same way as fresh water assuages the burning of fever, so Nirvana is always cool and assuages the burning of all the passions. And just as water quenches the thirst of men and animals which are exhausted and parched by heat, so Nirvana quenches the temptation of sensual enjoyment.

'In the same way as the remedy protects against the sufferings occasioned by poison, so Nirvana protects against the sufferings of the poisoned passions.

'And just as the remedy puts an end to disease, so Nirvana puts an end to all pain.

'And here are the ten properties which Nirvana has in common with space. Neither has ever been born, neither becomes old, dies, changes nor is reborn; both are invincible, cannot be stolen, have no support, are paths (the one for birds, and the other, for the Arhats), and are empty and infinite.

'Like the magic stone, Nirvana grants one's every wish, brings joy and spreads light.

'In the same way as a mountain peak, Nirvana is lofty and precipitous'.

The terms Nirvana and Satori express the same experience. The term Satori corresponds to the *Paravritti* of Indian Mahayana Buddhism. It means Awakening or About-face or 'transcending of mental agitations'.

The most important obstacle to the realization of this experience is mental agitation and attachment to superficial values.

The characteristics of Nirvana and Satori are defined in the following way.

1. Irrationality

Awakening or Satori does not result from any rational effort. Discursive activities, anticipations or imaginative reminiscences are considered as obstacles.

It is important to note that Satori is not a *result.* It is never constructed by our mental manipulations. The interior attitude

which prepares for Satori consists of a clearing away of habits and useless attachments. As D T Suzuki writes[3]:

'When we remain in Dhyana (meditation) we are the slaves of Dhyana. As excellent as these spiritual exercises might be, they lead us inevitably to a state of slavery. There is no liberation to be found there. And so one may consider the whole Zen discipline as consisting of a series of efforts to free us from every form of slavery'.

The experience of Satori does not suppress the functioning of reason but instead gives it a different role.

2. Intuitive vision

Satori is characterized by an intuitive vision which transcends our mental representations. This is linked with its super-rational character. It involves an experience which transcends the familiar dualities of spectator and spectacle, of experiencer and experience. As Rene Fouere states[4]:

'If all contradiction were to cease, if the subject coincided constantly with himself, he would cease to perceive, since all distinct knowledge presupposes a separation between the knower and the known. The interior Awakening suppresses exactly this separation between the subject who knows and the object of his knowledge'.

In the experience of Satori we are freed from the traps which offer us the apparent distinctions of things and beings. We do not deny them. We give their proper place in the framework of a greater whole and we are incapable of feeling any attachment whatsoever towards them.

The intuitive vision of Satori is an experience during which the Cosmic Mind—which we were without knowing it—reveals itself to use in its unity and its total homogeneity.

The Ch'an master Bodhidharma wrote[5]: 'As for Satori . . . this is not a total annihilation, it is rather an awareness of the most adequate type, but it cannot be expressed in words.

3. D. T. Suzuki, op. cit.
4. Rene Fouere, *De l'acte complet,* Cercle du Livre, Paris, 1953
5. D. T. Suzuki, op. cit.

3. Categorical authority

By this, the Illuminated Ones mean that no authority or logical argument can refute the experience of Satori. Professor D. T. Suzuki writes of this subject[6]:

'Zen is like drinking water, for it is by taking it that one knows if it is hot or cold.

'Satori is an interior perception which takes place in the most intimate part of the consciousness. Hence its character of indisputable authority, that is to say of ultimate, definitive fact'.

It is to be noted that the adversaries of Zen and of the Oriental mystics claim to diminish the value of the experience of Satori by taxing it with subjectiveness. They lost sight of the *sine qua non* condition of Satori: the elimination of any attachment to thoughts, images, theories, vulgar or subtle perceptions, the liberation from the control of the automatisms of the memory; in a word, complete dissolution of all the psychological elements which make up the personal consciousness. All that remains of the ego is that which is inscribed in the apparent limits of one's physical form. But the latter is liberated from any psychological content of attachment or identification. Although Satori is realized in the heart of a *pseudo-entity* with finite and personal appearances *on the surface,* it draws the essence of its inspiration and its very reality from the impersonal and infinite source of the *depths.*

4. Creative and positive sense

The living reality of Satori can only be defined negatively in relation to our customary values. It is however the creative and positive fact par excellence. However the term positive must not be taken in its usual sense. It indicates rather authenticity and interior richness.

Our incapacity to define or express the experience of Satori—by reason of its very nature—is not sufficient reason

6. Ibid.

to tax it with negativeness or unreality. The masters of Ch'an and Zen teach us that as soon as we realize the essential reality of beings and things, we give our acts a quality of harmony, efficiency and creativity that they could not achieve within the limits of ignorance and egoism.

As D. T. Suzuki writes[7]: 'We are inclined to think that once ignorance is banished and the ego relaxes its restraint on us, we no longer have anything to lean on and we are reduced to the destiny of a dead leaf blown first here, then there, wherever the wind chooses. This is not so, for illumination is not a negative idea meaning only the absence of ignorance. Illumination is affirmation in the truest sense of the word'.

5. The sense of 'returning to oneself'

The attainment of Satori brings a feeling of unshakable interior peace as well as unequalled security and liberty. The tensions with regard to *becoming* are absent, and the peace of Being alone remains. We have not acquired anything new. We have simply liberated ourselves from the control exercised over us by attachment to certain mirages adored in vain by the majority of men.

Having escaped from the veils of illusion caused by our ignorance and distraction, we have revealed ourselves clearly to ourselves, as we were and have been for all eternity. Such is the sense of the expression 'return to oneself' used by the masters of Ch'an and Zen. An identical condition is described in the Hsin-Hsin-Ming of Tsen T'sang: 'When the ten thousand things are viewed in their oneness, we return to the origin and remain where we have ever been'. Or as Dr. Hubert Benoit puts it[8]: 'You have found yourself now; since the very first beginning, nothing had been disguised from you; it was you yourself who closed your eyes to Reality'.

Westerners experience great difficulty in understanding that the Awakening or Satori is not an acquisition of new things

7. D. T. Suzuki, op. cit.
8. Dr. H. Benoit, op. cit.

but the discovery of a reality already existing in everyone's innermost being. As D. T. Suzuki describes it[9]: 'We are already Buddhas. To speak of attaining whatever this is is a profanity, and, logically, a tautology'.

In the state of general ignorance, the mirage of the ego is taken for the sole reality. Deprived of its true interior richness the ego struggles to acquire material or spiritual rewards. It turns desperately towards the outside.

The discovery of what we are in reality demands on our part a constant readjustment, a total change of direction, a recasting of all the accepted values: herein lies its profound sense of conversion. The atmosphere of the negative approach of Satori and the meaning of the 'return to oneself are described in a work of the Ch'an master Hui Hai[10]:

'The realization of the *Supreme body* (Cosmic Mind) resides in the fact of not attaining whatever this may be (again). Those who think they have attained and realized whatever this may be are people adopting a bad mode of vision. It is said in the Vimalakirti Sutra, when Sariputra questioned Devakanya: "What have you attained and what have you realized to achieve your present State?" Devakanya replied: "I have attained nothing and realized nothing to arrive at my present state, if I had attained or realized anything I would have become a person opposed to the Law".'

By what we have seen so far, Ch'an and Zen take for granted that we have always, for all eternity, been the supreme Reality: and so, from this point of view, there is nothing new to acquire or to attain.

6. Impersonal tone

The experience of Satori is stripped of all personal qualities. The only personal elements which remain could be summed up as originality in the mode of expression and in the style of he who attempts to speak of it. But the basis itself, that

9. D. T. Suzuki, *The Non-mental,* Cercle du Livre, Paris, 1953, p. 103
10. Hui Hai, *The Path to Sudden Attainment,* Sidwick and Jackson, London, 1948

is to say the state of cosmic consciousness, is identical in the heart of all beings.

The impersonality of Satori cannot be fully understood without a brief study of the Zen notion of the Unconscious. This must not be confused with the psychologists' unconscious. It involves a universal and impersonal principle. Present in it, but in a very elevated form, are the most basic aspects of intelligence and love.

The impersonality of the Zen Unconscious is defined by three characteristics.

Firstly: the Zen Unconscious is a state of consciousness which is pure, infinite and unaware of itself. The contrast between the Zen Unconscious and our familiar state of consciousness is clear. We are too conscious of ourselves and in a clumsy, contradictory and conflicting way. Since the Zen Unconscious is 'the nature of Buddha' (complete in itself), it requires no objectivization. It has no desire to test itself. It is self-sufficient. Our personal consciousness, on the other hand, is constantly seeking objectivization, affirmation and expansion. The atmosphere of the Zen Unconscious is made up of liberty, creation and lightness. The atmosphere of our familiar consciousness is that of captivity. We are prisoners of our conditionings, and of our habits. We are heavy, crushed under the weight of our memory-accumulations.

Secondly: characteristic of the Zen Unconscious is its *non-fixation.* This is usually translated into English as *non-abiding mind*[11].

Thirdly: the Zen Unconscious is characterized by its total freedom from attachment to forms. Hui Neng defined it in the following way[12]: 'By absence of form, one means being in a form and yet being apart from it; by *unconscious* one means to have thoughts and yet not have them (not be attached to them); as for *non-fixation,* this is the primordial nature of man.

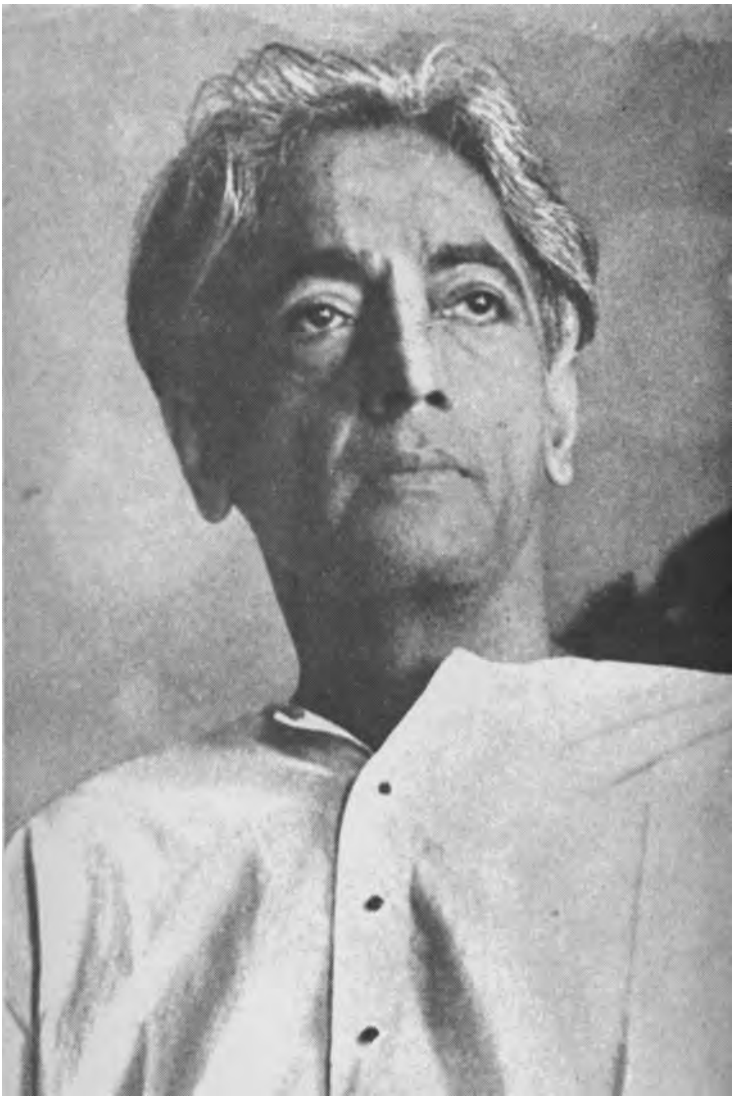
'O my good friends, if the mind is not altered in any way, and yet one is still in contrast with all the conditions

11. Hui Hai, op. cit.
12. D. T. Suzuki, *The Non-mental,* op. cit.

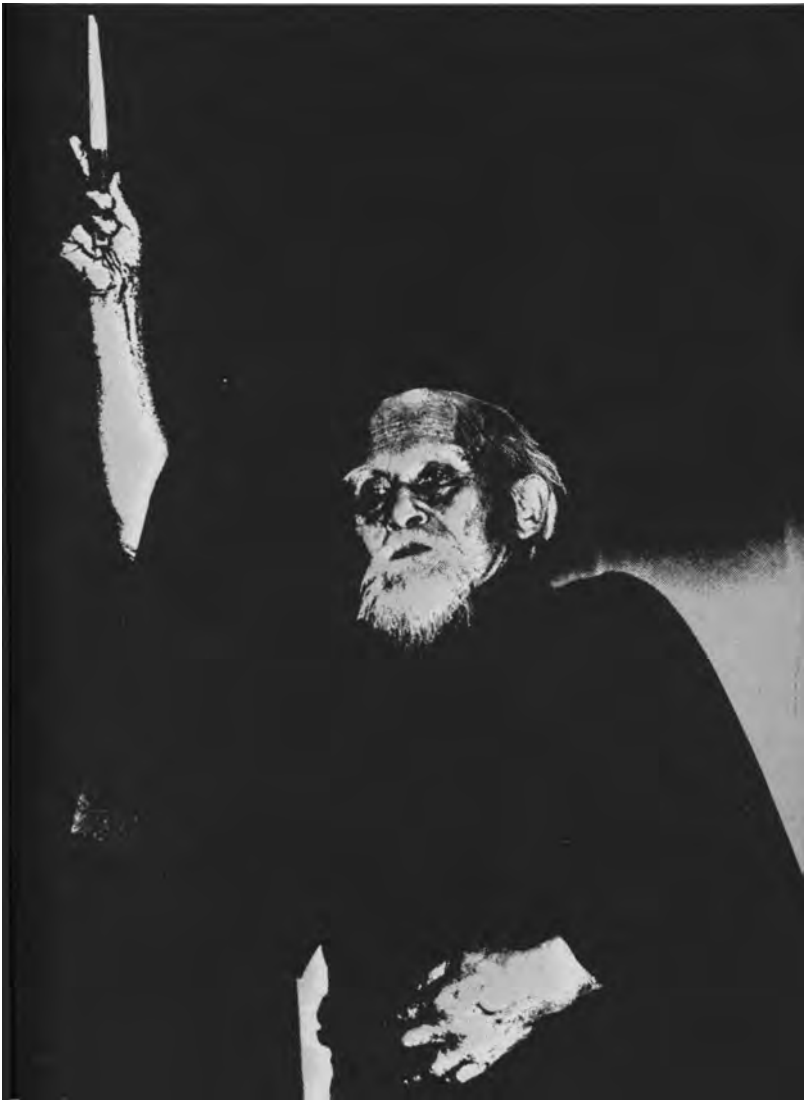
From the 6th and 7th Centuries Buddhism spread to Japan. It bore there the name of Zen. (Polychromatic Buddha, Kamakura era.)

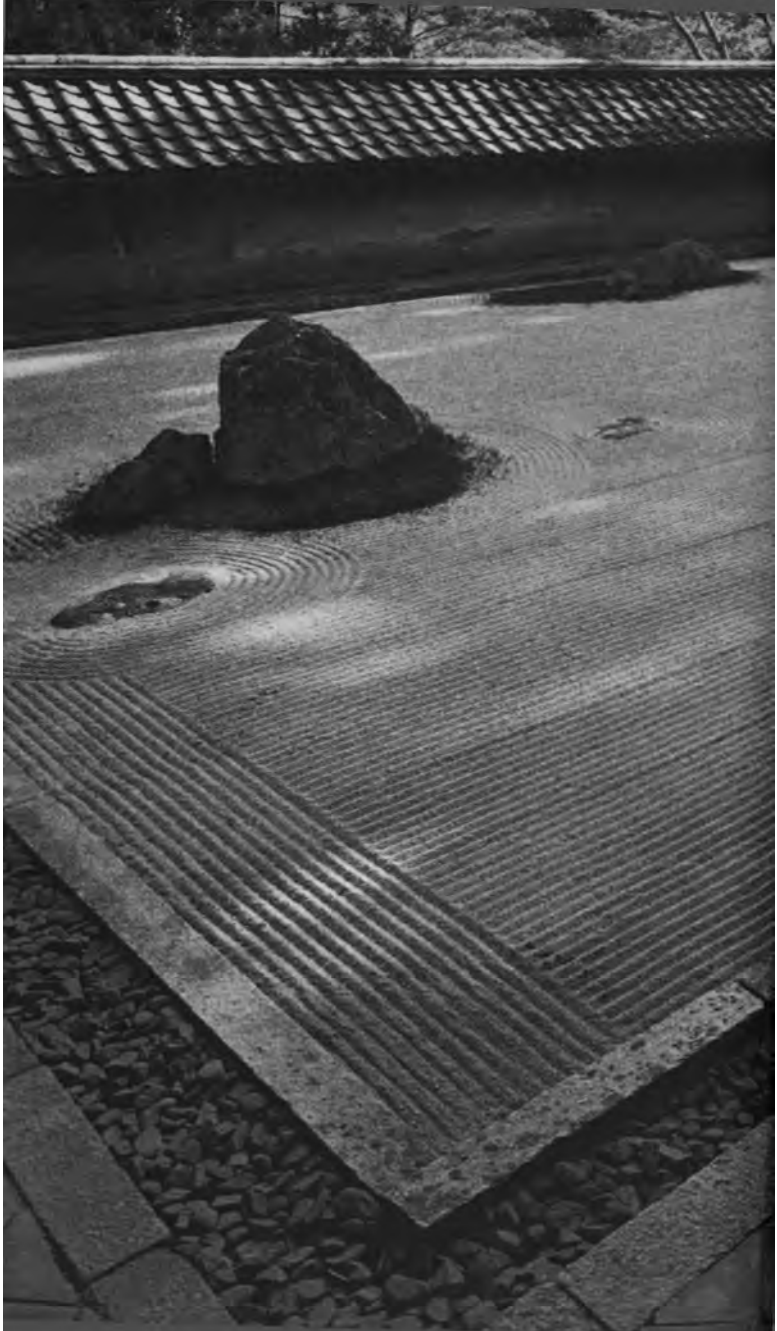
Zen temple in the prefecture of Nagano (Japan).

Krishnamurti, contemporary Indian psychologist and independent philosopher: his teachings are closer to original Ch'an than to modern Zen.



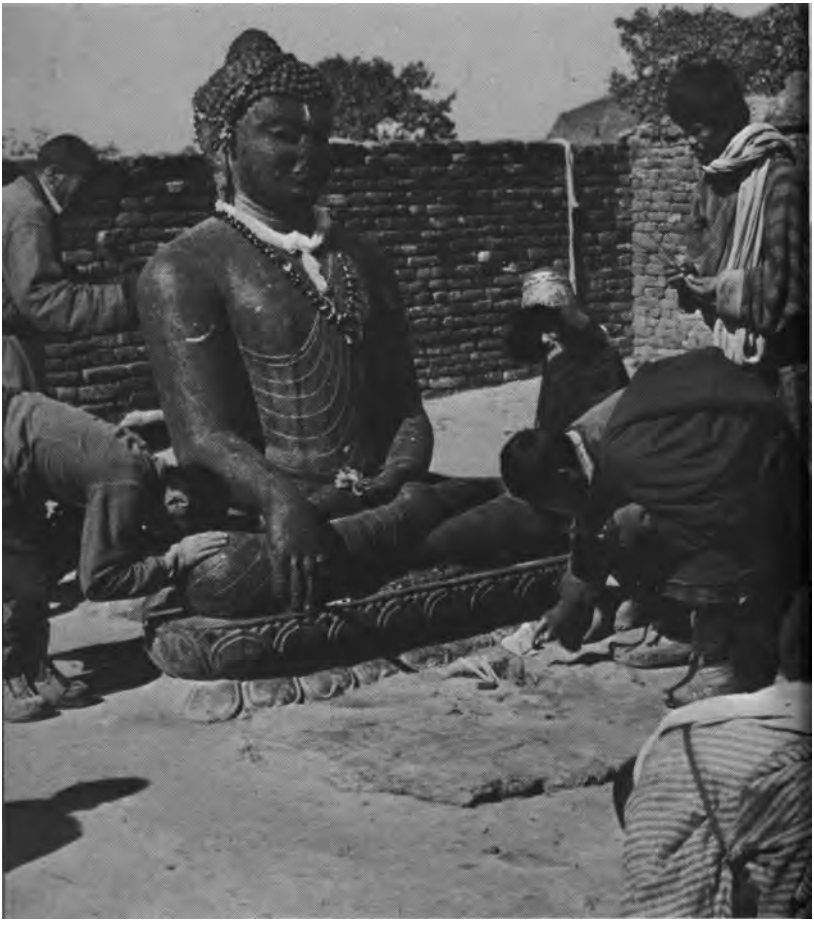
The Zen master Ueshiba in the position Ten chi (equilibrium between sky and earth, between spirit and matter).





< Zen garden of the temple Ryoanji in Kyoto. The position of the sand and the rocks is ritual and symbolic.

In Northern India, a popular form of modern Buddhism: pilgrims in prayer before a statue of Buddha, near the Nepalese border.



of life, this is *to be unconscious*. It is to be always detached, in one's own consciousness, from objective conditions'.

The absence of fixation removes all means of support. As the Zen Unconscious does not set out any point of support by which to objectify itself, and moreover not wishing to do so, it escapes all of our attempts at representation. Through thought, we can only grasp of the Zen Unconscious that which it is no longer.

7. Feeling of exaltation

Satori's vision of infinitude and the perceptions which characterize it contrast clearly with the cramped nature of the limits of the personal consciousness. The effective experience of Satori expresses itself in a considerable exteriorization of psychic potential. The Illumined Ones avoid describing its modalities for obvious reasons. Everyone would hurry to imagine them and take them as a guide, and would sink into an experience of self-hypnosis devoid of all value. For this reason, we must be cautious when we try to write about Satori or to comment on it. Dr. Hubert Benoit writes on this subject[13]: 'If anyone, after reading this, attempts to experience it in the informal way we describe, let him beware: there are a thousand ways of believing one is there, when one isn't. In every case the error is the same and consists of one complication or another, which is made up of forms; one is not simple enough. The immediate informal perception of existence is the simplest perception there could possibly be'.

The exaltation of which the Illumined Ones speak must not be confused with any expansion of the ego. These two notions are intimately linked in our minds. Exaltation, here on the other hand, must be taken in the sense of a profound and serene interior joy coming from the Cosmic mind. In the authentic Satori, parallel to the serenity of interior joy, there is a great simplicity. This has been very well expressed in an example quoted by D. T. Suzuki[14]:

13. Dr. Hubert Benoit, op. cit., vol. I, p. 129
14. D. T. Suzuki, *The Non-mental,* op. cit.

'Tchao Pien, government official, was a lay disciple of Fa Tchan of Kiang. One day, after having completed all his duties, he was sitting doing nothing at his desk when, suddenly, a clap of thunder sounded in his ear, and he found himself in a state of Satori. The poem which he then composed depicts one aspect of the Zen experience:

Thinking of nothing, I was sitting quietly at my office desk.
My mind was flowing, untroubled, like the water of a limpid fountain. A sudden thunder-clap: the doors of the mind opened wide.
And see, the old man sitting, there . . . in his manner-less manner'.

8. Instantaneousness

The quality of instantaneousness is one of the fundamental elements of Satori. The Illumined Ones stress the quality of ever-present Reality. As D. T. Suzuki writes[15]: 'The idea of the direct method is to seize this floating life *while it is flowing past* and not after it has flowed away.

Whilst it is flowing, there is not time to make any re-collection of memory or to construct ideas'.

For the convenience of language, we will say that there are two presents, whilst for the Illumined person, there is only one. We will say (using our dualist and cumbersome language) that there is a present *of depths*: that of the ultimate nature of things in the non-manifest universe. Then, there is the present that we perceive from instant to instant in the course of daily life. For the ignorant, these two presents are separate. For the Awakened mind they are but one. Awakening or Satori is achieved by a perfect coincidence between the present *of depths* and the present *on the surface* of the exterior environment.

What is the obstacle that prevents us from being quite 'present to the Present' (according to the expression of Suares and of Zen)? Every time an idea arises between us and an object, the coincidence of the two presents is hampered. Why? Because we are all, unconsciously, victims of a force of habit

15. Ibid.

of memory. This force projects, between ourselves and each new instant, that fateful echo of the past which is the word.

As the Indian psychologist J. Krishnamurti demonstrates[16], the mind cannot simultaneously endure the control of a conscious or unconscious attachment to words, and realize total adhesion to the present. Words are the imprint of the past. This imprint is normal and natural. It exists in the Awakened man as in the average man. But the Awakened man is liberated from it. He knows that 'the word is not the thing'. The modern semantician tells us this quite clearly[17]. But we are, most of us, in such a state of inattention and lethargy that words exercise a considerable influence. The shadow they cast from the past onto the present is so dense that we are incapable of grasping the fullness of the instant.

The Illumined Ones insist that there are no half-measures in the correct attitude revealing to us the fullness of the present. They cannot allow that the mind be influenced by the past, either easily or with difficulty. The slightest trace of it, the slightest identification of the memory with former values, with words, prevents us from realizing perfect adequacy in the present.

Such is the true meaning of this thought of Lao Tzu[18]: 'He who walks well leaves no tracks'.

As long as the word, this echo of the past, is projected between us and our actions, and as long as we manifest in this way, consciously or not, a preference for the past to the detriment of the present, then no Satori will be possible. It is in this sense that one must understand this verse of Tsen T'sang: 'The perfect way knows no difficulty expect that *it shies away from all preference.* A difference of a tenth of an inch and the Heaven and earth are set apart'.

The 'difference of a tenth of an inch' symbolizes the attachment of our mind to words, to images or to some aspect of the past. These are the reasons for which the Illumined Ones teach us that a genuine Satori is only possible once we liberate our mind from attachment to words.

16. J. Krishnamurti, *Man and His Image,* Courrier du Livre. Paris, 1966
17. B. de Villaret, *The Semantics of Korzybsky,* Courrier du Livre, Paris, 1965
18. Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching,* op. cit.

Each passing moment consists of something unique and extraordinary which escapes. Zen is the art of living fully in the present. For this reason some authors present Buddhism, Ch'an and Zen as the doctrines of 'perfect momentariness'.

CHAPTER X

Zen and Interior Silence

Ch'an and Zen are characterized by an approach to beings and things which is completely different to that of the West. To try to make Westerners understand and admit the essence of this approach is a very thankless task. As A. W. Watts writes[1]: 'Whoever tries to write about Zen will encounter exceptional difficulties; he can never explain, he can only indicate. The only thing which he can do is to give suggestions enabling the reader to direct himself as close as possible to the Truth. But as soon as he tries to fix this into a definition, it vanishes'. It is important to understand that the fundamental source of inspiration of the physical, emotional, and mental behavior of the Zennist is beyond ordinary consciousness.

Let us examine briefly of what this consciousness is composed. Since Freud, C. G. Jung and Baudouin, the recent progresses of psychology have revealed the complexity of our interior life. We can divide the structure of our psyche into two sectors. Firstly, the conscious—this part of ourselves we know with relative clarity, it is the most concrete, the most superficial. It is contact with the practical problems of our everyday existence. Secondly, beyond this peripheral consciousness resides a part of ourselves of which we know very little. Many are completely unaware of its contents. This is the unconscious. During the activities and agitations of everyday life we are too tense. The beds of the unconscious are very deep and their contents cannot be revealed to us. While we sleep our mental agitations and our tensions are considerably diminished. This relative silence and this relaxation permit the contents of the unconscious to manifest itself by means of dreams.

Buddhism, Ch'an and Zen, teach us that the personal

1. A. W. Watts, *The Spirit of Zen,* John Murray, London, 1948

consciousness is illusory. If we want to bypass this illusion, we must first gain awareness of it. The attitude of Zen is not to escape but to resolve. It does not limit itself to denouncing the illusory character of the personal consciousness, but analyzes the way in which it has been engendered.

The Illumined Ones teach us that we are faced with one immediate task: the achievement of mental silence. But great confusion exists as to the exact nature of this mental silence. It should be immediately stated that this mental silence is only a necessary and indispensable pause between two very different ways of thinking. The first is the disorganized way of thinking of the ordinary man. The second is the Illumined One's way of thinking, which is completely different. The Indian psychologist, J. Krishnamurti, compared the mental activity of man to a machine made up of complex cogs turning rapidly. If we want to study the working of this machine and see how the cogs turn among each other, it is necessary to make it stop for an instant, and then make it turn in slow motion. The Illumined Ones teach us that in the average man, the *mental machine* functions badly. It is plugged into a bad current. It must be disconnected and plugged into an infinitely more precious source of energy.

Nothing is more simple and at the same time more difficult. Many authors agree in recognizing the importance of a pacification of thought, but the methods that they propose to us are not only divergent but also completely contradictory. And so, the aim of this mental pacification has nothing in common with what we have just outlined. The problem of mental silence is thought of here in a very different way to yogas or schools of concentration based on will and personal discipline. The Illumined Ones consider that intensive development of the will hardens our *mental musculature.* This hardening prevents us being receptive to the deep zones of the consciousness The spiritual reality residing beyond thought has such delicacy, fineness and subtlety, that we must liberate ourselves from all our psychic tensions to permit it to manifest itself in us.

The conditions for perfect inner disposition can be resumed thus: suppleness and complete agility of the mind, a superior form of sensibility, a natural and relaxed transparency of

thought. True silence of thought results, not from *discipline* of the ego but in the *comprehension* of the energies to whose *advantage* it is to maintain the agitations of the ego. This distinction is very important. It defines clearly one of the specific qualities of Ch'an and Zen thought. As J. Krishnamurti explains, the ego cannot dissolve the ego. But in the heart of the ego a comprehension can be installed emanating from a deeper level of consciousness which Zen calls the Cosmic Mind. In other words, instead of exerting ourselves to discipline our thought by an effort emanating from this thought itself, it is much more important to discover the workings and meaning of the mental activity.

The intelligence which permits the realization of this discovery is obviously not that of our ordinary thought. It is instead the expression of the Cosmic Mind within us. We tend to criticize the oriental wisdoms by accusing them of being imprecise dreamings or nebulous philosophies of escapism. This legend must be destroyed. The elements of Ch'an and Zen as revealed here show to what extent their psychology is precise, profound and penetrating.

If we want to reach the peak of the practical and positive mind, and Westerners appear to, we must be able to reply clearly to four fundamental questions. As we are incapable of replying to them, we recognize that we are ignorant of the mobile depths of our thoughts; and of our acts From that time onwards, let us talk no more of our practical sense. These four fundamental questions are as follows: What do we think? How do we think? Why do we think? And especially, who thinks?

The works of Freud, C. G. Jung and C. Baudouin, and the progress of neurophysiology allow a partial reply to the two first questions. But the replies to the two last are much more vague.

Psychologists show us that the total contents of conciousness are much greater than the limits of the consciousness of ordinary awakeness. The neurophysiologists try to explain the *how* of thought but their explanations are incomplete. The *how* of thought cannot be explained simply by the cerebral engravings responsible for memory, nor simply by the polarizations and depolarizations of the cerebral neurones,

nor by the phenomena of phosphorylization, nor by the role of ribonucleic or deoxyribonucleic acids. It would be puerile to explain the unfolding of our mental operations by considerations limited to the spheres of biology or biochemistry or neurophysiology. We do not contest the value of these aspects but they are only partial. A more important question is the *why* of thought. It is linked to that of the reality or non-reality of the ego, in other words to the question *who thinks*?

We have seen that there is no static entity. There only exists a rapid succession of thoughts giving to the consciousness an illusory impression of continuity. There are interstitial voids between thoughts, moments of silence which have been the objects of detailed studies by the masters of Buddhism, Vedanta, Ch'an and Zen. Tibetan Buddhism is equally preoccupied by this problem. It explains that the discovery of the 'interstitial voids or intervals of silence between the thoughts permits the experience of the Nirvana or vision of Clear Primordial Light'. We read in the Tibetan Yoga[2]: 'The realization of the Clear Light must take place in the interval existing between the cessation of one thought and the birth of the following one'.

The great question that we must ask ourselves is: how does it come about that of three billion beings, only a tiny minority manage to unmask the pretence which the ego plays on itself and which gives it the impression of being a continuous entity? Is there then, acting over the whole of the human race, one and the same force irresistibly masking from our eyes the discontinuity of the consciousness? Is there a mysterious force capable of systematically hiding from us the illusory and destructive character of our pseudo-entity?

By referring to the texts of the Lankavatara Sutra, Buddhism, Ch'an and Zen give us an affirmative reply to this question. Most of our thoughts result from a reflex of self-defence and from fundamental fear. One part of ourselves, situated in the deep zones of the unconscious, knows very well that if we were confronted for an instant with one of these interstitial voids existing between two thoughts, the

2. W. E. Wentz, *Tibetan Yoga,* Maisonneuve, Paris, 1938

illusory character of our entity would reveal itself with such evidence that its reign would come to an end. Now this part of ourselves does not at all come to an end. On the contrary. It hangs desperately onto its continuity Buddhists indicate this force by the name of *Tanha.* The term *Tanha* expresses the avidity of the ego, the thirst for continuation, the desire to exist and possess.

Mental agitation results to a great extent from a reflex of self-defence guaranteeing the apparent continuity of the ego. This is the symbol of the *old man* of whom the scriptures speak. This is also the profound significance the Illumined Ones give to the word Satan which is not a person but the symbol of a force of inertia. The word Satan is meant to derive from the old Arabic word *Shaitan,* meaning *I resist.* It evokes the fixation of the ego to the levels acquired by the personal consciousness and the refusal of inner Awakening.

Everyone can comprehend and sense that mental agitation is only the self-defensive reflex of an instinct of preservation present in the deepest zones of the unconscious. This deep superego cares little that the ego on the surface is suffering, is tortured or is lost in the enjoyment of a thousand pleasures. The essential thing is to hold out.

We carry, inscribed in us, the obscure memories of the whole past. So much effort has been necessary in order to achieve the construction of the human being! Millions of shocks for a few handfuls of successes. The levels acquired have been attained at the cost of efforts followed for the course of countless ages.

A force of inertia tends to make us stagnate at the level achieved.

This force of inertia is much more powerful than we suppose. It is opposed to one of the laws of nature which is expressed by a continual becoming and a transcending of achieved levels. For this reason Ch'an and Zen require us, as do certain Christian scriptures, to 'die to ourselves'. This is not a physical death but a foregoing of our attachments and our habits. This psychological death is not an annihilation but a rebirth. It is not a defeat but a victory: the victory of Life over entity. As Chuang Tzu puts it[3]: 'The great man has

3. Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching,* op. cit. p. 220

no longer any self, for he has bound all the parts of his being into one ecstatic contemplation of universal unity'.

CHAPTER XI

Mental Silence and the Experience of Satori

We will divide the path leading to the experience of Satori into two stages. This division is a concession made to the exigencies demanded by language-convenience. The masters of Ch'an and Zen consider there to be no separation between mental silence and the experience of Satori, since the latter is realized simultaneously with the attainment of complete and authentic mental silence. With this reservation made, we think that the division of the experimental process into two stages will make it more accessible for Westerners.

Firstly, a preparatory and progressive stage: profound awareness of the fact that we are conditioned, imprisoned in our own egoism. We must reveal this deadlock in which we are caught. Our thoughts, our emotions and our acts are only the expression of a desire for continuity, affirmation and expansion. Such a life-process is without worthwhile result. It leads us along a trail of pleasures and sufferings which are revealed as so many servitudes hiding from us the true meaning of existence.

Secondly, a stage without progression. We let the profound Reality of our true being, the Cosmic Mind, work within us. This Reality is outside our values of time, duration, continuity, and evolution. We must catch in the act, at the very moment when it is at work in the deep zones of the consciousness, the operational process of thought and its complicity in the deception which is the apparent continuity of the ego. This is a task which is simple and yet difficult. It is not enough to understand what has preceded intellectually, it must be sensed by total perception. The character of this total perception is one of the specific elements of Ch'an and Zen. It is not found anywhere else, except for the teachings of the Indian psychologist Krishnamurti. In total perception,

there is no longer any division between the thought which understands on the level of words and symbols, and the emotions or intuition which *sense.* Let us examine in more detail the first stage Every instant thoughts are presented into the field of our mind. They arrive imperceptibly, whether we are in contact or not with our habitual environment. They arrive a little in the manner of waves, which, distant at first, become progressively more pronounced as they approach the ocean shore, then finally their outlines are distinct and they break.

An important difference is to be noted: whereas the waves form and then break one by one, each one exhausting all the potential which creates them, thoughts, on the other hand, flow in total disorder. Scarcely has one thought been presented in the field of our mind, than another arrives and prevents the preceding one from finishing its course. And so on, always in an incredibly rapid and complex rhythm. Our mind is filled with contradictory thoughts. Some have not been consciously invited. These are uncontrolled psychic movements which some psychologists call intruder thoughts. No one knows whence they come or whither they go. We tend to think that all these thoughts, invited or not, intruders or not, conscious or not, have 'neither head nor tail'. We think that they have no bond between them, they appear so disparate, absurd, irregular or banal. Ch'an and Zen teach us that they are all the expression of a crucial and fundamental force: the ego's desire to prove itself as a real and permanent entity. Each unfinished thought is an incomplete act heavy with action—and servitude—potential. Because it has not been finished and dispensed with, it will be the cause of a thousand desires which will hamper the ego in the future. They will produce the train of misery and pleasure which we all know. In short, here are just so many guarantees for the continuity and duration desired by *Tanha,* the ego's instinct for conservation and its thirst for existence.

In the second stage, a kind of leap forward or transformation must be achieved. Having taken full consciousness of our desire for duration, it is necessary to catch in the act the first impulse that the mind produces. This is not a theory

but a living deed. An effective move is not a theory or a concept.

It is quite possible to understand and sense at the same time that the impulses existing in the background of all our thoughts are only the reflexes of a fundamental fear: that of not continuing as an entity. In a flash, it is possible for us to grasp the vanity of all our pursuits, their sterility and the total deadlock in which we are caught.

When the absurdity and uselessness of our desire for continuity are fully understood and sensed, the self-defensive reflex impulse of the ego drops by itself. The obscure force responsible for the continual and disorganized appearance of thoughts has disappeared. This is the *letting-go* of Zen. All our previous psychological tensions are suddenly replaced by the joy and genuine ecstasy of Satori. In this experience a fullness is revealed which is beyond intelligence and love.

There is nothing supernatural or superhuman here, the Illumined Ones tell us. Nothing is more foreign to Zen than the western notion of *supernatural.* For Ch'an and Zen, all is included in Nature with a capital N. This Nature encloses all the aspects of the exterior universe and the non-manifest inner worlds. Included in it are the material, psychical and spiritual worlds and that which encloses and dominates them.

The notions of natural and supernatural are relative, just as are those of normal and abnormal. We often take shadows for reality and as we are, for the most part, plunged into the same ignorance, we think of ourselves as normal. An old Chinese proverb denounces the ridiculousness of such an attitude[1]: 'When one dog starts to bark at a shadow, ten thousand dogs make it a reality'.

We must think of the Awakening or Satori as the *normal state.* In his introduction to *La Doctrine supreme du Zen,* written by Dr. Hubert Benoit, the Swami Siddheshwarananda wrote[2]:

'The abnormal human beings are the distressed. The normal human being is he who is liberated from distress. The pathological cases which demand the clinical observation of the psychoanalyst are those of the neurotic and psychotic. The

1. D. T. Suzuki, *Essays on Zen,* op. cit.
2. Dr. Hubert Benoit, op. cit., p. 13

distance is not very great between the neurotic who is brought to attention by observation and ourselves, the so-called normal people. In relation to the normal, in the absolute sense of the word, we are all abnormal. Dr. Benoit calls *natural* the condition of the man who has not resolved his conflicts, but whose condition is not unbalanced enough to warrant medical treatment. The so-called normal man that we are, is in fact the natural man in as much as he distinguishes himself from the pathological abnormal cases under treatment from psychiatrists and psychoanalysts. An immense gulf separates the natural man from the normal man.

The agnostic scientific mind refuses all assertions which postulate something which cannot be verified or controlled. To say that a man is normal is a reality, there is an assertion which must be verified by our intellectual tests. . . . Rare though the examples brought to our attention may be, it is quite un-scientific to refuse to admit the notion of the normal man without the support of statistics. . . . Dr. Benoit has the courage to state that *only the man who has attained Satori is the normal man.*

Hitler burnt six million Jews; during a certain period, a section of humanity which had become hysterical, considered as abnormal those who held an opinion different to that imposed by the Nazi State. The statistical testimony denied the man who had *sane views.* In the same way, to consider (because we are all more or less abnormal) the man of Satori as an abnormal is the height of idiocy'.

In fact we must consider as normal the man in complete possession of his faculties. Before the experience of Satori, we are not complete human beings. We are not in possession of our faculties. It is they who are in possession of us. We do not think freely, instead we *are thought.*

It is enough to practise concentration to become aware of this. A great effort is necessary to fix the attention of our thought on one point to the exclusion of all others. We bang up against a resistance. Our thoughts begrudge all our attempts to immobilize it. We bang up against the refusal of an almost irresistible force which is determined to maintain mental agitation. We have already seen the reasons for this.

After the experience of Satori, we can at last give to thought

the proper role which Nature has assigned: an instrumental role, an ideal means of communication and an admirable tool for scientific and technical work. In those fields the possibilities of thought are immense. The Illumined Ones have never contested this. They simply tell us that thought is simply a function. That which was destined to be no more than a function is taken to be an entity. Therein lies the drama of our misapprehension.

What is the difference between the thought-functioning of the ordinary man and the Illumined One? In the ordinary man thought is used as an accomplice in his unconscious desire for continuity and duration. As Carlo Suares writes[3]: 'Subjective time, this is what the ego is. The ego is an accumulation of all the desires for permanence, attached one to the other by a chain which is duration. The cause which creates individual time is not objective time (that recorded on clocks) but the desire experienced by the associations of which the ego is made, to recall itself at every moment to see itself'.

In the ordinary man thought reinforces this subjective time or desire for duration. It plunges into a thousand disorganized and contradictory fantasies. In the Awakened man, there remains no more interior disorder. Each thought appears adequately for the circumstances.

In the ordinary man, no thought finishes its course. No sooner does one thought appear on the field of his mind than another turns up and prevents the first from fully expressing itself. And so on. Each one of these thoughts leaves a residue which only increases the contents of the unconscious. In the Awakened man, on the other hand, each thought completes its course. It vanishes and exhausts the energies which made it appear. It leaves no residue.

What we have just said has been developed painstakingly and much more deeply in the works of the Ch'an masters. They have defined in a very clear way the role, functioning and limits of the mental activity. It must be understood that mental agitation as well as thought-fixation are hindrances to the Awakening. Both maintain and reinforce the ego. The mental silence, spoken of by the Ch'an and Zen master, must

3. Carlo Suares, *La comédie psychologique,* op. cit., p. 306.

be thought of as a pause allowing the manifestation of the energies of the Cosmic Mind. The Awakened man does not remain in a state of permanent mental silence, which would result from an act of will. His thought functions, but its unfolding is totally different from that with which we are familiar.

The difficulty of achieving Satori comes not only from the mental agitation which is familiar to us but also from an opposite tendency resulting from the inertia of thought.

Indeed, the *correct view* of the Buddhist masters asks us to be fully attentive. But the more attentive we are, the more our thought tends to come to a halt on the objects which it observes. As Dr. Roger Godel says[4]: 'The mind has a quality of viscosity. It tends to *stick* to everything it touches'. This tendency encourages a certain inertia, laziness and fixity which are equally responsible as the much-quoted *Tanha,* desire for continuity.

The Chinese master Fung Yu Lan, whose works have been translated by E. R. Hughes and published ip English, writes[5]: 'When you see that earlier thoughts and later thoughts and thoughts in-between are momentary thoughts independent of each other and do silently fade away, this is what is called sagari samadhi (the vision of all things in a Buddha-meditation)'.

This passage describes the thought-processes of an Illumined One. The thoughts are no longer produced in the chain of ego-continuity. For this reason, the commentator Fung Yu Lan mentions the momentary quality of each thought and their mutual independence. The thoughts of the Illumined One emerge with litheness and agility, perfectly adequate for the place and circumstances. The mental processes of the ordinary man, on the other hand, are imprisoned in the chain of continuity which paralyses and prevents adequate response to place and circumstances. Such are the essential bases of Ch'an and Zen concerning the correct functioning of the mind.

4. Dr. Roger Godel, op. cit.
5. Fung Yu Lan, *The Spirit of Chinese Philosophy,* Routledge and Kegan, London, 1962, pp. 156–174

CHAPTER XII

The Habit-Force

The Lankavatara Sutra, which is one of the principal Indian texts of inspiration of Ch'an, states[1]: 'What is understood by the Void in the highest sense of final Reality, is that in the acquisition of inner comprehension by means of wisdom, *there no longer is any trace of the habit-force* engendered by erroneous conceptions, from the time of a past without beginning'.

The study of the inertia of the habit-force is one of the principal preoccupations of Buddhism, Ch'an and Zen. The most important texts of Mahayana Buddhism are constantly alluding to it. Habit-force is the cause of inner want, laziness, monotony, carelessness and ignorance. Opposite to this psychological habit-force is Awakening or Satori, which is creation, renewal, pure intelligence and cosmic consciousness.

It is said in the Vajracchedika Sutra (Diamond Sutra)[2]: 'We do not perceive the world as it is in reality. Our productive imagination, nourished by energy (in the sense of inertia) engendered by habit, superimposes on the world an illusory construction, a mirage, of images similar to those seen in dreams'.

Ch'an and Zen offer us a release from this dream. This liberation demands on our part a fully accomplished labor. It does not merely involve becoming aware of this and that bad habit (smoking, gluttony or excesses of other kinds) and engaging in the practice of opposite habits. It is necessary to go very deep to put an end to the very process of habit-forming in its entirety. As Christmas Humphreys paradoxically puts it[8], in the Spirit of Zen 'each habit is a limit

1. A. David-Neel, op. cit.
2. Ibid.
3. Christinas Humphreys, *Zen Buddhism,* Allen and Unwin, London, 1957

of movement, and from this point of view, there are no good habits'.

Nothing is more powerful in the universe and in man than the force of habit. Where does it come from? It goes back to the first origins of a universe and is intimately bound to the formation of worlds.

The history of a universe is in fact that of a process of continuous associations. It seems that as soon as privileged points within the prime source of energy come into existence, the very fact of these particularizations calls for compensation. Where there was no differentiation, just a single unity, no relativity or relation was possible. The existence of privileged points calls for a complement, and equilibrium.

For this reason, the Indian masters explain, atoms associate with atoms and form molecules. Molecules associate with molecules to form giant molecules. This process of association is carried out under the direction of the laws of affinity taught by modern physical chemistry. The large molecules combine among themselves to form the. bases of the first cells. The monocellular beings combine among themselves to form the polycellular beings. We can observe thus the working of a process of continual associations: from the atom to man, through the amoeba.

This associative habit-force is continued in us and by us in the form of the thoughts, emotions and actions which are familiar to us. But we have never doubted the all-powerful influence it exerts over the slightest details of our behavior.

How does this associative habit function in us? That which we generally term as evolution is not only manifested in the material and biological evolution of the species. The differential of evolution is found much more in the psychic field than in the physical field. The criterion of evolution in man is no longer inspired by physical considerations—shapes, measurements — but by psychological factors — intelligence quotient, development of consciousness, intellectual and creative faculties. The associative habit-force of which we have spoken will extend its operational process into the psychic world.

Carlo Suares explains[4]: 'The formative entity, at first quite

4. Carlo Suares, La *comédie psychologique,* op. cit., p. 290

plastic, progressively hardens, because of associations and disassociations which strive to settle and take form. As soon as they are embodied, the entity is there, and from that time on, it advances in time'.

Man has acquired the habit of associating himself to his material and spiritual possessions. This process of association is so habitual that we are not aware of the extent of its action. Through it, we identify ourselves with our body, with our name, with the image that we have of ourselves, with our bank-account, our family, our house, our car, etc.

The identification and association denounced by Buddhism, Ch'an and Zen and most of the world's advanced mystics, is the manifestation of an associative habit-force. As long as we imagine we possess the things and beings with which we are associated, we will be possessed by them.

Far from developing the consciousness and the intelligence, associative habit plunges them into a state of drowsiness, inertia and degradation. Professor E. Leroy has better than any other defined the negative role of habit[5]; without knowing it, he has expressed very convincingly the essence of the standpoint of the masters of Buddhism, Ch'an and Zen:

'There is something proceeding from the mind, inexpressible in terms of spiritual life, which marks a direction of fall, which resists change, which moves by rectilinear inertia, which is mechanism and repetition, which strains towards unconsciousness, something which appears like the mind undoing itself to the point of self-negation . . .

'This something is habit . . . habit by which actions are gradually schematized into gestures as fixed as objects, and then by which gestures are spaced in routine juxtaposition . . .

'Would not one grasp all the aspects of the problem by conceiving matter according to the analogy of habit, by defining it as a constellation of dead habits?

'Everything begins in an atmosphere of liberty by an act of intention. Then comes habit, a sort of body which, like the body itself, is a bundle of habits.

'And then, habit taking root . . . gradually degrades itself

5. Edward Leroy, op. cit., pp. 27–38

into mechanisms where the consciousness goes to sleep and is buried'.

All the exertions of the Illumined Ones go into liberating us from the all-powerful control exercised over our minds by the force of habit which engenders spiritual drowsiness. They want to wage, like Gurdieff, Ouspensky and Krishnamurti in particular, a real 'war against sleep'.

The formation of the personal consciousness and of its ignorance by the force of habit is depicted in the Lankavatara Sutra[8]:

'The consciousness of ideas giving support to the consciousnesses attached to the senses (sight, vision of forms, hearing, etc.) distinguishes an objective world, and thus is held in movement produced by new ideas concerning that which it sees. It attaches itself to this objective world and, *by the effect of multiple habit-forces,* it nurtures the Alaya Vijnana[7]'.

Habit-force in matter

The material world is governed by strict mechanical laws in which the force of habit reigns in all its omnipotence. It is thanks to this habit-force that the strict determinism of phenomena is possible. An astronomer can predict, as Leverrier did last century, that at a particular hour and minute, the planet Neptune would be in a particular place in the sky.

In the infinitely small, determinism is still much less strict. We can however consider an atom of hydrogen as the expression of habit, caught by energy in the form of a single negative electron, to turn around another form of this energy, known by the name of nucleus or proton. In this perspective, we can define matter as a constellation of dead habits! However, as we go progressively deeper, the process of habit becomes less rigid and strict determinism tends to become blurred.

6. A. David-Neel, op. cit.
7. Storehouse of consciousness equivalent to the collective unconscious of the psychology of C. G. Jung

Habit-force in living matter

If the matter called *inanimate* seems to be a constellation of dead habits, the matter called *living* lets us see an energy at work, the behavior of which tends to move away from the rigid character of habit. Of course, the seeds of a given species of flowers have the habit of always transforming themselves into identical plants and flowers. But, as H. Bergson and E. Leroy explain, there exists in the behavior of their growth very different processes to those of the matter called inanimate. We know that the latter is governed by a principle of energy-degradation expressing the habit of abasement in the qualities of its successive stages during its different transformations.

In opposition to this movement of descent, living matter presents to us numerous *upward* movements in its qualities of energy. To the degree in which life—that indefinable reality—is installed in the matter, it introduces into the latter a revitalizing of the qualities of energy. In other words, to use the expression of Stefane Lupasco, it *potentializes* it[8].

The law of life is a law of change, creation and renewal. If, on the one hand, matter and even spirit are governed by the laws of habit, there exists, on the other hand, in the course of evolution, an opposite tendency. The habits governing the *surface* world, both material and psychical, will have to yield place to the creation and growth of the world *of depth.*

If, on one side, we observe in the universe the action of an all-powerful habit-force, on the other side the history of evolution can be considered as increasing progress towards more mobility and more liberty.

If we take a look at inanimate matter, we see that it is incapable of expressing *on the surface* the intensity of the movements which take place on the atomic level and, besides, the inexhaustible riches of the Cosmic Mind residing in its bottom-most depths. A block of stone undergoes the modifications of temperature and pressure of its immediate environment without reacting. The first rudiments of organization

8. Stéfane Lupasco, *Les trois matieres,* Julliard, Paris, 1960

already appear in certain mineral substances, which manifest an incipient sensibility of unsuspected amplitude. Broken crystals mend themselves. They are sensible to anaesthetics. In the vegetable kingdom, the difference is clear. The complexity of their organization gives plants a greater sensibility, they defy the laws of gravity by their upward growth but the placing of their roots prevents any other kind of mobility.

In the animal kingdom we find much more independence and mobility. If we wish to study the growth of mobility in man, we should cast our glances towards different fields to that of outward appearances. Since evolution is more psychic than physical, it is in the field of thought that we must look for a progressive tendency towards autonomy, liberty and movement.

At this point in our account, from mineral, plant and animal up to the human mind, we have noticed a growth in mobility, but this was in fact always governed by the habit-force. At the human level, *for the first time in the history of a universe, the force of habit is going to be put in check.*

The enormous complexity and subtlety of man's cellular architecture permits him to attain a suppleness and agility of thought, and a ready inner disposition to which the creative beginnings of Life, or of the Cosmic Mind, can be manifested.

Although the force of habit seems to extend its all-powerful influence into the field of matter and even into that of the spirit, it is however possible for us to escape it. In the eyes of the masters of Buddhism, Ch'an and Zen, the possibility of liberation from our slavery to the law of habit is all the more evident since it is part of a mirage, at once individual and collective, in the spell under which we live.

The day will come when the *thinker,* having strayed from servitude to servitude, will understand the vanity of his associative habits and the traps set by his own thoughts. He will realize the absurdity of the play in which he is acting. Nothing can fill in the gulf of his inner contradictions. The mirage of the ego is a veritable barrel of the Danaides. It can never be filled since it is devoid of any substance.

As soon as man understands this, peace is installed in his mind. He stops and looks more serenely into himself and all things. The associative habit is dead. The reign of the Satanic

force of inertia is ended. The tensions with regard to becoming and possessing are replaced by relaxation and the joy of Being.

CHAPTER XIII

The Three Phases of the Ego

The comprehension of what we have just explained about Satori, mental silence and habit-forces demands a certain frame of mind. For some everything is clear, for others everything seems obscure. A certain spiritual maturity is essential for the realization of the Awakening. Some authors, such as Carlo Suares[1], divide the history of the psychological evolution of the ego into three phases.

However, a certain clarification is necessary when we speak of the three phases of the evolution of the ego. Ch'an and Zen insist on the sudden, abrupt nature of the Awakening. Yet although the Awakening is instantaneous, its preparation is progressive. Numerous misunderstandings have been caused by the non-comprehension of this difference. As Dr. Benoit puts it[2]:

'Either there is no union between the two parts of the man, in which case he does not enjoy his divine essence; or else direct contact is established, in which case there is no reason, since absolutely nothing is lacking, why the man should not be immediately introduced to the enjoyment of his divine essence. The interior labor which ends with the establishment of this contact is long and difficult, and so *progressive,* that is to say that the preparation for salvation is progressive but not the salvation itself'.

When we speak of the existence of three phases in the psychological evolution of the ego, they only concern the progressive aspect described by Dr. Benoit. They can be schematized as follows.

1. Carlo Suares, op. cit.
2. Dr. Hubert Benoit, op. cit., p. 86

1. Phase of the birth of the ego

The personality is barely sketched out. During this pre-individual phase, the habit-force exerts its all-powerful control. The man imitates and copies. He does not yet think by himself. He is not yet an individual. His psyche undergoes the influence of the mental currents of the surrounding environment: prejudices, habits, beliefs, etc. It is the mentality phase of *Panurge's sheep.* Liberty and creativity are non-existent. This *pre-individual* man adheres blindly to the political or religious opinions of the majority. Initiative and personal judgment are absent. Such is at the bottom of the psychology of the mass movements whose power obliterates individual judgment and annihilates all sensibility and all intelligence. C. G. Jung has exposed the dangers of this and history shows us how experiments in totalitarian states end in disaster.

During this first phase, mental energy is still too weak. It seems to obey the process of degradation by its tendency to the least amount of effort, and by its lack of creativity and dynamism.

2. Phase of maturity of the ego

From the beginning of this phase, the passive attitude of the mind disappears. Obedience to the mental imperatives of political and other slogans is seen in all its puerility. Rhythms of repetition, routine and habit show how negative and superficial they are. From the imitator that he was, the man becomes creator. He no longer bends blindly before the *fait accompli* of proposed or imposed values. He dares to doubt and begins to rethink the problems by himself. Perhaps he will do it in a questionable manner, but a new process is starting within him. This psychological maturity will be expressed in a growing demand for autonomy, initiative, creation and liberty.

The mind, whose law is liberty, will at first try to look for it in an excessive affirmation of its new autonomous

power. However a day will come when, having exhausted all its possible means of expression, it will understand that it is the prisoner of its own creations and its own desires.

The ego then perceives the narrowness of its limits. It discovers its first inner contradictions. The obscure awareness of its contradictions and of the absurdity of its condition has been partly located by J. P. Sartre. Whereas Sartre's existentialism opposes a rather deceptive *in-self* against the ego (the *for-self*), Zen existentialism[3] reveals an *in-self* imprinted with felicity and with cosmic consciousness. As soon as the ego senses the artificial and cramped character of its limits, it aims towards the realization of the third phase.

3. Phase of the 'transcending' or liberation of the ego

Most westerners consider this phase, to be unattainable or negative. Buddhism, Ch'an and Zen consider it as the most natural.

The man has noticed the dream-state into which he had been plunged by the *force of habit.* He breaks free from the automatisms of the past and eventually liberates himself from the ascendancy of time. As Carlo Suares writes[4]:

'These comments bring us to state in detail the three phases of the ego's life. The first is the period of infancy in which the ego is formed. The second is the period in which, when the ego has been established, it develops through to complete fullness. The third is the period in which the ego eventually yields to the now mature individual (maturity being none other than the possibility for the individual to shatter his ego).

The first phase is that in which time is constructed (psychological time, that is), the second is that in which time is destroyed, and the third, that in which man has recovered the Present'.

Proper attention and vigilance have finally allowed the

3. For Zen existentialism, see Dr. Benoit, op. cit.
4. Carlo Suares, op. cit., p. 308

human being to demask the farce he was playing with himself. From the point of view of the Illumined Ones, only a man like this must be considered normal. The supreme mission of the human being consists in manifesting the fullness of his divine essence.

CHAPTER XIV

The Problem of Death According to Zen

At this point in our account, the reader will understand easily that the attitude of Zen with regard to the problem of death is very different to that which is familiar to Westerners.

When we speak of the life of a man of sixty years, we are expressing a continuity of lived existence in which, despite the fluctuations of character, health and details in the accidents of destiny, a certain identity of depth seems to have been conserved. When, because of old age or illness or accident, the heart has stopped beating, when the physiological and psychological life has halted, we speak of *death.* What we call *life* and *death* are in fact the opposite but complementary aspects of a single, identical process. For this reason, the ancient Greek philosopher Thales proclaimed: 'Death is not different from life'.

When we examine carefully the basic structure of matter, we discover a process of *lives* and *deaths* carried out billions and billions of times per second (exchanges of ions, exchanges of neutrons and protons in the nucleus of the atom). The study of biology shows us the cells of the human body being destroyed while others replace them. Buddhism, Ch'an and Zen teach us that similar processes control the phenomena of conscience. They consider that what we call *life* and *death* are only manifestations of a more profound Reality. For the Illumined Ones, the problem of life and death, such as we generally present it to ourselves, is a pseudo-problem. Death only affects the exterior form and the mental associations. But the experience of Awakening liberates us from attachment to the body and the mental structure.

For the Westerner physical death often takes on a dramatic aspect, because for him the notion of reality is frequently

concentrated on and limited to the material world. Psychic or spiritual activities are often considered as the mere epiphenomena of matter. In this case, the loss of the body takes on a totally irreparable character. We have identified ourselves excessively to the carnal aspect of the beings who are dear to us as well as to our own body.

The idea that no magician will ever be able to return the body of the loved one is for us heartrending and unbearable. Physical death is however only one fragmentary aspect of a total process. Our real being is infinitely more vast than this body which was born only a few years ago and which faces death in another few years.

The Illumined Ones teach us that the most important death is not the one we think. The most important death is formed on the psychological level. It is not a defeat but in fact a victory: the highest victory there can be.

The comprehension of Zen liberates us from attachment to the body and to the mental and emotional associations. It permits us to experience, in a living and non-theoretical way, the Cosmic Mind which is beyond life and death. This psychological attitude, rather paradoxical for many Westerners, has been very clearly expressed by Krishnamurti[1]:

'By understanding its own totality, the mind has understood the significance of the particular as well as the universal. It has broken away from all ambition and all desire for prestige. All these things are absent in the thought of the man who lives wholly in the present and who dies to everything he has known, every minute of the day. . . . If you have been this far, you will discover that life and death are ONE . . .

'Don't think that all this is philosophy, but look within yourselves, deny completely your avidities, your ambitions, and you will see that in this end, there is a death which is an intemporal creation, which, if you wish to give it a name, can be called God, or the Unknown'.

This expresses the words of the ancient masters of Ch'an and Zen. It is quite severe and can put some people off. As

1. J. Krishnamurti, *Causeries Saanen, 1962 et 1963,* Courrier du Livre, Paris, 1963

Master Eckhart puts it[2]: 'Unliberated men hate that which brings joy to liberated men. Nobody is rich in God who is not completely dead to himself'.

It seems that all Awakened men of all time and of all races have proclaimed the bases of an identical wisdom. The essential of it is the same. Only the form varies. The significance of death was stated in the words of Jesus to Nicodemus[3]: 'In truth I tell you, unless a man has been born over again he cannot see the Kingdom of God'.

We discover the same requirement formulated in the scriptures when they tell us of the stripping of the *old man.* The old man symbolizes the accumulation of past memories and the inertia of the habit-force about which the Buddhist texts speak.

The liberation of attachments to the past is one of the essential elements of the psychological death which the masters of Buddhism, Ch'an and Zen, describe. They teach us that this psychological death must be realized by living fully attentive to the restrictive role of the mental habits which imprison us. This does not involve an evasion but rather a sort of confrontation. When this experience has been correctly lived we are forever liberated from the anguish of death. For Awakened men, this liberation results from the experience of the Cosmic Mind.

Each one of us can discover in himself and through himself this inner light. It envelopes and dominates all shadows, which are only apparent. For the Awakened man there are no more shadows, nor is there any death. Only the forms appear and disappear. The world sheds its apparent opaqueness. Everything becomes transparent and luminous.

The language we are using here is not new. Since antiquity man has sensed these truths. But it seems that the modern world, increasingly fascinated by science and the material values, has forgotten them.

In ancient India, the Indian Nataraja symbolized the eternal victory of life over form. Beyond the destructive principle of Shiva and the conservative principle of Vishnu,

2. Master Eckhart, *Oeuvres,* Gallimard, Paris, 1942 and Aubier, Paris, 1942
3. St. John, ch. 3; v. 3–7

there is always the inexpressible *that,* the perpetual creation of Brahma.

Since antiquity man has sensed that the duality of the contrary forces of life and death were enveloped in a unity more vast than they. This was the symbol of Yin and Yang of ancient China, the negative and the positive surrounded by a circle expressing the unity which encloses and dominates them[4].

However, even if form is always transitory, it has its part in reality and its significance can be immense. The error committed by the majority consists in transgressing the essential law of form, that is its impermanence. The Illumined Ones have pointed out the impermanent character of form, but still they have never considered it as completely illusory.

For them the art of life consists not in denying form, not in turning one's back on the particular features of the exterior world, but on the contrary in looking them full in the face, intensely awakened to the present moment. Each moment holds something unique, completely new, irreplaceable and mysterious. It is in fact only in this supple, living and fully adequate view, that form manages to convey the strange and marvellous language it intends for us. Then we will discover that there is always in form and beyond it a part of the unknown and of creation. We live this creation when we die psychologically to ourselves. Then we *are* the Life which is beyond birth and death.

Zen teaches that this natural achievement is accessible to every being who has been sensitized to the highest possible degree of intelligence and love.

4. See diagram of T'ai-ki, ch. 30

CHAPTER XV

Karma and Reincarnation

The study of the law of cause and effect, referred to by the term Karma, is one of the bases of Buddhist teaching. It affirms the existence of this law and invites us to liberate ourselves from it.

Karma is a Sanskrit word which means *action.* Because he acts clumsily and incompletely, the ordinary man creates Karma, that is, he is *psychologically* prisoner of the law of cause and effect. The Awakened man, because his acts are appropriate and complete, no longer creates Karma, he is *psychologically* free of the law of cause and effect. This can be clarified if we take another look at the way in which thoughts appear in the ordinary man. They arrive continuously onto the field of his mind. No sooner does one arrive than another turns up and prevents the first from finishing its course. Each of these thoughts, Buddhism teaches us, is an incomplete act. Herein lies the prime source of Karma on the psychological level, for each incomplete thought is potentially heavy with desire and actions.

In the Awakened man, on the other hand, each thought immediately liberates all of the energies which made it appear. Thoughts arrive appropriately for the place and the circumstances, they develop calmly and finish their course. They do not leave any psychological residue. The thought of the Awakened man is a complete act. Each movement of the brain actualizes and liberates its energies from moment to moment. Because of this fact, psychological extensions towards the future and the sequence of time are nonexistent.

The law of cause and effect still controls, of course, the material universe and the physical body, but the Awakened man is psychologically liberated from it whilst the ordinary man is subject to it.

However Buddhism teaches us that there exists not only a personal Karma, there is a collective Karma resulting from the interaction of beings and things among themselves. The laws of governing this collective Karma are contained in a text called *Chain of Dependent Origination.* A. David-Neel writes on this subject[1].

'If Buddhism declares that everything — object, event, phenomenon, any occurrence whatsoever—proceeds from a cause, it also asserts the complex character of the causes which are responsible for the result which arises, and, moreover, it states that these causes are interdependent.

'Given that such and such things exist, another will be born. This is the formula of the *Chain of dependent origination* (pratitya-samutpada) that we find here as the foundation of the doctrine of Karma. In fact, the *dependent origins* are only one side of Karma'.

'Impossible to know' is the beginning of beings enveloped in ignorance, who, because of their desire for existence, are led to ever-renewed births and so pursue the round of rebirths (Samyutta Nikaya).

Awakened men conjugate the verb *to be.* Most of us conjugate the verb *to have.* By conjugating the verb to have, we commit ourselves to the way of innumerable struggles and servitudes. We create Karma.

Let us compare the mode of existence of the Awakened man to a vertical process. He is delivered from the illusion of psychological time and continuity. Tanha, the thirst for becoming and possessing, is extinct in him. He no longer chooses, no longer accumulates, no longer desires. He is liberated and no longer creates Karma.

The ordinary man, on the other hand, lives according to a horizontal process. His life expresses a desire for increasing expansion. He wishes to increase and extend his prestige indefinitely, and accumulates more and more material or intellectual possessions. He is incapable of living in the present and every instant projects himself into an imaginary future. The impossibility of fully actualizing himself in the present 'potentializes the future', according to the expression

1. A. David-Neel, op. cit., p. 161

of Stefane Lupasco. This potentialization of the future is one of the sources of Karma.

The notion of chance is nonexistent in Taoism, Buddhism, Ch'an and Zen. The unfolding of the Universe as a totality and of the lives of individuals, results in a concatenation of causes and effects. This applies especially to the exterior aspects of the Universe. In fact we know that, as we delve deeper into the farthest zones of the atomic world, the law of causality and strict determinism change in character. They are no longer so absolute. In the depths of the spiritual worlds, they are nonexistent. The law of causality and determinism imply duality, relativity, continuity and time. It is obvious that once the Awakened man finds himself on the spiritual level, he takes his distance as far as the law of cause and effect is concerned. They are psychologically free of Karma.

If we ask the Zen masters what they think of chance, they reply that our impression of chance results from the enormous complexity—in time and space—of the network of causes and effects forming the history of a universe as well as that of each human being. The impression of chance results to a great extent from a distance between cause and effect. It also proceeds from the multiple and complex intersecting of causes and effects.

A very simple example could substantiate what we have just said. If we throw a stone into the calm water of a pool, we can observe the formation of small waves which spread out in the form of concentric rings and gradually disperse. The fall of the stone is the cause, the *first* waves are clearly the effect. If we throw the stone near the edge of a pool, some of the concentric waves will collide with the edge and will turn into small secondary waves. An inattentive person could wonder what was the origin of these secondary waves that are moving in the opposite direction to the first, towards the point where the stone fell in.

The distances between the billions of effects in the Universe and in the life of each human being, and the infinitely complex causes which determine these effects, are much greater than those existing between the dropping of the stone in the water and the secondary waves that we mentioned.

These are the distances which are at the bottom of the gropings and muddles encountered in the course of the biological evolution of species on the planet. By *distance* we mean here the complexity of the levels or stages lying between the physical universe and the bottom-most depths of the spiritual world: molecular level, atomic level, sub-atomic level, level of pure energy, level of sub-quantum energy, inferior psychic levels, superior psychic levels, etc.

It is important to note that modern psychology, whether it be Freudian or Jungian, excludes the notion of chance. Statistics gained from detailed investigations reveal that there always exists a very strict relationship between accidents and the state of psychic tension of their victims. This tension can moreover be unconscious.

Besides, it is an accepted fact that when the tensions or psychic complexes of a human being are eliminated, most of the circumstances of his exterior environment are modified in direct relation to his transformation. Now, at first sight, it seems that there exists no link or relationship between exterior material events and a psychological state. It is the distance which separates them which prevents us from discerning the links between causes and effects and their operational process.

Let us remember finally that for the most sceptical men of science, chance could not exist since each present moment is the mathematical sum of all the preceding moments. But this sum contains billions of elements, of such complexity that it is difficult to determine them. For this reason we generally get the impression that events result from pure chance.

Let us point out the inexorable character of the law of cause and effect, called *law of Karma.* Westerners willingly accept the idea that 'as each man sows, so let him reap', but a good number wish for the intervention of an exterior power or hope for pardon from a god. Such a concept is foreign to Buddhism, Ch'an and Zen, which are free of notions of salvation, sin, and the privileged way to follow.

To each cause, for which we are responsible, there is a corresponding effect. Whether we wish it or not, the effect must unavoidably manifest itself. No exterior power, no

master, no God can interfere in the process of cause and effect presiding over the lives of human beings. What we have said can be found clearly stated in the Dhammapada, where we read[2]:

'By oneself alone, the evil is done.
By oneself one is disgraced.
By oneself, the evil is undone.
By oneself, alone, one is purified.
Purity or impurity belongs to each man.
No one can purify another'.

The law of cause and effect is more than a moral or social law. The masters of Buddhism, Ch'an and Zen consider it as an automatic mechanism from which one can be liberated, psychologically, only by the Awakening.

Reincarnation

The law of cause and effect or Karma has the indirect consequence of posing the problem of reincarnation. Most of the Buddhist schools, plus Ch'an and Zen, are reincarnationists. In antiquity Pythagoras, Plato and Plotinus were partisans of this doctrine which was admitted by certain Christians up to Origenes in the third century A.D.

Let us point out however that some Buddhist and Brahman schools are either not reincarnationist or look at the problem from another angle. Such is the case, for example, of the Indian writer Coomaraswamy who states[3]: 'The notion of reincarnation, in the ordinary sense of rebirth on earth of deceased persons, only represents an error of comprehension of the doctrines of heredity, transmigration and regeneration'.

Most Buddhists consider the process of reincarnation in quite a different way than that which we might imagine. That which we call *Soul* is only in their eyes a series of 'causes and effects' of a psychical nature. Although this network of causes and effects is very complex, it nevertheless retains a character of uniqueness and originality.

Each individual existence or incarnation would be ex-

2. D. T. Suzuki, Essays *on Zen,* op. cit., p. 819
3. A. K. Coomaraswamy, op. cit.

pressed in a whole made up of experiences, joys, sufferings and awarenesses. This whole would be summed up in the form of a balance sheet of psychic forces and in a collection of tendencies, different for each individual.

After psychic death and the disintegration of the inferior psychic elements, the deepest beds of our spiritual structure, shaped by a subtle energy, would retain the imprints of this psychic balance sheet and the collection of tendencies. It is upon these that the choice of incarnation would depend in any particular body, at the moment of conception, according to the very complex laws of affinity and Karma, As the physical support of incarnation only rarely corresponds to the total demands of the psychic, several incarnations would be necessary, and in different sexes.

Some Buddhists consider each existence as a net in which we collect experiences of which the balance is registered in the deepest zones of our spiritual structure. Life after life, after alternations of joys and sufferings, a progressive maturity is established. This maturity finally prepares the full knowledge and the bypassing of the ego at the end of which the cycle of *Samsara* or *wheel of birth-and-death* is terminated.

Let us mention that Wei Wu Wei, a specialist in Ch'an, considers that the term *reincarnation* is inadequate. He prefers the word *transmigration.* He states on this subject[4]:

'Since dualism cannot exist without thought and since time is an effect, reincarnation must inevitably be subject to time. It follows that what undergoes reincarnation must be capable of thinking.

'This is confirmed by the universal belief in the liberation realized by those who have transcended the process of thought. Henceforth they will be free from reincarnation. But thought needs a somatic mechanism by which it can express itself. Reincarnation means that the *principle of thought* is expressed through a succession of bodies of genetic origin. . . . *The principle of thought* is more of an *influence* than an entity. We have called it a principle because it contains no resemblance to a personality or individuality.

4. Wei Wu Wei, *Why Lazarus Laughed,* Routledge and Kegan, London, 1960 p. 209.

From the point of view of Reality the *ego* is only a concept, and has no absolute existence.

'We will use the term *principle of thought* associated with a series of specific psycho-somatic mechanisms (successive bodies). For the transformation itself, we will not use the term reincarnation, but instead *transmigration*'.

It is important to note that the Buddha and most of the masters of Buddhism accord secondary importance to the problem of reincarnation. Many think that minds involved in this problem tend to put off till tomorrow what can be done today. Whether reincarnation exists or not is secondary. The masters insist more on the fundamentally illusory character of the ego which considers itself to be a distinct and continuous entity. Whether this ego lives one existence or several is of little importance in relation to the imperative necessity to achieve immediate deliverance from ignorance.

When we ask the partisans of reincarnation why men do not remember their previous lives, they reply as follows: The great majority of men do not know themselves fully. This means that our psychic structure is much more complex than we suppose. It is made up of a series of successive layers, going from depth to depth. Most of us are only conscious of the most superficial layers. So what happens when death comes along? The body decomposes and, after it, the different psychic associations. Nothing of what we know of ourselves remains between two successive reincarnations. All that remains is an energy-balance of a psychic and spiritual nature. This collection of tendencies is placed in the deepest layers of the individual psyche at a level reached by very few people.

CHAPTER XVI

The Notion of God in Buddhism

Various authors, such as A. David-Neel, consider Buddhism as atheistic. They support their way of thinking by postulating the fact that the word *God* is never mentioned in the Buddhist texts. This is not sufficient reason to place a philosophy in the categories of atheism. Buddhism, Ch'an and Zen are beyond our categories of atheism or theism.

The texts of Buddhist orthodoxy speak with emphasis of the Illumination of the Buddha and the incomparable felicity of Nirvana. Felicity and illumination are not the products of a void. They proceed from the discovery of a fundamental Reality. The masters of Buddhism have too clear a vision of the infinity of this Reality to have to name it. It cannot be conceived and nothing can be said about it. All our customary distinctions and our familiar values, including those presented by theologies, are incapable of giving an exact idea of the Real. Meditation on these attributes is considered as an obstacle by Awakened men.

Although the word *God* never appears in the Buddhist texts, we frequently pick up expressions such as *pure essence,* or the *basis of the world,* or the *Cosmic Mind* or the *Body of Buddha.* In his remarkable work on Zen, Dr. Hubert Benoit speaks of *our divine essence*[1]. Awakened men consider that the God of which Westerners speak is very often only a mental projection of their own mind, bearing all of its limitations. Our anthropomorphisms seem simplistic to them. The idea of an exterior God, rewarding some and punishing others in terms of our human values, is foreign to them. Professor D. T. Suzuki[2] thinks that in the West we 'seem too conscious of God, although we say that we have life and

1. Dr. Hubert Benoit, op. cit.
2. D. T. Suzuki, *Essays on Zen,* op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 193

movement in him. Zen wants one to efface, if possible, the very last trace of thought of God'.

This paradoxical position causes many misunderstandings. We will try to dissipate them. For Zen, to think of God is to deny God. To use such attitudes to affirm the atheism of Buddhism would show a lack of comprehension of the latter. When Zen states 'to think of God is to deny God' it does not deny the existence of the divine. It simply draws our attention to the fact that thought is incapable of representing the supreme Reality to us. Because of this, all mental effort, instead of helping us, only runs the risk of taking us farther away from our desired goal.

Plato taught that to every task must correspond the appropriate tools: for heavy tasks, heavy and rough tools; for delicate and subtle tasks, light, delicate and subtle tools of work. Thought is the ideal tool of work for technical jobs and for mathematics. But the field of Reality or Cosmic Mind is so subtle, so delicate and so fine that thought is too rough a tool to be able to operate appropriately. One might as well wish to carry out high precision work in watchmaking with a navvy's pickaxe and shovel.

Although Buddhism has little to say about a God similar to that of Westerners, it is however intent on liberating us from the dream world of ignorance and illusion which bars us from access to the divine. The Cosmic Mind of Zen is the center towards which are aimed all the efforts (or non-efforts) of those who follow this way.

Some Western authors, clearly mystical, also avoid using the term God. Carlo Suares refers to the supreme Reality of the Universe as the fundamental *something.* Jaspers refers to it as the *enveloping.* We will refer to it as the *One-Totality.* It envelops and dominates the mind, the psyche and the material world.

Buddhism, Ch'an, Zen and Taoism are deeply impregnated with the notion of the unity of one divine essence. This essence forms the hidden Reality of beings and things. The perception of it implies the transcending of our customary values. A similar attitude is expressed by Master Eckhart who writes[3]:

3. Master Eckhart, *Sermons,* Aubier, Paris, 1942, p. 241

'God, this ultimate Reality which our ego strains to grasp, is only revealed when we have lost sight of all things temporal. Let us cease to trust our intellect and let us go beyond the way of reason.

'In the vision of the Lord, there is no duality, no relativity. As long as we are intent on looking, we are not yet ONE with what we are looking at.

'As long as something is still the object of our intuition, we are not yet ONE in the ONE. For, if there is only ONE, only ONE can be seen'.

In the view of Buddhism, Ch'an and Zen, Reality is not a thing which can be discussed. It must be lived. It is lived once the mind is liberated of its former values, its attachments and its identifications. From this moment, the seeker proclaims like Hsi Yun[4]: 'This Cosmic Mind is the Buddha . . . and the Buddha is all living beings. This Mind is not less manifest in ordinary beings, nor more manifest in the Buddha'.

In this perspective, the divine is not distinct from us. We are the divine, but we do not know it. As it was said in the scriptures: 'We have eyes and yet we do not see'. The Indian psychologist Krishnamurti declared that 'there is no God other than the purified man'. Also it should be said that the purified man is he who has freed himself from the limitations of egoism and personal conscience thanks to full attainment of Awakening. And so the qualification of pride is not applicable to him when he speaks of his integration with the Cosmic Mind. Let us point out that although this integration is possible, it is still exceptional in the present state of human evolution.

The fact of asserting that 'we are the divine' does not imply any exclusive or inclusive quality. We are the divine in the same way as are the paving-stones and the dead branch that we trample beneath our feet. At this level, as paradoxical and scandalous as it might seem in the eyes of the profane, the oppositions existing for us between a pretty rose, a distant star or the debris of discarded objects, are not so very clear cut.

4. Hsi Yun, op. cit., p. 38

We are the divine, on the surface and in depth, for nothing is outside the body of Buddha. Our very thoughts, erroneous as they may be (so the Zen masters tell us), are not outside the Cosmic Mind, but they do not affect it in any way.

Master Eckhart is among the few Western mystics who have expressed an attitude approaching that of Ch'an and Zen. He says in his *Sermons*[5]:

'It is to the extent in which man knows himself that he will manage to know God.

'Where I am, there is God, that is the pure truth.

'Man is in truth God and God is in truth man.

'The soul (after its salvation) has lost its name in the unity of the divine essence, and for this reason it is no longer called soul, its name is *immeasurable essence*'.

The impulse of recoil that we experience when we hear it said that a simple stone or a fragment of dead wood is divine, results from the fact that we know nothing of their true nature. All we have in mind are mental pictures describing the external contours and superficial appearances resulting from the imperfection of our senses. Their inner reality is quite different. The little information that the recent investigations of physicists have gleaned gives us plenty of material for reflection[6]. Teilhard de Chardin has discovered certain essential aspects of it.

We can say that the materialists of the last century devoted a cult to a god they did not know, because they were still misinformed as to the exact structure of matter. Thanks to the progress of modern physics, the *God material* has just lifted its mask of glacial immobility. Now it is transfigured into energy which is prodigiously mobile, fluid and impossible to grasp. Its previously sombre and monotonous face is brightened more every day by a dazzling light. The enchantment of silent light perpetually unfolding in the heart of the smallest grain of sand is greater than the splendor of the most beautiful fireworks. The physicists give us glimpses of the essence of matter in the shape of an unfathomable ocean of energy and pure light.

We will understand better, in the light of what has been

5. Master Eckhart, *Sermons,* op. cit.
6. See R. Linssen, *The Spirituality of Matter,* Planete, Paris, 1957

said, the following anecdote. A disciple asked a Zen master how he could obtain Satori or vision of the real nature of things. The master simply raised his stick and said: 'If you can understand this, you will have understood the entire Universe'.

In the view of Buddhism, Ch'an and Zen, the divine is a homogeneous whole, which knows no duality. By virtue of its dividing analytical tendency, dissecting and classifying all things, our thought makes arbitrary divisions in the heart of this One-Totality: material or physical division, psychical division, spiritual division. It erects tight partitions separating these different modes of the Real. In fact, there are no separate *modes* in the Reality. There are no separate planes, no tight partitions, no opposition between spirit and matter, or between manifest and non-manifest universe.

Ch'an and Zen enclose the notions of immanence and transcendence of the divine. These notions, considered incompatible by most Western theologians, are complementary. The notion of complements, evidenced by the eminent physicist Niels Bohr and taken up by Prince Louis de Broglie, opens up great horizons not only to physics, but also to philosophical and spiritual thought.

The Buddhist masters sometimes smile ironically observing the desperate efforts of our minds towards a definition of the divine or a carefully indexed codification and enumeration of its multiple attributes. The Illumined Ones consider it more prudent to state what the divine Reality is not. It is not a person, nor an entity. It is outside all the values which are familiar to us. If we define it as a principle, let us remember that it is absolute and exists by itself.

For the masters of Ch'an and Zen, the Cosmic Mind is the eternal and sole subject. For Wei Wu Wei, specialist in Ch'an, 'to think of God is to deny the pure subjectivity of God'. The universe such as we see it, the beings and the things, are only objects in the same way as our notions of time and space; for thoughts are also objects.

The Ch'an master Hsi Yun declares in *The Cosmic Mind*[7]:

'The imaginations of ordinary men are conditioned by

7. Hsi Yun, op. cit., p. 97

their contact with their surroundings; these imaginations are consequently impregnated with desires and repulsions. In order to suppress illusion caused by external contacts, one only has to put an end to the imagination. When this is done, the field of sensorial perceptions is emptied. However, if you seek to eliminate all external contact without having significantly put an end to imaginative activity, you will not succeed. Since the myriad objects that exist are nothing other than the Cosmic Mind, what do you hope to achieve? There is only one single reality, which cannot be either realized or embraced. . . . This is why the Buddha (preaching the Lotus Sutra) expressed himself thus: "In truth, I have obtained nothing from Illumination. There can be nothing other than intuitive, non-mental comprehension"'.

The realm of the world of phenomena is the Cosmic Mind grasped by erroneous perception.

Taking into account the many reservations which have been made on the subject of the terms *God* or *Supreme Reality,* we will use terminology considered lame by Ch'an and Zen masters and say that what holds the place of Divine Reality in the West is called Cosmic Mind in Zen and non-reality in Ch'an.

The living and present character of the Cosmic Mind is evidenced in the famous dialogue of King and Paloti recorded in the *Annals of the Transmission of the Lamp*[8]. Here are the words of this dialogue.

KING: What is the state of Buddha?

PALOTI: To see the nature of Reality is the state of Buddha.

KING: Do you see this nature?

PALOTI: This nature is pure Action.

KING: Who acts? I do not understand!

PALOTI: I see it.

KING: What is this nature?

PALOTI: The action is all here. You just cannot see it.

KING: Have I it in me?

PALOTI: You are the actor now and at all times. When

8. D. T. Suzuki, *Freedom & Knowledge in Chinese Buddhism,* periodical 'The Middle Way', May 1956, London

you are not, your very substance does not perceive itself.

KING: Where can the actor be located?

PALOTI: When he is in the breast, he is the body; when he is in the outer world, he is the man; with eyes he sees; with ears he hears; with the nose he smells; with the mouth he speaks.

This language is direct and unequivocal. Reality can and must be found where we are. As Nyogen Senzaki puts it[9]: 'If you do not manage to find Reality where you are, where can you hope to find it?'

9. Nyogen Senzaki, *Buddhism and Zen,* The Wisdom Library, New York, 1953, p. 27

CHAPTER XVII

The Meaning of the Buddhist "Void"

Most Westerners have great difficulty in understanding exactly the notion of the *Void* in Buddhism. Buddhists think that the Cosmic Mind is beyond all our capabilities of mental representation. This is the reason why they use the expression Void. We propose to examine in detail the motives for this paradoxical definition.

This Void must not be interpreted as a nothingness. The *Tchag Tchen Gyi Zindi,* one of the fundamental works of Tibetan Buddhism, tells us[1]: 'Do not think of the Void as being nothingness'.

The term Void comes from the Sanskrit *Sunyata.* The study of the Sanskrit root of *Sunyata* indicates that, in Buddhism, we can understand the notion of vacuity as synonymous with *non-self* or *foreign to Reality.* By Void we must understand the absence of our customary values, our dualist conceptions, and of the properties or attributes that we accord to beings and to things.

We read in a work of Hui Hai, translated into English with the title *The Path to Sudden Attainment*[2]:

'When the mind is detached, the Void appears.

The *Void* is simply non-attachment.

To understand the Void of distinctions, is to be delivered'.

For this reason, we read in most Indian, Chinese, Tibetan and Japanese texts entire pages full of negations. Speaking on the subject of Reality, these texts tell us: *That* is not high, or low, or hot, or cold. *That* is not green, or red, or round, or square, etc. The Orientals are generally very prudent in their commentaries on the Real. They proceed by means of negation. Since the very nature of the Real prohibits any

1. A. David-Neel, op. cit.
2. Hui Hai, op. cit., pp. 17, 26, 27

kind of mental representation, any kind of definition, it could not be otherwise.

This is the reason why the purest teachings are in a very intractable position because of the very extent of their purity. They can affirm nothing. Their role is limited to denouncing the obstacles which prevent us from awakening to the discovery of our real nature, of which nothing can be said. This Reality cannot be known as we generally know things. Here, perhaps, we will discover the meaning of the enigmatic words pronounced by Socrates during an inner experience: 'I know that I know nothing'.

However, the abolition of all distinctions, of all processes of knowledge in the sense we understand, does not imply an impossibility of experience. In fact, when the master Hui Hai speaks to his pupil, he says[3]:

'Speaking of non-perception, I refer to common perceptions and not to the supreme perception.

'Question: What are the common perceptions and what is the supreme perception?

'Answer: If any distinctions are made, they result from common perceptions. The supreme perception implies a *void* of distinctions.

'The understanding which results from a particular perception does not necessarily imply understanding the (hidden) Reality of the thing perceived'.

As we further our study of the texts of Buddhism, Ch'an and Zen, it seems obvious that the *void* of our customary conceptions is shown to be an untold fullness. What appears at first sight to be a negative and destructive void is transformed into a highly creative vacuity.

A similar attitude is expressed in the writings of Master Eckhart[4]:

'Take this as a maxim: to be *void* of all that is created, that means to be full of God, and to be filled with creation, that means to be void of God.

'The void heart has power over all things! What is a *void* heart? A heart which, not being laden or troubled by anything at all, nor attached to anything, sees no benefit

3. Hui Hai, op. cit., pp. 12, 13, 26
4. Master Eckhart, *Sermons,* op. cit.

anywhere in the world, but is plunged wholly into the most precious will of God, having renounced his own'.

The inner void and liberation from egoism expressed by Master Eckhart correspond to the dissolution of the ego and the five *skandas* of Buddhism, The Prajnaparamita Hridaya Sutra (the Heart Sutra) gives us a paradoxical passage on this subject[5]: 'There are five skandas and these must be considered void by nature. Form and body are void. Void is not different from form and form is not different from void'.

Awakened men teach us that when we see an object, from this point of view, the perception we have of it goes farther than its exterior contours. We penetrate it instantaneously by a sort of secret resonance established between our profound nature and that of the object. This experience is of a supra-intellectual order.

Being able to experience in this way we have the impression of being endowed with a new faculty. No word in our language could manage to define it exactly. We suggest here the word *omnipenetrability,* keeping in mind the omni-penetration of light mentioned by Professor Masson-Oursel[6].

By our own profound nature, we are closer and closer united to the profound nature of the beings and things which surround us. What we are trying to define here has been explained by Chuang Tzu[7].

'The man who partakes of the action of the Principle, walks in simplicity and abstains from concerning himself with multiple things.

'Holding firm to the source, the origin and unity, he knows as a genius knows, by *intuition within the Principle.* Consequently, his capability is extended to all things.

'As soon as he encounters a being, he grasps it, *penetrates* it, and knows it to the full'.

This progressive stripping-off of the opaqueness of things and of our own inner structure tends to void our minds of all attachment to particular distinctions. The Ch'an texts tell us that the mind of the Awakened man is not attached to anything and that he 'abides nowhere'. This paradoxical

5. M. Shibata, op. cit.
6. P. Masson-Oursel, op. cit.
7. Lao Tzu, Tao *Te Ching,* op. cit.

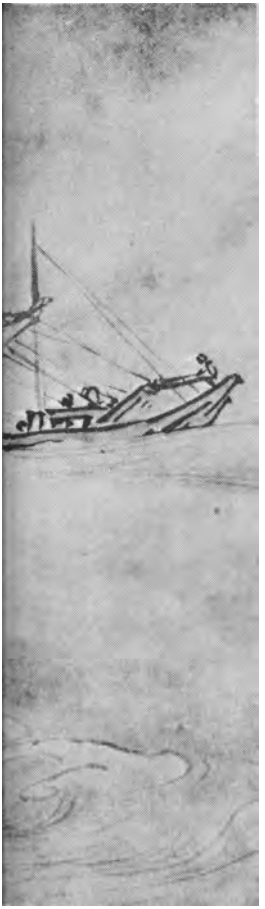
Sesshu, figurehead of Zen painting: ‘Winter Landscape’ (15th Century).

Embroidery on Japanese silk by the Zen master N. Matsu (18th Century).

The ‘Path of flowers’ or the art of arrangement leading to ‘the perception of the unity of all things’.

Landscape attributed to the master Shubun.

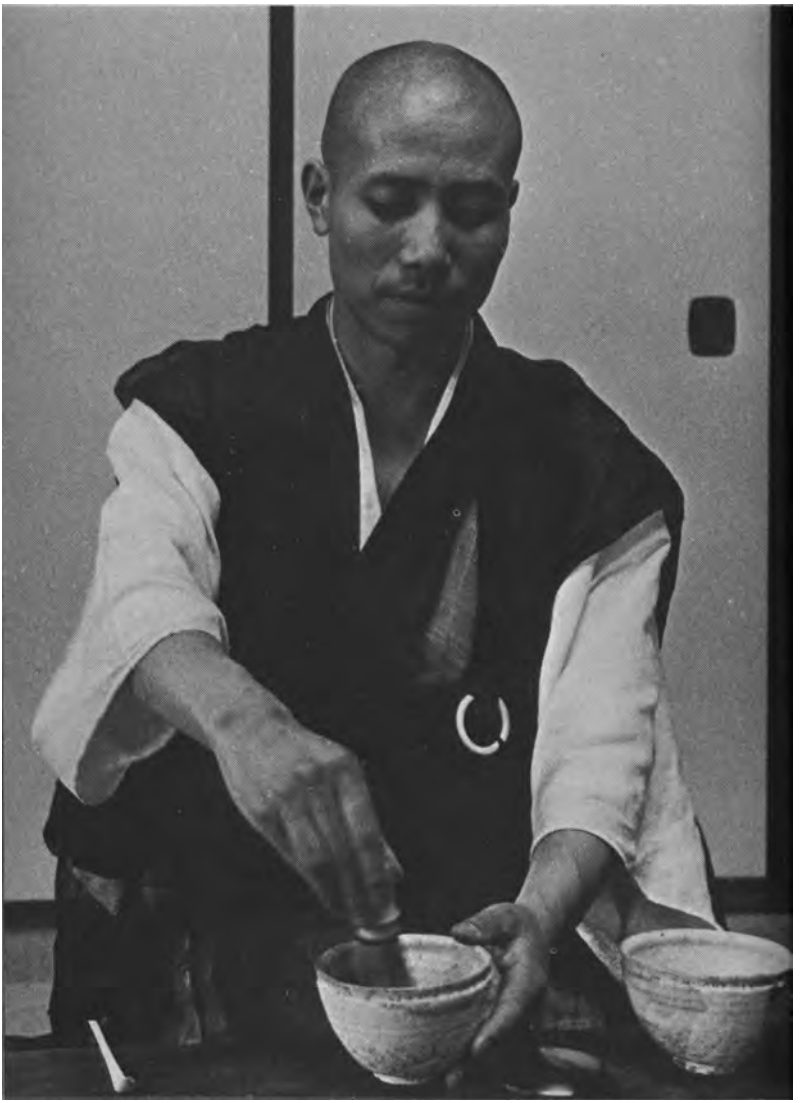
Sesson: 'Boat returning in the storm' (15th Century). With the work of this artist ends the golden age of Zen painting.




寺根茅舍竹和梅
實主相逢心不埃
莫性門前立談久
渡頭日暮待船來
遠江竺雲等連云

A school in Kyoto where, in the spirit of Zen, the traditional tea ceremony is taught.

The Zen monks share in providing all the material needs of the monastery, for example in the work of preparing tea. Here, a monk grinds rice.



expression deserves clarification. We find it in the writings of Hui Hai[8]:

'Question: What does the place of *non-abiding* mean?

Answer: It means abiding nowhere at all.

Question: What does *not abiding anywhere* mean?

Answer: To not abide in goodness or evil; not in being or not-being, not on the inside, or the outside, or the middle; not in the void, or in abstraction, or in non-abstraction; that means to abide nowhere.

Question: To what can this mind be compared?

Answer: It is not blue, or yellow, or red, or long, or short, or coming, or going. It is not blemished, or pure, or subject to birth and destruction. This is the form of the real mind which is also that of the real body.

Question: By what means can this body and this mind be perceived?

Answer: They can be perceived in your own true nature'.

We find an identical atmosphere in Tibetan Buddhism, although the latter likens the Void to the 'Clear primordial light' in the little-known texts which are of interest mainly to specialists. We read in the *Tibetan Yoga*[9]:

'The real state of the spirit, the true identity of all things, *inseparable from the Void,* beyond the compass of phenomena, while one experiences the great happiness of 'thought which goes beyond', is the *Clear Primordial Light.*

'The Clear Primordial Light symbolizes the visual condition of the spirit in the primordial state. It is the true state, not blemished by the thought process of Samsara, thus experiencing as a natural state, an inexpressible spiritual happiness, inseparable from the *notion of void,* the "That which is, of all things"'.

Let us point out however that for the Indian and Chinese masters, as well as for those of Tibetan Buddhism, the ultimate depths of the spiritual universe are situated beyond the Primordial Light. The texts of all the mystics and gnostics speak to us of the *Shadows,* or at least of that which for us is *Shadow.*

8. Hui Hai, op. cit., p. 11
9. Lama K. D. Samdup, *The Tibetan Yoga,* Maisonneuve, Paris, 1938, p. 231

It is said in the Tibetan texts[10]:

'The Shadows alone filled the limitless All, for the Father and the Mother and the Son were the new ONE. The seven sons were not yet born from the *Fabric of the Light.* The Shadows alone were *Father-Mother.*

'See, Lanou, the radiant child born of the two: brilliant space born of dark space which emerges from the depths of the great dark waves'.

The meaning of this could be explained if we think of the physical light which always results from the encounter of photons with a material object. It is the same for the 'Clear primordial light'. The Ch'an and Zen masters teach us that it is found at the peak of the mental world. It proceeds from the encounter between the translucent zones of the non-manifest world and the manifest world.

The study of the notion of Void in Buddhism, Ch'an and Zen, brings about a complete upsetting of our values: the nature of Reality, the role of physical life, the notion of the body. The Cosmic Mind is frequently likened to the notion of *Real body* or *Body of Buddha* (Dharmakaya).

The Illumined Ones teach us that as we approach Satori, that which we call our body is no longer an object among objects, and so too our mental pictures. As soon as we are liberated from the illusion of living as a distinct entity, the *part* in us no longer mistakes itself for the All. Only the consciousness of the All is present, from moment to moment, in those qualities which are unfathomable and inexpressible. All our notions of space and time undergo a complete transformation. In relation to the Cosmic Mind, our physical and mental vision takes on a secondary and derived role. Its prestige becomes so imperious that we cannot help but grant it a certain quality of substantiality, which, to be sure, has nothing in common with our customary notions of substance.

The substantial quality (for lack of a better expression) that we accord to the Cosmic Mind tends to make us experience it as our only real *body* and our true being. This

10. *Tibetan Kandjur-Bhak-hgyur,* Tibetan Studies, 14, Calcutta, 1912, pp. 76, 77

Cosmic Body is not only *ours,* it is the body of pure essence in which all beings and things move and have their being. In this perspective, there is no longer any distinction between a physical body, a psychic body or a spiritual body, and the Cosmic Mind itself.

However, let us avoid any kind of anthropomorphism. In the view of the Ch'an and Zen masters, this *body* is not that of a person in the generally accepted sense of the word.

CHAPTER XVIII

Buddhism and Modern Science

> 'Life and consciousness exist on the level of the intra-nuclear particles'. Dr. D. Lawden[1].

It is interesting to note that the progress of modern science, and especially of physics and psychology, reveal certain similarities between the teachings of science and of Buddhism.

The rapidity of the recent evolution of the sciences increasingly obliges investigators to leave behind the old values. This attitude, indirectly linked with that of Ch'an and Zen, has been defined by an eminent member of the Ecole Polytechnique, G. Cahen[2]:

'The depersonalization of scientific judgment is considered as an essential condition for its validity. The physicist must struggle in every way against the precariousness of an over-individualized statement. He must do his best to eliminate his personal equation.

'In the face of facts, he sees himself invisible, passive, impersonal and nonexistent'.

In this same work, Georges Cahen comes to the conclusion, on the one hand, of an identity of essence between the intellect and the universe, and on the other, of the existence of a *Void* as the fundamental reality of the universe. He states[3]:

'The analysis of the phenomena that relate to the immediate contents of our perceptions, present two characteristics that we will bring to notice. On the one hand, this process reveals an *identity of essence between the intellect* and the Universe. On the other hand, this content is *progressively emptied of its apparent substance*: Matter itself

1. Dr. D. Lawden, periodical *Nature,* April 1964, London
2. G. Cahen, *Conquêtes de la pensée scientifique,* Dunod, Paris
3. Idem.

tends to be nothing but empty form, a field of action of the structural properties of our mind, that is to say, something immaterial.

'We will express thus, in the most extreme manner, the ultimate tendency of science: *reduction of reality to void.*

'This void is not non-being, nothingness. On the contrary it is the most complete being there can be since it holds the universe in its power'.

Other parallels can be drawn between the teachings of Buddhism and those of modern science. At this point we would like to show that Satori, this fundamental experience of Ch'an and Zen, is intimately related to the universal interfusion in which all the atoms of the human body participate both reciprocally and in relation with the whole Universe.

Everything holds, nothing is separate in the Universe, from the dense physical matter all the way to the farthest limits of the non-manifest. Universe. Oppositions, between the world of phenomena and the world of noumenon, between matter and spirit, between what is governed by the law of cause and effect and what is beyond all causality, between the temporal and the intemporal, all must disappear. They only exist in our minds.

In antiquity, in the East as well as in the West, there was held to be no distinction between philosophical and scientific thought. For Mahayana Buddhism, spirit and matter, Nirvana and Samsara, were the opposite faces of a single and same reality. For Heraclitus, Democritus, Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle, natural phenomena, life and man formed a homogeneous, inseparable whole.

The refusal to acknowledge the unity of the psychic and the physical and the relationships between microphysics and metaphysics proceeds mainly from an attitude formed in the 16th century, when science became experimental and liberated itself from any kind of religious obedience, an emancipation which permits science and technology to accomplish the extraordinary progresses that we are witnessing right now, and which are at the same time perplexing and disturbing.

There is a noticeable movement which, from the 19th century onwards, obliged scientists to devote themselves to specific tasks and become specialists because of the extent and variety of the phenomena studied. Since then they refused to tolerate any interference of metaphysics in science, and fell into the partial and sectarian attitudes of scientism and strict materialism, the best examples of which are Taine and Le Dantec.

Then we see that this movement crosses into a completely inverse phase. More and more scientists nowadays adopt a completely opposite attitude. They are afraid to undergo the deformations inherent in *specialists,* whose branches of knowledge, separated by rigid partitions, turn in on themselves and end up in complete deadlock. Scientists understand today that all sciences are part of a whole and that the discoveries which seem the most widely separated do in fact mutually enrich each other, in a sort of continual symbiosis. They are once more engaged in a definitive way in the study of the fundamental unity of all phenomena.

They are involved with achieving the synthesis and co-ordination of the numerous discoveries made every year throughout the world.

And so scientific conventions attract and unite men from all fields: astronomers, physicists, chemists, specialists in cervical anatomy, cyberneticians, biologists and doctors. Without this co-operation and these frequent confrontations, successes such as the sending of astronauts around the moon would have been impossible. The new syntheses which result from the increasingly numerous meetings between all specialists from all spheres force us to re-think certain traditional attitudes of thought.

In this new tendency we see the intuitions of the ancient wisdom of the East, full of unity and universality, reappear with particular force.

In a remarkable study entitled *Microphysics and Metaphysics*[4], Mathilde Niel writes:

'The progresses achieved in such varied fields as physics, biology, astronomy, and psychology lead us to re-think certain

4. M. Niel, *Microphysics and Metaphysics,* periodical 'L'Age nouveau' no. 110, Paris

problems posed for a long time by spirituality and especially by oriental spirituality.

'The new discoveries in the world of the atom and the elementary particles have forced researchers to entirely refashion their view of the Universe and their way of thinking. Reason itself which was thought to be unalterable has been thrown into confusion, and Gaston Bachelard has saluted the coming of a new scientific mind. But these discoveries also tend to transform our sense of the metaphysical, or, if we are spiritualistic, our way of experiencing the divine, and we must expect the rational revolution to be followed by a spiritual revolution'.

The departure point of the spiritual revolution is in the recent revelations on the strange nature of the infinitely small. The discoveries relating to the ultimate constituents of matter are daily more fascinating. The important role of the infinitely small in all phenomena, not only physical, but also biological, biochemical, neurophysiological and psychological, is revealed to a greater extent every day.

In addition, the energetic, non-casual, intemporal and perhaps unconditioned nature of the infinitely small leads us to the threshold of the psychic and spiritual worlds. Beyond the old quantum mechanics, some scientists, such as Robert Tournaire, have elaborated a system of sub-quantum mechanics. Here too we have one of the most fundamental physical and spiritual revolutions of modern times. This position of synthesis and balance between out-moded materialism and spiritualism is, it seems, outlined in the modern tendencies of Zen.

The progresses of biology and psychological neurophysiology depend on the discoveries of the infinitely small. The evolution of the species and mutations, correspond to changes of molecular order in the genes. The gene is a complex molecule of deoxyribonucleic acid transmitting parental heredity from the time of conception. The genes are grouped in chromosomes. Each human cell contains forty-eight chromosomes or twenty-four pairs. As E. Schrodinger writes[5]: 'Incredibly small groupings of atoms, much

5. E. Schrodinger, *What is Life*? De la Paix, Paris, 1951, p. 154

It is said in the Tibetan texts[10]:

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The substantial quality (for lack of a better expression) that we accord to the Cosmic Mind tends to make us experience it as our only real *body* and our true being. This

10. *Tibetan Kandjur-Bhak-hgyur,* Tibetan Studies, 14, Calcutta, 1912, pp. 76, 77

levels of spiritual life, there is just this same something of integral newness and strangeness, from moment to moment. It is, in other words and on another level, the same thought as expressed by M. Niel[11]: 'If our feeling of liberty came, as the new psychoanalysis seems to prove, from the consciousness that we do not impede an energy of cosmic magnitude, then the indetermination of quanta and our feeling of liberty, although different from one another, could have a similar cause'.

This similar cause, for the Zen masters, is obviously the Cosmic Mind. This reality is manifested in the form of a field which many scientists try to establish as a formula, but which eludes all attempts at formulation.

The notion of a unified field engaged the attention of Einstein and Heisenberg in particular. In France, Jean Charon sought the formula of a unified field capable of comprising in a single equation the nuclear, electromagnetic and gravitational fields. The nuclear, electromagnetic and gravitational phenomena are governed by a reality identical to that from which the manifestations of the whole Universe are suspended. This reality has been described by the English astronomer Fred Hoyle as a 'field of creation'.

The notion of field permits us to go beyond the old duality of spirit and matter. Such is also the opinion of Emile Brehier who states that 'the field is the universal reality which goes beyond the distinction of matter and spirit'.

We can leave the conclusion up to Mathilde Niel[12] who writes:

'It is curious to see that the notion of field, considered as universal reality, compares with certain intuitions of Oriental thought, notably that of the Cosmic Mind of Zen Buddhism, or the cosmic consciousness of Tagore.

'And so it is the action of this field on the elementary particles which seems to determine the infinite combinations, the creation of new structures finishing up as what we call matter, life and consciousness.

'But once the individual consciousness appears, the uni-

11. M. Niel, op. cit.
12. Id.

versal field would act through the intermediary of this consciousness, which would then be creative, because of the same nature of the fundamental field of creation'.

Field of creation and Satori

In its deepest and most spiritual essence, the Universe resolves into a unified field of pure creation. The Pure Being of philosophers, the God of mystics would not be found anywhere else but here.

When we work out in our minds a panoramic view of the recent progresses made in most of the sciences, one reality emerges above all others: that of a unified field of creation in which all the manifestations of the visible and invisible Universe are nourished. This reality occupies a position of priority of which the evidence is affirmed from day to day. As E. Schrodinger writes[13]: 'There can only exist one single thing, apparent plurality being only a series of different aspects of this single thing'.

The complexity of cell structure which characterizes the human body demonstrates an astonishing suppleness and perfect receptivity to the subtlest and most profound rhythms of nature. Man can be particularly receptive to the cosmic rhythm in which the Universe is constantly recreated, for his essence and that of the Universe blend into an identical field of creation.

The Satori of Zen or Ch'an is nothing other than the living experience of the unified field of pure creation, gaining awareness of itself and by itself, in us. But here we are using a convenience of language which still seems to make some concessions to dualism. In fact, the experience of Satori is beyond the duality of experience and experiencer. It is not an objectivation like our usual experiences. Krishnamurti, Ch'an and Zen are particularly insistent on this point. Whether we are there or not, the unified field of pure creation is the fundamental reality of the Universe and of ourselves, beyond any distinction of object and subject. For this reason, the living experience of the unified field of

13. E. Schrodinger, op. cit.

creation demands on our part total mental passivity and inner transparence.

The universal co-existensivity of the atom and Satori

We have just examined briefly the relations which can exist between the unified field of pure creation and the experience of Satori. We now propose to examine the behavior of the Universe and the atoms of which we are made, at a level which is closer to the world of phenomena: the level where the extraordinary and constant interfusion of atoms is carried out through the mediation of the wave-like aspects of energy.

We know that the basic essence of materiality is fluid, moving and continually changing. We can no longer safely compare the Universe to an architectural building constructed on 'hardness'. Time, space, relativity and solidity are absent from 'the ultimate bases of the world'. As Lao Tzu often says, 'suppleness and spontaneity are the laws of Life'. We have shown more than once that this suppleness and spontaneity are manifested mainly in the form of one fundamental process: the process of relations. We have its laws and modalities defined in a work[14] that we will summarize here.

In the ultimate zones of materiality, at the intranuclear level, we can witness numerous interchanges. The corpuscles within the nuclei of atoms have no longer any individuality. After considering this fact, we arrive at a principle: in the intra-atom, *the fact of relations is more important than the individuality of the constituent elements.* We can make the same observation in biology, where life is essentially dependent on cellular instability, on the suppleness, rapidity and fluidity of the exchanges.

The progresses of modern genetics have demonstrated the importance of the notion of interaction between the genes of an individual and the factors of his environment. Environment and heredity are factors in continual interaction that control the whole behavior of the individual. The genes react among themselves, the environment reacts upon the genes,

14. R. Linssen, op. cit.

and the genes themselves change and in turn operate on a transformed environment.

It is above all in the study of atoms that once more we will discover a new aspect of the fundamental fact of the relations which control the Universe at all levels. We have previously described the intensity of the relations or exchanges inside an atomic system between the planetary electron and the nucleus on the one hand, and also within the very heart of the nucleus, on the other. We are going to examine a fact which is still much more significant.

There is no being object, no thing, no atom in the Universe which is independent. As Teilhard de Chardin puts it[15]:

'The more we penetrate far and deep into matter, by means of an ever-increasing power, the more the interrelation of its parts confounds us. Each element of the cosmos is a positive fabric of all the others, interwoven above itself, by the mysterious phenomenon of composition which keeps it in existence as the crux of an organized whole, and below, by the influence it undergoes of the superior unities which envelop and dominate it for their own ends.

'It is impossible to cut into this network, to isolate one piece of it, without it unravelling and coming undone from all sides.

'All around us, as far as the eye can see, the Universe remains as a whole . . . and there is only one really possible way of looking at it, and that is to take it as a complete block'.

In fact, modern physics teaches us that independently of its clearly defined and localized corpuscular aspect, each atomic corpuscle includes an opposite and complementary aspect: the wave-like aspect. The action of every little electron, by its wave-like motion, extends over the whole universe.

The wave-like aspect of each of our constituent atomic corpuscles has a potential which extends to the farthest points of the Universe (in expansion or not).

And reciprocally, each atom of the distant nebulae, located in the unfathomable abysses of billions of light years, is

15. Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man,* Harper, N.Y., 1959, p. 38

present in each of us, in each object, in each grain of sand on our planet. There the constant but invisible mutual interpenetration of all the constituent parts of the Universe is continually at work. Everything holds together as if the entire cosmos was a single, immense, and perfectly homogeneous block.

Truly, everything is in everything, and with such intensity, continuity, and depth that the imagination is powerless to conceive the feeblest part of this universal interfusion. Let us say it again—we can never say it often enough—so that everyone is deeply aware of it: everything is in everything; the entire Universe is in us and vice-versa. It seems at first sight that such paradoxical language must come from a visionary or a poet. And yet nothing corresponds more exactly with both physical and metaphysical truth.

As Teilhard de Chardin writes[16]:

'The radius of action peculiar to each cosmic element must be protracted all the way to the farthest limits of the world. *Since the atom is naturally co-extensive to all the space in which it is situated, and since . . . a universal space is the only one there is, we have to admit that it is this immensity which represents the field of action common to all atoms. Each one's volume is the volume of the entire Universe.* The Atom is no longer the microscopic and closed world we thought it to be . . . It is the infinitesimal center of the world itself . . '.

And so we understand that a fragment of matter is not only made up of the sum of the atoms that compose it. There is infinitely more than one simple sum of juxtaposed elements. But this new perspective is so completely different to the one we have been taught, and also to the one which our senses offer us, that we acknowledge it only with astonishment and difficulty.

There is a combining-force which attaches every fragment of matter, every atom, to the entire Universe and vice versa. The energy contained in this combining-force is considerable and is part and parcel of the substance of every object, every

16. Teilhard de Chardin, op. cit., p. 40

thing, and every being. Teilhard de Chardin writes on this subject[17]:

'The innumerable centers which share among themselves a given volume of matter are not independent. Something binds them together and makes them mutually dependent. Far from behaving as an inert receptacle, the space which they fill in their multitude acts upon them as an environment which, actively directing and transmitting, contains their organized plurality.

'If they are simply added together or juxtaposed, atoms do not form matter. *A mysterious unity envelops them and binds them together, a unity against which our mind rebels but to which it is finally forced to yield*[18]'.

We know now how ridiculous it is to consider a living being, thing or object from the point of view of isolation or independence of any kind. Nothing is independent or isolated. Everything holds together. To claim the isolation of an object, a metal paper-knife for example, simply because the senses of sight and touch endow it with definite and precise contours is, in fact, a childish simplification which we must learn to condemn. The action of the atoms of this paper-knife extends across all of the interstellar worlds. It fills the entire Universe of billions of light-years with the potentiality of its presence. And reciprocally, something of each of the atoms situated in the farthest confines of the galaxies is found in the heart of this apparently isolated paper-knife. It is very probable that if this something of very distant origin were not present, a noticeable modification of the plural organization of the atoms and molecules would take place and make the appearance of our paper-knife utterly unrecognizable.

Billions of invisible but intensely active links bind together all the apparently separate parts of the Universe. This illustrates in a very compelling way, not only the fundamental fact of relations, but also that of universal interfusion. This universal interfusion is the fundamental fact of every second that passes, while, simultaneously, but at a deeper level, the unified field of pure creation regenerates the ultimate depths of the Universe.

17. Teilhard de Chardin, op. cit., p. 36
18. Our italics

It is interesting to note that what we have just said forms the basis of the teachings of the Avatamsaka Sutra, developed in depth by Kegon, a branch of Buddhism very closely connected to Zen.

The fact of interfusion is there. Whether we think of it or not, whether we know it or not, the wave-like action of our constituent atoms is present in the whole universe. And vice versa. From this point of view, Satori is nothing other than a certain awareness in us of this interfusion whilst at a deeper level, the unified field of pure creation is revealed in us and by us.

The state of living experience of cosmic interfusion could be described as follows: it is essential to let this interfusion 'be what it is', without any intervention on our part by an act of will or choice. We must not wish to *interfuse.* Interfusion is. We must not wish to re-create ourselves according to the rhythm of the unified field of pure creation. They are in themselves autogenous, absolute and omnipresent.

The Illumined Ones tell us that the 'supreme blessing' is ours when what remains of us becomes permeable, vulnerable, disposed to the creative rhythm of the unified field and to the cosmic interfusion. As it is said in the Tao: 'Let the Empire of Reality be its own law in us'.

The experience of Satori or the *liberation* of a Krishnamurti can in no way be called imaginative projections, *a priori* speculations or states of self-hypnosis resulting from meditation on a fixed subject. Satori will be realized as soon as we allow the unified field of creation to resume the place that it has occupied for all eternity. For this, all our interpretations, our most subtle images relating to this field must firstly disappear. It is the same as regards interfusion, which will not have been authentically lived until all traces of any mental representation of it have been driven from our minds.

We have treated this subject because it is interesting for men of a certain culture, when the matter is first approached. But for the final approach, the Ch'an and Zen master paradoxically tell us, all must be transcended and forgotten.

In his discourse to his disciple Thot, Hermes Trismegistus said that 'the infinite is mobile in its stability'. This para-

doxical statement seems quite correct. Man is a striking example of this universal process of interfusion and inter-exchange at the heart of an apparent stability. What significance would a liver or a kidney have without the totality of the organism whose equilibrium they help to maintain? Only interrelation, interaction and organization together give, to the complete individual as well as to the particular organs, their full significance.

In the same way as a stone is outwardly stable, when perceived superficially as an entity, and all the while is deep down intensively mobile, so too is the universal totality intensively mobile despite its apparent external stability.

In the same way as man appears at first sight to be an immobile individuality whose apparent continuity and very life are based on the rapid and complex interfusion of blood-circulation, so too does the universal totality live in accordance with the rhythm of a prodigious interfusion between the apparently separate elements which constitute it.

According to an ancient Indian image, the infinitely complex and subtle interfusion is the *breath* of the universal reality. The rhythm of renewal of the unified field of creation is the life-source underlying this fundamental *breath.*

All that has just been said applies to the exterior Universe or manifest world, such as our thought can conceive it and understand it within the limits of time and space. The Ch'an and Zen masters go much deeper, towards what some philosophers call the noumenon or non-manifest world.

The account which has just been made serves as an intermediary approach between these two opposite and complementary sides of Reality.

CHAPTER XIX

Koans and the Mondo

The *koans* are statements of paradoxical thoughts used by the Zen masters to give a psychological *shock* to their pupils. They are also questions which cannot be resolved by thought, and create a state of great intellectual tension which can be followed by an inner experience.

The *mondo* is mostly presented in the form of questions and answers which have the same aim. Both force the pupil to achieve mental silence and project a sort of ban on his agitations. Thanks to this silence, the most profound levels of the conscience can come to the surface.

Here is an example of koan, followed by a commentary.

> 'In the beginning, the mountains are mountains.
> In the middle, the mountains are no longer mountains.
> In the end, the mountains are mountains are mountains again'.

At first sight, this set of verses seems a mystery. In fact, its message is very illuminating. The correct interpretation of this text allows a panoramic view of the stages leading to the Satori of Ch'an and Zen.

During the phase which precedes any kind of research (the individual phase) we doubt nothing, we do not reflect on the great problems of existence. We let others think for us. When we see the mountains, we say quite simply, 'These mountains are mountains'. Their external contours represent for us their only reality. The rocks are only rocks, the soil is only soil.

When we begin to waken to inner research, we discover that the image which our senses gives us upon contact with the outside world does not correspond to reality. We see that nothing is immobile. Everything moves and is transformed. Instead of rocks, soil and mountains, we guess the underlying process of a prodigiously active energy which

animates the strange particles that move with the speed of lightning. We know, either by intuition or by scientific inquiry, the secret life and profound nature of all matter. The aspects of *surface,* with their many shades of difference, come in on a secondary and derived level in the face of a common essence of energy which forms their real nature, that of *depth.*

When we look at the mountains during this phase, they are no longer, for us, the same mountains as before. They are like a mirage devoid of all real substance. In the beginning of our research, we tend to change to an attitude of complete opposition to the first. We are so caught in the powerful magic of the profound reality of things, that this interior light blinds us to *surface* appearances. Matter has become for us the veil, the illusion (the *maya* of the Indians) and we say, 'the mountains are no longer mountains'.

However, one day we will come to realize that there is no division between the material world, such as we see it on the *surface,* and the pure essence of the Cosmic Mind in *depth.* These result from our mind's lack of penetration and inability to synthesize. Everything is the Cosmic Mind. Not even as much as a grain of sand is outside this One-Totality. From this moment, when our gaze rests once more on the mountains, we say as at the beginning, 'the mountains are mountains'. However we now place their material appearance in an infinitely more vast and profound whole. The mountains are no longer *absolutely* an illusion. The notion of illusion or *maya* came from a faulty functioning of our mind, which gave us illusory notions of beings, of things and of ourselves. When the Awakened man says 'the mountains are mountains', these words express a state of panoramic vision encompassing the appearances of *surface* and the reality of *depth.* His eyes give him an image of the external world conditioned by the scale of his physical observation, while at the same time, the Cosmic Mind is revealed as being the sole reality of the mountains at the level of absolute depth.

At the time of our interviews with professor D. T. Suzuki, the eminent Zen specialist offered us the following koan,

'When I hear I see and when I see I hear', which seems at the very least paradoxical.

By this, we must understand that in the experience of Satori our perception of things is global instead of distinct, and that this does not diminish our capacity to perceive clearly the singularity of things at a certain level.

When I hear the sound of a distant clock, I have two alternative ways in which to react. It may be that I am inattentive, without any depth of perception, and the experience is banal. It is limited to merely hearing a sound which in no way moves me or gives me any kind of revelation. I remain enclosed within myself. The clock and the sound are completely alien phenomena which are of no interest to me.

Or else I am *awakened;* in which case, all the stimuli of the environment, whether visual, auditory, olfactory, or tactile, reveal the unity and interdependence of beings and things. When I hear the sound of a distant clock, I am in a certain sense—through the Cosmic Mind—the essence of the clock's energy. I am the molecules of air which it causes to vibrate, I am the wave of sound that it emits into space. I am the essence itself of space. Since I am aware of the profound nature of my being, which is the profound nature of all things, every external event, every movement permits me to vibrate in exact time with the common essence by a secret resonance which is renewed from moment to moment. In a certain sense, everything I see, I perceive *through* this more profound reality. This does not involve auto-suggestion, or any kind of mental creation. On the contrary, as everything I hear, I hear through this unfathomable identity. It ends up by occupying such an important place for me that it is it that creates the dominant tone of all distinct perceptions. At the end of this process, I can actually say, 'when I hear, I see; when I see, I hear'.

The French writer Rene Fouere has expressed the essence of this attitude, which he calls the *complete act*[1]:

'Although it is possible, after the fact, to divide the complete act into mental, emotional and physical components,

1. Rene Fouere, op. cit.

these components are so intimately associated that *they cannot be the object of a separate observation.*

'A sort of alignment occurs between the emotion, the thought and the act, an alignment which makes them converge into one organic synthesis, which itself constitutes a simple and new reality'.

Some koans are presented in anecdotal form. They are more closely related to the *mondo.* The following conversation occurred between a pupil, who wished to be instructed in Zen, and his master:

'The pupil: Where do we come from and where do the myriad things and myriad beings come from?

The master: Everything comes from the Cosmic Mind. Everything is the Cosmic Mind.

The pupil: Where are we going? And whither go the myriad things and myriad beings?

The master: Everything returns to the Cosmic Mind. Everything is the Cosmic Mind.

The pupil: Where does the Cosmic Mind come from? Where is it going?

The master took off his slipper and dealt a violent blow onto his pupil's head'.

At the time of our last voyage into the mountains of India, we asked the master Sam Tchen Kham Pa, a refugee from Tibet, what were his thoughts on the *Buddha nature* or the *Cosmic Mind.*

'Nothing', he replied. Someone pressed him and the master replied, 'The torrent flows'.

The first reply means that the Cosmic Mind has no thoughts of itself. The second points out two fundamental principles of Zen, that is, firstly that the torrent is the Cosmic Mind and secondly the principle of perfect momentariness or the importance of the present. It is here, now; 'the torrent flows'.

For Zen this koan is amply sufficient. Every complete perception is an instance of Satori, on the condition that it is established after a rupture of routine and of mental habits. The establishment of the rupture of mental habits is one of the essential roles of the koans.

As Chang Cheng Chi explains[2]:

'The student should never forget that most of the Zen koans are only the salient points of a play, and not the complete drama. The koans tell the fall of the *ripe apples* but do not tell the history of these apples, which is a story of delights and disappointments, pleasures and pains, struggles and trials. The master shakes the apple tree and the ripe fruit falls, but the green fruit remains on the branch.

'The Zen masters knew very well that illumination is not obtained through merely hearing a remark, or being struck. Only the student who enjoys great maturity of mind can attain illumination after a single remark from the master or a blow given by him. They also knew that this maturity was only obtained after long years of study'.

2. Chang Cheng Chi, *The Practice of Zen,* Buchet-Chastel, Paris, 1960, p. 51

CHAPTER XX

Zen and the Anguish and Violence of Our Times

Most human beings live in a world of anguish and violence. Few recognize this and those who do recognize it are more willing to call themselves anguished than violent. Anguish and violence are intimately linked. Zen teaches us that anguish is the result of a contradiction existing between man's behavior and his inner nature. We will see in more detail what this means. More and more thinkers and psychologists are involved with this question.

Contemporary events give the problems of anguish and violence a quality of burning actuality. The murders of Martin Luther King, Robert Kennedy and many others, the protest movements and the student revolts throughout the world are the consequences, on the social level, of very profound and complex psychological factors.

The causes of anguish are many. They can be divided into two categories. Firstly, the superficial causes: the ones that everyone is beginning to recognize. Secondly, the deeper causes that are revealed by Zen and the most advanced types of modern psychology (the psychology of depths).

Superficial causes

In less than a century, the face of the world has completely changed. Imagine the way of life of a man in 1869 compared to the 1969 man. The contrast between the two rhythms of life is enormous. In less than a hundred years the vast progress in science and technology have overturned human life, habits and the sense of values. Imagine a world without radio, television, cinema, cars, planes, etc. In a century, the

material revolution has been so rapid that man today is ill-adjusted, 'in a strange land'. The human being, whether he wishes it or not, is faced with a host of dangers. The rapid evolution of technology engenders economical problems and uncertainties: uncertainty of employment, uncertainty of methods of production which are always at the mercy of new discoveries, uncertainties in the face of sudden fluctuations of even the most stable values.

Other uncertainties come from the constant menace of wars at different levels: actual war, war of nerves, confrontation of viciously opposed ideologies or economies. *In the name of ideas, man kills man.*

Modern man, hypnotized by the scope of technical progress, escalates a merciless struggle against nature. This brings about a host of dangers: pollution of the atmosphere by industries and the abuse of nuclear explosions, invasion of chemicals into our food supply, etc. These facts are quite superficial. They are presented with such sharpness that they activate manifestation of the anguish latent in the heart of every human being. That which had been deeply hidden tends to manifest itself *on the surface.*

The acuteness of actual crises and the increasing rapidity of the rhythms of existence are all facts which contribute to our consciousness of distress. If there is lack of maturity and proper attention, this distress creates violent reflexes.

The violence of today's youth is not merely the product of blind reflexes. It does not result solely from a conflict between two generations. The lightning rapidity of technical progress has brought about actual revolutions which have no historical precedent. The moral, political, economic and social structures can no longer respond to the necessities of a situation which is entirely new. The outcome is obvious. And the young, better than any, are aware of it. Their positive and critical minds, free from the old routines, can see the obsolete nature of most existing values and structures. But all these phenomena must be considered as superficial symptoms, on the most external psychological levels, of the anguish and violence, which originate at a much deeper level.

Deeper causes

The most external form of anguish results from an inability to adapt to the circumstances of the physical environment. In the same way, fundamental anguish, which lies much deeper, comes from man's psychological and spiritual inadaptability in relation to the demands of his inner nature.

Both Ch'an and Zen are the art of living adequately. They teach us that man lives badly, thinks badly, perceives and acts inadequately. He is not master of his destiny. He is completely unaware of the forces that control his behavior.

As Dr. Hubert Benoit puts it[1]:

'When man looks at himself with impartiality, he realizes he is not the conscious and voluntary artisan of either his feelings or his thoughts, and that his feelings and thoughts are merely accidents that occur in him . . .

'Since I am not the voluntary artisan of my feelings or my thoughts, I must recognize that I cannot be the voluntary artisan of my actions, in other words, I can do nothing freely'.

The fact of being driven by a force of which we are unaware is one of the causes of fundamental anguish. The absence of self-knowledge tends to make us take the *mirage* of the ego for an absolute reality. The illusion of the ego (or personal consciousness) and the exile into which it thrusts us are the main causes of fundamental anguish.

How is this anguish manifested? We are in a false situation although most of us are not conscious of this. Some sense it, but only on a very superficial level. There exists a great majority of human beings who, as yet, have not been touched by the essential falsehood of their situation. On the other hand, anguish can also be born in the most advanced of beings whose maturity allows them to become sensible to their fundamental contradiction. This paradoxical situation is explained perfectly in the commentaries made by Dr. Benoit on the problem of anguish in Zen[2]: 'One can understand why anguish is the fatal lot of beings which are, in one sense, the best and richest, in whom the abstract impartial aspect is very strong and the animal, partial aspect very strong too.

1. Dr. Hubert Benoit, op. cit., p. 83
2. Dr. H. Benoit, op. cit., p. 105

. . . This man is unhappy but, at the same time, he is brought to the total realization which the combination of *yes* and *no* represents; the others are comfortable but they are not brought to this realization'.

We are in a false situation which generates anguish. In fact, we are in a state of untruth. Perhaps this is the time to recall what Freud often said. He maintained that the *untruth* was useless, for it is impossible to lie or deceive *completely* because the unconscious of the person one wants to deceive, *knows* and *senses.* When he has reached a certain spiritual maturity, man can *sense* the fundamental untruth which controls his existence. This is the principal cause of anguish. The fact that anguish is not manifested 'on the surface' in the case of many human beings must not prevent us from realizing its latent existence 'in depth'.

There is only one solution for the problem of anguish, pronounced by Socrates: 'Know yourself'. Yet, as has been seen, in Zen this self-knowledge implies infinitely more than we generally suppose.

There is no rapid, immediate, external and spectacular solution to the fundamental problem of anguish. One can give the world new economic, social, political, juridical and religious structures which are more adequate to the material revolution. If, parallel with these necessary reforms of *surface* and *structure,* one does not proceed towards the transformation of man's heart and mind, these efforts will be spent in vain.

What sort of condition does the modern man without complete self-knowledge find himself in? A comparison could illustrate the psychological circumstances of this condition. It is no exaggeration. If we find it excessive, it is because we have not yet become aware of our inner contradictions with enough conviction and keenness. In his ignorance of himself, today's man is comparable to a walker who has lost his way, at night-fall, in a dense forest. Lacking any sort of directional equipment (since he does not know himself), he does not know which way to go. This uncertainty puts him into a state of anguish, so that, becoming more and more anxious, he is disturbed and might become violent.

One can also compare the situation of today's man to that of a driver who had broken down in mid-traffic in a car which he does not know how to operate. The breakdown takes place at a crossroads, holding up the peak hour traffic. Everyone protests, horns are sounded, and there is a general loss of patience. Incapable of starting his car, this driver goes through the. successive stages of anguish, revolt and violence. The reader could reply: 'But not if the driver was a Wise Man'. Zen's reply to that would be that if he was a Wise Man, either he would have stayed at home or else he would have taken the precaution of learning well all the forward and reverse movements of his new car before venturing out onto the public highway in the peak hour traffic.

How can we liberate ourselves from anguish? Zen and modern psychology give us quite similar answers to this problem. In the first place, it is necessary for us to realize that we are anguished, and to do so without any kind of artificial auto-suggestion such as reading a book on the subject. We must understand that it is impossible to resolve problems of which we have only a fragmentary awareness. So it is necessary to become aware of our inner contradictions in order to see to what extent we are out of harmony with our inner nature. In the second place, we must realize that anguish comes from ignorance of ourselves and from faulty thought-processes. Due to these faults, thought takes itself for an entity, whereas it is only an instrument. Thus we are imprisoned in the illusion of personal consciousness, which separates us from the fullness of universal life or Cosmic Mind.

In order to come to terms with anguish, or any other problem, one must attain a state of lucidity which is without ideas, without comparisons, in which anguish itself is not judged or named. This state of lucidity is not a *sub-conscious* state. On the contrary, it is supremely conscious. Only this supreme consciousness (called paradoxically the *Zen Unconscious*) can free us from the grips of egoism. Henceforth, anguish is dispelled.

In the experience of unity, we achieve a state of felicity which is beyond our familiar notions of love. When there

is genuine love, there is no anguish. The intrusion of anguish into love always results from the claims of thought which try to corrupt it. Zen teaches us that if we profoundly understand and feel what has just been said, the anguish in us will give place to a pure, unmixed joy.

CHAPTER XXI

The Social Dimension of Buddhism

It is interesting to examine the practical results brought about by teachings which are as advanced as those of Buddhism and its extensions, Ch'an and Zen. Many Westerners consider the notions discussed in this book as speculations which are too elevated, inaccessible, and unadaptable to social life. There is only a short step, from such a standpoint, to deducing that such teachings could have no effect on the behavior of a very large number of people or on society. The study of the history of Buddhism in India under the emperor Asoka, would disappoint the sceptics.

We lose sight of an important fact which affects us all: twenty centuries of Western culture have come to their climax in a civilization which, despite the prodigious growth of technology, has egoism and money as its absolute masters. Modern man has supersonic airplanes, interplanetary rockets and artificial satellites at his disposal, but he has also perfected the instruments of his own destruction.

Present dramas result from an enormous disparity between technical evolution and the psychological maturity of modern man. Modern man, as the Dutch philosopher Vanderleeuw declared, is a 'refined barbarian'. By *barbarian* the Zen masters mean every man in whom greed and ignorance of the ego create violence, exploitation of others, hate and cruelty. As Carlo Suares writes[1]: 'All our historical civilizations have been based on the reality of the ego as a being, and because of this, they have been sub-human'.

The basic notion of Buddhism and Zen is the impermanence of the ego and of all things. In this perspective it was inevitable that the Buddhist civilizations should display a highly pacifist attitude. The Buddhist communities were

1. Carlo Suares, *La comédie psychologique,* op. cit.

free of the domestic quarrels that present societies have known and are experiencing now more than ever. The notion of the illusory character of the ego directs man towards an attitude of detachment, as much from himself as from material goods. Violence, war and attempts to dominate are absent in societies which lived under the influence of Buddhism at the time of its apogee in India between the 3rd and 2nd century B.C.

The notion of the impermanence of the ego has an immediate counterpart in that of the fundamental unity of a common essence. The comprehension and vision of this unity abolishes the distinctions and separations between beings. This notion of unity is expressed in a limitless respect for life in all its forms, human or animal. It creates the qualities of constant meekness, kindness and charity.

The highly social character of Buddhism is undeniable. It is—despite the persecutions to which it has been subjected—one of the few religions that have not been responsible for wars or religious persecutions.

We can quote the example of the famous emperor Asoka who ruled over a large part of India in the 3rd century B.C. He was a great warrior before his conversion to Buddhism, but then became the most peaceful of emperors. During the thirty-seven years of his reign, he managed to prove that the most elevated of spiritual values can have a collective application and can serve as a control lever for superior political action.

The emperor mixed discreetly with the common people and questioned everyone he met without regard to social condition. He learnt of their problems and their aspirations. He helped his subjects, not only by material gifts but also by spreading the teachings of the Buddha.

He established a body of civil servants whom he instructed as to the real significance of their role and their responsibilities. He made it clear to them that they should not consider themselves merely as officials but as instructors of the people. They must give full value to the teaching of the Buddha by the prestige of their wisdom and their own example.

Asoka had numerous amphitheatres built where the masses

could receive instruction. He kept close watch on the market price of merchandise to avoid abuses. He himself gave the example of a life of simplicity and service without any kind of ostentation. Respectful of life in all its forms, he forbade hunting and animal combats. He devoted himself especially to developing family life in an atmosphere of peace and harmony.

On the economic plane, the problems were very simple: military conquests and wars were non-existent after the emperor's conversion to Buddhism, and so taxes were light and all of them went towards progress in cultural life, education, medicine, the building of hospitals and the arts. The latter underwent a considerable uplift, influenced greatly by Greek art. Most historians agree that under this exceptional emperor, India knew an unequalled glory for more than thirty years. Everywhere along the roads were wells and reservoirs for thirsty travellers. Peace and joy reigned in the humble villages as well as in the towns. Human relations bore the stamp of kindness, fraternity and gentleness. Exploitation was rare and work was a joy. Inner richness shone in everyone's heart. Architectural works knew a period of prestige. The ancient grottos were transformed into sanctuaries of which the decorations are admired the world over.

More than 80,000 buildings were constructed. So that his admirable effort of social and spiritual regeneration might continue over the centuries, the emperor Asoka had numerous pillars and great columns raised throughout his vast empire, engraved with his most important edicts.

The following have been chosen from those texts:

'There is no higher duty than the well-being of the whole world. And the little effort that I contribute will help to free me from my debt to my fellow creatures, so that I may make some people happy on earth and that they might attain heaven in the other world. All men are my children, they will receive happiness, not suffering, from me.

'It is with this alone in mind that I have raised religious columns, acting as helpers of the religion.

'On the roads, I have planted *nyagrodhas* to give shade to men and animals; I have planted gardens of mango trees,

I have sunk wells and, in many spots, have raised caravanserai for the benefit of men and animals.

'By order of the king, dear to the *devas,* the officers of Tosadi appointed for the administration of the town must know the following:

"You are appointed to watch over hundreds of thousands of creatures in order to gain the affection of good men. Every man is my child; just as I wish that my children should enjoy all manner of prosperity and happiness in this world and the other, I have the same desire for all men".

'In the past centuries murder, violence and lack of respect for parents has dominated; but today the king Piyadasi, dear to the devas, faithful to the practice of religion, has made the voice of drums sound in such a way that it is like the voice of religion itself'.

It would be a desirable situation if the men who control the destiny of the world today could inspire such elevated principles. The crises which rage in all fields of human activity show an urgent need for this.

Walpola Rahula writes[2]: 'Buddhism aims to create a society which would renounce the ruinous struggle for power, in which tranquillity and peace would prevail over victory and defeat; where persecution of innocents would be denounced vehemently; where one would have more respect for the man who conquers himself than for the one who conquers millions of beings by military and economic warfare; where hatred would be conquered by friendship and evil by good; where enmity, jealousy, unkindness and greed would not poison men's minds; where compassion would be the motive for action; where all beings including the most humble living creature would be treated with justice, consideration and love; where in peace, friendship and harmony, in a world in which material contentment reigned supreme, life would be directed towards the most elevated and most noble aim, the attainment of the ultimate Truth of Nirvana'.

Another inscription on Asoka's rock reads: 'No superstitious rites, but goodness towards slaves and servants; deference

2. Walpola Rahula, The *Teaching of Buddha,* du Seuil, Paris, 1961, p. 123

towards venerable persons, independence uniting in respect for living creatures. These and similar virtues are the rites which it is in truth essential to perform'.

PART THREE

CONCRETE ASPECTS OF ZEN

CHAPTER XXII

Zen and Practical Life

The practical aspects of Zen in this section are considered by the masters of Ch'an and Zen. Far from being incompatible with everyday life, Zen is extremely valuable to it. There are no actions which should be considered *ordinary* or by contrast *extraordinary*. Zen demands that we give great intensity of attention to anything we undertake. Reality is where we are from moment to moment. This concept is explained by D. T. Suzuki[1]: 'The Zen state of mind is the ordinary state, that is to say there is nothing supernatural in Zen, nothing which is useless in our daily lives'.

The factor determining our own realization depends on the mental attitude with which we confront our daily work and leisure. The type of work is secondary, for each incident and perception that we experience could be an occasion for Satori. A Ch'an master once said that '. . . infinity is at the *end* of each instant'. And Suzuki[2] says: '. . . Mystics are men who are completely practical. They are not visionaries whose souls are too absorbed in dream-like thoughts to be bothered with things of the world. The belief that mystics are dreamers or star-gazers is wrong. . . . If mysticism is genuine, it must be practical and should be expressed in our daily life'.

A Zen poet, writing under the name, P'ang-iun wrote this verse:

'What a supernatural marvel!
And what a miracle; here it is:
I pour water and carry wood!'

Such a mental disposition leads the practitioner of Zen towards an action technique which is more attentive, no

1. Suzuki, *Essays on Zen,* op. cit.
2. Id.

matter what he is doing. It could apply to his thoughts, his speech and his gestures. All tend to mirror the awakening of full responsibility. In Zen monasteries, monks participate in manual work and many other *concrete* tasks and it is recommended that they accomplish these to perfection.

Among the practical advantages coming from a Zen attitude, specialists have noted: rapidity of reflexes, complete objectivity, a striving for perfection, effective detachment, and simplification of needs and inner enthusiasm.

Rapidity of Reflexes

The practice of Zen is able to expel all personal fears. It is a recognized fact that fear, in the case of most animals, paralyses the auto-defense reflexes of instinct. What is true for animals is also true, from a slightly different point of view, for humans. Most of the errors that we make, for example, most of the careless acts result directly or indirectly from fear, greed and impatience. These three tendencies are also linked closely. When a person's mind has relaxed and he is freed from his tensions and his fears, the body, the nervous system and the mind undergo a transformation which is extremely beneficial to him. Recent progress in psychosomatic studies has shown that important modifications operate on the sugar level in the blood and the hormonal secretions through our mental or emotional states.

Relaxation of the whole body during mental calm permits the realization of full mental attention. What is most noticeable is the fact that when a person has been Awakened, he shows an astonishing effectiveness in all circumstances. A simple example of this was observed through an incident where a Zen master was present. People were sitting around a camp fire in a forest. Without warning a log from the fire tumbled out and headed towards the small group of people. With a gesture as quick as lightning the Zen master seized the log and diverted it. Nobody had noticed the danger. This kind of very simple behavior shows that the Zen attitude awakens us in both our inward and in our outward reflexes.

This attitude then is very different from that of the ascetics who contemplate during '*samadhis*' (contemplations or meditations). During these *samadhis,* the intensity of inner contemplation is such that it tends to make the mystic disassociate himself from the exterior world and, in a manner, absent himself. This is especially true in the case of *Nirvikalpa samadhi,* a mystical ecstasy which is the integral part of Indian wisdom and mysticism, leading to the next stage, *Sahaja samadhi.* In this last state the consciousness on the material plane remains while the deeper zones of the Cosmic Mind are awoken.

The Zen attitude gives us better reflexes. The body and the nervous system are cleared for the richness of the Cosmic Mind. They find again a natural wisdom that our races have lost. The abuse of the mind is probably the origin of this loss. To be alert in our reflexes means that we are able to adapt more easily to the situations which occur during life. Without this we can lose our footing because of the precipitating rhythm of existence. When we are able to be free for the Cosmic Mind the results are surprising. This is the basis for perfecting the art of the bow and arrow, judo and many other similar studies.

Complete Objectivity

Psychologists concede that all errors in judgment and mistakes result from an inner attitude which is either too subjective, impregnated with fear or with other personal motives and passions. Zen suggests to us the adoption of an attitude of awakening and vigilance during which the habitual *me* is discarded for pure and impersonal lucidity of the Cosmic Mind. Intense and silent observation exempt from all preconceived ideas enables us to begin everything with vigor and freshness. As soon as our thoughts are dissociated from our past it is no longer only 'our thought'. When the mind is freed from its habits and its memories it enters a state of suppleness and extraordinary sensitivity. It is able to expand its ability to penetrate. In the area of Zen, the vision of

the Cosmic Mind is sufficient in itself. It rids man of all desire, all need to choose.

This attitude has been described by Swiss poet, Pascal Ruga, in a work entitled, *I have nothing to ask for*[3]. *Nothing* and the mystery of Love are built into this simple sentence. Everything is put into a gleam of light where love takes from man himself and his weakness, so that even death is not unpleasant and life is never inadequate. Chuang Tzu, in his famous comparison with a mirror, said that we must 'see everything but not take anything, nor make choices'.

Constructive activity

According to Zen, matter is spiritual and the mind is material. The richness of the mind must be expressed in the material by the material. The *me* must be dead to oneself and the acts accomplished are no longer specifically those of the separate personality. If his outward gestures are similar to those before he became enlightened, the deeper motivations are not the same. They are no longer translated through the *self* nor the *habit force* of thought. The acts, which apparently seem to be executed by the self (because it is a body which expresses them), are really the manifestation of the Cosmic Mind in perfect control of the circumstances of the moment. These acts, however, are devoid of all egotism and of all ignorance. They are essentially constructive and positive. Thus Dr. Roger Godel writes[4]: 'The wise man destroys nothing. He is a doer and a most practical man. His activity is integrated, and nothing harmful can touch him'.

Every action which involves the greed of self and the instinct of possession is a negative and incomplete act. It can only engender conflicts, as much for the individual as for society. The action which is eminently positive and constructive is the one in which the fullness of Life itself is expressed from moment to moment. It is the total act, it demands nothing and it is entirely in the present. Thus writes

3. Pascal Ruga, 'I have nothing to ask for' (*Freedom Magazine,* Dec. 1968)
4. Dr. Roger Godel, op. cit.

Rene Fouere[5]: 'The complete act contains its own end, it has its in-built recompensation. It is not carried out by the attraction of something in the future. It is not directed towards any exterior end. It is independent, spontaneous'.

Our difficulty is that our inner tensions are usually found in the zones of our subconscious. We often think that we are perfectly relaxed and 'present in the Present'. But, in fact, a crowd of tensions and secret aspirations are embedded in our subconscious mind. Our actions always have some secret motive.

Zen thinking concerns a complete act of the present, and constructive activity has been defined by D. T. Suzuki[6]: 'Life unfolds onto a great sheet called *time.* Time is never repeated and once finished it is gone forever. The same is for actions. Once done, it can never be taken back.

'Life is like a *soumiye* painting [a Chinese ink painting] which can be executed only once, without hesitation, intervention of the intellect, or even the least correction.

'It is not like an oil painting which can be altered and repainted several times until the artist is satisfied.

'In *soumiye* painting, the least stroke which is made over another becomes an error. Life is like that. All the corrections show up when the ink has dried. In life, we can not take back what we have already done. Zen therefore teaches that life must be seized at the moment, not before or after'.

Zen also warns us against excess in imaginative and contemplative life. These states could end in the creation of a mood of morbidity brought about by self-hypnosis during which the person only thinks about his own mental creations. Many meditative persons bring about a real sense of communication between the matter and the mind, between the concrete and the abstract. Zen is a return to the concrete, not to be enslaved by it but to eventually go beyond it.

The direction of the action, which has been described, is well defined in an ancient Indian text, *Yoga Vasishta*[7]:

'1. Stable in the state of plenitude which shines out when you have renounced your desires and peaceful in the state

5. Rene Fouere, op. cit.
6. D. T. Suzuki, *Essays on Zen,* op. cit.
7. R. Maharshi, *Studies,* vol. II, Maisonneuve, Paris, 1942

in which to live is to be free, taking action whilst enjoying yourself, o Raghava!

'2. Having inner freedom of all desire, without passion or attachment, but outwardly active in every way, active and playing in the world, o Raghava!

'3. With good conduct and full of tenderness, conforming to conventions on the outside but inside being free of them, active and enjoying the world, o Raghava!

'4. Perceiving the flowering of all the stages and experiences of life, living resolutely in a sublime transcendental state, active and enjoying life, o Raghava!

'5. Without any attachment inside but behaving as if you are involved, not burning up inside but outside full of ardor, active and enjoying life, o Raghava!'

Complete Adequacy

Adequacy consists of an attitude of vigilant lucidity. It is impersonal and allows us to meet correctly all the demands of all circumstances.

When our mind is fixed on an idea unrelated to the circumstances of the present, we find ourselves incapable of adequately coping with the necessities of the moment. As long as we approach the actual facts by recalling similar facts which have occurred in the past, we are incapable of establishing a rapport with the new facts. This rapport changes continually. Not only are the facts never exactly the same but whether we like it or not, we ourselves are subjected to the law of change too. Complete adequacy has been defined by the master Hsi Yun[8]: 'When one renounces all things, inner and outer and when the mind is emptied out with no attachments to abandon; when each act is only directed by the place and the circumstances . . . this is the highest form of renouncement'.

For most Westerners, this renouncement could be synonymous with boredom, sadness, monotony. Perhaps it would be better to substitute the word *comprehension* for renounce-

8. Hsi Yun, op. cit.

ment. The climate of concentration and serenity with Zen is expressed by the master Nansen[9]: 'Drinking my tea, eating my rice, I pass the time as it comes. Lowering the eyes from the torrent and lifting them to the mountains . . . Ah! how relaxed and serene I feel'.

Complete adequacy should not be interpreted as an attitude of living severely, exempt from sensitivity and compassion. The absence of egoism and the unified vision which characterizes complete adequacy gives us not only a super-mental awakening but also a great supply of love.

The Western reader will better understand the meaning of adequacy in Zen by giving examples of inadequacy in life. The example we have in mind is from an old Laurel and Hardy movie in which the two visit a house belonging to a well-known criminal. Tired by their searching through the house, they go to sit down on a wooden chest. Before sitting down, however, they open it to examine the contents. They discover a body at the bottom of the chest. They close up the coffin again and sit down phlegmatically. It is not until a few minutes later that they realize they are sitting on top of a corpse and they are then struck with horror. We see here a typical example of distraction, an absence of application. Even though when the chest was opened they were physically able to see the body, they were both mentally unaware and were psychologically preoccupied with other things so that they noticed nothing.

The distraction here was deliberately arranged by the author of the movie to stage a humorous incident. Another example of inadequacy—authentic in this case—was observed by the French scholar Poincare. The latter was walking along a boulevard in Paris. He was quite occupied by some complex mathematical problem. As he walked along he came across a pet shop. He stopped there for a few moments to admire a superb canary in a cage. He took the cage into his hands to examine the bird but, fascinated with his calculus, he set out on his walk again, forgetting the cage and the canary that he was still holding. It was not until some moments later that he noticed what he had done. This example shows what

9. D. T. Suzuki, op. cit., vol. II, p. 336

happens when mental activity is too intense and removes us to the abstract world.

Examples like these can be seen in everyday life. When we speak to someone too full of his own worries or victim to some personal fixation, we can notice that the person is not following us. Physically he may be listening, but psychologically he is so encumbered by his personal preoccupations that he is incapable of really listening. The masters of Zen instruct us to develop well the art of listening.

The Simplification of needs

The simplification of our needs is one of the practical consequences of Zen. The discovery of our real nature delivers us from most of the desires which we have previously had, such as needing possessions, looking for continual distractions, new games, more prestige, etc. As the force within ourselves grows, so the exterior values tend to become less attractive and we become more and more independent of them. This, however, does not mean that we become *anti-social.* The anti-social man has a kind of egoism which produces this unhealthy state of mind.

Notice that simplification of our needs is not a way to Awakening, but a consequence of it. It would be contrary to the spirit of Zen to enter into a training during which we decide, deliberately, to simplify the complications of our existence because we wish to obtain Satori.

How much then should we simplify our needs? What are the minimum or maximum needs appropriate to each individual? There is no way to give a general rule here and such questions show that the fundamental principles of Zen are not clearly understood. The situation should always be seen according to the place and circumstances. If we codify these laws, the person would risk being enslaved to just another set of rules, yet this kind of codification seems unfortunately exactly what many people demand.

The degree of inherent perception in the Awakening mobilizes automatically a considerable quantity of nervous and

mental energy. This brings about a spontaneous transformation translated by a simplification of needs in food, sex and distractions. The excessive importance of these preoccupations, which characterizes the modern world, tend to disappear. The natural functions cease to be a problem to us and we begin to play a more balanced role.

Inner Freshness and Youthfulness

The specific climate of Satori is one of inner freshness and youthfulness which is constantly renewed. Real youth is much more psychological than physical. One often finds in young people an absence of an inner life and a lack of enthusiasm which borders on depression. The dominant contributing factors to growing old are: routine, sterile repetition of habits at all levels, the accentuation of manifestations of the ego.

These tendencies completely disappear with the realization of real Satori. Each new day becomes a real rebirth. Life takes on a freshness and spontaneity. We begin to feel the rhythms of life and the heart becomes free to feel love.

CHAPTER XXIII

Zen, Judo and Aikido

The spirituality of Zen is expressed practically through different arts such as flower arrangements, Japanese gardens, and painting, as well as through sports like fencing, judo, aikido, and also through customs, like the tea ceremony. Judo and aikido are two of the best exercises that Westerners can practise to impregnate the non-mental attitude. They are pacific and give one mastery over himself. Judo and aikido are transpositions of the profound laws of nature into the region of our body and mental reactions.

At a biological level, life is expressed through conflicts of elements in opposition to one another. Opposition between two poles, the negative and positive elements Yin and Yang, the war between phagocytes and leucocytes, etc. But these battles or conflicts are only a part of a vast totality. When Ch'an, Taoism and Zen evoke spontaneity and non-violence they are not concerned with the processes of biological life, but the way of existence in a much deeper reality; the Cosmic Mind.

To understand the psychological origins of judo and aikido and their relations with Zen and Taoism, it is worthwhile to recall that the spiritual life of the Japanese people has been strongly influenced by the Chinese philosophies, and Ch'an in particular. The Ch'an teachings are filled with love, non-violence and spontaneity. Taoist thought draws often on the fact of the 'power of water'. It is said in the *Tao Te Ching*[1]:

'Supreme virtue is like water. Water and virtue occupy the places that all men detest. This is why they are comparable to Tao.

'There is nothing in the world more feeble and inconsistent

1. Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching,* op. cit.

than water; and yet it corrodes what is hard and nothing can resist it'.

Lao Tzu does not stop to denounce the feebleness of water. According to him, suppleness always will triumph over hardness. Calmness always wins over violence. Some aphorisms of Lao Tzu which follow will help the reader to feel the mood of the *Tao Te Ching* which inspired the masters of judo and aikido;

'Softness triumphs over hardness, feebleness triumphs over strength. What is more malleable is superior over that which is immovable. The non-being penetrates the impenetrable; and this is why I know the supreme effectiveness of *non-activity*'.

'As a new-born baby, man is supple, frail; in death he is rigid and hard'.

'At their birth, plants and trees are flexible, yet when they die they too become hard. Solidity and rigidity are the companions of death. Suppleness and fluidity are the companions of life'.

'Something which is strong and grand is in an inferior position; and that which is supple and feeble is in the elevated position'.

These writings admirably sum up the basic principles of both judo and aikido.

The correct attitude of combat is defined by Lao Tzu as follows;

'For one in command perfection is to be in a position of peace; if he should engage in combat it is without anger; if he should seek to conquer it is without conflict.

'This is the ideal of a man who will not do battle It is the art of using the human strength by co-operating with the sky and it is the supreme wisdom.

'Here is the Tao of the sky: to conquer without battle; to persuade without talking; to bring something close without calling; to have perfect realization amidst apparent inertia'.

We can find the equivalent of this in the famous fable by La Fontaine, *The Oak Tree and the Rosebush.*

Chinese historical records give us interesting details about the origins of judo. It was the master Kano who in the last

century actually evolved the judo movements. Chinese philosophers often spoke of the suppleness of the willows which bend under the weight of snow so that the accumulation of snow on their branches is always very slight. This was compared to the effect on the huge pines. The rigidity of the branches meant that so much snow would accumulate that the mighty tree would be damaged by the weight.

Judo has often been defined as the gentle way. To understand this it is helpful to study the thoughts of the Zen masters on the subject of judo. They consider that the people of the world have lost every trace of the instinctive physical wisdom given to them. To the Chinese and Japanese masters, the body is in direct relationship to the Cosmic Mind. But the hyper-intellectualization of people has deprived man of this elementary and precious contact. However, it is still possible to recover this lost gift. Zen teaches us that the possibilities of physical life are immense. Through our abuse of the body, modern man has deprived himself of the joys of a rich and serene life. This has convinced many people who are disciples of Zen to practise judo and aikido. The latter give the body a suppleness, a muscular and nervous relaxation which help man immensely.

Judo and aikido also help to bring about a natural mental peacefulness. We know that this peacefulness only reacts on the most superficial layers of the mind and that they do not affect the thought processes of the *self,* but the results obtained from the practice of judo and aikido are nevertheless important.

The exercises in effect are able to *disintellectualize* us. We learn to become sensitive to the body reflexes which are neither dictated by the brain nor by thought. Our intelligence is overshadowed.

The masters of judo and aikido teach that the center of body equilibrium and that of the vegetative consciousness is not in the brain, as the Western world believes, but in the stomach. This is the center of *Hara.* In the words of Count Karlfield von Durckheim[2]:

'The consciousness of self, profoundly anchored in *Hara*,

2. K. von Durckheim, *Hara,* ed. La Colombe, Paris, 1960

is a consciousness of the superior self always present in the human being. It is the superior consciousness which transcends the inferior consciousness. This superior self holds reign over a mental domain far more vast and capable of greater acts than is the inferior self. With this in mind, it is useful to mention a concept which, in the Japanese world, plays an important role: it is *Haragei.* This word, literally translated, means the art of the stomach.

'*Haragei* is every act and artfulness accomplished from the stomach, for they are not able to be truly great until they are based on *Hara.* Perfection is not able to be reached until a person is a complete being. The one who has learnt to master Haragei has obtained, at least to a point, mastery. The arts which can lead him to this mastery are the art of tea drinking, the bow and arrow, fencing, etc. When a person has perfected one of these he is able to culminate his success in *Haragei.*

'In reality *Hara* is the total man in his liaison with the deep vital forces which are within him, such as the forces of nutrition, procreation and conception, as well as those which helped him in his rebirth'.

In judo, the student who thinks is sure to be thrown onto the mat. Victory is assured by *non-resistance* and this is applicable both physically and mentally. We are under the mistaken impression that calculated thoughts and gestures are good. In fact, for the masters of Zen, a calculated movement is a bad movement. This gives us some indication of the amount of re-education we must take to align ourselves to Zen.

For those people who are immersed in mental concentration, the practice of judo and aikido is inestimably beneficial. The judoka is obliged to rediscover the lost instinctive reflexes which his body once had.

This in no way contradicts scientific discovery, which has shown the important roles of cerebral functions and the integrating functions of the cortex. Science has shown quite recently that memory is not only restricted to the area of the brain. Memory is supported by acid molecules which are distributed in the cells throughout the body. The Zen masters

claim that this further proves their claim that Hara or the abdominal center is related to the deep layers of the subconscious.

What is the attitude adopted through judo and aikido? It can, perhaps, be explained by using two examples. When an enraged person threatens us, there are two possibilities open. The first is to resist the aggressive force. Although this is the most common reaction, it is the wrong one. The action of self-defence comes from the mind and the brain. Following this, mental reactions such as anger and fear occur. We expend considerable energy in resisting the force of attack of the adversary. Should we be stronger than our assailant, the challenge is not troublesome, but if the aggressor is stronger, we are easily overcome.

However, in this situation another possibility is open to us, and this alternative is the one advocated by the judo instructors. We should not be dictated to by our mental habits nor by our brain but by *Hara* or the center of instinctive wisdom in the body. Instead of resisting the attack, we should draw it in as a willow accommodates snow and wind. We should remain detached and fearless. We should not resist. Judo and aikido provide us with certain holds which in this situation should be used against the adversary. These holds actually use the aggressor's own energy against himself. The more violent his aggressiveness, the more violent his fall. We have seen *black belt* holders overcome men of great strength like this. Even without moving, by making some imperceptible gesture, the master of judo can defeat the aggressor. He does not combat force with force.

The secret of success here is in passivity, *non-mental* attention, in upsetting the body's balance, and in the perfecting of the judo hold. These judo holds which are taught by the instructor should be practised and be given over to *Hara.* This is not the case with many instruction centers for judo in the Western world. Here judo is more often a competitive sport, which is entirely wrong.

The psychological climate of aikido is similar to that of judo. The term *aikido* can be broken down into three elements: *ai* which means united, *ki* meaning mind and *do*

meaning way. Hence, *aikido* means the way through the union of the mind. The attitude of aikido compares with one of the principles of Zen, that of adequacy. By this, one understands that the person who practises it must immediately adapt himself to the minor details of the aggressor's attack. This means that one must maintain a vigilance and an awareness of all the circumstances, gestures, positions and intentions of the adversary.

As in judo, aikido does not fight force with force. It knows the two forces of nature, Yang and Yin. It knows their opposite positions and also the way in which they may complement each other. Tony Thielemans, in his excellent study on aikido and kendo, has written[3]: '. . . According to the following principle, one always seeks to make the following movements: if the adversary utilizes a positive force, the victim must use a negative force, and conversely. Take for example what happens when one seizes your wrist. It is difficult for you to release your wrist if you are weaker than your opponent. But if, by communion of spirit, when the adversary seizes you (positive force) you fall back and pivot your body (negative force), you will release yourself without difficulty thanks to using the correct technique. You have used a complementary energy from the one who has made the attack'.

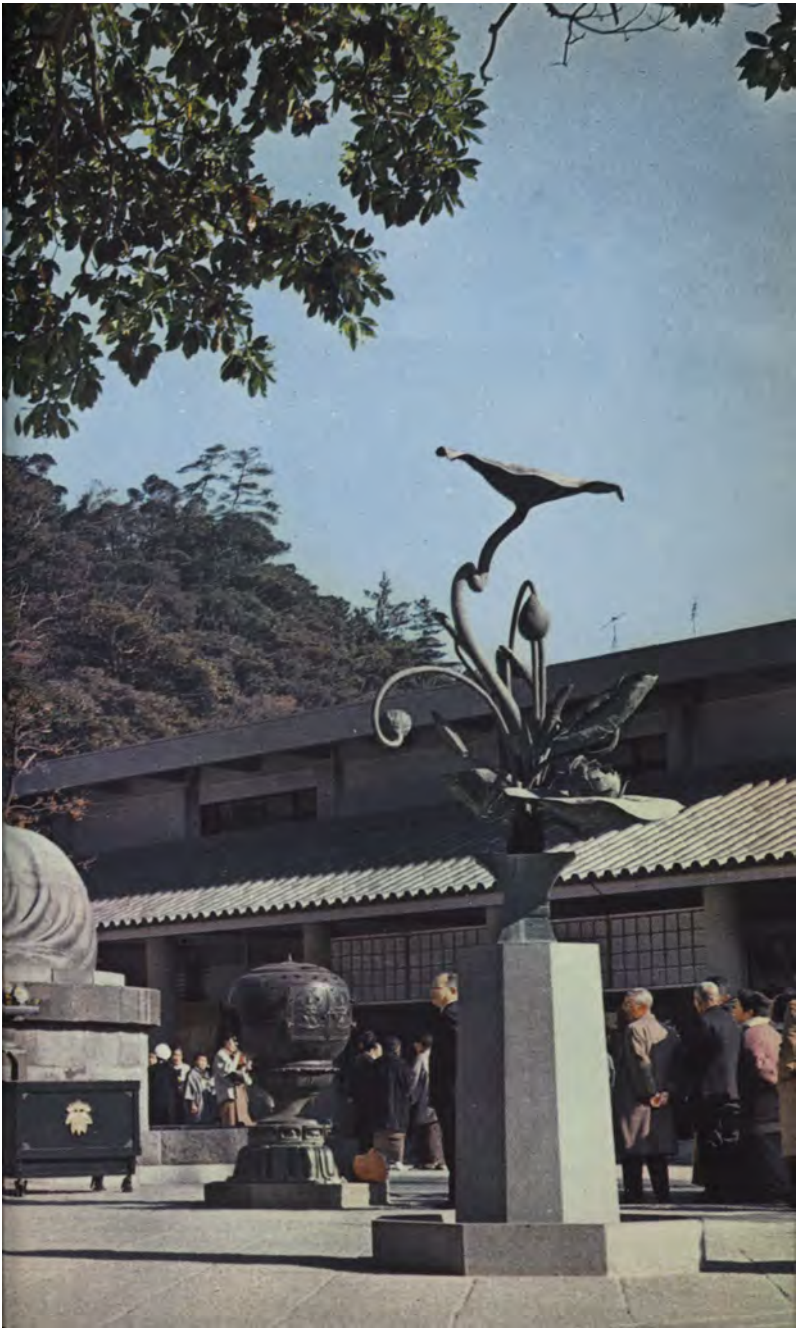
3. Tony Thielemans, *Aikido and Kendo,* ed. Marabout, Verviers, 1967

Archery is not a sport, but an art and one of the great practical mysteries of Zen.

Young students engaging in the discipline of meditation in a modern school of initiation into Zen. The worth of this group meditation is contested by certain specialists in Ch'an.

Zen monks reciting Buddhist texts before the communal meal.

Ceremony to receive a Zen monk.



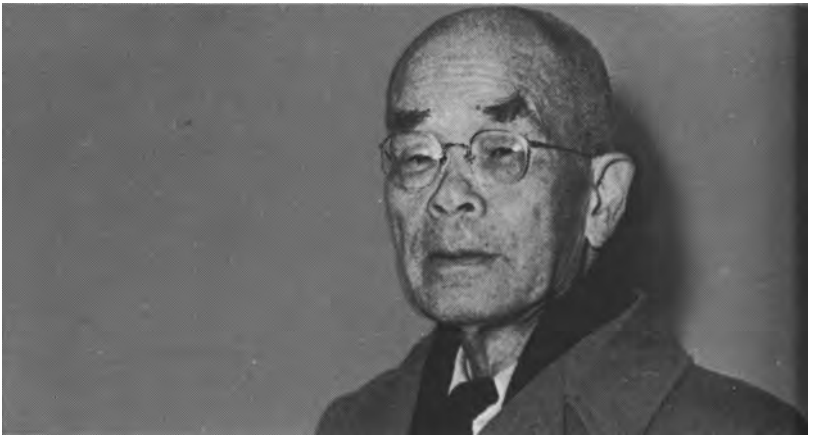
< At Kamakura, center of Japanese Buddhism: The giant statue of Buddha.

In aikido (as in judo), thanks to the technique of certain holds, the opponent takes a fall, the violence of which is in proportion to his aggression.

Training room for judo, budo, karate and aikido, at the Neassens Institute, Brussels.

Zen study centers in Kyoto, directed by the abbot Ogata, are frequented more and more by Westerners.

Professor D. T. Suzuki: His numerous works have contributed to the spread of Zen thought in the West.



CHAPTER XXIV

Zen and the Art of the Bow

Occidentals do not realize the role of archery in the spiritual world of Japan. For most of them archery is a sport like many others, and so remains merely a competitive game. For the Japanese, archery is intimately linked with the mind.

It is an art without artifice. To understand it and practise it it is necessary to cast off egoism and inner tensions. There exists in archery something more vast and profound than in the other arts: within it comes realization of Satori, the state of intuitive detachment which grasps the totality of the universe.

All this appears surprising to the Western people who think that success in archery depends merely on good muscular tension and intense concentration on a target. The Japanese neither think about this nor calculate their movements, but remain as detached as a child. He does not aim at a target but rather at the resistances which fight against his *Self.* We should mention here a work of Eugene Herrigel[1], a German who went to Japan to learn the principles of Zen and to try to unravel the mystery which the Japanese masters gave to archery. In Japan the art is not a sports performance but a national cult. It is impregnated by a spiritual and religious atmosphere and aims for the perfect mastery of the self. Success depends on the banishment of every personal feeling of avidity, pride and tension.

Western man is surprised to think that the Japanese masters advocate this kind of attitude to archery; not to aim at the target is incompatible with our rationalization of the situation. Within Zen, archery is a matter of life or death in relation to the archer and his battle against himself. This

1. E. Herrigel, *Le Zen dans le tir a L'arc,* ed. Derain, Lyon, 1955

shows us the religious side of Zen. How do the Japanese teachers conceive this combat of the archer competing against himself? It is a question of an inner battle during which the archer begins a progressive re-adjustment of all his old values in the light of Zen teachings. The poorly informed Westerner finds it difficult to understand that the practice of archery is not for any exterior achievement. Yet the archer must, before everything else, reach an inner silence and detachment at all levels of his being. The bow and arrows are only subsidiary to this.

Beginning from the practice of archery, Eugene Herrigel set out on a path which led to the essence of Zen and its teachings. For several years he sought to increase his knowledge. He seized the opportunity to study when he was sent to Japan by his government. He had as his teacher the famous Kenzo Awa. For Herrigel it was an arduous and severe initiation, for the way which leads to the 'art without artfulness' is both hard and rigorous.

The master began by demonstrating the power of the bow with its nobility of form, and finished by making an essential yet paradoxical point: 'When the bow is stretched to its maximum, it encompasses everything, the Whole'. After a prelude of purification, special respiration exercises, the master invited the pupil to watch him. 'Watch!' he said, 'it is not necessary to make any effort when drawing the bow. Relax the muscles and understand . . . pull *within the mind'*.

He lifted the arrow so that his hands were above his head. He kept this pose for an extended moment. 'This is a spiritual affair', he would often say. At first, the student could not grasp the meaning. With great patience the master would repeat at each lesson, 'Detach yourself, rid yourself of tensions . . . breathe well'. Progress was slow and often the pupil was discouraged. 'Inhalation links and reunites', the master would say. 'All can be accomplished while the breath is within; exhalation, on the other hand, frees us'. The pupil was continually baffled, but the master would demonstrate the different movements: taking the bow, placing the arrow, lifting the bow, bending it. . . . Each movement began with

a deep breath, held for some time and then finalized by exhalation.

After several months the pupil understood the meaning of 'stringing the bow in the mind'. He discovered, through this specialized form of deep breathing, a new way of inner liberation. The next stage was to release the arrow. The master would show the suppleness of his hands and the span of his fingers. Herrigel was not able to imitate this suppleness and agility. The master would instruct him, 'Do not hunch your shoulders . . . breathe deeply and calmly . . . your will is too strongly aimed towards one goal . . . your mind wants to conquer something . . . the true art is without such a goal . . '.

It was difficult to forget all sense of intention. He questioned whether archery was really a question of life or death. The master said that it was: '. . . one shot, one life. From one end of the bow, the archer pierces the sky and from the other he pierces the earth'. This enigmatic answer strongly mirrors the Zen attitude. We find often this same symbol of balance between the sky and the earth, between the mind and the matter in the posture of *Ten-Chi* (Sky and Earth) of aikido founded by the great Japanese master, Ueshiba.

The training period of Eugene Herrigel lasted for more than three years. The teacher continued to stress the importance of non-restriction and passiveness. Herrigel finally asked the question that would puzzle most Westerners or people who could not understand the paradoxical spirit of Zen: 'How are you able to shoot the arrow if you yourself do not execute it?' After some months of meditation the pupil understood at last the meaning of the strange and inaccessible formula, 'It is something, not yourself, which draws the bow!'

Shortly afterwards, the pupil drew his bow without thinking of anything and was able to make a successful aim. His teacher confirmed that 'something made the shot . . . it was perfect'. The master himself, says Herrigel, then performed an astounding feat. He decided to hit the target with his eyes closed and bound over. He also requested that a small candle be placed in front of the target and that the lights be switched off. His shot was perfect.

Zen considers that the art of the bow and the sword, as well as judo and aikido, are expressions of a going beyond the habitual reflexes of man's self at every level. Herrigel expressed the following opinion at the end of his work[2]:

'To master one of the arts which come under the influence of Zen is similar to being given a glimpse of the universal truth. This truth is revealed in the freedom of the master's mind and in what he calls *Something*. In this he finds again his deep and inexpressible essence. Through this source, his untapped potentialities bring to him a comprehension of the Truth, which for him and for others who come into contact with him, constantly renews his visions of life.

'If he succeeds in this difficult task then his destiny has been accomplished, for he will come to Truth, the superior Truth of all truth, the origin, without form of all origin, the Nothingness which at the same time is everything. That which he absorbs will give him a new life'.

2. E. Herrigel, op. cit., p. 85

CHAPTER XXV

Zen Painting[1]

The influence of Ch'an and Zen Buddhism on Chinese and Japanese painting is considerable. Some knowledge of Chinese and Japanese paintings and the techniques employed, is indispensable to an understanding of Zen painting.

Chinese Painting

In ancient China, painting was considered as the only true art. Contrary to the Western artists, the Chinese never used oil paints. Perspective did not interest them. They distinguished objects and figures in the foreground and background in an original way. In Chinese painting, the study of the human body was not undertaken. On the other hand, the Westerner learns as much as he can about the human form so that he can better understand and interpret his subjects.

The Chinese artist spent some years studying nature, travelling and working in an atmosphere of tranquillity. He contemplated nature, communicated with it, and made a synthesis of what he felt. He then closed himself up and did his final work far from the place which was then reproduced. He painted with little miniscule strokes and would never retouch. He had to have a confident technique, a spontaneous execution which is linked to the Zen attitude to life and nature. He sometimes used color but his best works were in pencil sketches. His most beautiful material was ink, in every shade, on silk or parchment. The Chinese brush was made from a handle of bamboo at the end of which different animal hairs were attached. The brush was manoeuvred from the

1. This chapter is written in collaboration with the Belgian painter Roger Van Malder, a specialist in Zen painting

shoulder and the elbow and not, as in the West, from the wrist. 'The brush stroke is the man', say the Chinese. They preferred to paint landscapes.

The first Chinese paintings date from the 6th or 5th centuries B.C., during the time of Confucius and Lao Tzu. During the Han dynasty, towards the 2nd century B.C., Chinese painting developed and absorbed the influence of Taoist and Confucian thought. During the Tang dynasty, Buddhism had a preponderant influence (618–907). Among the early masters of Chinese Buddhist painting, Theou Fang should be mentioned. He had a great sense of humor. Other painters of the T'ang epoch were Li Sseu Hiun, Li Tchao Tao and Wou Tao Tseu. The painter Wou Tao Tseu has been compared to Michelangelo because of his mural paintings.

After the T'ang dynasty, China was broken up, and it was not until the arrival of the first Song emperor that peace was restored. Painters continued to conserve their preference for nature subjects in their work: landscapes, flowers, birds. Among the known painters of this time were Tao Ning, Li Ti, Li Tcheng, Koui Hi, Fan Kouan, Li Tang and Mi Fei.

From the 4th century, generally speaking, Chinese painting has been deeply influenced by the spiritual thoughts of Ch'an. It was held that Buddha himself lived within the frailest blade of grass, the tiniest insect and the bird. In the spirit of Ch'an painting, every work of art is like life, unique and incapable of being effaced. It must be seized and taken. A master of Ch'an summarized this: 'It is a matter of registering one moment of visual truth with the same instantaneousness which accompanies spiritual flowering'.

The Chinese painters inspired by Ch'an have gained a balance and originality which is reflected in their work. These painters try to discover and express the inner relationship which exists between nature, the supreme reality and man. Notable amongst them is the celebrated Mou Ki, whose works have had a great influence on much of modern painting as we know it. A Chinese scholar commenting on the non-conventional works of Mou Ki declared, 'The perfect simplicity is really the (expression of) the subconscious'.

Ch'an also gave birth to other forms of painting: 'imagin-

ary portraiture', of which the best known artists were Ma Yuan and Hia Kouei, and also a school whose artists were known as 'those who paint in one corner'.

Through the detachment of their work these artists tried to suggest the infinite by using emptiness, not only as a factor of composition but also as a reflection of the human soul. They had the gift to transform, with a few strokes of the brush, the forms of nature in a light of hidden reality. Their touch is concise, the ink is thick and rich and they find themselves carried by a strange force. The spectator feels submerged by the wave of movements and unleashed forces. He stops, contemplates and reflects.

Japanese Painting and Zen

Japanese painting has been profoundly influenced by China. Its beginnings seem linked with this country because of the history of the two nations.

At the end of the 12th century, Japan revolted against China under the direction of the Fujiwara, the shoguns (regents) who ruled at Heian from 897. The sending of ambassadors to China was suspended. Buddhism, officially introduced to the country about 538, had degenerated. The national cult of shinto, most popular in the court, had lost its attraction. For a century, the daimios (the local lords) waged war and polarized into two rival clans: the Taira and the Minamoto. The Taira became the victors in 1167 and installed themselves in Heian, but seventeen years later they were chased out by the Minamoto. The date of the Taira's overthrow was in 1184 and, from that time, a new epoch arrived in Japan—that of Kamakura. The Minamoto freed themselves of the decadent Buddhism which was mixed with shintoism. Japanese monks were again sent to China and they brought back to the Japanese knowledge of Ch'an. The shoguns became conscious of the one law and new culture in China.

After the first Zen monastery was founded in Japan thanks

to the Japanese monk Eisai, painting developed very suddenly and was strongly influenced by Ch'an. Chinese masters visited Japan and some remained, establishing a school which realized remarkable works.

During the centuries which followed many Japanese monasteries and houses of nobility began to collect paintings by Chinese artists who had been inspired by Ch'an: Che k'o (10th century); Mou Ki (1200–1250); Mu Shi (1220–1290), Liang K'ai and Hsia Kouei (both active about 1200), Ma Yuang and Ying Yu Chien. These collections became so valuable that when studying Chinese art, a student found a visit to Japan indispensable. Amongst the treasures were innumerable landscapes, legendary figures, still life of such marvellous simplicity that meditation would reveal in them a spiritual density often imperceptible to the non-educated eye.

In the 12th and 13th centuries, Japanese monks assimilated the techniques of Ch'an Chinese painting of the Song dynasty. At the end of the 13th century the Japanese painters were engaged mostly in portraiture. In the 14th and 15th centuries, under Muso (1275–1351), a writer and garden architect, the new culture became much deeper. The kakemono was invented. Monks and other notables executed tinted drawings in large numbers. During this epoch we should remember two names: Mo Kuan, highly esteemed by his continental colleagues; and Kao, the executor of a portrait of Kanzan, a very popular legendary monk. This portrait, filled with verve, was the first in a group which had a specifically Japanese humor and were known as the *zenga* (ga meaning painting) of the Tokugawa.

Under the Ashikaga, Zen at last had come to full bloom in Japan. The new style of life became popular. The ceremony of the tea, floral art, archery, the art of gardens, and zazen, all influenced the uninitiated. Zen, like Christianity in the West, impregnated the country's culture in all areas.

The zenga Japanese painting school mainly reflects the spiritual climate of Zen which prevailed. Non-intellectual concentration triumphed over superficial observation, inten-

sified vision and brought to expression an effectiveness and total adequacy. The feeling for the essential eliminated all decorative, ornamental, superfluous elements: only the mystery of life remained. The loss of *self,* the fusion with the land and the cosmos brought about a return to rustic life; the people acquired a new dimension. Contempt for conventions provoked a disdain of form; the Zen artist expressed himself with a humor which—especially during the Tokugawa —transcended aestheticism. Intuition took precedence over the mind and went towards the Zen subconsciousness. Painting became impersonal. The zenga translated the tranquil serenity of Satori. The Zen artist expressed himself with a boldness and sureness in his strokes.

Painting and calligraphy expresses a vision of the world born from meditation. The paintings also invite meditation. They are above all a spiritual exercise. Beauty is not an end in itself but the result of a state of being of the artist.

The Techniques

The techniques in Japan are similar to those in China. The Japanese used the same type of brush as that invented by the Chinese in about 2,600 B.C. by Che Houang. They also used Chinese ink.

The principal techniques evolved by the Japanese masters are as follows:

Hatsuboku: a technique in a surprisingly modern style by Ying Yu Chien. Hobaku: a technique of crushed ink, used by Sesshu. Bokkotsu: technique where the brush is dipped in a quantity of water and ink. Tentai: points technique used notably by Mi Fei (1051–1107). Ippitsuga: a term used for works where painting and calligraphy are executed with the same brush. Suiboku (Chinese ink and water): a technique favored by Zen painters. Soumiye Painting: executed with Chinese ink only. The steely blue paintings were called *seiboku.* The masters used them voluntarily, sometimes varying tones discreetly.

Masters of the Golden Age in Zen Fainting

During the 15th century the four best artists of Zen in Japan were Josetsu, Shubun, Sesshu and Sesson. Josetsu, one of the pioneers in suiboku painting in Japan, is primarily important as an educator. His painting has an incomparable vivacity. Sesshu, the most outstanding of all, expresses himself through his admiration and respect for the subject. Shubun, the pupil of the former, became the principal suiboku master after 1423. His landscapes give a great spatial sense to which his pupil Sesshu has likewise given homage.

Toyo Sesshu (1420–1506) was an essential figure in Zen painting as well as in Japanese painting in general. He was the author of a hobaku landscape with a brilliance unequalled in the history of landscape painting all over the world. An abstract work, non-figurative at first view, it constitutes a true realization of Satori which can be grasped even by the uninitiated.

The hobaku landscape has a foreground of rocks and vegetation suggested by a few short strokes, varied and precise and with a background of very fluid mountains. In relief and almost invisible are a tiny boat and a man. The whole painting is bathed in a brownish tint. Toyo Sesshu was seventy years old when he executed this chief work. His influence on Japanese painting was great. His pupil, Sesson, continued Sesshu's vigorous style (which has some relation to the art of Van Gogh).

After Sesson the golden age of Zen painting ended. Apart from the Ami dynasty (counsellors of the Ashikaga) and the suiboku masters from Bunsei, Tokaku and Keishoki, painters became merely decorators of courts and palaces. Suiboku painting by Zen monks was secularized (Kano school) and this was the situation until the end of the 15th century and into the 16th century.

At the end of the Ashikaga epoch, Japan fell into a century of civil wars and then entered into the Azuchi or Monoyama epoch and the Edo or Tokugawa epoch (17th to 19th century). During these periods the principal Zen painters were Isshi, Fugai, Hakuin and Sengai.

From diverse origins the artists practised a condensed, pithy art, conforming to the spirit of Zen with koans (mondo) and haikus, drawn in a more eruptive style than those of the masters of the 15th century. Isshi (1608–1648) the son of a prince, became attached to Che k'o; he excelled in silhouettes of legendary monks such as Bodhidharma; his landscapes are limited to a few impressionistic works, filled with emptiness.

Fugai (about 1700), a solitary person, made suggestive sketches of people with a sure, rapid contour.

Hakuin (1685–1768), the son of a peasant, played an important role in the history of Japanese Zen. In painting he approached all themes with enthusiasm: figures of Bodhidharma, calliographs, flowers, animals and landscapes. He had a marvellous sense of synthesis and his style, always tender, was absent of malice, intelligence and fervor. To the Occidentals he often seemed indecipherable. His spirit is really that of Zen. He is the father of modern Zen.

Sengai (1750–1837) the Abbot of Shofukuji, (a temple in Eisai) is one of the favorite Zen painters of the Japanese scholar Suzuki. His output was enormous and he was a very popular artist. So many people came to see him that he would come to the window and say he was not at home. He has illustrated with humor and a total disdain of form, the basic truths of his meditations.

Closed to foreigners from 1639 Japan, in honor of China, returned to Confucianism and the Japanese found in Zen painting an outlet for their spirit of liberty. It manifested itself in haiga painting, influenced by the haikus, the poems of seven to seventeen syllables. The haikus originally came from China in the form of lettered paintings and were introduced to Japan in the 17th century by the Zen monks of the Obaku sect. It is based especially on the landscapes of the Chinese scholars (bunjingas). The Japanese bunjingas seem to be closer to the spirit of Zen than the Chinese.

Zen Painting and Western Art

Zen painters have mastered their technique. Many of them

have also achieved peace of mind. The combination of these two elements in their work give the latter a unique importance which should never be under emphasized.

Their painting has certain fundamental qualities: humility, unworldliness, serenity, strength, depth and lucidity. It is non-sentimental, supra-intellectual, irrational, impersonal, non-mental and intuitive. Its psychological and spiritual maturity, coupled with its sensibility, give Zen painting an incomparable appeal. Zen painting has some characteristics in common with Western painting, but it is devoid of obsessions, hate, anguish and worry.

Zen painting transmits lucidly the incommunicable which is the essence of life. By formulating the instantaneous it expresses eternity. Zen has had an enormous influence on Western painters, such as the Californian school of action painting and certain European artists. Only a minority of these Western artists, however, have grasped the spirit; many have only imitated the procedures in Zen painting.

Finally it would be correct to say that Ch'an in China and Zen in Japan were responsible for ridding painting in these countries of symbols, cliches and all artificial imagery. Refinement has been associated with simplicity; Ch'an and Zen have made painting the pure instrument of the Cosmic Mind and painting has been bound up with life itself.

CHAPTER XXVI

Zen Poetry

The state of non-mental perception in Zen allows us to consider it as one of the purest sources of poetic inspiration. The poet's awareness of the world about him may be described as a state of heightened sensibility in which he achieves a profound empathy with all things in nature, which are seen to partake of the Sublime and the Ineffable.

The only obstacle to the intensity of this communion is formed by mental agitation and our habitual analytical processes. These are precisely the two elements which Zen can help us leave. Professor D. T. Suzuki, commenting on the rapport between Zen and poetry has said[1], 'Zen finds more spontaneous expression in poetry than in philosophy because it has more affinity with feeling than with intellectuality'. Remember, however, that in Zen poetry, sentiment is not evoked by loving sentimentality nor human voluptuousness. It is more a question of a superior form of sensitivity towards the beauties of nature.

The beginning of Zen poetry dates to the third century. During this time poems were short, and quickly evoked a mood. Since then the genius of Zen poetry has never died. The Zen poets show us the necessity to seize the course of life in its simplicity, in its instantaneousness without metaphysical preoccupations. Here is good example of a Zen verse:

'An ancient lake
A frog dives in . . .
Plop . . '.

It is said that this was written at the moment when Basho, the author, discovered the deep and immense feeling of Zen. He wanted to express the essential: it was not

1. D. T. Suzuki, *Zen and Japanese Culture,* Routledge and Kegan, London

necessary to linger with details. He was touched and then he went on his way. Isn't the whole mystery of the Universe able to be revealed with this simple word, *plop*? This can be the *all* or *nothing* as the Japanese say. This *plop* will be *all* if we take a non-mental attitude taught by Zen. This *plop* however will be *nothing* if we stay imprisoned by our inner routine thoughts.

The difference between the Zen poems and the poems of the West is simple: the first renounce details and are brief; the second multiply details and are long. Three lines of some Zen poems summarize simple and essential truths which take up several pages of commentary, such as with this verse:

'When the light fades
The one who is not thinking is the admirable one.
Life passes . . '.

It is beautiful to the limit of philosophy.

The poetry form in Zen known as haiku is more rigid than that of the sonnet. It cannot have more than seventeen syllables[2]. The choice of subject is limited by the traditional rules which encompass the seasons, the year, the customs and the country. The most successful poems are those which restrict themselves to the rigidity of form but express a depth of feeling or poetic emotion.

The role of the reader must be less passive than when reading poems from the West. Although it is not necessary to be extremely well-versed in the literature of the East it is necessary to be trained progressively within the climate and vision of Zen. The Japanese masters tell us that things become clear when one looks for them without asking questions. This is somewhat paradoxical for the Westerner. It has been expressed by the great Zen poet, Gochiku, in the following way:

'The long night
The noise of the water
Says what I think . . '.

The Zen haiku poem is a form which is simultaneously

2. The haiku poems of seventeen syllables were preceded by the *Waka* which contained thirty-one syllables at the maximum

the most simple and the most difficult in Japanese poetry. Its greatness comes from its apparent simplicity.

Readers wishing to study Zen poetry more closely should consult the following two works, *Zen and Japanese Culture* by D. T. Suzuki (Routledge and Kegan, London 1960) and *The World of Zen,* by Nancy Wilson Ross (Stock, 1961).

CHAPTER XXVII

Zen Gardens

Zen thought has strongly influenced the Japanese in this cult devoted to nature. But the expression of the cult is quite different from that of the Western one. When people from the West walk through a park, they admire the flowers more than anything else. At other times they may admire and contemplate water in a beautiful lake. The Japanese, however, place the accent on other elements: the stones, the moss, sand and rocks. In Japan various rocks are venerated as national treasures and marvellous legendary tales surround them. The gardens of Ryoanji in Kyoto are veritable abstract designs. At any rate this is the first impression made on the Western visitor. The design is that of a rectangle of sand carefully interspersed with fifteen rocks, placed in groups of five. Some Westerners do not grasp the meaning although some, reflecting on the gardens, have realized that the design has some deep significance. They are compared to a musical work by some great artist, such as Bach.

The work of the Japanese artist, as we know, has a strong link with religion. Spiritual life is not sectioned-off in life. Zen art must express or refer to the highest truths taught by the Japanese masters.

In a Zen garden everything is symbolic. Every detail has some spiritual and psychological significance. In place of the many flowers which distract and charm a visitor to a Western-style garden, the rocks and sand in the Zen garden coax the person to concentrate *in depth.* Zen gardens are created for contemplation. The sand and rocks constitute the base elements of this aestheticism. The positioning of the rocks is ritualistic; often grouped in threes, they form sacred triads. The vertical or horizontal placing of the rocks are arranged according to a philosophical attitude.

An interesting feature about the Ryoanji garden rocks is that they can never all be seen at the same time. This is to

teach us that as long as we remain on the plain of duality and intellectual analysis we are slaves to a fragmentary vision. The total vision is only seen if we see the garden from above on an observation level which surrounds the garden. This global vision of things, from a superior supra-mental point of view is one of the bases of Zen.

The most important feature of the Zen gardens is the rocks. Sometimes the rocks are submerged in the sand. To the Japanese, sand represents virgin space. It is also an image of the void. But one question remains: if the garden is supposed to suggest the notion of the inner void, why isn't it formed simply by a rectangle of sand devoid of rocks whatsoever?

The Zen masters have an answer to this. It is only through form—though a very sober form—that novices are able to seize the notion of the void. The void, D. T. Suzuki tells us, must be a fact of experience in the same way as is the perception of the colors of a flower. The void expressed by virgin space in painting, by silence in music, the ellipse in poetry and immobility in dancing, can only be understood by the objects which take up his perception at first.

Why in the garden model are there fifteen rocks? Because one would hold our attention too much, too exclusively. Two groups or more form centers of multiple interest and put the accent on their reciprocal relationships. The five groups of three rocks are placed to suggest the unity of a vast reality which encompasses both sand and stone. The meditation of the Zen gardens in this view must help the spectator towards the comprehension of one of the fundamental Sutras of Buddhism in both Ch'an and Zen, recommending the vision 'of void in form and form in void'.

Zen gardens therefore have one aim: to bring to the mind of those who contemplate them the perception of a certain inner nothingness. The masters consider that the materials used in the Zen gardens have only a secondary importance. The important element they say is the mind's attitude of approach in order to interpret the essential gifts. 'The garden exists within us', writes D. T. Suzuki[1].

1. D. T. Suzuki, *Zen and Japanese Culture,* Routledge and Kegan, London, 1960

CHAPTER XXVIII

The Tea Ceremony

The tea ceremony has its source in certain mythical elements. Its rapport with Zen has been contested from time to time.

Japanese folklore relates that Bodhidharma, one of the first founders of Zen, after Tao An and Tao Cheng, spent nine years in meditation before reaching inner Awakening. He had reached a state of fatigue which was so great that his eyelids kept dropping. Bodhidharma wanted, despite everything, to keep his eyes open. Legend tells us that he seized his eyelids and threw them on the soil. A little later, a pretty little plant grew in this place and it was tea. Later, his disciples came to listen to his teachings and when they felt tired, he picked the flowers of this plant and infused it with boiling water. Legend says that the drink of the magic plant of Bodhidharma helps men to reach the inner Awakening.

Many Japanese attach religious meaning to the ceremony of the tea. For poets, artists and philosophers who like to remain for long periods in peaceful surroundings, tea is an agreeable pastime. Emperors in the past made it an occasion to take a short rest from their numerous duties. During this time they would leave the place where they worked and go to another room. The tea ceremony evokes a relaxing atmosphere of inner joy and plenitude.

What is its mystery? Does it contain a secret? A great master of the tea ceremony once said: ‘You place the coals so that the water is able to come to the boil; you guard that the beverage made has an agreeable taste. In the summer, you create an impression of freshness in the room where it is taken and in the winter, an impression of comfort’.

Perhaps these kind of comments may amuse the Western man if they are only viewed from the outside. Zen, however,

wants us to see these things and all circumstances of life from the inside. ‘The one who wishes to be initiated to the art of the tea-drinking ceremony must be his own master’, Zen instructs. It takes a simple and natural attitude. There is no searching, only a feeling of amiability and love.

CHAPTER XXIX

Zen and 'the Way of Flowers'

The Japanese masters of Zen do not consider the arrangement of flowers—or *Ikebana*—as merely a decorative art. It is rather the expression of a deeper vision of life and an intimate communion with the beauties of nature.

'Flowers are the expression of an unconscious perfection'. the Indian mystic Krishnamurti once said. For many Orientals, the art is the expression of a spiritual aspiration. The beauties of nature express the hidden essence of things. The masters in the arrangement of flowers teach that it is neither a simple pastime, nor a distraction, nor a fantasy. Floral arrangements are not uniquely reserved for women as one tends to think. In some centuries, the Samurais and the men of chivalry held it in great esteem.

The ceremony of the arrangement of flowers is preceded by meditation and introversion. The pupil must be unattached and be able to perceive the unity of everything and of all life. It is necessary that his heart must be in communion with 'the heart of the flower'. Western people are often lost when faced with these conditions. Our poets are perhaps the only ones who can understand.

The progress made in the 'way of flowers' aids our evolution and our inner sensitivity. This sensitivity is the source of inspiration for floral arrangements which are beautiful, and yet harmonious in their sobriety.

The basis of flower arrangement is the triad. It is the symbol of the three aspects of the universal totality in its rapport with man: man between sky and earth. The perception of the meaning of this triad is made in two stages. First, silent and concentrated observation of each element of the triad (whether it is made of flowers or rocks makes no difference) and their reciprocal relations. Then, the

perception of the deep unity which encompasses them is important, for this gives the feeling of the inner silence: an indispensable element to all artistic aptitudes in Zen thought.

The essential thesis of the Japanese masters is as follows: 'The perception of the heart of the flowers must take us to the revelation of the depths in our own heart and the heart of all things'.

What are the flowers and plants chosen by the Japanese?

The chrysanthemum, the golden flower of the Orient.

The lotus, the flower of the religious cult.

The plum tree which expresses resistance to injuries.

The peony, the flower of richness and love.

The pine which is constancy, strength of character.

The bamboo which expresses stability.

Flowers hold marvellous secrets, the poets and sages of the Orient tell us. They give their secrets only to those who have renounced their egoism and are able to establish with them (the flowers) a perfect relationship. The true Japanese artist is seized by the profound essence of things and his floral composition fills him with inner joy, making him outwardly content.

The composition of a floral work begins by the placing of three principal lines or axes. These are often formed by branches of a bush. The flowers are then placed on the bases. They must be carefully arranged, for the spaces between them symbolize the inner silence. The Japanese advise that symmetrical constructions should be avoided, for these seem to reflect a superficial disposition of spirit and show too much mentality at work.

CHAPTER XXX

Zen and Hygiene

Body hygiene in general and particularly alimentary hygiene occupies a very important place in numerous Chinese religious sects. Speaking of characteristic traits among the ancient Chinese and Indians, Professor Masson-Oursel writes[1]: 'There are many analogous aims: the search for perfection is in the basic disciplines, not the spiritual ones. In India it is in respiration, while in China, nutrition takes the position of importance'.

While a fair section of the Ch'an and Zen schools only give secondary importance to alimentary discipline, other schools give it a predominant role. Such is the case in the school of *macrobiotic Zen* of the Japanese Ohsawa[2], which has numerous followers, including Europeans. This school was partially inspired from the ancient diet principles of the Chinese based on the two antagonistic and complementary principles of Yin and Yang. These two principles, Yin (negative) and Yang (positive) must be equalized to bring about physical, mental and nervous harmony in man. The benefits of good alimentary habits is diversely appreciated by the masters of Ch'an and Zen, but all agree that an alimentary discipline is necessary.

We will now outline some elements in the macrobiotic schools from China and Japan. The *Yang* foods or positives are those plants which have a slow growth and concentrated constitution. Amongst them, Zen singles out grains, cereals, plant roots (carrots, radishes), the roots of chicory, watercress etc. The beneficial qualities of plant roots were known by the Chinese masters of Taoism. They always have a yang character. The famous Ginseng used plant roots in increasing

1. Professor Masson-Oursel, op. cit., p. 89
2. N. S. Ohsawa, *Philosophie de la médecine d'Extrême Orient,* Paris, 1957

quantities and they are favored by modern western dieticians.

The *yin* or negative foods are most of the plants of rapid growth. Amongst them are cane sugar, asparagus, mushrooms, bamboo shoots etc. Generally speaking, fire and heat are *yang,* while water and humidity are *yin.* Yang and yin tendencies are also manifested in the colors of food. Red, the color of intensity, is yang. The food of this color (radishes, red meats, carrots, etc.) are usually yang. Violet, the color of expansion, is yin. The yang regions, that is the tropical regions, produce yin foods, such as bananas, grapefruits, cocoa, coffee, sugar cane etc. Temperate regions which are yin, generally produce yang foods, such as potatoes, watercress, etc.

Japanese specialists on macrobiotics divide chemical substances into two groups. Amongst the yang substances, sodium heads the list and amongst the yin, potassium is the most important and the most harmful. It is plausible to admit that the considerable growth of cancer has been caused by the abuse of yin elements in diet. Cancer results from a disordered proliferation of cells. We find here the manifestation of a process of expansion characterizing the element yin.

There is not, however, one perfect diet. Each individual is quite different and one diet during one time in a person's life may not be suitable in another. Yet one thing is certain: Western man is badly nourished. This is the opinion of the Japanese masters who insist on the importance of a healthy body, and on the brain receiving blood which is clear of

The diagram, of T'ai ki represents the two complementary principles of Yin and Yang. The central motif is surrounded by trigrams which form one of the bases of the I Ching.

all kinds of toxic substances. Physiological intoxication could be an obstacle to the perception of spiritual energy. For this reason, Japanese dieticians and teachers of Zen advise that their disciples abstain from meat, alcohol and all food which has traces of chemical substances.

The Japanese teachers consider that we commit five fundamental errors in our eating habits: we eat in too large a quantity, we eat too richly, we do not masticate sufficiently, we are not attentive during our meals, we take our meals irregularly and we take in too much food too late at night before sleeping.

Mastication

It is important that we educate ourselves to chew correctly. This is the first readjustment we should make in general food discipline. To nourish ourselves correctly, instruct the Japanese masters, is important if we wish to remain detached for new heights of consciousness. The Hatha yogis in India say, 'Eat little, but the little eaten should be health giving and should be masticated slowly'.

The Russian physiologist, Pavlov, said that, 'Digestion is a question of nerves'. By a conscientious and attentive mastication we give to our teeth the work that would otherwise be imposed on the stomach, which often causes nervous upsets through inattentive and hurried eating. The nervous system is the medium between the spiritual and psychic energies and the body. It is a most precious auxiliary for the Awakening.

Rational eating should include a good amount of cereal: whole wheat, whole rice, etc. These should all be carefully masticated. Starchy foods should be transformed as much as possible by the chemical substance in saliva.

Over-Rich Foods

These foods are responsible for many incapacities of assimilation, intestinal fermentations and intoxications. Es-

pecially for people enfeebled by illness, food should be taken in small quantities and should never be too rich.

Overeating

The absorption of too copious amounts of foods leads to hurried eating and insufficient mastication. Dieticians claim that we have lost all ideas of real appetite. We no longer know how to discern a real hunger, corresponding to the genuine needs of the body, from fictitious hunger, linked with habit. Most people in countries of good economies over-indulge in food. Many of them become in fact more unhealthy in their atmosphere of plenty than if they lived more rigidly.

The Number of Meals

An evening meal is forbidden in most Buddhist monasteries. The masters teach that a copious and late meal prevents a person from having a beneficial sleep. A certain importance is given to the quality of sleep which could be the time for spiritual experience of great value. Numerous Hatha yogis in India and most Buddhist monks take only one meal at midday and they content themselves with tea at night.

Inattention at Meals

It is most important in all things to give full attention. Inattention is a negative attitude, to eating as to all activities.

Fasting and Poisons

The practice of fasting is always beneficial. It need not be too intensive nor too generalized. A semi-fast is well-advised. This consists of not taking a single meal between the evening and midday the following day. This system has

been adopted by many Buddhist monks. Prolonged fasts need the surveillance of a doctor specializing in this field. It has been proved that the practice of continual small fasts helps a person live longer.

Independent of its physiological advantages, the fast is able to help a person become more prepared for spiritual concerns.

In direct opposition to the practice of fasts, many people use artificial stimulants such as drinks and drugs to engender momentary euphoria. Some of these are coffee, white sugar, alcohol and all the allopathic medicines.

Exercises

Zen asks us to proceed to a revaluation of the vegetative life. The study of physiology teaches us that the human body is built to undertake intense physical work. The ancient Egyptians claimed that perfect health was not possible without physical exertion amounting to an hour and a half daily (with abundant perspiring). Modern life however has taken man from nearly every physical exercise, particularly this has happened in cities where most people are involved in sedentary work.

Exercise helps the circulation of the blood; with a minimum amount of exercising, we are able to make inhalations and take on elementary postures of Hatha Yoga whilst detaching ourselves from all occult notions. Both the Hatha yogis and the Zen masters insist on the importance of correct breathing. The rhythm of respiration is in direct rapport with our thoughts. The man whose mind is anxious, agitated, breathes quickly and incompletely. Inversely, if we breathe deeply and calmly, we will be able to pacify mental agitation.

The Count von Durckheim studied the methods of respiration and meditation while in Japan. He commented on these in his work on *Hara* from which we have taken the following extract:

'It is through our respiration that we are able to take consciousness . . . If we succeed in learning the laws of

life which manifest themselves in us through respiration, we are already on the way.

'The act of breathing is in three stages. During the first stage the subject must become conscious of his respiration and correct it. During the second stage, he must learn, with the help of exercises, to recognize the defects in his breathing; the subject tries to relax and to hold it, he works with his breath. With the third stage, the subject learns to perceive respiration as part of his role as a *superhuman* being.

'Correct breathing results through movement of the diaphragm. When all this is in good order the movement is not executed consciously; it is produced automatically. By contrast, if the movement of the diaphragm is insufficient, the chest is constricted by another auxiliary muscle. This shows that even when breathing man closes himself up in the circle of his inner self. Flat breathing, that is, breathing carried on in only the top section of the thorax, indicates that a man is not relaxed and that he remains, without realizing it, a prisoner of his inferior self'.

As important as breathing is walking. The absence of exercises and mental strain are the cause for more and more cases of insomnia and depression. The Zen masters estimate that in this present time of technical development, with the use of the automobile and the general lack of exercise, every Western man should spend at least one hour per day in walking, as well as taking deep-breathing exercises.

CHAPTER XXXI

Buddhism and Zen in the 20th Century

The variations of both Zen and Buddhist thinking in Japan has resulted in the formation of a considerable number of sects. This can be explained by the inner and individual depth of the spiritual searching by disciples. This mental disposition has some unexpected consequences. As soon as a master acquires a certain experience and prestige, he founds a new sect himself in the same school where he first began to learn. Very often the students at this school will become pupils of this master and give him authority of a sort. This custom exists not only in Japan, but in China as well. It ends in the creation of several hundred sects whose adherents are in agreement with those of other sects, although there may be some insignificant differences.

While the masters comply with a real and detached experience, they react against the errors and concessions of some sects which adopt easy solutions and a spiritual laxity. But today, observers say that there is a great difference between the purity of the first teachings of the Ch'an and most of the actual existing Japanese sects. Many Japanese masters prefer in modern times to adapt themselves to the levels of the masses and develop or found schools in which the participants recite certain invocations or prayers. They practise the *Nembutsu* and consecrate themselves to techniques of meditation very different from the first Ch'an teachings. We are very far from the detachment of the great Shen Hui.

Many sects are formed each year. Some of them, such as the Seicho-No-le which has its religious center in Tokyo, was founded under the direction of Masaharu Taniguchi towards 1948 and has now about ten million adherents. The teachings of Seicho-No-le are outlined in a work entitled

Divine Education and Spiritual Training of Mankind. The teachings of the sect have been taken all over the world through very active missionaries.

According to statistics, published officially in Japan in 1964, there were more than 430 religious sects for the population, then given as approximately 94,000,000. The number of adherents to these diverse sects is about 145,000,000. These numbers are paradoxical and show that many Japanese are affiliated to several religious sects at the one time. The national religion of Japan is neither Zen, nor Buddhism, but Shinto, and many Japanese attach themselves to all religions at once.

Japan has 73,000 Buddhist temples, 11,000 churches and 10,000 special centers for study where one is instructed in Zen and the different forms of Buddhism. Shinto has no temples but has 80,000 sanctuaries and 11,000 centers of study and propaganda[1].

The principal manifestations of Buddhism and Zen can be summed up in the following way. There is a Zen center near Kyoto at the 'Chotokuin Shokokuji', under the direction of Sohaku Ogata who belongs to the Rinzai Zen School. This 'Center of Zen studies' gives regular courses, organizes meditations and retreats to which many students come from all parts of the world. Sohaku Ogata is married and father of three children. He is the professor of Hanazono University and has conducted courses in the United States at the University of Chicago. He has taken part and held numerous conferences in Europe and is the author of several works on Zen.

Rinzai Zen exists in Japan under two forms: the first, known as *Inzan* and the second as *Takaju.* The two main schools have their central bodies in Kyoto, at Myoshinji and Nanzenji respectively, and have between two and three million adherents.

Amongst Buddhist movements assimilated to Zen though slightly divergent, are the sect of Shin shu, founded by Shinran in the 13th century. This sect is actually divided into two principal branches with their centers in Kyoto. One

1. According to *World Buddhism Magazine,* Dehiwala, Ceylon

center is at Nishi Honganji and the other at Higashi Honganji. The Shin shu sect has about fifteen million followers. Another sect is the Jodo of Kyoto at Chion-in. This sect has half a million members.

The Shin shu and Jodo sects are situated between amidism, Buddhism and Zen. Some followers of Shin shu are in disagreement with Zen and declare that[2] 'to believe that one is able to obtain the Awakening through his living is an erroneous conception . . . we need to beware of it'. This shows us once more the distance between the original Ch'an teachings.

It would be of no use to try to detail information on all the existing sects. Some are the places of celebrated schools, such as the Tendai which has as its religious seat the Enryakuji monastery. Others, such as Shingon are less well-known. The seat of Shingon learning is in the Toji monastery, an ancient edifice having formerly belonged to the Tendai sect. The conceptions of the Shingon, moreover, approach those of Zen and are contested by the Shin shu sect. The Shingon teaches, in effect, the possibility of realizing the Inner Awakening in the course of active life.

Amongst others, we should mention the existence of a Japanese sect known as 'Macrobiotic Zen' with its center in Yokohama. It has numerous adherents. Its founder G. Ohsawa has adherents all over the world. The followers of this movement accord great importance to dietary hygiene. They have created co-operatives who produce special foods and macrobiotic restaurants in many Western countries.

Japan is the world center of all the arts and diverse practices resulting directly or indirectly from Zen. Amongst these practices are the Academies of Zen painting, centers of studies on flower arrangements, numerous centers of judo, aikido, budo, karate, the art of the bow, fencing, kendo etc. Most of the Japanese masters of these schools frequently visit the West to teach their arts.

Theoretically, all the Zen centers with the attendant arts and practices are open to all those who would like to be instructed. In practice, access to some centers is less easy.

2. Honen, Shinran, Nichiren and Dogen, op. cit. p. 24

It necessitates a training period and an entry examination. Ch'an has numerous followers in Formosa, Hong Kong and the West. Ch'an monasteries and Buddhist centers exist still in China. Their activity is restricted, however, and information concerning them is contradictory.

Amongst the movements of Ch'an and Zen in Hong Kong are the 'Buddhist Culture and Art Association' which publishes a magazine written in Chinese and English, entitled *The Yuen Chuen Magazine.* This periodical is published by a Zen nun, Hiu Wan, better known under the name of Miss Yau Wan Shan through her many paintings in the Zen style which have been exhibited in the United States and Europe.

Zen centers of study are becoming more numerous in the West. They are found in England, Germany, Holland, Belgium, Austria, France, Italy, etc. Students of Zen meet each year in Europe in the course of which there are conferences and seminars. The venue could be once in Switzerland, then in England, etc. Monasteries for Tibetan Buddhists exist in England near Salisbury and in Switzerland near Rikon. Zen is considerably developed in America where there are many institutes and study centers, both in New York and California. In Canada, the 'Zen Lotus Society' in Montreal is very active. Another important Buddhist center is in Toronto under the direction of the Venerable Dr. H. Saddhatissa Maha Thera, professor at the University of Toronto. In West Germany, Count von Durckheim, a specialist of Japanese Zen, is director of a center of physical psychological and spiritual re-education which is well-known; it is near Baden-Baden.

Many signs show that Zen is becoming more popular in the West. Christmas Humphreys, president of the Buddhist Society in London, has written several works on Buddhism and Zen in which he illustrates this new interest. It should also be mentioned here that such great Japanese scholars as D. T. Suzuki, N. Sensaki and R. F. Sasaki, as well as Ch. Luk and Wei Wu Wei, have been publishing for many years numerous books and articles on Zen, both in the Far East and the Western world.

Conclusions

In the East, studies of Ch'an or Zen are never terminated by a conclusion. Since this is a book for Westerners it is permissible to make an exception.

We may recall that the essential reality of life for Zen is neither exclusively material nor exclusively spiritual. The pure actions of the Cosmic Mind are expressed in the present. The law is that of adequacy in relationships. Each freed man is absolutely different through his physical form, his biological heredity, his temperament and his technique of expression. But an identical life is followed by all those who have *Awoken.* At the moment of the experience it is the pure act expressed in perfect simultaneousness within the heart of a free person on this planet as for one who lives in another world a long way away. Nevertheless, each freed person has a particularity of expression and a remarkable originality.

An old Chinese adage tells us that in the Universe everything is different and nothing is absolutely similar. Even something like electrons differ by variations in their positions. These variations influence interactions, types of multiple relationships.

Zen does not deny the *particular* in its forms or singularities but insists that their real significance is not completely understood. The exact comprehension of the *particular* is only accessible when we are established in the *cosmos* and we are able to spontaneously express ourselves. The game of singularity is continually changing. This idea has been examined and discussed by C. G. Jung[1].

The effective realization of this *Awakening* exists for us through a vigilance of all time, a very great suppleness of the mind, and an agility of thought which can move easily to the present. This realization is not nothingness, but plenitude.

Individual originality is inappropriately deified by most

1. C. G. Jung, *Eranos-Jahrbuch 1935,* p. 104, Rhein-Verlag, Zurich, 1936

Westerners. It is never the result of an attitude deliberately chosen by a *self,* where one is made a prisoner of his own game and victim of auto-identification. Supreme originality is only realized when the *me* is dead to itself, it no longer exists as a psychological entity which avidly collects memories. When the storage of memories disappear, man is only an instrument in the hands of Life.

For Zen, a single reality emerges in triumph: the supreme act when the categories in which we place our acts—either important or inessential—have no significance. Each ordinary gesture can be extraordinary. The Garden of Eden is the same. We have eyes but we do not see. Thus we escape the importance of living. Because the supreme language is only able to be understood here, *it is infinitely important to live,* to live fully and clearly, to live in the richness of real love which gives the supreme act its great charm.

It is expressed thus by the Zen master Yoka Daishi[2]: 'If you live Zen, you can leave the hell of your dreams and you will realize the paradise where you are'.

2. Nyogen Sensaki, op. cit., p. 38

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE MASTERS OF BUDDHISM, TAOISM, CH'AN AND ZEN

DATE	MASTERS, SCHOOLS, WORKS, EVENTS
B.C.	
4000–1766	Legendary period of China with five emperors. The legendary time of the origin of the I-Ching.
2000–1000	The period of the Chandas in Indian history and the appearance of the first Rig Vedas.
1000–800	The Brahman period of Indian history; Sama, Yajur and Atharva Vedas.
800–600	Last Brahman period of Indian history; Brahmanas, Aranyakas, Upanishads.
600–200	The period of the Sutras, epic poems and legends.
6th Century B.C.	
c.570	*Lao Tzu,* the author of Tao Te Ching, the founder of Taoism.
c.560–480	*Gautama Buddha,* the writer of the sermons which were later developed in the Sutras, the Lankavatara Sutra, the original Prajnaparamita, etc.
c.551—449	*Confucius,* known as Kung Tsee, founder of Confucianism. Insistent on the application of the ancient theory of the philosophical Yi to the concrete realities of daily life.
543	Accession of Bimbisara to the realm of Magadha.
539	Cyrus, king of Persia, takes Babylon; he was later to conquer the Bactrians and parts of north-west India.
c.534	*Gautama Buddha* renounces family life and devotes himself to spiritual studies.

c.532	*Pythagoras* the wise and philosophical Greek.
c.528	Illumination, or the *Awakening* of the Buddha.
518	Inscriptions of Darius I the Persian King inferring that the Persians had gained India as a province.

5th Century B.C.

491	*Ajatasatthu* is named king of Anga-Magadha.
c.483 or 480	Death of *Gautama Buddha.*
c.470	Birth of *Socrates.*
c.450	*Mahakasyapa,* the successor of Buddha.

4th Century B.C.

383–382	The conference of Vesali: the great schism and formation of various Buddhist sects.
333	*Darius III* is defeated by Alexander at Issus.
372–289	*Mencius,* one of the successors of Confucius.
350–330	Birth of *Chuang Tzu,* disciple of Lao Tzu, author of the 'True Canon of Nan-noa'.
398 or 350	*Lieh Tzu,* Taoism.
325	Expedition of *Alexander the Great* to India.
323	Death of Alexander the Great.
313	The drawing up of the Jaina.

3rd Century B.C.

269	*Asoka,* viceroy of Avanti, kills his brother and accedes to the imperial throne.
265	Crowning of Emperor Asoka at Pataliputta.
262	*Nigrodha* teaches Buddhism to Emperor Asoka who makes it the religion of the State. Construction of numerous monasteries.
253 or 247	Council of Theravada at Pataliputta.
246	Establishment of Buddhism at Lanka (Ceylon) through the mission of Mahinda.

236	Death of Emperor Asoka; decline of the empire; tabulation of the Tao Te Ching.

2nd Century B.C.

184	End of the Moriyan dynasty.
150	*Milinda,* king of Bactria.

1st Century B.C.

Through the Greek influence, the first representations of Buddha appear.

1st Century A.D.

100 B.C.-300 A.D.	*Ashvagosha, Nagarjuna, Asanga, Vasubandhu,* drawing up of the original Prajnaparamita, Sutras of Mahayana, Saddharma-Pundarika, Lotus of the Good Law, Sandhiniromocana Sutra, Yogacara school, Vajracchedika Sutra, Lankavatara Sutra, etc.
c.65	*Matanga and Bhorana,* Indian Buddhist monks, introduce Buddhism to China in the town of Loyang.
78	Accession of *Kanishka* to the realm of Bactria, construction of numerous Buddhist temples and the first images of Buddha.

2nd Century

100	Council of Purusapura (school of Sarvastivadin).

3rd Century

220	Buddhism expands to Annam. Persecution of Buddhism in India.

4th Century

c.300	*Hsiang Hsiu.* Chinese mystical school at the time of the Wei and Chin Chinese era. Taoiste, the commentator of the works of Chuang Tzu.

312–385	*Tao An* of Ch'an established parallels between Buddhism and Taoism.
333 or 410	Final codification of the texts of Buddhaghosa Hinayana Buddhism.
334–416	*Hui Yuan,* disciple of Tao An.
c.350	Buddhism is introduced to Burma and Korea through Chinese influence.
360–434	*Tao Cheng* of the Ch'an school, teacher of the theory of the sudden Awakening.

5th Century

384–414	*Seng Chao,* of the Ch'an school transcribes the texts of Confucius and Lao Tzu. He is converted to Buddhism after reading the Vimalakirti Sutra to which he devoted many commentaries. Together with Tao Cheng, he must be considered as one of the founders of Ch'an.
384–413	*Kumarajiva,* an erudite Indian monk, translates the Indian Sutras to Chinese at Ku-tsang and Chang-An. His work is indirectly decisive in the formation of Ch'an.
334–416	*Hui yuan,* of the Ch'an school, makes parallels between Buddhism and Taoism.
385–433	*Hsieh Ling Yun,* of the Ch'an school, writes about the works of Tao Cheng.
422	Buddhism is introduced to Thailand and spreads to Indonesia.
c.480	*Liu Ch'iu,* Ch'an school. Writes on Buddhism and Taoism.

6th Century

c.500	*Bodhiruci,* Buddhism.
480–528	*Bodhidharma,* considered by some writers as the founder of Ch'an, author of 'The contemplation of the Wall in the Mahayana'.

400–550	Publication of the first catalog of the Tripitaka.
c.500–550	First infiltration of Buddhism to Japan via Korea.
486–593	*Huei k'o* school of Ch'an, successor of Bodhidharma, the Second Patriarch.
538–597	*Chih k'ai,* Ch'an school, writer of the 'Method of the cessation of thought and the contemplation in the Mahayana'.
557–640	The Chinese master *Tu shun,* considered the First Patriarch of the Hua-yen sect.

7th Century

c.600–700	Development of the Tantric schools in India.
606	*T'sen T'sang,* of the Ch'an school, the author of the famous poem, Hsin-Hsin-Ming; the third Ch'an leader.
627	*Hui t'an* of the Ch'an school.
579–651	*Tao Shin,* of the Ch'an school, successor to Seng Ts'an, the Fourth Patriarch.
601–675	*Hung Jen,* of the Ch'an school, successor to Tao Shin, Fifth Patriarch.
638–713	*Hui Neng,* of the Ch'an school, the most famous of the Ch'an masters, successor to Hung Jen, the Sixth Patriarch, and the writer of numerous sermons, and of the T'an Ching. Known in Japan under the names of Wei Nang or Wei Lang or Eno.
c.645	*Hsuang tsang,* of the Ch'an school, translator of the Vijnapti matra of Yogacara.
647	*Harshavardhana* is king of the north of India.
c.640–650	Introduction of Buddhism to Tibet.
643–712	*Fa tsang,* of the Chinese Hua Yen school, the beginning of the Japanese Kegon, based on the Avatamsaka Sutra.

665–713	*Hsuan Chueh,* of the Ch'an school, the disciple of Hui Neng, the author of a work translated to English under the title 'Song of realizing the Tao'.
668–760	*Shen Hui,* of the Ch'an school, a disciple of Hui Neng.
677–744	*Hui Chung,* of the Ch'an school, disciple of Hui Neng.
689–773	The monk Roben who had an important role in the development of the Kegon in Japan.

8th Century

c.716	*Shen Hsiu,* of the Ch'an school.
c.740	*Ch'ing yuan,* of the Ch'an school, the disciple of Hui Neng.
750	Beginning of the Pala Buddhism in Bengal.
c.775	*Huai jang,* of the Ch'an school, disciple of Hui Neng, the master of Ma Tsu.
700–790	*Che T'ou,* of the Ch'an school, Soto Zen is introduced to Japan.
702–760	*Tao Hsuan* (in Japanese Dosen), of the Hua Yen school.
c.788	*Ma Tsu,* of the Ch'an school.
720–814	*Po Chang,* disciple of Ma Tsu, the author of a study on 'The doctrine of the mind'.
724–749	The reign of the emperor *Shoma,* one of the founders of the great temple, Kegon Todai-ji.
736	The master *Tao Hsuan* brings teachings of the Hua Yen school to Japan.
737–838	The Chinese master *Ch'eng kuan,* known in Japan as Shoryo Daishi (Hua Yen).
748–837	*Nan ch'uan,* of the Ch'an school, the disciple of Ma Tsu.
771–853	The *Kuei yang* school, founded by *Kuei Chan Ling yu,* in Japanese Isan Reiyu (Igyo Zen).

780–841 *Yun yen T'an Sheng.*

9th Century

800–900 Kashmir submits to the influence of Shivaism. Central Asia submits to the influence of Islam.

778–897 *Chao Chou,* of the Ch'an school, the disciple of Ma Tsu.

779–841 *Tsung Mi,* of the Ch'an and Hua Yen schools, introduces the Japanese Kegon.

780–841 *Kuei feng* the Fifth Patriarch of the Hua Yen sect (Kegon).

c.850 *Huang Po,* of the Ch'an school, also known as Hsi Yun, the author of the *Cosmic Mind.*

c.867 *Lin Chi,* of the Ch'an school, one of the founders of the Rinzai Zen school in Japan.

840–901 *Ts'ao Chan,* of the Ch'an school, the disciple of Tung Chan.

862–949 *Yun Men Wen yen,* founder of the Yunmen school (known as Ummon in Japanese).

10th Century

885–958 *Fa Yen,* of the Hua Yen school. The time of the Japanese Kegon.

891–972 *Te Chao* schools of Ch'an T'ien Tai and 'The Pure Earth'.

902 Death of *Tao Ying,* the disciple of Tung Chan.

904–975 *Yen Shu,* of the Ch'an, T'ien Tai and 'Pure Earth' schools.

942–1017 The monk *Genshin,* author of an amidist work entitled *Ojoyoshu.*

945 Death of the master *Yun Men Wen yen,* founder of the Ummon Zen sect.

947–1024 *Fen Yang,* of the Hua Yen school, of the Japanese Kegon sect.

11th Century

1004	*Tao yuan,* of the Ch'an school, the author of the 'Ch'uan Teng Lun'.
c.1000	Attacks by the Turks on India.
1002–1069	*Huang Lung,* of the Ch'an school, the author of the 'Three Barriers of Huang Lung'.
1063–1135	*Yuan Wu,* of the Ch'an school, uses the method of the koans.
1066	Muslim occupation of the North-West of India.
1073–1132	The Japanese monk *Ryonon,* who founded the 'Yuzu nembutsu shu' sect.

12th Century

1089–1163	*Ta Hui,* of the Ch'an school, disciple of Yuan Wu.
1127–1279	Sung Period in the South.
1145–1216	The monk *Koin.*
1150	End of the Pala Buddhist dynasty.
1133–1197	Honen Shonin, founder of the Jodo sect (sect of 'The Pure Earth').
c.1150–1200	Decline of Buddhism in India.
1141–1215	*Eisai,* Japanese master of the T'ien Tai sect, introduces Ch'an to Japan in 1191 as the Zen Rinzai sect. He founded Zen monasteries in Kyoto and Kamakura.

13th Century

1163–1228	The master *Ju ching*, successor of the master Wu chi.
1173–1262	*Shinran Shonin,* of the 'Pure Earth' sect in Japan.
1184–1225	The master *Myozen.*
1198–1280	The master *Ejo,* disciple of Dogen.

1200–1253	*Dogen* had an important role in Zen in Japan. He introduced the Soto Zen sect there in 1227 and founded the great Eiheiji monastery.
1222	*Nichiren.*
1226–1286	*Bukko,* the founder of the Japanese Zen monastery of Engekuji at Kamakura.
1235–1309	The monk *Nampo Jomo,* of the Rinzai school.
1275–1351	*Muso,* master of Japanese Zen, the famous painter of soumiye.

14th Century

1355–1417	*Tsong kha pa,* Tibetan Buddhist, played an important role in the reform of Tibetan Buddhism; he founded the monastery of Ganden near Lhasa and the Order of the Gelug pa.

15th Century

c.1431	*Cho Densu,* Zen painter.
1414–1465	*Shubun,* Zen painter.
c.1483	*Soga Jasoku,* Zen painter.
1421–1506	*Sesshu,* Zen painter.

16th Century

1546–1623	*Han Chan,* of the Ch'an school, who wrote on the Sutra of the complete Illumination.
1582–1645	*Minamoto Musashi,* Zen painter.

17th Century

1622–1693	*Bankei,* one of the great masters of Japanese Zen.
1630–1683	*Tetsugen,* Zen master, author of the 'Sermons'.

18th Century

1641–1721	*Dokyo Yetan,* Zen Japanese master, known as Shoju Ronin, instructor of master of Zen, Hakuin.

1685–1768	*Hakuin,* Japanese Zen master, the author of many koans.

19th Century

1750–1837	*Sengai,* Zen monk and famous painter.
1836–1886	*Sri Ramakrishna,* great Indian mystic.
1895	Birth of *J. Krishnamurti* in India.
1863–1902	*Swami Vivekananda,* who played an important role in the diffusion of Indian wisdom coming to the West.

20th Century

1869–1948	*Mahatma Gandhi* gave Indian thought a world-wide application by his use of it in politics and his theories on non-violence (Ahimsa).
1840–1959	*Hsi Yun,* one of the great masters of Ch'an, died in China at the age of 119.
1870–1966	*D. T. Suzuki,* the greatest writer on both Ch'an and Zen.
1945–1969	Renaissance and development of Buddhism, Ch'an and Zen in America, England and, to a lesser extent, Europe.
1950	Death of the Indian masters *Sri Aurobindo* and *Sri B. Maharshi.*
1955	Death of *R. P. Teilhard de Chardin* and the discovery of his work.
1960–1969	Numerous priests begin to study and to write on modern Zen.

Glossary

Absolute: One who exists by himself and does not depend on anything.

Adequacy: Capacity of reacting correctly to a circumstance. The gesture of adequacy in Zen is not a 'thought gesture'; it is not of personal mobility. Reacting correctly to a circumstance is not limited to a physical gesture but implies an adequate mental attitude.

Ananda: Sanskrit term meaning 'felicity'. Name of Buddha's cousin, considered to be the second leader of Ch'an.

Anthropomorphism: The tendency of men to give to the Universe, to all things and even to God, shapes, feelings, values and human thoughts.

Ashvagosha: A Brahman converted to Buddhism. The Twelfth Patriarch of Ch'an.

Avatamsaka Sutra: The first important Sutra exposed by Buddha after his Illumination. It evokes the unity and interfusion of the Cosmos.

Awakening: This term refers to the state of the spirit of the man who 'knows' himself fully. The deep layers of the consciousness and subconsciousness have opened up to him. The Awakening passes the limits of the personal consciousness and moves to a universal consciousness. This corresponds to the state of Buddha or Nirvana or Satori.

Bodhi: Sanskrit term signifying Awakening or Wisdom or Illumination.

Bodhidharma: The Twenty-eighth Patriarch of Ch'an, considered by some authors as the founder of Zen (though in reality he was preceded by Tao An, Tao Cheng and Sheng Chao).

Buddha: Comes from 'Bodhi' and means 'Awakened' or Illuminated. Designates a state more than a person. The name given to Gautama of the dynasty of Cakyas and to whom is attributed the origins of Buddhism.

Buddhahood: State of one who has had the experience of the Buddhist Awakening, the state of felicity.

Ch'an: Chinese term equivalent to the Japanese 'Zen', meaning both the spiritual and material cosmos (version of Ch. Luk).

Co-extensiveness: Reciprocal actions which expand; the light of an atom stretches to its neighbors and to the Universe, and reciprocally.

Complementary: Simultaneous existence of two opposed principles, negative and positive, within one person or thing. These principles complete one another. Example: Electrons are at the same time corpuscular and undulatory.

Consciousness: The conscious part of man is only an infinitesimal part of the totality of consciousness, modern psychologists tell us. It is the most superficial part destined to reflect the daily and immediate problems. The subconscious, however, is much more important.

Corpuscular: Referring to concentrated particles of energy in the neutron.

Cosmic Mind: Should not be confused with the ordinary mentality. For Chan or Zen it is the Supreme Principle, encompassing matter and mind which the ordinary mentality can understand. The West would consider the Cosmic Mind to be some Divine Entity, impersonal and devoid of all anthropomorphism.

Dharma: Sanskrit term meaning 'law, truth, religion'.

Flame of 'Self': The Buddhist teachings compare the flux of the consciousness to a flame whose food are the five skandas: the forms, sensations, ideas, different reactions and consciousness. The 'me' is neither stable nor constant.

God: Term which is not specifically used in Buddhism, Ch'an or Zen. The notion of the divine in the east is less encumbered by anthropomorphism than in the West. It is also more impersonal. Taoism speaks of the 'Cosmic Principle', Ch'an and Zen refer to the 'Cosmic Mind'.

Hinayana: Buddhist school.

Huang Po: Pseudonym of the master Hsi Yun, the author of the 'Cosmic Mind'.

Identification: Attitude of mind by which we attach ourselves either consciously or not to beings or things, or by which we project ourselves into them.

Intelligence: Faculty of understanding and replying adequately to circumstances. In the West, intelligence is linked with mental agility and to wisdom. For Zen intelligence surpasses thought. It is either 'non-mental' or 'supra-mental'. It is not the result of accumulation of facts, memory recall, etc.

Interfusion: Action of penetrating and infusing something into something else. Physics teaches that 'all is in all'. A part of the energy of every object, apparently isolated, penetrates into all the objects of the universe, and reciprocally. From this point of view there are neither absolutely isolated or independent things or persons.

Karma: Sanskrit term meaning 'action, law of cause and effect', based on the theory of successive lives.

Kegon: Japanese sect very close to Zen, based on the notion of universal interfusion: 'All is in All'. An extension in Japan of the Hua Yen Chinese school.

Maha-Prajnaparamita Sutra: The collection of sermons made by Buddha, reaching 120 volumes, translated completely by the Chinese master Hsuang-Tsang. The base of the teachings of the Buddhist school of Mahayana and of Ch'an and Zen.

Mahayana: Great Buddhist school, one of the Indian bases of Chinese Ch'an and Japanese Zen.

Manas: Sanskrit term meaning 'mentality' (Latin: *mens*).

Me: The total of body, emotions, conscious and unconscious thoughts, memories, and knowledge which western man considers as the real and personal self and which Zen denounces for its illusory character. The limited consciousness of 'me' must be surpassed in order to accede to the experience of Satori, or Awakening in the Cosmic Mind.

Memory: The conscious and unconscious registering of passed events, experiences, sensations and knowledge. Zen and Krishnamurti's natural or technical memory, which does not necessarily reinforce the 'self and the psychological memories which provide an excessive identification of 'me' with the contents of natural memory.

Mentality: The ordinary mentality comprehends thoughts, memories, symbolic representations, knowledge and the conscious and unconscious collections of the individual psyche.

Nagarjuna: The Fourteenth Patriarch of Ch'an. He founded the Madhyamika School. He is considered the First Patriarch of the Tien Tai school. (In Japan, the Tendai school).

Nirvana: Sanskrit term expressing the extinction of the 'flame of oneself'. State of inner Awakening or complete illumination. Nirvana is not nothingness but Plenitude.

Prajnaparamita-Hridaya Sutra: The sutra of the heart; a condensation in 268 Chinese characters of the teachings of Buddha on the subject of wisdom written over a period of twenty-two years.

Reincarnation: Theory teaching the existence of successive lives of one soul in different bodies. It is supported by most oriental philosophies.

Rupa: Sanskrit term meaning 'form'.

Sastra: Commentary on a Sutra.

Stupa: Pagoda or monument containing sacred relics or bones of a sage or holy man.

Subconsciousness: Deep area of the ordinary consciousness which is generally ignored by man. Jung shows us that the subconscious forms the most important part of our psyche. The goal of psychoanalysis is to harmonize the consciousness with the subconscious.

Subconscious Zen: This is not related to the psyche but is the specific quality of the Cosmic Mind. The latter is an infinite consciousness but unconscious of itself. It neither implies nothingness nor intelligence.

Sutra: Teachings directly attributed to Buddha.

Tripitaka: The three divisions of Buddhist teachings (Sutras: sermons; Vinayas: rules; Sastras: commentaries).

Zazen: Position of meditation; sitting with crossed legs.

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