

III

ZEN SEEING INTO OUR ORIGINAL NATURE*

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The View, Path and Result

The View: Zen Mind, No Self, and the Wisdom of Kindness

"From the beginning all beings are Buddha."

-Hui-neng

Zen, *Ch'an (Dhyana)*, as with the other paths here considered, has its outer exoteric and inner esoteric understanding of the View, Path and Result. In the major traditions of our great Primordial Wisdom Tradition, the **View** of the nature of ultimate reality—the **Ground**—establishes the **Path** or Meditation which ultimately accomplishes the **Result** or Fruition of the View and Path. In Buddhism this Result is Buddhahood. The committed student practices both the exoteric, esoteric and "innermost secret" aspects of the View and Path in order to accomplish the Result. These distinctions of course, are dualistic conceptual subject-object elaborations. Essentially, prior to conceptual thought, there is no difference. Whether esoteric or exoteric, whether *tongo* (sudden enlightenment) or *zeno* (gradual enlightenment), *Zen* is ultimately *Buddhadharma* transmission from heartmind to heartmind, master to student, to world. Esoterically *Zen* is not bound to Buddhism. As with *Dzogchen*, *Zen* is the nondual (beyond subject and object, concept and belief) completion or perfection (primordial Ultimate *Bodhicitta*, *Busho*, *Fukatoku*), the indwelling heartmind presence (*vidya*, *rig pa*) of the Primordial Ground that is the prior unity of *samsara* and *nirvana*. In this radical nondual view, *samsara* and *nirvana* are the same. There is no *essential* difference. *That* is what must be realized. That is the intrinsic primordial awareness wisdom liberated now, just as it is.

Exoterically, *Zen* is a path to the goal of enlightenment. Esoterically, *Zen* is not a method or a path to a goal. *Zen* is immediate experience of our prior Buddha Nature, already present in the human form, always awake, here now. *Zen* is the release from our egoic self-contraction away from the sourceground. It is this egoic habitual, chronic contraction that obstructs realization of the self-perfected state of our actual, nature, our original face. The concept of a path to this realization implies a dualism of present location and future destination. Enlightenment is always in the future. Perish the thought. The miraculous paradox is this: the perennial wisdom truth is that from the beginning the primordial presence of the Ground, our supreme source is always present, awake, at the spiritual heart (*hridayam/kokoro*) of each human being. Our heart's desire? "It is already accomplished." This is the paradox of the "spiritual path." The great nondual liberation that is the realization of our always present Buddha Nature, this ultimate "Happiness Itself" is already the case. As *Maya*, the veil of ignorance (*avidya*, *ajnana*, *marigpa*) is consumed, this truth becomes a continuity of recognition, as our self-centered material and spiritual strategies for seeking happiness yield to the compassionate wisdom of kindness that is none other than our own happiness. Such is the paradoxical

logic of human happiness.

Perhaps the greatest expression of the wisdom of Mahayana Buddhism is found in the *Heart Sutra* (from the *Prajnaparamita Sutra*): "Form is emptiness, emptiness is form." (To approach these Perfection of Wisdom Sutras we must consult the profound interpretations of Nagarjuna, Chandrakirti, Tsongkapa, and Longchenpa). Our attachment to, or "gaining idea" of this truth is however, according to Suzuki Roshi, dualistic (p. 207). Form is "I", and emptiness is something else. There is a perceiving subject separate from its object. Further, "I" desire to possess or to realize "the goal" of "emptiness" realization through "my" activity of zazen (meditation). There is a subject/object, self/other split. There is a dualism of "my meditation" and my already present Buddha Nature. Yet the Sutra continues: "Form is form, emptiness is emptiness." This is the nondual, no separation view. Form and emptiness are a prior unity. The dualistic practice of "form is emptiness, emptiness is form," is just the necessary beginning. Beginning practice is always dualistic. When we forget about ourselves, about trying to gain something for ourselves, then our concern for others spontaneously arises. Skillful kindness spontaneously arises. And this is happiness. This process is the great secret of *wu-wei*, effortless non-seeking surrender to our primordial source, Tao. The activities, images and appearances of mind continue to arise, but there is no attachment, no self to cling to them, therefore no egoic self motive or "gaining idea." Therefore no Karma. Whatever arises, pure or impure, is allowed to "self-liberate" at the very instant of its arising. This is the nondual practice of "form is form, emptiness is emptiness." When Ummon was ill he was asked "How are you?" He responded, "Sun-faced Buddha, Moon-faced Buddha." Always Buddha. There is no dilemma. No problem. No dualism. There are apparent differences, but no essential difference in all of these arising independent existences, our myriad spacetime realities. *Samsara* and *nirvana* are identical. Form is form, emptiness is emptiness. We are form (epistemological realism). We are emptiness (epistemological idealism). Form and emptiness are a prior unity. These Two Truths cannot be separate. Thus there is one truth and it transcends, yet embraces all assertions, all predicates, all concepts about it. This Ultimate Truth that is nondual Reality Itself cannot be grasped by the concept-mind. Ultimately it can only be realized through the "pristine cognition" (*dharmadhatujnana*) that is our innate Buddha mind. "Truth is One. Many are its names" (*Rig Veda*). "The only difference between a Buddha and an ordinary person is that one realizes it, the other does not... Everything is Buddha from the beginning" (Hui-neng).

So, self-centered, dualistic practice is merely the beginning. Dogen said, "*shoshaku jushaku*," continue in error. "Establish your practice in your delusion." Even in delusion, our Buddha mind is always present. Just to continue with a single-minded effort, from mistake to mistake, is the essence of the Zen master's life; is the essence of the life in Zen. "Success is going from failure to failure without losing enthusiasm" (Winston Churchill). No problem. "Have a cup of tea."

Thus, form is just form, emptiness is just emptiness. Nothing more need be added. If we think we are accomplishing something special, our pride changes it. Pride is added baggage, the egoic "gaining idea" that derails our practice.

The ultimate nature of mind, of Reality Itself, is emptiness. In emptiness there is no self. Since there is no self, there is no path. Since there is no path, there is no goal. So there is nothing to seek and nothing to gain. Thus our activity is selfless, and happy.

"When 'self' occurs, so the thought of 'other.' From 'self-and-other' both attachment and aversion come. These two combined are the source of every ill" (Dharmakirti). This simple formula states the perennial problem of human evil. The antidote is our Buddha Nature, the selfless, unseparate, nondual original nature of us. This is simply the primordial wisdom Truth of What Is. **Regardless of what we think or believe, What Is, is. Our thoughts, concepts and beliefs about it are merely limits, relative conditions of What Is. Then we become the defensive advocates of these limits. To see this truth in each moment is the nondual practice.** "Perfect practice" then is the paradox of *shoshaku jushaku*. Begin right now, where you are. Continue to practice the teachings, and just continue. Never quit! Zen is simply seeing Buddha in everyday routine, in whatever arises, in whatever we do. Right here lives our original nature. Nothing special. So now, all that we do is spontaneous, authentic and kind.

Dogen Zenji said, "To give is non-attachment." Giving is the way of being happy. *Dana Prajna Paramita* means to "give" (*dana*) "wisdom" (*prajna*) at "each crossing," each step (*paramita*). To surrender (*pistas* / faith) desire/attachment to what appears, each moment, each step of our crossing of the river of our life, is giving. What we give is not the point. To give or surrender our egoic attachment to a wrong view, or a concept, or an opinion when we find that we are defensive; that is giving. To give a little kindness, or a bit of encouragement, a dollar, a poem, a truth of the teaching, a generous word, when given with little or no egoic gaining idea, that is the wisdom of Zen giving. This is true service to another, and through that we serve our own happiness. It is urgent to understand that, according to our Great Wisdom Tradition—whatever we do to lesson our habitual, narcissitic, egoic self-sense, and to expand our generous kindness in the service of reducing the suffering of other beings—increases our own happiness.

In Tibetan Buddhism this practice of giving without any gaining idea is *tonglen*. This **wisdom of kindness** is compassion (*karuna*), just as compassion is wisdom (*prajna*). "Practice these two as a unity." Such giving has absolute value that cannot be lost, even when it goes unrecognized. As we really begin to see the self-centered separateness of our effort at giving, we realize that our egoic attachment to all that we fear to give, or lose is illusory. Everything is interdependent, utterly connected. This is the great truth of interdependence (*pratitya samutpada*). Everything is transient and passes away. This is the great truth of impermanence (*anitya*). There is no essential intrinsic self (*anatman*) to defend. This is the great truth of selflessness. **So we are all connected and everything changes. Everything now is already gone. Gaté, Gaté. Gone beyond. The transcendence**

of ego-self and its illusory objects is already accomplished! This is what is. This is our choiceless choice. The present realization now of this primordial wisdom truth is the great mystery, the wondrous truth of *wu wei* (surrender / no seeking). This is the way of Tao. And this is the supreme view and practice of Zen. Now there is nothing left to do. Thus does the wisdom of kindness spontaneously arise in every thought and action, and in all that we do. So now be supremely happy!

Shoshin: The Beginner's Mind

This opening to receive everything given, and giving it again, moment to moment, without attachment or clinging, or any "gaining idea" is the essence of what Dogen Zenji and Suzuki Roshi call *shoshin*, "beginners mind." Beginners mind is Zen mind. With open mind, empty mind — free of concept and belief and negative emotion — the mind receives directly that which is given by reality to the senses and the heart. As the egoic concept-emotive logic of the discursive, rational mind is undermined by meditation and transmission from the master, step by step, the luminous primordial suchness, thatness, isness, emptiness, (*Tathata, shunyata, Wu/Mu*) that lives prior to the mind, that is source of the mind, is revealed, and in due course, integrated. **That** is what is to be realized. That is who we are between two thoughts. **That** is who we are before the *kosmos* was born.

Who is it? "What is Buddha Nature?" "What is Zen?" "Who am I?" The answers lie not in thought, but in the **realization** of the source or basis of all of **That**, everything that arises. **That** is the deepest expression of our primordially pure original nature. **That** is the original nature that is our Buddha mind, our supreme source in whom all objects and all minds arise. It is **That** that cannot be grasped and understood by dualistic concept mind. Yet, wonder of wonders, this presence is always present, at the heart (*kokoro, hridayam*), conceptually unelaborated, unfabricated, here, now "perfect just as it is."

Perhaps, above all, Zen mind is openness to the direct "heartmind to heartmind" transmission (*denbo*) from the master; for without the wisdom intervention of the master, the heart-mind cannot awaken from its dualistic egoic slumber. Yet the master can only mirror, guide and point. "My understanding has nothing to do with your understanding" (Issan). "This cannot be taught" (Gautama Buddha). The student must arrive at his/her own, unique understanding. The master merely mirrors **That** that is always already present, awake, at the spiritual heart of the student.

One of the great truths of our primordial Perennial Wisdom is this: without the guidance and love of the master, spiritual practice cannot begin to outwit the prideful defenses of the intellectual and the spiritualized ego. The ego-self is truly a false guru. It is told many ways. It is told in each of the traditions of our great Primordial Wisdom Tradition. One who chooses to act as his/her own guru has a profoundly foolish student.

What Is Zen? "Open Mouth, Already A Mistake"

What is the very essence or nature of mind—the nature of reality itself—beyond our thoughts, concepts and beliefs about it? What is this bright primordial awareness of mind without conceptual content? Thoughts, and the process of thought cannot think beyond itself, transcend itself, any more than the eye can see itself. "Who are you between two thoughts?" It is dualistic even to think about Zen. "Open mouth, already a mistake" (*Issa*).

There appears then, need of a bridge from the "dogmatic slumber" of reason to the truth of **That** (*tathata*) that lies beyond, that transcends yet embraces the thinking, feeling bodymind. Even if there were nothing beyond this, reason and "objective science" demand that we explore "the beyond" to discover this for ourselves. "To thine own self be true" (Socrates). Otherwise we have only our subjective unexamined **opinions**—subjective metaphysical assumptions—of the transcendental and the transpersonal. Indeed, the weight of our entire Great Wisdom Tradition urges us to go beyond—*gate, gate, paragate*—the lifestage limits of our present concept and belief systems. Do we not profoundly limit ourselves by our attachment and defense of these ever changing concepts and beliefs?

Thus, Zen is the bridge between human reason and the nondual emptiness base or source in whom everything arises. Zen is the practice of the subject seeking to know its object. Zen is that which the subject seeks, which the knowing subject finally "sees" or recognizes (*zenki, zenkan*), and ultimately realizes (*kensho/satori*) at ever deepening levels. Zen mind as *shoshin*, the beginner's mind (empty mind) is, with *zazen* (meditation), the bridge, the way, the method, and the daily practice. Zen mind as *kensho/satori/daigio tetei* is the basis of the recognition of this primordial base. Zen mind/Buddha mind is **That** (*Tathata*) that is to be realized. Zen mind is the nondual identification, then integration of the seeking/ knowing "subject" with the transcendental "object" of "knowledge" such that the ego or self (*yuga*) is absorbed, enlightened and transcended (*muga*). Zen is the "goal". Zen is the very essence or nature of mind. Zen is the Way (path). Zen is the bridge that makes the goal the path until the bridge itself is transcended in its nondual source. Zen is everyday routine. "Nothing special" (*wu shin*). Zen is the paradoxical negation of all of the above concepts. Zen is the surrender of any and ultimately all such speculation about the Zen of What Is. Zen is the understanding of the foolishness of the endeavor of the crutch and buttress of explanation. Such is the paradox of Zen.

"What is Zen?" asked a novice monk.

Master Hyakuja replied, "It's like riding an ox, and seeking to find it."

Said the student, "After we understand; then what is it?"

The master replied, "It's like riding an ox, and going home on it."

Asked the student, "Then, what do we do with it?"

"It's like an ox-herd who keeps it out of other people's rice fields."

What is Zen? "Three pounds of rice." What is enlightenment? "A dead stump to tie your donkey to" (Te Shan). Is Zen a religion? "In vast emptiness (*shunyata*), there is nothing holy" (Bodhidharma). "With much clay you can make a large Buddha." Zen is not sacred. Nor is anything else. "All that can be shaken shall be shaken." Zen is not tolerant of the dogma of exoteric organized religious *praxis*.

The Path: Integrating Wisdom and Compassion

Exoterically, *zazen* is formal sitting meditation, a yoga or method, or practice through which the dualistic perceptions and conceptions of the thinking mind are transcended in their nondual source. *Zazen* is the bridge between the relative, conditional truths of reason and causality and that supreme source. As subject-object dualism (the linear, two-valued, true-false dichotomies of thought) is the defining characteristic and very nature or condition of thought and its logical syntax of language, thinking must be transcended, then reintegrated. Concept-mind must be deracinated of compulsive conceptual thinking and ideation in order to integrate the reality that abides beyond (*gate, gate*). Thoughts and the experience of mind (*nyam*) continue to arise, but there is no egoic self-sense, no attachment, not even to yogic bliss. Experience is thereby self-liberated or transcended at the very instant of its arising. However, the "lower" aspect of mind (ego, *yuga, manas*), and the always already present and prior "higher" aspect of mind (*muga, bodhi, gnosis/jnana/yeshe*, primordial wisdom) are **apparently** separate. Exoterically (dualistically) then, *zazen* is the yogic bridge that links them. (The Sanskrit "*yoga*" — linking or union of the lower with the higher — is the etymological root of the Latin "*religio*" from which the English "religion" is derived.) It is the practice of *zazen* that frees the mind of its attachment or clinging to the objects of its thoughts, visions and images (even sublime great images) as they arise from the "lower" mind. *Zazen* illumines the intellectual egoic mind with the luminous, pure clear light of the source (*bodhi*) where the dualism of the reality of *samsara* is transcended and the realization that *samsara* (the cycles of suffering of the phenomenal world) and *nirvana* (what remains after the ego is "blown out", like a flame) are identical. Esoterically, this process is realization of *prajna* (conventional, discriminating wisdom) and *jnana/yeshe* (nondual Primordial Awareness Wisdom), the awakening to the Buddha Nature or Buddha essence (*Busho*) which is the essential emptiness base (*shunyata*) or Suchness (*Tathata*) of nondual Reality Itself. The expression of that in the world is compassion (*hesed, caris, karuna*), for wisdom is compassion, and compassion is wisdom. Where *karuna* is manifested, there is *prajna*. Where *prajna* is manifested, there is *karuna*. Where *karuna* is objective, *prajna* is subjective. Where *prajna* is objective, *karuna* is subjective. *Prajna* descends; *karuna* ascends. They are the same. "Descend with the view (*prajna*). Ascend with the conduct (*karuna*). Practice these two as a unity" (*Padmasambhava*). "Make the goal the path." This intention to integrate the goal and the path is accomplished to reduce the suffering of beings. We

dedicate anything and everything good that we understand and accomplish to this great theme. This is the great essence of the Mahayana, and the very heart of Zen.

Advanced Zen Practice

Suzuki Roshi's lineage continues Dogen's tradition of the nondual practice of *Shikan-taza* (*Chih Kuan* or *shamatha-vipashyana*) meditation based in "faith" (*pistis*, ego surrender) without an idea or object. *Chih* means tranquil mind (mindfulness). *Kuan* means insight from contemplation of *shunyata* (emptiness).¹ *Shikantaza* is "advanced" formless meditation using neither a *koan*, nor the following of the breath, nor a deity, nor any idea or image whatsoever. At the root of this practice is the profound faith and understanding that the single-minded persistence of the practice of objectless sitting mediation (*zazen*) and the following of the master's "pointing out" instruction (*denbo* during *dokusan* and *tiesho*), will surely lead to liberation, the realization/enlightenment of that prior, inherent condition that is our original nature, the Buddha Nature present in every sentient being, and indeed in all phenomenal existence. We are not separate from *That*. Thus, there is no need of effort or intention to become enlightened. Indeed, such a "gaining idea" will prevent it. (This is precisely the view of *Dzogchen*, Ch.II). **The greatest barrier to enlightenment (*kensho/satori*) is the idealization and dramatization of it. It is "nothing special" (*wu shin*). With practice, it comes and goes, and comes and goes—without effort (*wu-wei*)—until, ultimately, it comes and goes moment to moment now, forever. This result, this fruition, is known as Buddhahood.**

Shikantaza is an advanced practice for those who have developed equanimity, a subtle and stable practice, and a profound desire for enlightenment. Such an adept has usually spent years at sitting *zazen* and walking *zazen* (*kinhin*) and has experience as the Witness, dwelling at the root of attention, prior to the objects and images of thought and idea (Appendix A, lifestages 5 and 6). **The Zen practitioner and the non-practitioner live not in reality, but in his or her ideas or concepts about it. Zen practice is the purifying or distillation of attention, in all aspects of life, such that reality is experienced directly as it is (*kensho/shoshin*)—at the root of attention—untainted by concept, belief, or negative or positive emotion, even as it arises through body, voice and mind in the everyday lifeworld of "hewing wood and carrying water."**

A man once asked master Ikkyu, "What is the greatest wisdom?" The master wrote with his brush the word "Attention."

The man inquired further, "But surely there must be something more, something profound," the man implored.

Quickly Master Ikkyu wrote, "Attention, Attention, Attention."

"Just what does attention mean anyway," The man demanded.

Spoke the master, "Attention means Attention."

In the advanced nondual yoga practices of *Saijojo Zen*, *Dzogchen*, Essence *Mahamudra*,

¹ Yasutani Roshi prescribes "*Shikantaza*" ('just sitting') for advanced students.

Advaita Vedanta, and *Tao* all thought forms, mind forms, objects, visions, images, even great and sacred images (avataric and deity forms), are transcended in their nondual source. Here, dwelling at the root of attention, abides the great mystery of the nondual Primordial Awareness Wisdom, *Tao*, Absolute Consciousness-Being Itself, *Dharmakaya*, *Samantabhadra*, *Nirguna Brahman*. Ultimately the dualism of attention itself is released (6th and 7th stage practice) as the "state of presence" (*Atman*, *vidya*, *rigpa*, *logos/Christos*) of the Absolute Ground is lived moment to moment, while moving and acting in kindness and compassion through the world. To be sure, a most amazing paradox.

Nansen and a student were having a cup of tea. The student asked the master, "What is the true secret of Zen?" The master poured the student a cup of tea until it overflowed. Then he spoke, "Like this cup, you are filled to overflowing with your own ideas. How can I show you the secret unless you offer me an empty cup?"

Master Shozan was addressing his students on the dualism of thought. Raising his staff he spoke, "If you call this a staff, you deny it's eternal truth; if you do not call it a staff, you deny it's present fact. What exactly do you call it then?"

The Result: Seeing Into Unity of the Two Truths

"That everything is included in your mind, is the essence of mind."

- Suzuki Roshi

Zen is the liberating Result, the Fruition of the View and the Path. Just so, Zen is esoterically, the spirit or essence of all religion, morality, art, and culture. For without this spirit of Zen there is only the exoteric, conventional, the academic, the alienated and the banal. Thus Zen is, to the relative-conventional understanding, as arrogant and impudent as it is humble. As Zen is perfection or Buddha Essence in potential or latent form, it cannot be praised or blamed. To the concept-mind Zen is altogether paradoxical.

Zen is the fruition of the combined genius not only of India, China and Japan, but of our entire Primordial Wisdom Tradition. **Thus, like Dzogchen, Zen is not merely a religion or a philosophy which changes and evolves like the prevailing views of exoteric religion, science and culture. As Relative Truth (form), Zen is the manifested change and evolution of the ever changeless Tao. As Ultimate Truth (emptiness) Zen is the ever changeless Tao Itself, the very ground of being in whom form arises.** Zen is the tantric continuum of enlightenment and illusion, *nirvana* and *samsara*, good and evil. Zen is the process of the holarthic reconciliation, inclusion and transcendence of all dualistic spacetime reality in its unbroken whole, the primordial sourceground itself. Thus, Zen is the coalescence of the Two Truths. "Where goodness, beauty and truth are all present as one, there is Zen" (R.H. Blyth).

"Zen is not a state but an activity" (R.H. Blyth). *Satori*/Enlightenment, like love, is not a state, or a feeling, or an experience, but an activity, a continuity of discrete recognitions of the

Nature of mind—"brief moments many times"—continuous from now, to now, to now. Paradoxically, this "remaining naturally in the state" (*satori/vidya/rigpa*) is the **activity of choosing** nondual reality—moment to moment—over any other activity or state. Therefore, ego (*yuga*) and the egolessness (*muga*) of no-mind (transcendence of the dualism of mind) are both necessary parts of the process of Zen mind and Zen practice. Indeed, we accomplish *muga* through *yuga*. We must always remember, these two are not ultimately separate, but are actually an unseparate, non-conceptual prior unity. (We can make no ultimate non-conceptual assertion whatsoever about unity, or anything else because assertions are conceptual statements). We must have the discomfort, the "pinchability" of ego to provide the motive to transcend it. The transcendence of egoity then, with the resulting liberating wisdom and compassion is the fruit or result of Zen.

The nondual wisdom of emptiness recognizes the prior unity of the Two Truths—ultimate and relative. From ultimate emptiness the forms of relative spacetime reality arise interdependently (dependent arising, *pratitya samutpada*) from prior causes and conditions. "Cause and effect are just as real as they are unreal" (R.H. Blyth). **Without this emptiness base, no arising. With no arising, no suffering, no compassion, no Buddhas. It takes these two truths to understand the one truth that is Reality Itself. The nondual awakening to this truth is the fruition of Zen that may result in Buddhahood.** Again, at this level of non-conceptuality we can make no assertions about reality or Buddhahood, or anything else. This Buddha Mind, the very Nature of Mind, can only be realized directly—not at some future moment—but in this very moment now.

Therefore, from the view of Relative Truth, Buddhahood has a cause—the ego and its transcendence through the *sadhana* of the *praxis* of the path. Yet, "From the beginning all beings are Buddha." We are already Buddha mind. So Buddhahood is already our actual nature now. Yet it has a cause that makes it a future event (p.211). Our Great Wisdom Tradition resolves this paradox through the profound teaching of "The Two Truths" (Chap.II). Again, there is the all too real dimension of "Relative Truth," (*samvriti satya*), the unfolding of the "real" subject-object world of objective cause and effect—relative-conventional reality—and then there is the dimension of "Ultimate Truth" (*paramartha satya*), the atemporal, acausal, nondual unbroken whole that enfolds and embraces, yet transcends the relative spacetime dimension, and in whom its phenomena arise and participate. We live in these two worlds—the finite and the infinite—at once! And the secret is seeing these two, always—moment-to-moment—as an ultimate unity. The liberating result of this moment-to-moment recognition that is realization is meditative stabilization that may ultimately result in Buddhahood, the great happiness that cannot be lost.

Only the truly intelligent understand the principle of the identity of all things. They do not view things as apprehended by themselves, subjectively, but transfer themselves into the position of the things viewed. And viewing them thus they are able to comprehend them, and to master them. . . So it is that to place oneself in subjective relation with externals, without losing objectivity - this is Tao.

- Chung Tzu (author's translation)

And Tao is Zen.

So the fundamental principle of the Zen of nondual seeing is the simultaneous transcendence and inclusion of the subject-object split of dualistic perceptual and conceptual cognition of the continuum of the arising *kosmos*. ("*Kosmos*" here is the Pythagorean *kosmos* which transcends and includes the objective, physical phenomena of the mere spacetime cosmos.) And Zen is the liberating pristine cognition-Buddha gnosis-the recognition, then realization of the prior ontological unity of relative and absolute (The Two Truths) that is the nondual Nature of Mind. This essential mind essence is our supreme identity whose essence is primordial emptiness, whose nature is luminous clarity, and whose expression or manifestation is ultimate compassion (Ultimate Bodhicitta). In human beings this ultimate compassion is spontaneously expressed as compassionate activity—the wisdom of kindness—that is Relative Bodhicitta, the relative "cause" of Buddhahood.

A Brief History of Zen

Historically, Buddhism has profoundly changed, and has been changed, by each country it has entered. Zen (Ch'an in China) is a school of Mahayana Buddhism which entered China from India in about 521 AD with Bodhidharma (Daruma, 470-543), the twenty-eighth patriarch of Indian Buddhism and the first patriarch of the Ch'an/Zen tradition. Bodhidharma's *Shobo Genzo*, a profound collection of *teisho* (commentaries), is perhaps the greatest work in traditional Zen literature. Thus the Buddhadharmas (Jap. Buppo, the *Dharma* (truth) teachings of Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha) continues in Zen as an unbroken "heartmind to heartmind" transmission lineage from Shakumuni, the Buddha. It continues today throughout the world.

Zen is the short form of *Zenna* which is a Japanese translation of the Chinese Ch'an (*Ch'an-na*) which translates the Sanskrit *dhyana*, meaning meditation (contemplation) on emptiness (*shunyata*) the nondual source or nature of mind prior to, or beyond, or transcendent of all relative mind's dualistic distinctions. The Indian *dhyana* Buddhism of Bodhidharma blended with the Taoism of China to produce the great tradition of Ch'an Buddhism during the T'ang period with many great Ch'an masters, including the great sixth patriarch Hui-neng (Eno, 638-713). Hui-neng founded the Southern School with its new emphasis on *tongo* (sudden enlightenment). While the Northern School remained obscure, the

Southern School evolved into the "five houses/seven schools" (*goke-shichishu*). Other great masters of the T'ang and early Sung periods included Mat Su (Baso), Hyakujo, Tozan and Sozan (founders of Soto Zen), Joshu, Rinzai (founder of Rinzai Zen) and Ummon, author of the *Mumonkan* (1220) which includes the famous *Mu* koan (p.200).

Two of these lineages, Rinzai and Soto were exported from China to Japan and have since spread throughout the world. At the end of the 12th Century Eisai Zenji (1144-1215) brought Rinzai Zen (*Oryo* lineage) to Japan (1191). Early in the 13th Century the great Zen master, Dogen Zenji (1200-1253) brought the Soto lineage to Japan. Soto was founded by Tozun (807-869) and Sozan (840-901). Soto is the first two letters in the Japanese name of each. The Rinzai school was founded by Rinzai (d. 803).

Both traditions taught the essentials of the Ch'an tradition (seeing into one's actual original nature which is Buddha Nature (*Kensho/Satori*), but placed different emphasis on *zazen* and the use of the *koan*. In Soto, sitting meditation (*zazen* as *mokusho*) is stressed over *koan* (*kanna*) practice. *Dokusan*, the private direct transmission (*denbo*) sessions between master and student, and *tiesho* (the Roshi's commentaries) have been a fundamental part of Ch'an/Zen practice, and is still practiced with varying emphasis in Rinzai Zen and Soto Zen throughout the world.

While Zen flourished in Japan, Ch'an in China blended with Pure Land Buddhism (the cult of Amitabha, Jap. Amida) in the Sung and Ming periods (1279 forward) and the great tradition of Chinese Ch'an lineage transmission came to an end.

The great reformers of the Ch'an/Zen tradition were Hui-neng (630-713), the 6th and last Ch'an Patriarch, and the great 18th Century Rinzai Zen reformer Hakuin Ekaku (1687-1768). (p. 182)

It was Hui-neng who accomplished the synthesis of Indian Mahayana *dhyana* Buddhism (with its emphasis on both sitting meditation/*zazen*, and intellectual teaching) with the active and practical philosophy of the Chinese Taoism of Lao Tsu and his great disciple, Chuang Tsu.

Taoism emphasized the practical understanding of the eternal flow of change of the changeless supreme source, the nondual unbroken whole that is Tao. In contrast to the Indian mind, the Chinese mind could not accept the monkish lifestyle of the *dhyana* practitioners. Anyone who wouldn't work was suspect. It was Hui-neng and his immediate lineage, the great masters Ma Tsu (Baso), Nansen and Joshu who integrated the bringing of the "heaven" of *dhyana* into the "earth" path of "hewing wood and carrying water." The monk who didn't work, didn't eat. To this day Zen practice emphasizes meditation (*dhyana*) and enlightenment (*kensho/satori*) not in the *zendo* (meditation hall), but at work (*samu*) and in the spiritual crucible of the marketplace. Hui-neng's great teaching legacy to us is in the great *Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* (the *T'an-ching* or "Platform Sutra"), one of the great masterpieces of world spiritual literature (pp. 186-187).

A thousand years later, in Japan, it was Hakuin (1687-1768) whose leadership revived an intellectual and decadent Rinzai tradition into the vital living Zen that it is today

throughout the world. Under Hakuin, Koan practice was transformed from intellectual gamesmanship to its original profundity (p.137 ff).

Soto Zen continues to flourish in Japan and was introduced in the United States in 1958 by the great Zen Master Shunryu Suzuki Roshi (1905-1972), a direct spiritual descendant of Dogen. His lineage legacy continues today at the *Zen Center* in San Francisco, California. Roshi's *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* is among the most profound, and also readable texts in contemporary spiritual literature.

Zen and Our Primordial Wisdom Tradition

Esoterically, Zen, like all of the esoteric traditions of our Primordial Wisdom Tradition, transcends its Buddhist origins and conventional Buddhist practice. Whether the pinnacle of individual enlightenment, or the emptiness Base that is the primordial Tao in whom everything arises, Zen is indefinable and incomprehensible (*fukasetsu*), beyond all naming (*namarupa*), definition and concept. Zen is "known" only through direct experience. We barely approach it through language, prose and poetry.

As with Taoism, whose wisdom was assimilated by *Ch'an* Buddhism before it came to Japan as Zen, "The Tao that can be named is not the eternal Tao." Zen that can be described is not Zen. With the nondual yogas of *Dzogchen*, *Advaita Vedanta* and the Christian Gnosis of Light, Zen is the presence of the primordial perfection or completion, the perfect symmetry already present within each human form at the spiritual heart (*hridayam/kokoro*) and within every form of *samsaric* experience or existence. Esoterically, Zen is Tao, the direct nondual presence of that primordial source or nature of mind whose exoteric objects arise therein. Like *Dzogchen*, Zen is **That** (*Tathata*) nondual primordial wisdom (*gnosis/jnana*) experienced and realized by all of the *roshis*, *rishis*, saints, sages and *mahasiddhas*, in all of the world systems throughout the timeless *kosmos*. Zen transcends history and its origins. Zen as Tao was present before the worlds began. Zen as experience began with the first experience of a sentient being. Zen as conscious awareness began with the first human experience of the divine. Zen as enlightened experience began with the liberation of the first prehistoric yogi. Zen will continue as long as sentient beings respond to their transpersonal primordial source.

Therefore, as with the other perennial wisdom traditions—Valentinian Gnostic Christianity, *Advaita Vedanta*, *Dzogchen*—Zen is exoterically (conventional, academic Zen, *Bompu*, and "Beat" Zen), a practice for feeling better, or *Shojo* or *Daijo* for delivering us from the state of "ignorance" (*avidya*) to the "goal" of enlightenment *satori*. But esoterically, living Zen is the direct recognition (*kensho*) and then realization (*wu/satori*) of that presence of the supreme source (vertically), and then the compassionate giving (*dana*) or expression, or manifestation (horizontally) in the lifeworld of that prior perfection. And this is the nondual *Saijojo* Zen.

Shoshin or Zen mind must remain, from the beginning, the beginners mind, the open, empty, awake mind that includes all possibilities. *Shoshin* is great doubt. *Shoshin* is great faith.

Shoshin is great confidence in the face of doubt. These are the Three Pillars of Zen. *Shoshin* is flexible and unfixed, like the mind of a child, like an old man basking in the sun. It does not attach and defend its ideas, concepts and beliefs, for it has none. Zen mind is our vast original mind, "Big Mind", compassionate mind. "When our mind is compassionate, it is boundless" (Suzuki Roshi). The paradoxical "goal" of Zen practice then is to maintain the nondual beginner's mind, *wu-wei*, effortless surrender with no seeking, no goal or "gaining idea." "Make the goal the path."

Zen Mind, No-Mind, Buddha Mind: Letting It Be As It Is

The Reformations of Hui-neng and Hakuin

The fifth Ch'an patriarch, Hung-jen (Gunin) was attempting to determine his *dharma* successor. He asked his monks to create a poem (*gatha*) expressing their understanding of the *Buddhadharma*. The presumed *dharma* heir was Shen-hsiu (Jinshu). His gata read:

Our body is the Bodhi tree,
Our mind a Mirror bright;
Carefully we wipe them,
And let no dust alight.

But the novice monk and stable keeper Hui-neng (Eno, 638-713), having seen Shen-hsiu's *gatha*, submitted his own:

Bodhi is not a tree;
Nowhere is the mirror bright;
As there is nothing from the beginning,
Where can the dust alight?

Hung-jen immediately understood that, although Shen-hsiu's *gatha* expressed a deep but traditional and dualistic understanding of the *dharma* as transmitted from Bodhidharma, the twenty-eighth Indian Buddhist patriarch and first Ch'an patriarch. Hui-neng's understanding transcended the traditional exoteric teaching with its dualism of experiencing subject and external, separate observed object. The two *gathas* above represent the transition from the dualistic to the nondual view in Ch'an Buddhism. Just so, *Ati Dzogchen* represents the same transition from the outer tantras to the inner tantras and ultimately to the subtlest *Ati* yoga of *Dzogchen* practice.

The subtle nondual thread which runs through the fabric of our great Primordial Wisdom Tradition is expressed in many ways. In the *Vajrayana* tradition of Buddhism we have, in the highest inner tantra, *Dzogchen* (*Ati yoga*), Garab Dorje's statement: "The nature of mind is Buddha from the beginning." There is no separation between mind (and the objects and beings arising therein), and Buddha. All is Buddha mind. Everything is Buddha essence or Buddha Nature (*busho*, *buddhata*, *Tathagatagarbha*) "from the very beginning." "From the beginning, all beings are Buddha" (Hakuin). The objects of mind, and the experiencing subject are at root, identical. They share the same essence or emptiness base. This is the nondual base, the primordial womb in whom everything arises. So this is the difference between relative mind, "Small Mind," and the nature or essence of mind, "Big Mind," that is its absolute or supreme source, the primordial matrix of all arising objective and subjective phenomenal

reality. This ontological duality expresses the perennial "Two Fundamental Truths" — Ultimate Truth, the nondual Source, and all the realities of Relative Truth arising therein. These Two Truths are in essence an unseparate and inseparable prior unity. Seeing them thusly, then acting in accordance, is Zen enlightenment.

This nondual Zen understanding—The View—of the Mahayana transcends, includes and pervades the gradualist, dualistic view of the Sutras, just as the nondual *Dzogchen* teaching transcends and includes the dualistic "antidotal" view of the outer tantras (*Kriya*, *Carya* and *Yoga*), and even of the inner tantras of *Mahayoga* and *Anuyoga*. The "higher" or innermost teaching is superior to the "lesser" yogas not so much qualitatively, but quantitatively in that the former is more direct, inclusive and less dualistic than the latter, and therefore more directly and expediently reveals or mirrors the great liberating source.

The *Prajnaparamita Sutra* of the *Mayayana* tradition of Buddhism, like the *Hinayana Sutras* (and the Gnostic texts) are considered by scholars to be didactic and dualistic. But within them, particularly the *Heart Sutra* (*Mahaprajna paramita* or *Hridaya Sutra*) and the *Diamond Sutra* (*Vajrachchedika Sutra*), is the profound intuition of the nondual nature of mind. The great Indian Buddhist master, logician and poet, Nagarjuna (2nd Century) has interpreted these *Sutras* in this way. Whether Hui-neng and Hakuin were familiar with the nondual view of Nagarjuna, what is clear is the nondual understanding of all three of these great sages.

Hui-neng's essential statement is this: "From the beginning not a thing is. Seeing into one's self-nature is seeing into emptiness (*shunyata*)." Hakuin's essential statement (in the *Zazen Wasan*) is: "From the beginning all beings are Buddha." This is the great nondual truth that is transmitted directly from the *Dharmakaya* through the historical *Nirmanakaya* Shakyamuni Buddha and on through the teaching transmission lineages to all of those with an eye to see.

From emptiness the wondrous being appears. . . no-mind includes everything. . . even before we practice it, enlightenment is here.
Without any idea of attainment, you are always Buddha.

-Suzuki Roshi (1970)

This great truth (*anatman*/no-self/dependent origination) is contained in the *Hinayana*, *Theravada*, Mahayana, and Vajrayana *dharma* teachings (*sutra*, *shastras* and *tantras*) often in a dualistic representation. It is contained in the expressly nondual view of Ati Yoga (*Dzogchen*) and the *Anuttara* tantras of the Essence *Mahamudra* of the Vajrayana, in the nondualism of the Mahayana *Saijojo* Zen teaching through Hui-neng (Eno) and his immediate Ch'an *dharma* successors Ma-tsu (Buso), Nan-chuan (Nansen), Chao-Chou (Joshu), Huai-hai (Hyakujo), Huang-po (Obaku), Lin-chi (Rinzai), Tung-shan (Tozun), Ts'ao-shan (Sozun), wu-men (Mumon), and from China to Japan in Esai Zenji (1141-1215,

Rinzai/Oryo School), and Dogen Zenji (1200-1253, Soto School).

In Japan, a thousand years after Hui-Neng's reformation of Chinese Ch'an Buddhism, after a period of intellectual dualism wherein *prajna* (wisdom) and *dhyana* (zazen/meditation) had again become separated, Hakuin Zenji (1685-1768), reformed Japanese Zen and the nondual practice and expression of Zen was restored.² Before Hui-neng became the 6th Ch'an Patriarch, Ch'an Buddhism was essentially Indian *dhyana* Buddhism, with its emphasis on the *dhyana* practice of *tso-ch'an* (zazen), or sitting meditation. D.T. Suzuki has termed this the "dust wiping type of meditation" for it emphasizes the dualistic practice of wiping the dust from the bright mirror of the mind ("keeping watch over purity"), but it cannot transcend the mind to be united with its primordial, nondual source. The fundamental difference between the passive "quietism" of the traditional approach of Shen-hsiu and the approach of Hui-neng was in the view of Buddha Nature (*busho*). For Hui-neng, Ch'an (Zen) was "seeing into one's original nature" (self-nature), which is "nothing from the beginning." "*Shujo honrai hotoke nari*" (all beings are endowed with Buddha Nature from the beginning). Such a nondual view was a truly radical idea through which dualistic exoteric Ch'an/Zen Buddhism was freed from the dualistic view of Indian Hinayana Buddhism.

"We talk of seeing into our own original nature, not of *dhyana* or of attaining enlightenment In self-nature there is from the beginning not a thing that is attainable" (Hui-neng).

Here is the pith and the gist of Zen. It is not merely the quietism of sitting zazen that leads to enlightenment—though zazen prepares the mind to open to natural *satori*—but truly **seeing** (*kensho*, *satori*), and **knowing** (*wu*, *gnosis*) that one's own original self-nature is "always already" liberated, enlightenment itself. This is the immediate recognition and ultimate realization. Indeed, clinging or attachment to the peace and bliss of zazen practice, or the striving or seeking motive (desire) to enlightenment, will effectively prevent enlightenment. "Remaining naturally in the state (*satori*, *rigpa*, *vidya*) is the practice." "Nothing special." In the *T'an-ching* Hui-neng states that "If the view is dualistic there can be no enlightenment. . . . The truth is understood beyond the mind (*hsin*, *sems*, *citta*), not by *tso-ch'an* (zazen) sitting."

This dualism between *dhyana* (meditation) and *prajna* (wisdom) which twice stalled the growth of Ch'an/Zen may be understood thusly: If *prajna* is awakened only through the activity of *dhyana*, then *dhyana* is prior, thus the two are separate and a dualism exists.

We see into our own true nature, our Buddha Nature which is *shunyata* (emptiness), through the illusory objects, concepts, and beliefs of the mind by the illuminating clear

² Other expressly nondual views (formulations or representations) of the dharma appear in Shankara's *Advaita Vedanta*, in the *Madhyamaka* (Middle Way) of Nagarjuna and Chandrakirti, in Valentinian Gnostic Christianity and in the Taoism of Lao Tsu and Chuang Tsu. Expressly dualistic representations of the *dharma* teaching are found in the Buddhist *Vaibhashika* and *Yogachara*, in *Sankhaya*'s separation of *Purusha* and *Prakriti*, and the Hindu Yoga systems of *Nayaya*, *Vaisheshika* and *Mimamsa*, as well as the dualistic exoteric conventional representations of the major world religions.

light of *prajna*. *Prajna* is the opening to receive the truth of *dharma* that our true self-nature is Buddha Nature, then expressing this original nature through compassionate activity in the world. Thus, seeing into our original nature is "leaving it as it is" and is just being That (*tatata*/suchness/*shunyata*). *Prajna* is openness to receive the truth of *shunyata*. And *dhyana* (*zazen*) is the simultaneous practice, the yoga, the *sadhana*. But their essence is the same. No conceptual thought (*wu-nien*) is involved. The third aspect of this triad is *sila* (conduct, morality) which flows from *prajna* and *dhyana*. This triad of *prajna*, *dhyana* and *sila* is analagous to View, Meditation and Conduct in *Dogzchen* and *Mahamudra*.

For Hui-neng then, *prajna* and *dhyana* are not separate, but identical. Our self-nature recognizes or realizes itself, its authentic or original nature through directly experiencing or seeing this great ultimate truth (*paramartha*), Reality Itself. This seeing (*kensho*) is *prajna*. The dualistic view separates the seeing from That (*Tathata*) great truth being seen. In Hui-neng's nondual view, the **activity** of seeing unites the seer with that seen. Seeing is the activity of *kensho/satori*. *Prajna* is receptivity or opening to it. The reflected objects appearing through the bright mirror of the mind are transcended in their source, and one sees that the perceiving self and Reality Itself are identical. There is no separation, no separate other. There is no dualism. No dilemma. No problem whatsoever. From the realization of this view, compassionate activity to reduce the suffering of sentient beings spontaneously arises. Is *dhyana* prior? Is *prajna* prior? From the nondual view they are a prior unity, a relationship of identity.

It is significant in this regard that Hui-neng changed the terminology for "seeing into the nature of mind" from *k'an-ching* to *chien-hsing*. The Chinese character *k'an* means to observe from above or from without, as though the observer and that observed were separate. This is the classical, dualistic, exoteric objectivist view of science and religion in both the East and the West. Observer and that observed, spiritual aspirant and the goal of perfect happiness or godhead are viewed as essentially separate. The character for *chien* means "to see" or "pure seeing" and does not imply or connote a separation of observer from that observed, of practitioner from the "goal" of practice. When combined with *hsing* (mind) *chien-hsing* becomes "essential nature of mind", the direct seeing into it, self-seeing, not separate observation of it from without. Therefore, seeing something, a specific object is *k'an-ching*. Seeing into one's primordial original nature—*chien-hsing*—is paradoxically, no-seeing, which arises in "no-mind" (*wu-hsin*). When seeing has no reference to an object or condition, that is, when seeing is non-intentional—consciousness with no intentional object—the pure unconditioned, intuitive realization of the all inclusive source, it is "no thought" (*wu-nien*) and no-mind (*wu-hsin*). This direct, non-conceptual seeing into one's primordial original nature (*chien*) is the liberation from ignorance and suffering that is enlightenment itself (*kensho/satori*, *wu*). In the Vajrayana the self-perfected nature is the presence *rigpa* (*vidya*) of the primordial matrix, the ground or base or source. The Chinese character *wu* is "my heart-mind," thus it connotes the emotive (*bhakti*) "seeing or recognition/ realization of my own essential heart-mind."

“Seeing” (*kensho*) is a perceptual-emotional, even devotional process. Hui-neng speaks of the nondual identity of *dhyana* and *prajna*:

What is most fundamental is *Dhyana* (*ting*) and *Prajna* (*chin*)
... do not be deceived that *Dhyana* and *Prajna* are separate. They
are one. *Dhyana* is the body of *Prajna*, and *Prajna* is the use
(*upaya*, means) of *Dhyana*. . . *Dhyana* is in *Prajna*; *Prajna* is in
Dhyana. . . they are complimentary in practice (*sadhana* the path)
... the view that one must precede the other makes a dualism of
the *Dharma*.³

For Hui-neng, as for Hakuin, *dhyana* is not the "quietism" of sitting-only zazen, but the actions and activity of seeing, hearing, moving, conduct, thinking, eating, sleeping, all of the activities of a human being. *Dhyana* is activity (openness) as *prajna* (wisdom). ***Prajna* (wisdom) is the harnessing of the primordial prana energy (lung, ch'i) through meditation expressed and transmitted as compassionate activity (karuna). Prajna wisdom is dhyana meditation in action.** Zazen is bringing the purity and luminosity of no-mind/Zen mind—the primordial awareness wisdom (*Tao*, *gnosis*, *jnana*, *yeshe*)—into the everyday activity of the earth path of compassionate service to oneself and others, indeed, to all sentient beings. And this is wisdom (*prajna*). Wisdom and meditation are essentially the same—two sides of one reality—always a prior unity. Again, the relation is one of identity. Zazen (meditation)—not merely sitting meditation—is the activity (the action or conduct) of wisdom. **Thus, Hui-neng's great insight created a reformation that opened Chinese Ch'an Buddhism to the nondual view. Just so, Hakuin accomplished the same reformation for Japanese Zen Buddhism a thousand years later.**

From Ignorance to Bliss: Much Ado About Nothing

The perennial question of spiritual practice is this: How does one move from egoic ignorance (*avidya*, *marigpa*, *hamartia*/sin) to the bliss of realization? What is the nature of this transition from Relative Truth of phenomenal reality to the Absolute Truth which transcends yet contains all truth and all being; from the limited world of the conditional ego to the enlightenment/*samadhi*/*satori* of *shunyata* emptiness that is *Tao*. In exoteric Ch'an and Zen Buddhism the question is one of the transition from *mayoi* (*mi*) to *satori* (*wu*); from *samasara* to *nirvana*. In the *Sanatana Dharma* of the Hindu religious complex this transition from ignorance to happiness is the growing through *bindu* to *ojas*. In dualistic

³ Hui-neng, *The T'an-ching* (Jap. *Dan-gyo*), *The Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* ("Platform Sutra"). Some Scholars believe that the *T'an Ching* was written by an unknown author after Hui-neng's death. Myths of origin and interpretation are always inextricably interwoven. Exoterically considered, this is of historical interest. Esoterically, the truth of the teaching (*dharma*), when it is the truth, transcends historiographic and hagiological explanation. The truths of the sutras and tantras remain the truths of the dharma regardless of the specific exoteric origins of that truth.

pagan and neo-Platonic Gnostic Christianity it is the transition from ignorance or sin (*hamartia*) to the nondual Depth (*Bathos*) in whom arises the fullness of the *Pleroma* (divine realm) of *Abba*, the Primordial Father who is the very *Bathos*/depth/emptiness. And all of this through the activity or agency of *sophia* (relative wisdom) and the *gnosis* (ultimate wisdom) that transcends and embraces it. In the esoteric and nondual teaching of all the traditions "The View" is the pure seeing (*kensho*) or realization (*satori*) that *samsara* and *nirvana* are identical. The polarities of this duality are subsumed in the Primordial Awareness Wisdom that is nondual *jñāna/gnosis*. With the realization of this through the stages of meditative stabilization—the accomplishment of *shamatha* and *vipashyana* (*yoriki*)—stabilized, permanent enlightenment may result.

Regarding the nature of this view: Is liberation/enlightenment a sudden, discrete step-function (*tongo*), or is it a gradual learning process (*zengo*, continuity)? It depends on the View, relative or absolute. Thus it is both.

The alleged debate between Hui-neng (Southern School) and Shen-shiu (Northern School) that began with the two *gathas* (p.182), was this: Do we wipe the dust of relative conditional existence from the bright mirror of the mind, and polish the tile until it becomes a mirror, and by these purifying activities (*zazen*) gradually reach enlightenment, as Shen-shiu argued with his *zengo*, the gradualist doctrine? Or do we follow the nondual way of Hui-neng and simply hew wood and carry water and continue in the gentle activity and compassionate conduct of our daily practice (including *zazen*), without any "gaining idea" for enlightenment, confident that our inherent Buddha Nature is always present within, at the heart, and that in any given moment we may choose to recognize it. As these brief *satoris* become a continuity of recognition, liberation and then Buddhahood may result. Here is Hui-Neng's eloquent and passionate argument from his *Platform Sutra*:

All the Buddhas of the past, present and future, and all the Sutras (abide) in the self-nature (*tsu-hsing*) of each one where they were from the very beginning. . . There is within oneself that which knows (*prajna*), and from this source comes enlightenment (*wu*). Ignorance arises through thoughts (concepts) and no one, however wise, can help such a one. But in enlightenment through *prajna* all ignorance vanishes in an instant and the actual self-nature is realized. This realization may lead to Buddhahood. This state (activity) of *prajna-samadhi* is *wu-nien* (no-thought), or *wu-hsin* (no-mind).

- Hui-neng, *T'an-ching* (Yampolsky, 1967)

The path of Hui-neng and the Southern School then, is the path of sudden enlightenment (*tongo*), seeing at once, "brief moments, many times" the Buddha Nature

that is always present “from the very beginning” (This is also the view of the *Dzogchen* and *Mahamudra* of the Vajrayana). Indeed the first Buddhist *tongo* transmission form “heart-mind to heart-mind” was that from Shakyamuni Buddha to his great disciple Mayakashyapa, the first Indian Buddhist patriarch. When the mind is prepared and open through the practice of the path, one may find oneself suddenly taken up by the illuminating clear light (*kensho/satori/vidya/rigpa*), the presence of the very nature or source of the mind. Here, the dualism of conditional, relative existence is transcended yet embraced in the nondual “primordially pure” supreme source, the emptiness (*shunyata*) base or matrix in whom all relative existences arise, dwell and return. This is the enlightenment that “may lead to Buddhahood.” (For further discussion of the “sudden” versus “gradualist” debate, see page p.216.)

Thus, in the expanding continuity — “brief moments, many times — of true seeing into one's original self-nature one realizes that this luminous, awake nature of mind is *shunyata*, already present from the very beginning. Indeed, that is always our essential Buddha nature, always abiding at the spiritual heart (*hridayam*) of each human being. “Wonder of wonders, all beings are Buddhas.” The apparent need to wipe, polish and purify our defiled conventional nature in order to realize this essential Buddha nature was a dualistic illusion based in our unawakened state of ignorance. With the realization that the clear luminosity of *prajna* is ontologically prior to ignorance, and that it is truly our original self-nature as “it was from the very beginning,” then indeed, “where can the dust alight?” Again, this primordial presence (*vidya/rigpa*) of our actual self-nature is “always, already present.” We need merely to recognize it. Yet it is veiled by the obscurations (ignorance/*avidya*) of *Maya*. The mind training of the Path gradually removes this veil so that we can suddenly see (*kensho*) what is. As we accomplish this in a continuity of moment to moment *kensho/satori* through the *sadhana* of practice in the company of the master (*satsang*) and the *sanga* (fellowship of practitioners) we are liberated from the obstructive ignorance — negative emotions (desire/attachment, anger/aggression, ignorance) and *satori/* enlightenment is now our ordinary state of mind. Thus do we accomplish *shamatha* (mindfulness) and *Vapashyana* (penetrating insight) and enter into later *bhumi* stages of the Bodhisattva's path to omniscience of perfect Buddhahood.

Ultimately, we realize that even the bright mirror of the mind is an illusion, or merely a metaphor for “nowhere is the mirror bright.” What is it then, that remains when the fiery flux of the appearances of mind is blown out? (*Nirvana* literally means “blown out,” like a flame). What is to be realized here is the prior unity of the “yogi's great bliss” (*ananda/mahasuka*) with the primordial wisdom (*jnana/yeshe/gnosis*) of transcendental *prajna-samadhi* of no-mind that is our true original nature from the very beginning. This is *sahaj samadhi*, the union of bliss and emptiness. Ignorance then, is simply an ignoring or refusal to recognize our actual identity, the supreme identity that is here now, indwelling, at the spiritual heart as our original Buddha Nature. Ignorance is *hamartia* (sin), literally

"missing the mark" of our primordial original self-nature. Ignorance is *avidya-maya*, the power of the "concealer truths" of relative-conventional reality ("Small Mind") to cloak (*adhyesa*) the numinous presence (*vidya*) of *paramartha*, the Ultimate Reality ("Big Mind") that is its very source. Ignorance is *avidya* (*ajnana*, *marigpa*), the dualistic view of confusing the ego self of the transient phenomenal world of relative, conventional reality with the unconditional, transcendental self that is no-self, our immediate Zen mind-Buddha mind, our Buddha Nature (*tathgatagarbha*) whose very source is *shunyata*, empty, luminous, awake, compassionate, nondual intrinsic primordial awareness itself. Again, as this presence is integrated moment to moment in the lifeworld as self-less *prajna*-compassion the result or fruition is Buddhahood—the unity of appearance and emptiness, the unity of bliss and emptiness—ultimate Happiness Itself (Zen and Dzogchen, p.209 ff).

Wu-Wei **On the Paradox of Seeking**

You have always been one with the Buddha, so do not pretend
you can attain this oneness by various practices.
If, in this very instant, you could know that it can never
be attained by effort. . . you would now be the Buddha Mind. . .
Do not seek Buddhahood. Your seeking is doomed to failure.

-Huang Po (Kraft, 1988)

The *wu-wei* that does not aim at *wu-wei*, is truly *wu-wei*.

-Lao Tzu

Let it be, as it is and rest your weary mind. All things are perfect
exactly as they are.

-Shakymuni, The Buddha

Keeping this *wu-wei* wisdom view of not seeking in mind, we hew wood and carry water,
wipe the dust and polish the tile. Have a cup of tea.

The Essentials of Zen View and Practice

Bodhidharma's Four Statements of Zen

"Without past, present or future; empty, awake mind."

When Bodhidharma arrived in China (circa 521) he found a dualistic Buddhism much removed from its Zen spirit, either engaged in highly intellectual and speculative metaphysical philosophy, or trapped in compassionless moral precepts ostensibly passed down from the Buddha. The essence of Buddhism, the unified practice and expression of *prajna/dhyana/sila* (wisdom, meditation, conduct) appeared to be entirely absent. It is this cultural context in which the great sage transmitted his great *Four Statements*.⁴⁵

1. A special transmission outside the orthodox teaching of the scriptures (*kyoge-betsuden*)
2. No dependence on sacred writings (*furyu-monji*)
3. Direct pointing to the heartmind (*jikishi-ninshin; kokoro*)
4. Seeing into one's original nature, and realization of Buddhahood (*kensho-jobutsu*)

The transmission of the Buddhadharma (teaching of the Buddha) through sacred scriptures (*sutras, shastras* and *tantras*) is not sufficient according to Ch'an/Zen, and requires the direct "heartmind to heartmind" (*ishin-denshin denbo*) transmission from master to disciple. The first such transmission of the *dharma* was from Shakyamuni Buddha to his *dharma* successor the great Mahakashyapa, the first Indian Buddhist Patriarch. Thus, although the sacred writings of the *dharma* as transmitted through the *sutras, shastras, and tantras* are important, they are not sufficient, and must not be depended upon entirely. First, they must be "introduced" by direct *dharma* transmission from a master.

The Chinese character *hsin* (Jap. *kokoro*), usually translated as "mind," or "heartmind" may also mean "heart, spirit, soul, consciousness, thought," etc. Like such terms in other

⁴ Some contemporary scholars hold that the *Four Statements* actually originated much later, with the Ch'an master Nan-ch'uan (Nansen, 745-835), or with Hui-neng. (Eno, 638-713). Hui-neng's authorship of the *T'an-ching* ("Platform Sutra") is also in doubt. Indeed, some doubt the historical existence of Bodhidharma altogether. Historically such questions are of interest. However, esoterically the historical existence of any particular master, including Jesus or Shakyamuni Buddha have no effect on ultimate truth (*paramartha*) the supreme source *shunyata*, Tao, Brahman, etc) that is the Primordial Wisdom Teaching. Primordial awareness Itself – Tao – is the prior base or source of all apparent phenomenal arising, including the Buddha, dharma and sangha. This supreme source remains unconditional by our relative thoughts and beliefs about it. Therefore, the truths of this great nondual Primordial Wisdom Teaching are not conditioned by specific historical incarnations, interpretations or beliefs. "There are many, many ways for the teacher and the teaching to appear" (Namkai Norbu).

⁵ Compare these *Four Statements of Zen* with the *Three Statements of Garab Dorje* and the *Six Vajra Verses* of Vairochana (Chap. II).

languages, it has exoteric and esoteric denotations and connotations. In Zen it indicates spirit or heartmind union with ultimate primordial awareness itself, with our actual indwelling Buddha Nature (*Bussho*). Bodhidharma's third statement "Direct pointing to the heart-mind" has this connotation. This statement is essentially identical to the first statement of Garab Dorje's *Three Statements Which Strike the Essential Point* in the *Dzogchen* of Vajrayana Buddhism: "Direct transmission of the source of one's original nature" (Ch.II).

In the fourth statement, "Seeing into one's original nature" is *kensho* or *satori* (seeing nature, or direct seeing). As this direct seeing is deepened through practice and training (*zazen*, *koan* training and *dokusan*) it ultimately and in due course becomes the enlightenment-*samadhi* of one's inherent Buddha Nature, and may "progress" to the profound realization of Buddhahood. The paradox here is, of course, that every sentient being is "endowed with Buddha Nature from the very beginning," although one who is not on the path (*bonpu-no-joshiki*) has little or no awareness of it.

The Five Types of Zen

Early in the ninth century the Ch'an master Kuei-feng (Keiho Zenji, 780-841) of the Katak School classified Ch'an (Zen) into five types according to their substance and purpose. All five utilize the practice of *zazen* (*tso-ch'an*), but to different ends. Some are directed to exoteric, outward, relative-conventional goals, some esoterically, toward enlightenment, and ultimately, Buddhahood.

It is useful to note that all of the major religious traditions make some use of Zen as *zazen* (prayer or contemplative practices). The religions which emphasize *dhyana* or meditation (Taoist yoga, the yogas of the *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, *Vedanta* and other Hindu religions utilize *zazen* (sitting meditation) to a greater degree than Islam or Christianity. Yet the esoteric stream of these latter two also emphasize meditative prayer and contemplation (the Sufis and Valentinian Gnostics).

1. **Bompu Zen** (*Bonpu*, or "ordinary" Zen): Zen practice without the motive or intention to liberation, for physical and mental well-being, relaxation, or stress management. *Bompu* does not address the dualistic mass-mind delusion that humanity and Buddha Nature, matter and spirit, are separate. *Bonpo* does not speak to the truth that the Buddha Nature and humanity are an unseparate prior unity.
2. **Gedo Zen** (the "outside way"): Religious teachings outside the Buddhist context. The contemplative practices of Christianity, Islam, Confucianism, Shinto, Jainism, the Hindu Yoga Systems including *Vedanta* and others. *Gedo* also includes meditative practices (*joriki*) pursued to gain "supernatural" powers (*siddhis*), or to be reborn in some "heaven."
3. **Shojo Zen** (Lesser Vehicle, Hinayana Buddhism): Zen practice the motive of which is Arhathood, or enlightenment for oneself only, which differs from the Mayayana ideal of the Bodhisattva whose intention is to continue upon the cycle (wheel of *samsara*) of death

and rebirth for the sake of aiding the enlightenment of all sentient beings. The goal of *Shojo* may be the condition of *Mushinjo* (blank Zen) where the senses and ordinary consciousness are ceased. If *Mushinjo* is maintained at death, it is said that the adept escapes rebirth in *samsara*.

4. **Daijo Zen** (Greater Vehicle, Mahayana Buddhism): The purpose of *Daijo* is enlightenment, the seeing into one's original nature (*kensho, satori*) and realizing the Mayayana Way in the everyday life-world (*mujodo-no-taigen*). Here zazen becomes more than a means to a goal, but is the actual realization of the Buddha Nature (Buddha mind) that lives within each human form and indeed, within all sentient beings. Here the Bodhisattva ideal is active. The practitioner vows to continue on the wheel of death and rebirth until all sentient beings are enlightened.

5. **Saijojo Zen** (Highest or Supreme Vehicle): The great nondual transcendental Zen practice of all of the Buddhas in all worlds, throughout all time. Analogous to *Dzogchen* (Ati Yoga) or the Essence *Mahamudra* of the Inner Tantras (*Anuttara* tantras) of the Vajrayana (Diamond Vehicle). Here there is no gaining motive to enlightenment although the Bodhisattva ideal is present. The practice of the path becomes the goal. "Make the goal the path." Both Rinzai and Soto Zen utilize *Daijo* and *Saijojo*. Rinzai places emphasis on koan practice. Soto places emphasis on the *shikantaza* (*shamatha-vipashyana*) zazen practice of Dogen Zenji. *Mujodo no traigen* is the actualization of Saijojo Zen with meditative stabilization—*samadhi*—and its spontaneously arising "wisdom of kindness," compassionate activity in the everyday lifeworld.

Kuei-feng's classification is useful today within the context of Buddhist Zen. Esoterically considered however, the truths of Zen and zazen are the truths of our great Primordial Wisdom Tradition and obtain throughout all of the religious and philosophical traditions of Humankind. Yet, throughout this Great Tradition one finds at both the pinnacle and the base of each individual tradition a nondual "highest" or subtlest teaching and practice, the "perfect practice" for the prepared devotee working with a qualified master. This subtlest level of practice may lead directly to liberation/enlightenment. In the *Mahayana* tradition this subtle nondual practice is *Saijojo Zen* and the *Madhyamaka* of the Definitive Meaning. In the *Vajrayana* tradition it is *Dzogchen* (*Nyingma*) and Essence *Mahamudra* (*Kagu*). In the Hindu tradition it is the *Advaita Vedanta* of the great Shankara. In the Taoist tradition it is the *Yoga of the Returning of the Light*.

The Five Levels of the Zen Path

It is wise for the student and the teacher to periodically, authentically discuss (*dokusan*) the aspiration level of the student. In Zen, as in other "spiritual" practice, aspiration arises in five levels or classes. The student's meditation practice will be specific to the level of aspiration. Yasutani Roshi describes five levels.

Level one: The student has no prior experience in any meditative discipline. **Level two:** The student desires to enhance psycho-physical and emotional well-being; to learn to "relax," or to address some specific emotional or somatic complaint. **Level three:** The student has experienced some truth of the *dharma* through prior meditative, prayer, study, or religious experience and desires to continue this growth. The student is free of substance addictions and primary neurotic behaviors and demonstrates some degree of individual responsibility in the lifeworld. **Level four:** The student has experienced basic to profound insight into his/her original nature and actual place in reality; has established stability and responsibility in the lifeworld; has demonstrated and integrated prior meditative and "spiritual" experience, wisdom, and compassion; has an understanding of the activity of the ego and a moderate to intense desire for the highest realization; has a benign, humble and open mind and heart to the teacher or master and to the past and future *dharma*. **Level five:** The student has committed his/her life to the realization of Buddha mind and is beginning to manifest meditative stability and liberation—enlightenment in the lifeworld.

The practice to which the "student" and the "teacher/master" commit (covenant/*samaya*) on the student's behalf is dictated by the stated and demonstrated aspiration level of the student in the present lifeworld.

Yasutani Roshi's Three Pillars of Zen⁶

1. **Strong Faith** (*daishinkon*): In Zen practice, faith must run deeper than mere concept and belief. It is a profound and unshakable faith anchored in the Buddha's enlightenment, but also in the entire tradition of enlightened Buddhas and masters in all world systems throughout all time.
2. **Strong Doubt** (*daigidan*): Doubt is the other side of faith. Strong doubt arises from strong faith, just as every pole of a dualism dialectically gives rise to its opposite. Why does the world appear to be so full of suffering and death, when our faith in the dharma teaches us that the opposite is true? Faith is directly proportional to doubt. Dialectically, the pole of every dualism, every dilemma changes to its opposite (death/life, dark/light, negative/positive) and back again. Just so, doubt becomes faith, faith becomes doubt, and this hectic cycle yields the resolve to continue, all the way to the end of it.
3. **Strong Determination** (*dai-funshi*): From strong faith and strong doubt arises the

⁶ Yasutani Roshi, from Philip Kapleau's *The Three Pillars of Zen*, 1980.

desire and determination to reconcile the psychic tension (cognitive dissonance) between the two. In this spiritual dialectic, we naturally strive for cognitive and spiritual equilibrium (wholeness). The greater our commitment to the process, the greater our determination to balance, then resolve the apparent dualism of the wisdom/*prajna/ jnana* and compassion of enlightenment (*nirvana*), with the ignorance (*avidya*) and its suffering in the dualistic world of *samsara*. In *Daijo* it is doubt and fear of rebirth that is the motive to enlightenment. In *Saijojo* it is the profound faith in the knowledge which becomes the direct experience (wisdom) that all beings are inherently Buddha, which motivates and directs us forward in practice. There should be no urgent seeking after enlightenment. In faith and/or doubt we sit, walk and practice moment to moment in our everyday lives with knowing awareness and great confidence, beyond the dualism of faith and doubt, that our inherent Buddha Nature, our actual self-nature is always present at the heart. We return to this view, this "posture", this "seat", even when we forget. *Shashaku jushaku*, just continue in error. Here, "brief moments, many times," is the presence (*rigpa, vidya*), then the distraction (*ma rigpa, avidya*), then the presence, all day, all night, until the presence of the nondual supreme source is integrated and stabilized (*mujodo-no taigen*) in the everyday lifeworld.

The Three Aims of Zazen⁷

These three aims form an inseparable prior unity. Over-emphasis or neglect of any area is counter productive or dangerous.

1. **Joriki:** Development of the power of mindfulness (*shamatha*), and one-pointed concentration through penetrating insight practice (*zazen/shikantaza*). If *joriki* is not constantly expanded by *kensho* and *satori*, it fades and may be lost, or misused.
2. **Kensho/Satori:** The practice of *joriki*, when combined with other aspects of Zen practice (*teisho, dokusan*) leads naturally to *satori* awakening or seeing into our actual original nature, which is seeing the ultimate essence or nature of mind and the *kosmos*. *Kensho/satori* is the *prajna*-wisdom-compassion that arises out of *joriki*. Ultimately *satori* awakening, when practiced moment-to-moment may result in liberation-enlightenment, and even Buddhahood.
3. **Mujodo no taigen:** Potentially, the actualization of *Saijojo*, the nondual Supreme Zen Vehicle, is the continuity of stabilizing (*samadhi*) of the great nondual practice through kind, compassionate conduct in the everyday lifeworld. This is the highest or most direct nondual yoga of Zen practice. It corresponds to 6th stage (or even 7th stage) practice in the Seven Stages of Life (Appendix A). At this lifestage the ego and all dualism is transcended in its nondual source and the ultimate realization that "I Am Buddha," "That I Am" (*Tat Tvam Ami*), "I and the Father are one" is integrated into the aspirant's lifeworld. When *kensho/satori* is fully manifested and demonstrated in all activity and

⁷ Yasutani Roshi (in Kapleau), *Three Pillars* (1980)

action, on a moment-to-moment basis, this is the perfect enlightenment of the perfect practice (*samyak-sambodhi*). This is the practice that may result in Buddhahood, the perfect enlightenment of a Buddha.

Yasutani's Roshi's caution to us regarding certain trends in contemporary Zen practice warrants careful consideration:

The Rinzai sect tends to make satori-awakening the final aim of sitting (zazen meditation) and skims over *yoriki* and *mujodo no taigen*. Thus the need for continued practice after enlightenment is minimized, and *koan* study, since it is unsupported by zazen and scarcely related to daily life, becomes essentially an intellectual game. . . . The Soto sect stresses *mujodo no taigen*, little more than an accumulation of *yoriki* which recedes and disappears unless zazen is [practiced] . . . The contention of the Soto sect nowadays that *kensho* is unnecessary . . . is specious, for without *kensho* you can never really know what the Buddha-mind is.⁸

A teaching that does not arouse a defense of one's comfort zones, is not a useful teaching.

Dogen Zenji (Author's Translation)

⁸ Yasutani Roshi, in Kapleau's *Three Pillars of Zen* (1980)

The Zen of Spiritual Materialism: Pride is the Rub

Meditators and non-meditators alike have a pronounced egoic resistance to the growth changes induced through meditation. However, once the practice begins and stabilizes under the guidance of a master, the profound relief and release from the stresses and confusion of everyday conditional existence can, at more “advanced” stages, lead to a counter-productive attachment or clinging to the peaceful practice of mindfulness (*shamatha*) that results in a kind of “comfort zone.” This “zone” is not difficult to understand. Volumes of research have proven the benefits of meditation in increased health, well being and fuller functioning in the lifeworld of the meditator. As one learns the tranquility or equanimity that “tames the wild horse of the mind,” or even before, one naturally moves through, and relaxes and releases psycho-emotional obstructions and obscurations to clear seeing presented by one's conscious and unconscious egoic attachments and defenses. This leads to ever subtler and more profound emotional-spiritual growth as well as “personal power.” Indeed, one begins to acquire certain “spiritual” capital and status. Thus the clinging or attachment to the egoic “spiritual” comfort zone. Chogyam Trungpa has called this subtle egoic trap “spiritual materialism”. It is an “evolved” state of dualism (life stages 1 through 6, Appendix A) and may be a very seductive and destructive prison. Its cause is pride. Egoic pride is the most subtle, most insidious of the obscurations to realization that arise on the path.

It is the inherent responsibility of such an individual and his/her teacher and/or master to move through or beyond, or to transcend this plateau so that growth may continue. The process, by its nature, evolves or ascends to ever subtler or “higher,” or more interior levels (mansions or dimensions). All of this is well and good. Yet, if the aspirant/student, or the teacher, misses the point that “higher” spiritual growth (not necessarily conventional, psychological emotional growth) is retarded by any “gaining idea” or egoic motive—even a great or noble motive—great developmental harm may result. One of the perennial truths regarding spiritual growth is *wu-wei*, surrender of the seeking motive, effortless, non-goal directed action that is non-action. “Be here now.” Spiritual striving and seeking betray the destination. The goal is the path, today, now. “Make the goal the path.” Thus seeking and clinging attachment to the positive results of meditation, deep prayer or zazen paradoxically retards growth. The pride that is the “spiritualized” ego is one of the most subtle and dangerous non-entities on the path of growth to wholeness and liberation-enlightenment. The ego desires its goal of liberation from the suffering of ego. “Desire is the creator and destroyer of worlds.” The great paradox of “spiritual” growth is that it requires an intense desire - motivation to proceed. Yet this very desire yields the egoic intention, the “gaining idea” which inhibits further growth. Due to the subtlety of the ego's defenses, the student needs a qualified master. The ego—spiritual pride—is always a false guru. In Buddhism it is told that egoic pride—spiritual or otherwise—is the cause of the suffering of cyclic existence.

The Logic of Reality: East Meets West

Esoterically considered, Zen, as the Primordial Awareness Wisdom is the heartmind essence of religion, philosophy and science. The ultimate meaning of philosophy is the union of love (*philos*) and wisdom (*sophia*). The root meaning of “religion” (*religio*) in the Indic Sanskrit of our Indo-European etymological tradition is “yoga,” union, the linking or binding together—yin/yang, outer/inner, true/false, spirit/matter—of the opposites of dualistic reality. In the Greek this unifying force is *zygon*. The process of the dualistic, relative mind and its painful egoic resistance to healing these splits must be felt through, and ultimately transcended in the realization of its nondual supreme source. This seeking motive, this desire for the supreme happiness that is the realization of ultimate truth, whether pre-conscious, conscious, or super-conscious, is at the heart of the quests of science, religion and philosophy. Indeed, this motive, this primordial impulse, is the root of all of our seeking strategies.

Both science and philosophy are grounded in certain metaphysical assumptions as to the objective, physical nature of reality (Chap.VII). The metaphysical base of exoteric science (both physical and psychological) and of speculative philosophy (epistemology, metaphysics, aesthetics, ethical theory) is grounded in or presupposes that metaphysical, ultimate primordial ground that transcends yet includes it. How can this be? Zen (Tao) is this prior nondual unity of subjective observer and object observed and measured. Zen is the supreme source, the matrix or base of the mind in whom religion, philosophy, science, culture and everything else arises, and into whom this all returns. Yet Zen, as *zazen* is also the way or method or practice (the path) opening into the realization of this great truth of our Primordial Wisdom Tradition. Thus Zen (and *Dzogchen* and *Mahamudra*) is the ultimate nondual openness, the unbroken wholeness that is the primordial awareness base (Ultimate Truth/*paramartha*), “Big Mind” in whom all relative conventional spacetime reality (Relative Truth/*samvriti*), “Small Mind” arises and participates. These are the “Two Truths” of our perennial wisdom tradition. Zen is also the path, the non-seeking, non-action way (*wu-wei*) of simply letting Being be. “The *wu-wei* that does not aim at *wu-wei* is truly *wu-wei*.... Tao (Zen) does nothing, yet nothing is left undone” (Lao Tzu).

The perceiving, discursive thinking mind, “Small Mind,” in its intellectual effort to grasp and to understand the vast expanse of its nondual source—the very Nature of Mind (Big Mind)—encounters dualism and dilemma at every discrete point. Thinking is a two-valued, truth-functional (true-false, this or that) binary cognitive operation. Language expresses thinking and follows the basic laws of thought, the logical structure of syntax. These laws have been utilized in both the Orient and the Occident for at least twenty-four hundred years. The “Four Propositions” of *Nyaya* Indian logic (*catushkotika*) and Aristotle’s “Three Laws of Thought” express Eastern and Western views of the logic of the thinking or discursive mind. To better understand the Two Truths and Buddhist dependent arising (*pratitya samutpada*) and the strategy and use of paradox in Zen, and especially koan practice in the transcendence of

dualistic egoic view and experience, let us now briefly digress into the logical syntax of human language and thought.

The Laws of Thought in the West: Aristotle

The Occidental view is expressed in Aristotle's **Three Laws of Thought** and is the foundation of formal logic and mathematics, and of the Western rationalist, realist-materialist world view.

1. **The Law of Identity:** A is A. What is, by definition, is.
2. **The Law of Contradiction:** A is not not-A (contradictories cannot both be true).
3. **The Law of Excluded Middle** (*tertium non datur*): Everything is either A or not-A (contradictories cannot both be false).

Thus, the Law of Contradiction and the Law of Excluded Middle are deduced from the definition of contradictories as stated in the Law of Contradiction. The European Intuitionists and Hindu and Buddhist logicians deny the Law of Excluded Middle. The meaning of logico-mathematical entities or constructs is derived from their prior base (is dependent upon their construction). Therefore, according to the Eastern view, the truth of a particular statement (proposition) is not logically equivalent to the falsity of its contradictory. Therefore, it is not necessarily true that "Everything is either A or not A." Apparent contradictions may both have truth value, that is, "Both A and not-A" (the Law of Connection), or neither A nor not-A (the fourth law of Eastern logic, p.199). These laws permit the ontological interdependence of all arising phenomena, eg. The Buddhist Dependent Arising (*pratitya samutpada*), and do not presuppose the existence of A.

In the West, Akos von Pauler (supported theoretically by the Phenomenologists L.E.J. Brouwer, Hegel, Whitehead, Husserl and others) added this fourth law, the **Law of Connection** ("Everything is connected with all other things") to Aristotle's Three Laws. The principles of deductive and inductive reasoning are derived from these primary **Laws of Thought**.

The laws of Sufficient Reason, Classification, Correlatively, and the Scholastic *Dictum de omni et nullo*, (misleadingly called "Aristotle's Law"), the principle of "everything and nothing," are all recent developments to Aristotle's Three Laws and aid in the emerging *rapprochement* of the logic of East and West.

The *Dictum de omni et nullo* is the precursor to modern set theory and states that what is universally asserted or denied of a class (or relation) is asserted or denied of everything that is included within that class (or relation). The **Principle of Classification** asserts that everything that is, can be classified; and the **Principle of Correlatively** asserts that all relative phenomena are subsumed in the Ultimate or the Absolute. This is the Western version of the universal principle of "The Two Truths," that Ultimate or

Absolute Truth (*paramartha*) subsumes or transcends, yet includes Relative Truth (*samvriti*). The **Principle of Sufficient Reason** states approximately that every effect has a cause (the Causal Principle), from which the physical laws of motion (change) are derived. The proper method of philosophical and metaphysical inquiry, according to the Intuitionists and to Ludwig Wittgenstein, is "reduction", the discovery of the assumptions underlying, or prior to, our logical, speculative reasoning or thinking about this phenomenal reality that appears.

The Eastern Mind

In the Oriental tradition, especially in the Hindu, Indian and Tibetan logical systems⁹ formal logic closely parallels Western logic. That the categories of reason should be so similar in cultures with widely disparate world views may be explained, in part, by the fact that the pre-verbal cognitive base from which both the Eastern and Western thought and language systems have arisen is the shared prehistoric and historical Indo-European consciousness with its bent toward objectivity. The logical structure of the syntax of these systems is similar because the experiential consciousness base is essentially the same. But this similarity points to a more ultimate connection. All beings, indeed all existence share the same great primordial awareness consciousness base. Esoterically, we all share the same origin or source. Thus our cognition—our cognitive structures and functions—are shared. For the religious consciousness, we all share and participate in the same godhead. We just experience and describe it a little differently. The urgent inclusion of the Law of Connection—the Fourth Law—into the Western logical canon now parallels the essential **Four Propositions** of *Nyaya* in the Vedic-*Vedanta* and Buddhist traditions:

1. It is A.
2. It is not-A
3. It is both A and not-A (the Law of Connection)
4. It is neither A nor not-A (*neti, neti*: not this, not this)

If we compare the third law of each tradition we see that the excluded middle ("everything is either A or not-A") of the Western canon may be replaced by the Eastern **Law of Connection**, "It is both A and not-A", which is the complimentary to the fourth law of the Oriental tradition, "It is neither A nor not-A." These two considered together express the logical, epistemological and ontological uncertainty of the Quantum Theory, and of the paradoxical truth of Zen/Tao: "It is both this and that;" therefore, "it is neither this nor that" (*neti, neti*). Therefore it may be non-existent or empty of any essential, inherent existence (emptiness/ *shunyata*). Everything arises from Tao / emptiness, and returns again to emptiness. Indeed, this apparent arising and return are an atemporal

⁹ Not surprisingly, ancient China, under the practical, moral and mystical influences of Taoism, Confucianism and Ch'an Buddhism showed little interest in formal logic.

unity. Relative spacetime phenomenal existence (*samvriti*) is never ever actually separate from the primordial state of union with the perfectly subjective Base of reality that is Ultimate Truth (*paramartha*). This coalescence of the Two Truths of our Great Wisdom Tradition is thus, always a non-conceptual prior unity. There is one truth viewed as two modes, through two lenses. However, **ultimately**, not even this assertion can be made because, as we have seen, all assertions—Eastern or Western—are **relative** concepts. Ultimately, truth can only be realized through the pre-conceptual post-critical, “pristine cognition” (*dharmadhatujnana*, *chos-ying yeshe*), the primordial awareness wisdom (*jnana*, *yeshe*) of Absolute Reality. This “Buddha mind” is liberation from the limits of the logical mind. And this realization is the liberation from ignorance that is enlightenment, ultimate “Happiness Itself.”

This **Law of Connection** correlates the tautological, truth-functional (true-false) dualism of the other logical laws with the metaphysical necessity of the transcendent base, the sourceground that transcends yet embraces the entire dimension of relative truth, including the highly emotional, logical thinking mind. Theologians, philosophers, and scientists have often referred to this metaphysical Base as the “First Cause.” Physicists call it the “Big Bang.” For the religious mind it is the Creator God. This primal cause begins the linear chain of cause and effect—the arrow of time, from particles to stars to life—that is the primary assumption of the “Principal of Causality”, the basis of our classical scientific and common sense assumptions about reality. This primordial creation event marks the beginning of the transition from monistic Pythagorean/Parmenidean perfectly subjective “**Being**”—the changeless primordial Base that is “Reality Itself”—to the Heraclitean flux of arising energy/motion that is “**Becoming**” objective spacetime reality. Primal, absolute nondual being is always becoming its relative spacetime particulars. That is its nature. However, the Cartesian/Newtonian concept of an absolute objective causality and an absolute objective time in which it occurs, has been recently demolished by the Quantum Theory (the Uncertainty and Complimentarity Principles, Chap. I). This classical causality with its linear First Cause is also denied by the Buddhist view of causality, dependent origination (*pratitya samutpada*).

Thus, the profound intuition—the impulse—of our primordial sourceground appears in all its traditions and manifestations. The masters of the three times have told it: this utterly ineffable “supreme source” abides at the root of attention, just beyond the logic of conceptual mind. Yet human reason may approach it, and contemplative practice may reveal it, not conceptually or logically, but directly, through the senses and the heart.

Shunyata then, is realized as the affirming luminous emptiness by the “pristine cognition” of our nondual innate “primordial awareness wisdom” (*jnana*, *gnosis*). The objects arising from this emptiness Base are entirely devoid of any **ultimate** essential intrinsic existence. Yet through this dependent arising appears the often all too real world of **relative** spacetime reality, including us, and our rational, logical effort to understand it

all. *Vidya/rigpa* is the always present “presence” of this innate nondual wisdom, this vast emptiness Base that we are. And this realization waits, awake within each individual heartmind (*kokoro/anjin/hridayam*) as we indulge our seeking strategies, our paradoxical ceaseless search for logical certainty, and for the realization of the indwelling happiness that cannot be lost. So it is told by the highest teachings of our Great Wisdom Tradition.

Who Is It? From Koan to Zen Mind

It is the seeing into this entire process of self-transcendence (self-forgetting) in the primordial source that the logic of koan practice is designed to facilitate and ultimately realize. The essence of koan is paradox (Greek: beyond thinking). The purpose of Koan is *zygon* or *yoga*, (linking, binding together) the unifying of the opposites of dualistic reality. Paradox transcends the logical, conceptual mind which obstructs the recognition of the actual unity. The paradox of the koan, when engaged with all of the concentration of one's being, and all of the force of one's practice, in due course and by grace, cuts through, with the double-edged sword of Manjusri (the Bodhisattva of Wisdom), the dualistic conceptual baggage of the narcissistic, discursive thinking mind. At the instant of the cutting, the koan is resolved and a profound nondual enlightenment occurs. Such an enlightenment, as it grows through continued practice, may lead to Buddhahood. The term "nondual" is more precise than "union" for the latter implies an initial condition of a dualism to be unified, whereas the former implies no separation from the very beginning.

The function of the koan is to demonstrate to the practitioner the trap that is egoic conceptual mind in which we live. When an assertion or a denial is made we become trapped in the net of one of the logical Laws of Thought. By taking an opinion, or a conceptual or belief position, whether consciously or unconsciously, we have polarized our thinking and thereby our identity becomes bound to that pole. This leads to the egoic need to defend our position (cognitive dissonance). Thus we become the advocates of our present lifestage developmental limits. This is the dualism of opposites, and the reason the Buddha stated that he held no opinions. For Zen, the truth lies not in one pole or the other of a dichotomy—concept, opinion, or belief—but in the middle, at the zero axis between the poles of positive and negative, without choosing a position. It is this seeing from all perspectives that is the essence of the "supreme way of seeing," "The Middle Way" (*Madhyama-pratipad*) of the Buddhist *Madhyamaka* view of Nagarjuna. In "meditative stabilization", when our identity is firmly established here, we will not be seduced by the dualistic mind into the trap of true or false, right or wrong, good or evil, self or not-self.¹⁰ This mean or middle way of our great Primordial Wisdom Tradition is the grand dialectical resolution of the extreme views of eternalism (belief in a permanent intrinsic reality) and nihilism (denial of any reality). This middle way is the higher wisdom synthesis that is the prior primordial unity of Ultimate Truth (*paramartha*) with the "concealer truths" (*samvriti*), all of the illusory subject-object dualities of the world of Relative Truth. This synthesis is the *samadhi* of realization that is, in this dialectical

¹⁰ Of course perceptual and conceptual dualism (sensation and thought) continues to arise and one continues to observe and to use them in the everyday lifeworld. The difference is in the view. Dualism is witnessed as it arises but is not given identity. Thoughts are allowed to "self-liberate" at the moment of their arising. The poles of dilemma are experienced (*nyam*), yet not attached to. Identity "remains naturally" in our original nature, the *satori* of the emptiness of no-Self that arises from and returns to emptiness (*shunyata*).

process, the thesis of our next level of realization, all the way to the full *bodhi* of Buddhahood.

Thus, in the cognitive operations of the dualistic thinking mind the logical Laws of Thought are dialectical. One pole or position always changes to its opposite. An assertion can always be denied. Any thesis can be deconstructed to reveal its inherent contradictions. Our current *satori* of understanding is but a stage level for a deeper or subtler synthesis toward the ultimate realization of the numinous unbounded whole. Therefore, thesis becomes antithesis yielding a higher level synthesis which becomes the new thesis. Culturally, the dominant world-view or scientific or philosophical position of a society (or an individual), eventually may become its opposite. This dialectical pendulum moves forward and back, again and again in the history of ideas, and in the personal history of each individual.

Shall we then avoid thinking and conceptual activity altogether? No. The separative processes of the ego and its destructive dualistic thinking mind are an inevitable part of the whole process. This process cannot be successfully denied, suppressed or repressed. It must be used to serve an out-growing or a growing beyond. It is not ideation or thinking itself, but the **attachment** to beliefs, concepts and ideas (*wu-li*) that is the rub. Indeed, it is our habitual clinging to the process of thinking, evidenced in our inability to stop it, that prevents us from directly experiencing the presence of our nondual source that lives just beyond it, that transcends it and in whom it all arises, dwells and passes away.

When the radical truth of the primordial nondual mind nature or mind essence is realized, the dilemma of the alternatives or positions or poles of true/false, self/not-self, matter/spirit is resolved. The Ultimate Truth can neither be asserted nor negated. So long as one persists in assertions, negations, denials, contradictions, there is some "trace" of concept, of speculative or metaphysical thinking. Koan practice discourages this. The "Mu" koan, properly engaged, eliminates it.

"What is the Buddha?" "When you seek the Buddha, you cannot see him. Therefore the Buddha is the Buddha." "What is the Tao?" "The Tao is the Tao. The musk melon is sweet, even to the stems; the bitter gourd is bitter, even to the roots." (Goso). "The Tao that can be named is not the eternal Tao" (*Tao Te Ching* of Lao Tsu).

Zen is just the ordinary. Nothing special (*wu shin*). Nothing wonderful, speculative, metaphysical or philosophical. When you're hungry, you eat. When you're tired, you sleep. When you're insulted, you forget. Yet primordial awareness is always present. The continuum of recognition of this—moment-to-moment—is *shoshin* (*sho*, essence, *shin* heartmind), the beginner's mind. Zen is ordinary because **everything** is Buddha mind. Zen does not indulge too long, nor attach to any philosophy or religious belief. As with *Dzogchen*, Zen is not a friend of exoteric organized religion, nor of any spiritual dogma—outer, inner, or secret. Dogen said, "To study Buddhism is to study ourselves. To study ourselves is to forget ourselves." When we forget ourselves, what remains present is the numinous presence—beyond belief—as nondual pure awareness (*vidya/rigpa*). This is the

essence of the Socratic/Platonic dictum, "To thine own self be true."

When we forget ourselves, we actually are the true activity of reality itself. When we realize this fact, there is no problem whatsoever in this world.

- Szuki Roshi, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* (1970)

We are so addicted to conceptual thinking (*wu-li*) that to "just see" reality as it is directly given (*kensho*), prior to its capture and interpretation by the reticulum of the thinking mind, is not possible without training. Zazen (*shikantaza*), *teigo*, *dokusan* and koan practice are designed to bring "the mind-forg'd manacles" (Blake) of conceptual thought into chaos and crisis. The koan is a yoga. The koan is a vector. It points to the uncomfortable limits of discursive conceptual mind, and beyond to *kensho/satori*, luminous clarity which transcends yet embraces it. Here is Hui-neng's penetrating description of the koan crisis:

If you want to get to the pure truth of egolessness, you must let go your hold (*wu-li*) and fall over the precipice. When you rise again (you are) newly awakened and in full possession of the four virtues of eternity, bliss, freedom and purity which belong to the true Self . . . All of a sudden one finds the mind and body blown out of existence (like a flame), together with the koan. . . . It is like death itself. Then your awakening will be a joy inexpressible.

- Hui-neng, in *Zen Buddhism*, D.T. Suzuki (1949)

The koan crisis expresses a great truth of our radical nondual Primordial Wisdom Tradition: The ego-self must die and be born again as wisdom for the indwelling, inherent Christ-Buddha Nature to be realized.

Mu! : The Crux of the Matter

In Mumon's (Wu-men, 1183-1260) *The Mumonkan* (*The Gateless Barrier*, 1229) there are forty eight koans. The first and most widely used is the famous Mu Koan (brought to Japan by Kakushin in 1256). Students of Zen have wrestled with it for eight hundred years. It is still used in Rinzai, and even in Soto Zen to this day.

The power of the Mu koan lies in its radically nondual, non-speculative nature. Other koans engage the conceptual mind with the purpose of leading it to the edge. Mu, by its nature, transcends the limits of the dualistic logic of the conceptual mind from the very beginning. There is no logical or rational solution (*fukasetsu*) to the Mu koan. As Marcel Duchamps said regarding the apparent "problem of perception," "If there is no solution,

then perhaps, there is no problem."

Here is Mumon's *Mu Koan* with his commentary.

A monk in all seriousness asked Jushu: "Has a dog Buddha-nature or not?" Joshu retorted "Mu!" In the practice of Zen you must pass through the barrier-gate set up by the Patriarchs. To realize enlightenment you must look into the source of your thoughts, thereby annihilating them. The barrier is Mu, the barrier of the supreme teaching. Ultimately, it is a barrier that is no barrier. One who has passed through it can walk hand in hand with the whole line of Patriarchs.

- Yasutani Roshi trans., in Kapleau (1980)

The *wato* (key point) of the Mu Koan is "Mu!" The engagement is with Mu! *Mu/Wu* is the vast perfectly ineffable essence and nature of Tao. It is variously translated as emptiness, silence, non-being, satori, liberation/enlightenment, nothing, nothingness, is not, has not, etc. Mu is the nondual Nature of Mind — mind essence — our actual identity. Yet Mu is none of this. For all of this is merely ideational conceptual self-stimulation. Indeed, to the relative-conventional mind, a most unusual paradox.

We have seen that the essential nature of all existence is that it has the potential of Buddha Nature. Does everything have Buddha Nature then, or not? If so, how or where shall we find it? **Dogen's interpretation of the *Nirvana Sutra* is that all sentient beings already are Buddha Nature, not that they possess some quality called Buddha Nature. Everything already is "Buddha from the beginning." That is its essential nature, and actual identity.** All arising relative, conditional existence participates in this "Big Mind," is already Buddha mind. The motion of prana or energy (change), of the Law of Karma, (reaping what is sown, the Law of Cause and Effect) arises from, dwells, and returns again to its great primordial source. This source is *shunyata* (emptiness, *wu*, *mu*, *ku*), the matrix of all objective material and subjective immaterial (form and formless) phenomenal reality. "Life includes both existence and non-existence. . . existence comes from emptiness and goes back again into emptiness (*shunyata*). We have to go through the gate of emptiness When we realize that everything we see is a part of emptiness, we can have no attachment to any existence, everything is just a tentative form and color" (Suzuki Roshi, 1970)

We are the manifestation of our karmic action/effect relations at any given moment, and upon their modification we change accordingly. What we call life is no more than a procession of transformations. If we do not change we are lifeless. We grow and age because we are alive. We die because we are alive. Creation and destruction signify life. When you truly understand this fundamental principle you will not be anxious about your life or your death. You will then attain a steadfast mind and be happy in your daily life.

-Yasutani Roshi, in Kapleau (1980)

The Buddha said, **"What you are is what you have been; what you will be is what you do now. . . See Buddha Nature in all the various beings, and in every one of us."**

"Has a dog Buddha Nature or not?" Yasutani Roshi explains that the question is not about "has" or "has not."

"Mu has nothing to do with the existence or non-existence of Buddha-nature, but is itself Buddha-nature. Mu! thrusts Buddha Nature before us. . . There is no barrier. Everything being Buddha-nature, there is no gate through which to go in or out."

Mu is the gateless gate. Mu is the yogic vehicle for the transcendence of our attachment to material existence and its thought forms. Mu is the omniscient mind of the Buddha. No thought. No opinion. Unity with Mu is the beginning, and the ripening of Zen practice. Mu is the focus, night and day, moment to moment of Mu koan practice. Mu is the continuity of *satori*, "brief moments, many times." Mu is the "lifelong, life-after-life koan." When Mu is deeply understood no other koan is necessary. Mu is the unfathomable mystery. There is no "why," no "how." "This cannot be taught" (Shakumuni Buddha). It cannot be caught. It is useless to seek it. It's merely Mu! Right here, always now.

"Do not construe Mu as nothingness and do not conceive it in terms of existence or non-existence. . . or as a problem involving the existence or non-existence of Buddha-nature. . . stop speculating and concentrate wholly on Mu - just Mu!"

Yasutani Roshi, in Kapleau (1980)

Therefore, seeking Mu, freedom, liberation, enlightenment, perfection, or happiness is fruitless. The act or state of seeking (desire) precludes the result of happiness itself, which is already present, now. "We cannot **become** happy. We can only **be** happy"

(Adi Da Samraj). We must pass through this gateless gate of emptiness, during life or at death. But thinking about it cloaks it (*maya*), removes us from its immediacy, the presence, now, that is our actual original nature. In duality we cannot concentrate. In the dark empty sky, clouds arise and lightning flashes. Then the sky is dark and empty again. Everything arises then returns in to its great source.

Who is it? Reality Itself is a vast, luminous emptiness. Therefore, concentrate on nothing. Just sit and breathe. Whatever arises is pure clear light of the Mind that opens into the very ground of being. Thus whatever arises is liberated, now, and now, and now. So, "let it be exactly as it is." Perfect openness. Perfect space. As it is already accomplished, simply relax into it. This is who we are, without a single exception.

Can a moment last forever?

Endless circle our breath.
Days seasons kalpas
arising ceasing now
this blue eyed
little wildflower.

-David Paul Boaz (1999)

Midnight. No waves.
No wind. The empty boat
Flooded with moonlight.
- Anon.

Zen Mind, Wisdom Mind

“That everything is included in your mind
Is the essence of mind.”

-Suzuki Roshi

In 1958 Shunryu Suzuki Roshi (1905-1971), a direct spiritual descendent of Dogen-Zenji, founded the first Soto Zen Monastery in the West, the Zen Center of San Francisco with its beautiful Zen Mountain Center at Tassajara, near Big Sur. Roshi was perhaps the most influential Zen master in the West, and his masterpiece, *Zen Mind, Beginners Mind* is truly a garland of nondual wisdom, and one of the most readable texts in contemporary spiritual literature. Let the master's words speak and enter in.

It is completely mistaken to think that whatever you do is Zen or that it does not matter whether you practice or not. But if you make your best effort just to continue your practice with your whole mind and body, without gaining ideas then whatever you do will be true practice.... Establish your practice in your delusion. *Shoshaku Jushaku*. Just continue.

Dogen Zenji said, “to give is non-attachment” just not to attach to anything is to give. “*Prajna Paramita*,” the true wisdom of life, is that in each step of the way, the other shore is actually reached... each step is the way of true giving.

Dogen-Zenji said, “To study Buddhism, is to study ourselves. To study ourselves is to forget ourselves.” When we forget ourselves, we actually are the true activity of... Reality itself. When we realize this fact, there is no problem whatever in this world.

Dogen-Zenji said, “Every existence is a flashing into the vast phenomenal world.” The basic teaching of Buddhism is the teaching of impermanence or change... There is no abiding self... No special, separate self-nature for each existence. . . When we realize this truth we find ourselves in nirvana... Because we cannot, we suffer.

Emptiness is always here, and from it everything appears... So we can have no attachment to any existence... This “no-mind” is Zen mind that includes everything... The mind that is wisdom... Even before we practice it, enlightenment is here... Before thinking, before practice... So your practice will not be self-centered... It is not after attaining enlightenment that we find its true meaning. The trying to do it is enlightenment. Which is more important; to attain enlightenment, or to attain enlightenment before you attain enlightenment?

You must put confidence in the big mind which is always with you... It is possible in this moment! It is this moment... Without any idea of attainment, you are always Buddha... Now understand the true meaning of Buddha's first statement, “See Buddha Nature in the various beings, and in every one of us.”

Hakuin Zenji's Realization

The great 18th century reformer Hakuin's *Zazen Wasan* (*Chant in Praise of Zazen*) is a profound expression of the realization that is Zen (excerpt translated by Philip Kapleau).

From the beginning all beings are Buddha.
Like water and ice. Without water no ice,
outside us no Buddhas.
How near the truth, yet how far we seek,
like one in water crying, "I thirst!" . . .
The cause of our sorrow is ego delusion.
From dark path to dark path we've wandered
in darkness. How can we be free
of the wheel of samsara?
The gateway to freedom is zazen samadhi,
beyond exaltation, beyond all praises,
the pure Mahayana . . .
Thus one true samadhi extinguishes evils;
it purifies karma, dissolving obstructions.
Then where are the dark paths to lead us astray?
The pure lotus land is not far away. . . .
And if we turn inward and prove our
True-nature, that True-self is no self,
our own Self is no-self, we go beyond
ego and past clever words. The gate
to the oneness of cause-and-effect
is thrown open. . . Our form now
being no-form, in going and returning
we never leave home. Our thought now
being no-thought, our dancing and songs
are the voice of the Dharma. How vast
is the heaven of boundless samadhi!
How bright and transparent the moonlight
of wisdom! What is there outside us,
What is there we lack? Nirvana is
openly shown to our eyes. This earth
where we stand is the pure lotus land,
and this very body the body of Buddha.

Zen and Dzogchen: Unifying the Ground and Result

From the beginning all beings are Buddha.

-Hui Neng

The nature of mind is Buddha from the beginning.

-Garab Dorje

The Graduated Path: A Most Unusual Paradox

The spiritual teachings that have arisen within the primordial Great Wisdom Tradition of human history have a **View** (*darshana*, theory) which explains the **Ground**, the great Source of all appearing reality, and a **Path** (*marga*) which establishes the **Meditation** (*bhavana*) that seeks the continuity of recognition of the Ground leading to the **Result** or Fruition of the practice. This endpoint is “the Fruit” that is ultimate realization of our inherently nondual primordial wisdom sourceground. This final realization is seen as the essence, if not the cause of human happiness, and in the highest nondual teaching of each tradition as ultimate Happiness Itself (*Paramananda*, *Mahasuka*). In Buddhism this blissful Result is Buddhahood. The Path is the confusion of the gradual seeking strategies to this “goal” of liberation enlightenment. Regarding the View, the teaching is generally presented exoterically. Then, as knowledge deepens to wisdom in the “advanced” practitioner the teaching becomes more and more esoteric (inward, secret, nondual). Regarding the View of the Fruition (result/realization) of the Path, it may be either gradual (*zengo*, *rim-gyis-pa*), or non-gradual (sudden, *tongo*, *cig-car-ba*). In actual practice these two are interdependent. We “make the goal the path.” Yet it is urgent that we understand the subtle differences, as we shall see.

The Buddhist gradualist path (*zengo*) of the sutras (*Hinayana* and *Mahayana*) and outer tantras (*Vajrayana*) is a linear step-by-step, cause and effect progression of practices that purify ignorance through application of transformational “antidotes” to the obscurations or *kleshas* (desire/attachment, anger/aggression, ignorance) that veil (*maya*, *vikshepa*) the “goal” of the realization of the supreme source or Base (*gzhi*) as *shunyata* (*stong-pa nyid*), luminous emptiness, the absence of inherent existence (*nihsvabhavata*). Ultimately, as this enlightenment, this enlightened awareness, is stabilized, it may accomplish the Result that is Buddhahood. On this gradual path with its ever increasing continuity of sudden *satori/samadhis* (“brief moments, many times”), the practitioner becomes a Bodhisattva who then “progresses” to ever subtler levels of demonstration of his/her enlightenment (the ten levels or *bhumis*) through the everyday practice of the “perfections” (*paramita*) of wisdom, compassion and meditative contemplation (quiescence/*shamatha* and penetrating insight/*vipashyana*) on *shunyata* (luminous emptiness). In Zen *shamatha/vipashyana* is *shikantaza* (*joriki*, advanced *zazen* meditation). The gradualist path “aims” at or seeks the “goal” of *shunyata* realization. The aspirant works gradually on the relative conditional self through conceptual analysis – the discriminating wisdom of *prajna* (*sherab*, *sophia*) until

certainty is ascertained and emptiness is realized. Nagarjuna (2nd century) regularly reminds us that the only way to realize Absolute Truth is through liberating the obscurations arising in the world of Relative Truth. Thus, Absolute or Ultimate Truth—*shunyata*—is both origin and aim. While the gradualist path of the *Hinayana* and the *Mahayana* uses *prajna*, the Inner Tantras, and especially the Ati Yoga of *Dzogchen*, utilize the non-conceptual, nondual innate primordial wisdom (*sahajajnana*, *yeshe*, *gnosis*) the natural luminosity of essential mind nature. This blissful intuitive wisdom cannot be grasped by discursive, conceptual analytic meditation (*prajna*). It can only be directly realized (*pratyaksa*), suddenly, through transmission and empowerment by the master. It is then brought to fruition by nondual meditation under the guidance of the master. This primordial wisdom is the Buddha Nature, the *tathagatagarbha*, that is the primordial ground or base (*gzhi*), empty in essence, luminous by nature, and compassionate in manifestation.

In the non-gradualist (*tongo*, sudden) path of *Dzogchen* and of the *mujodo no taigen* of nondual *Saijojo* Zen, our intrinsic Buddha Nature (*tathagatagarbha*) is already inherently present in each individual, so there is nothing to seek. The presence (*rigpa*, *vidya*) of our luminous primordial, original Buddha nature—Buddha Mind—is “always, already present”. “Wonder of wonders, All beings are Buddhas.” The dualism of conditional existence and of the exoteric gradualist path must be “cut through” (*trekchö*, *kensho*) directly via the fiery concentrative force (*tapas*) of spiritual practice or *sadhana* aided by direct transmission from the master (the Lama or the Roshi). “Introduce the state of presence (*rigpa*) of mind nature directly” (Garab Dorje). “If the view is dualistic, there can be no enlightenment” (Hui-neng). Of course, the necessary *ngöndro* or foundational practices of *Dzogchen* and *Shojo* Zen are “gradualist,” preparing the student for the liberating, sudden flashing realization of Absolute Truth, the always immediate presence of *rigpa* that is *satori*. The *tongo*, sudden approach, as with *zenjo*, the gradualist approach, is a continuity of many sudden *satori* experiences opening into the vast emptiness ground as we tread the ascending lifestage levels of realization, potentially all the way to Buddhahood (Appendix A).

As we have seen, generally the view of the path of exoteric *sutra* is based on renunciation and purification, the esoteric tantric path in transformation, and the radical *Maha Ati* of the *Dzogchen* View is that the self-perfected state is the primordial presence of Buddha mind is already present in each being. Buddha mind arises from the Buddha body of ultimate reality (*dharmakaya*, *chos-ku*) personified as Samantabhadra, the Primordial Adi Buddha whose ultimate realization is the Buddhahood of the individual. This concept-free innate “pristine cognition” (*dharmadhatujnana*, *chos-ying*) of the vast expanse of Ultimate Reality Itself (*dharmata*) is the emptiness (*shunyata*) base (*gzhi*) that is the actual nature of all arising relative phenomenal reality. These two realities are the Two Truths (*satyadvaya*, *denpa-nyis*), Relative and Absolute. The illusory or apparitional aspect of this primordial Absolute Reality is the dependent arising of form as *Maya* or *dharmin* (Dudjom Rinpoche,

1991). Again, Buddha mind is inherently present in all beings “from the very beginning,” or before. And it cannot be grasped or realized by discursive concept mind.

So the sutra and tantra views of Buddha Nature are antidotal, that is, we apply cognitive and behavioral antidotes to the negative emotional afflictions or *kleshas* (ignorance, desire/attachment, anger/aggression/hatred) as they arise. Just so, Buddha Nature itself is the supreme antidote to such ignorance (*avidya* or *marigpa*). Again, the Ati Yoga view of *Dzogchen* is that the state of presence of our Buddha Nature is already present, awake, awaiting recognition, realization, then actualization through compassionate conduct in the lifeworld. Thus there is no need of an antidote. Perhaps, we are not yet Buddhas, but we are all already Buddha. “From the beginning, all beings are Buddha” (Hui-neng). Alas, this true nature of ours is veiled or cloaked by ignorance (*avidya/maya*).

This “state of presence” that is Buddha mind or Buddha *gnosis* (innate *gnosis*, *sahajajnana*) is transmitted directly, from master to prepared student, then practiced by the student. Again, Buddha Nature is the essential Nature of Mind, the very essence of the primordial ground or base or source (*kun-gzhi*). According to the *Prasangika Madhyamikas*, this vast emptiness base is not just a negative void, a “non-affirming emptiness,” but a luminous clarity, a brightness that is an affirming emptiness, and it pervades all phenomena including all us sentient beings. We are luminous beings of light! **As this state of presence is originally and perfectly pure (*kadag*), from the very beginning, obstructing thoughts, desires and karmic actions need not be denied, renounced or transformed, but merely allowed to self-liberate (*rang grol*, *zenkan*, *kensho*, *satori*)—at the very instant of their arising—into their “primordially pure” source condition, the already present nondual awareness ground that is always our actual original identity, our Zen mind-Buddha mind. Therefore, all of the “slings and arrows” of our outrageous relative conventional existence are openings—an aperture—into the blissful primordial ground of being.** The knowing (*prajna*), and feeling (*bhakti*) realization of this is the vast expanse of our Primordial Awareness Wisdom (*jnana*, *yeshe*, *gnosis*), always already present here and now. Thus it is told by the radical nondual wisdom teaching of Zen and *Dzogchen*.

Does Buddhahood Have a Cause? Unifying Ground and Result

This Ultimate Primordial Awareness Wisdom has many names. “Truth is one, many are its names” (*Rig Veda*). As it is free of suffering, it is Absolute Bodhicitta. As it is nondual from the very beginning, it is the inseparability of the Two Fundamental Truths (relative and absolute). As it is the spontaneously present Mandala of the Ultimate Nature—the Nature of the Three Vajras—it is the unseparate expanse of the epistemological unity of *samsara* and *nirvana*. As it is always primordially pure (*kadag*) and spontaneously present (*lhundrup*) it is *Dharmakaya*, the Mandala of Primordial Buddhahood. The ultimate realization of this ontological indivisibility of the Primordial Ground or Base (*gzhi*) with its

Fruition or Result is the full *bodhi* of liberation-enlightenment that is Buddhahood, outpictured by the seed-syllable *HUM*, the pristine cognition that is Buddha mind. Such a mind knows directly the phenomenal reality arising from the primordial ground (*pratitya samutpada*, *tendrel nyingpo*) is simply the prior unity of the Two Truths—relative appearance and absolute emptiness—the unelaborated purity (*kadag*) of the constant state that is the unity of bliss and emptiness. Of course, such wisdom – *gnosis*, includes the Two Truths of the *Vajrayana*, namely the primordial purity and the sameness (equality) of phenomena that is the Great Dharmakaya (*chos-ku chenpo*), beyond mere emptiness (Mipham, 2007).

However, if we fail to recognize and understand this radical nondual teaching— that we and all beings, indeed, all of relative spacetime reality are “Buddha from the very beginning” — we will be unable to recognize, let alone realize, this “always already” present primordial Mandala of the Base in whom all of the spacetime dimension of Relative Truth spontaneously arises and participates. We may thereby limit our understanding to the less direct *Hinayana* and *Mahayana* gradualist paths that assume that the Fruit that is Buddhahood is a future goal that has a cause and that cause is the *bodhicitta* cultivated on the gradualist path that subscribes to a program of “keeping watch over purity,” which is the dualistic “tile polishing” and “dust wiping” path to enlightenment. The rub here is that with all the future oriented purity practice, we forget that our in-dwelling Buddha Nature “is already accomplished.”

According to this foundational, yet less direct view, only by such ritualistic goal directed *praxis* can we purify the peripheral, adventitious negative emotional defilements and accomplish the Fruit or Result that is Buddhahood. And this Result, according to the *Hinayana* and *Mahayana* vehicles, takes many eons or kalpas. In this view—from the dimension of mind that is relative phenomenal appearance—the Nature of Mind or Mind Essence is primordially pure, yet is defiled by the destructive thought and action arising from the ignorance (*avidya/marigpa/ajnana*) of human beings and therefore we must commit to the gradualist path of purification and development of *bodhicitta*. And this purification of defiled negative emotions (the *kleshas*) cultivates the relative *bodhicitta* that is seen as the *cause* of Buddhahood. But if Buddhahood has a cause, then there exists an untidy duality or separation between the “goal” of **future** Buddhahood, and our **here now** innate Buddha Nature that is always present, at the heart, in all beings. In the *Heruka Galpo Tantra* we are told, “In the expository vehicle of cause, living beings are known to be the cause of Buddhas. In the resultant *vajra* vehicle, one mediates upon the Buddhahood of mind itself.”

Conversely, the view from the dimension of mind that is Absolute Truth—the mind’s ultimate nature or mode of being—is subtly, yet profoundly different. This “secret,” “greater esoteric” view that is the non-gradualist view of the Mahayana’s *Saijojo* Zen and Vajrayana’s *Ati Dzogchen* and Essence *Mahamudra* is here transmitted by the great Jamgön Mipham thusly:

Because the *sugatagarbha* (Buddha Nature) consists in the qualities of enlightenment, which are spontaneously present from the very beginning, all the various paths that may be implemented serve only to render these qualities manifest... The paths simply render the primordial luminosity of the dharmakaya manifest. They do not create (cause) it. . . . When the mandala of the primordial ground—the authentic nature of primordial buddhahood—is realized, the mind becomes inseparable from the wisdom of all the Buddhas of the three times (past, present, future). The irreversible ground of realization is thereby achieved. In that very instant supreme mastery is found—in which the ground and fruit are inseparably united.

Jamgön Mipham (2007)

Thus, all relative phenomenal appearance is suddenly realized to be the ultimate truth of the prior, spontaneously pure primordial base. In this radical view, there is no need of a purifying antidote. The presence—Buddha mind—is abundantly present, always right here now. We need simply to surrender, to “relax, into it.” This is the great perennial wisdom secret of *Wu-wei*, the effortless surrender or “relaxation into” the source. This “sudden” (*tongo*) realization is actually a continuity or tantric continuum of “brief moments, many times”—sudden *samadhi/satori/moksha* quantum event instants of the primordial ground state that results from gradual practice of the path. This *samadhi* is the atavistic, nondual Primordial Awareness Wisdom (*yeshe, jnana, gnosis*) that is Dharmakaya, or the three Buddha Bodies of the “Trikaya of the Base” (Nirmanakaya, Sambhogakaya, Dharmakaya). From this supreme nondual wisdom view that is Absolute Truth, all of the appearing objective and subjective phenomena of the realm of Relative Truth have never existed—have never separated from the trans-conceptual, trans-personal spontaneously present mandala of the primordial ground. And this emptiness Base (*gzhi*) is not other than the ultimate, perfectly subjective unbroken whole in whom all realities are enfolded, the perfect sphere of *Dzogchen*. This sphere is the display ground for all the unfolding, arising, objective and subjective relative-conventional, pure and impure phenomenal mind projections/ productions (*maya/vikshepa*) that are the creative “deposits” of *lila*, the endless purposeless play of the duality of relative *samsara* and *nirvana* of the three times—past, present and future.

When you fully realize this view and this practice, everything is the infinite playful display of Buddha Bodies of light, and of primordial wisdom. These are the stainless and spontaneous displays of reality (*cho nyi*) itself, like the rays of the sun they are utterly pure...

Ad.Zom Rinpoche (Translated by Anne Klein from Rinpoche's Jigme Lingpa Dzogchen Ngöndro, *Heart Essence of the Vast Expanse* (Longchen Nyingthig)).

Therefore, the non-gradualist path does not depend upon the relative-conventional Law of Causality—cause and effect—to provide a **relative** cause for the **ultimate** truth of Buddhahood. In this subtler, greater view, what appeared to be the distant “goal”—our primordially pure, beautiful original face—is always spontaneously present and awake at the spiritual heart of all beings, right now. “Open the door... follow the path right to the end” (H.H. The Dalai Lama).

Just as the surface of a mirror (*melôn*) remains unchanged by the images or reflections which appear therein, the crystal, adamantine clarity and purity of this immediate Primordial Awareness Wisdom (*jnana*, *yeshe*, *gnosis*) presence (*vidya*, *rigpa*) remains untainted by the peripheral adventitious physical, emotional and mental appearances that arise. Again, there is nothing to be purified, nothing to improve and nothing to seek. No antidote is needed. No cause is necessary. Why? Because everything is “already accomplished” (Garab Dorje). Buddha nature/Buddha mind is already the case. It is “always already” present at the spiritual heart. From this radical nondual view, the gradualist path of seeking may seem to be a distraction. Alas, “Yet the seeds of past action, karma, continue to cause further arising” (Shakyamuni Buddha). And thus, paradoxically, we utilize the skillful method (*upaya*) and merit (*prajna* wisdom) of these relative distractions to recognize, then realize the Absolute. At the beginning of the Path we utilize the relative means of the Path to recognize, then realize that *That* which we seek is already spontaneously present. “The only way to realize ultimate truth is through Relative Truth” (Nagarjuna).

Of course, ultimately, the Two Truths are, as we have seen, aspects of a unitary reality—one truth. Why? The conceptual dualistic dimension of Relative Truth is necessarily, already subsumed in nondual Ultimate Truth. Not to put too fine a point on it, but the *Prasangika* of the Middle Way (*rangtong*) has told it; no ultimately true assertion can be made even as to this ultimate or Absolute Truth (*paramartha*), for all assertions are merely the conceptual imputations and designations of Relative Truth (*samvriti*). Does anything then exist ultimately? Yes and no. It depends upon the view, relative or ultimate. Relative-conventional things—objective and subjective experiences— really do exist in their relative dimension. However, ultimately, no objective or subjective **thing** exists. And what is the ontological status of **this** metaphysical assertion? It is merely a useful relative, conceptual presumption that applies only in the realm of relative truth. The great paradoxical Ultimate Truth cannot be grasped conceptually. It can only be realized, beyond concept and belief. Let us then further explore this most amazing paradox of the Two Truths—relative form and ultimate emptiness—and its astonishing resolution.

Realizing the Emptiness of Emptiness

Although the Mahayana emphasizes the realization of the radical emptiness of *shunyata* (Chin., *wu*, Tao, Jap., *mu*)—the fruit that is Buddhahood—and the Vajrayana, especially the inner tantras, emphasizes the radiant presence of our Buddha Nature, the nondual View of both *Dzogchen* and of *Saijojo* Zen is that *shunyata* is not merely a dark “non-affirming negative” emptiness. Rather, *shunyata* is, as we have seen, an affirming negative because its actual nature is luminous clarity. There is an effulgent brightness to this intrinsic emptiness of form. We must always remember that the Nature of Mind, the Ultimate Source of all of this relative-conventional reality is “empty in essence, luminous clarity in its nature, and compassionate in its lifeworld expression”. Thus emptiness, the Ultimate Truth, the ultimate reality, is in absence of any essential intrinsic nature. This absence of essential nature is real. Emptiness, the ultimate reality, exists. But how does it exist? Is it a vast ultimate, all embracing permanently existing substantive entity? According to Buddhism’s highest or subtlest teachings—the *Madhyamaka Prasangika*, (“empty of self,” *rangtong*) and the *Madhyamaka* of the Definitive Meaning (“empty of Phenomena,” *shentong*) —*shunyata* exists only as relative-conventional truth, nominally or conceptually, not as Ultimate Truth. Although relative-conventional things—objective or subjective—are “findable” and real through “relative valid cognition” (inference, *anumana*), emptiness itself is findable neither through relative valid cognition nor through “ultimate valid cognition” (direct intuitive perception, *pratyaksa*). Thus, emptiness is devoid of self-nature and cannot exist intrinsically. We must not reify and entify the emptiness of phenomena into an absolute. Emptiness too is **ultimately** empty of inherent existence. This ultimate ontological status of emptiness, the Dalai Lama terms the “emptiness of emptiness.” Again, it cannot be grasped by the intellect. Can it be known? Yes. It may be cognized through nondual Buddha *gnosis*, Buddha mind that is inseparable from Buddha Nature (*tathagatagarbha*), the Buddha essence of all beings, and indeed of all appearing reality. This always present primordial wisdom (*gnosis*, *jnana*, *yeshe*) is the *samadhi* of realization of the luminous emptiness and primal unity of all of the apparent dualities—form/ emptiness, purity/ impurity, apparent /absent—of Buddhist hermeneutics.

Therefore, there are not **ultimately** “Two Truths,” —emptiness and form—for if there were, it would logically follow that Relative Truth would be Absolute Truth (the relative subsumed in the absolute) which contradicts the basic concept of Two Truths. Is this then, one truth viewed conceptually in two modalities? Is Absolute Truth merely the ultimate unreality of Relative Truth? Does the one all-embracing Absolute Truth absolutely subsume apparently, obviously real Relative Truth? Yes, yes, and yes. The Two Truths that are the one truth exist only conventionally. Everything exists merely as dependant arising from emptiness (*pratitya samutpada*). But this is not the final view. Such logical discourse is

mere conceptual elaboration, useful in leading us to the edge, the logical, epistemological limit of discursive mind. Beyond this is the truth of utterly non-conceptual “Mu!”

Again, this can only be realized in the “pristine cognition” of emptiness (*chos-ying yeshe*, *dharmadhatujnana*), the vast expanse of Basic Space that is sublime Buddha mind, perfect, luminous nondual primordial awareness wisdom (*gnosis*, *sahajajnana*, *yeshe*). But if all of this is mere relative-conventional ideational concept and belief, how do we finally establish a meaningful coalescence of the unity and multiplicity of the Two Truths that are the unbroken whole of non-dual Reality Itself? For this we must return to the radical nondual view and practice of *Anuttara Yogatantra*, and to *Ati Dzogchen* (Ch. II).

Enlightenment: Sudden or Gradual?

What **can** be asserted here is that the non-gradualist, *tongo* nondual view of *Dzogchen* and *Saijojo* Zen holarchically transcends yet embraces the gradualist renunciation view of the *sutras* and the transformation view of the outer *tantras* (and even of the inner *tantras* of *Mahayoga* and *Anuyoga*), just as the radical and revolutionary nondual teaching of Hui-neng’s *tongo* transcended and included the dualistic gradualist view that characterized *Ch’an* Buddhism in China in the fifth century, CE. Thus as Hui Neng told, sudden *tongo* and gradual *zengo* enlightenment are a prior unity. Both are necessary aspects of the path. This ecumenical (*rime*), unitary view continues today in Zen as the nondual view of *Saijojo* Zen in both the *Soto* and *Rinzai* schools, and in the inner *Madhyamaka* of the Definitive Meaning, and in Essence *Mahamudra*, and in *Ati Dzogchen* of the *Vajrayana*.

Therefore, the perennial Buddhist hermeneutical problem regarding sudden versus gradualist liberation is a false dichotomy. The above mentioned traditions all permit sudden enlightenment while utilizing a gradual path. Mipham and other *rime* masters have argued that the sudden intuition of primordial wisdom (*gnosis*, *yeshe*) in both Essence *Mahamudra* and *Ati Dzogchen* is compatible with the gradualist, analytical view of the *Madhyamikas*. Indeed, according to Mipham (1999), the gradualist dialectics of *Prasangika* permit a “sudden” liberation of the “Four Extremes of Elaboration” (*sprospa*) that is similar to *Dzogchen*’s establishment of *kadag*. Nagarjuna told it two thousand years ago. We accomplish sudden enlightenment through gradual practice. That is, we accomplish a gradual continuity of sudden *satoris*, “brief moments, many times,” until the full bodhi of irreversible liberation. But we must remember, the Buddha essence is always, already present and awake at the Heart, whatever *praxis* we indulge.

So, at the highest or subtlest level, the “innermost secret” teaching holarchically transcends yet includes the previous dualistic limitations of human created sects, schools, sectarian bias and all the rest—the conceptual, outer/exoteric and inner/esoteric relative-conventional aspects of Buddhism. The same is true of the great nondual practices of *Advaita Vedanta* (Chap. IV), and nondual *Valentinian* and *Thomas Gnostic Christianity* (Chap. V).

Happiness Itself: The End of All Our Seeking

Therefore, the Ati Yoga of *Dzogchen* and the *Mujodo no taigen* of *Saijojo* Zen exemplify the archetypal primordial wisdom teaching that has always arisen as part of the nondual Primordial Wisdom Tradition of self-conscious species in this, and other star systems for eons (Norbu, 1999). This great ecumenical teaching does not, under the guidance of a qualified master, suffer the dualistic limitations and religious dogmas of the limited egoic structures that have conceptually unpacked the teaching on their various exoteric and esoteric paths to liberation. However, as the heart essence of the teaching is dependent upon direct "heartmind to heartmind" transmission from master to prepared disciple, realization of the great ecumenical teaching requires this very relationship within the context of a specific tradition (Buddhist, Hindu, Taoist, Islam) and the wisdom personality of an individual living master or masters abiding within that tradition. Shakyamuni the Buddha, Jesus the Christ, Padmasambhava, Longchen Rabjam, Shankara, and many other Buddhas and adept realizers, past and present, appear in their avataric *Nirmanakaya* forms in different times and places to transmit this great nondual primordial wisdom teaching to those teachers and students who have recognized the love-wisdom imprint, and have prepared to receive it. These sublime avatars embody and transmit the primordial presence (*vidya*, *rigpa*, *Atman*, *Christos/logos*) of the "Buddha Nature" or the "Christ Nature" or the *Atman* that lives, awake, if cloaked (*maya*), within each human form. **"We must never forget the Tathagatas . . . the thousand Buddhas. There exist many, many ways for realized beings to manifest themselves and for the teaching to arise"** (Chögyal Namkhai Norbu).

Is one nondual tradition ultimately superior to another? It depends on the view, relative or absolute. Sectarian bias, from gross to subtle, is natural to the relative view. As to the absolute view, "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one remains silent" (Ludwig Wittgenstein). Through this Silence (*mouna*) the ultimate view of each tradition speaks one truth (*paramartha satya*) in many tongues. But of course, we cannot remain silent in the face of such profundity. "No small matter is at stake. The question concerns the very way in which human life is to be lived" (Plato, *Republic*, Book I).

In all cases, meditation masters caution against three errors: 1) the error of egoic separation from the inherently divine presence within; 2) the error of attachment to the form of the teaching and its practices (with the resulting sectarian bias); and 3) the error of the idealized exoteric worship of the spacetime physical form or personage of the master. Any one of these can derail the necessary, difficult self-transcending practice/*sadhana* required by the path.

The nondual primordial wisdom teaching is this: The numinous presence of the Buddha, the *Atman*, the Christ, the Tao, by whatever name, is the divine nature and supreme source of the bodymind, always already spontaneously present and awake at the spiritual heart of every human being. The teaching, the practice and the master

mirror or transmit this utterly ineffable miracle directly, non-conceptually, to the prepared aspirant. Yet the aspirant must train the mind and the heart first through dualistic, but finally through nondual, non-graduated practice (the desideratum devoutly to be wished). This is the union of quiescence meditation (*shamatha*) and insight meditation (*vipashyana*) that opens the conceptual cage and releases the profound blessing of ultimate truth that is always here, now Happiness Itself (*paramananda, mahasuka*). Such is the nondual teaching of our great Primordial Wisdom Tradition, and of the great teaching of *Ati Dzogchen* and *Saijojo Zen*.

On the Nondual View of Dzogchen and Zen:

In terms of the source, the root of all phenomena, there is no such thing as an observer and an object to observe. All the phenomena of existence, without exception, abide in the supreme source in a condition of birthlessness . . . As the supreme source (Samantabhadra), pure and total consciousness, I am the mirror in which all phenomena are reflected. Although lacking self-nature everything exists clearly; without need for a view, the nature shines clear. Understanding the essential unborn condition is not an object to observe dualistically. This is the great understanding!

-*Kunjed Gyalpo, The Supreme Source* (trans. Namkhai Norbu)

From the beginning all beings are Buddha . . . If we turn inward and prove our true nature, that true self, is no-self . . . our form now being no-form... our thought now being no-thought . . . this earth where we stand is the pure lotus land, and this very body the body of Buddha.

-Hakuin Zenji (trans. Philip Kapleau)

Historiographical Note

Neither the Buddha, nor Jesus, nor Shankara, nor Lao Tzu created a school or a religion. The schools, sects and cults of religion are human inventions and bear the limitations, distortions and dualism of secondary human gross and subtle egoic ignorance (*avidya*) as we conceptually and experientially unpack their view and meditation teachings.

That the esoteric and nondual teaching of Zen and *Dzogchen* are historically associated with Buddhism, does not mean that they began with or are limited to historical Buddhism. *Dzogchen*, for example, was practiced by the ancient pre-Buddhist *Bonpos* of the indigenous Tibetan *Bon* wisdom teaching, and by the pre-historic "Twelve Teachers of *Dzogchen*" centuries before the incarnation of the historical *Nirmanakaya* Buddha Shakyamuni (Norbu,

1999). Just so, esoteric Christianity teaches “That which is called the Christian religion existed among the ancients, and never did not exist, from the beginning of the human race until Christ came in the flesh.” (St. Augustine, Ch.V). Nor does the fact that *Nyingma Dzogchen* was influenced by *Shivaism* and *Ch’an*, or that *Ch’an* and Zen were influenced by Taoism mean that one is derived from or reducible to the other. As we recover from our habitual, linear cause and effect thinking we see that all of the traditions of our great Primordial Wisdom Tradition have arisen not so much one from another in a linear historical cause and effect chain, although these influences exist, but interdependently, as a continuum from the Primordial Wisdom Base. The various traditions of our Great Wisdom Tradition all respond to the primordial wisdom of this same ultimate ground of arising reality forms. Contemplation and meditation upon this “wisdom of emptiness” opens equally into that ground for all of them.

Who Is It?

In whom does this all arise?

-Adi Da Samraj

The primary *Dzogchen* tantra, *The Kunjed Gyalpo (The Supreme Source)*, must be considered one of humankind's great spiritual treasures. According to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, this supreme non-dual teaching has been transmitted from master to disciple directly, heartmind to heartmind, for thousands of years. Its current tantric version dates from the 8th century C.E., and is a fundamental tantra of the *Dzogchen semde* (mind) teaching series. This version of the great nondual primordial wisdom teaching is derived from Buddhist sutra and tantra understanding of the Nature of Mind, yet its truth essence runs, like a golden thread, through the grand tapestry of humankind's Primordial Great Wisdom Tradition. *Kunjed Gyalpo, The Wise and Glorious King* is Samantabhadra/Samantabhadri in inseparable yabyum embrace—androgenous primordial Adi Buddha—state of pure presence, clarity and emptiness that is actually our original Buddha nature, Supreme Source, Basis, primordial womb of everything. Samantabhadra, this Ultimate *Dharmakaya* Buddha speaks to Vajrasattva, the *Sambhogakaya* Buddha:

The essence of all the Buddhas exists prior to samsara and nirvana . . . it transcends the four conceptual limits and is intrinsically pure; this original condition is the uncreated nature of existence that always existed, the ultimate nature of all phenomena. . . It is utterly free of the defects of dualistic thought which is only capable of referring to an object other than itself. . . It is the base of primordial purity. . . Similar to space it pervades all beings. . . The inseparability of the two truths, absolute and relative is called the 'primordial Buddha'. . . If at the moment the energy of the base manifests, one does not consider it something other than oneself . . . it self-liberates. . . Understanding the essence . . . one finds oneself always in this state. . . dwelling in the fourth time, beyond past, present and future. . . the infinite space of self-perfection. . . pure dharmakaya, the essence of the vajra of clear light.

- Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, *The Supreme Source*, (1999)

Thus do the sutras and the tantras of Buddha's teaching, the dualities of the path—objective and subjective, self and other, observer and data, true and false, relative and ultimate—abide in the prior unity of the dependently arisen perfect sphere of infinite Mind Nature, luminous innate clear light mind that is always the unity of awareness and emptiness. Who is it, that I am? All the masters of the three times have told it. This infinite vast expanse of the primordial awareness wisdom continuum is who we actually are. *Tat tvam ami. That, I Am!* That is our supreme identity, great perfection of our always present Buddha nature, deep heartseed presence of ultimate happiness that is both origin and aim of all our seeking.

Being the Primordial Awareness Wisdom*

The Non-Meditation That is Happiness Itself

Now is the moment we abide in primordial essence
Luminous nature of mind
empty awake awareness itself

Whatever experience arises
Pleasant neutral unpleasant
no need to change it

Whatever arises let it be
 without judgment positive or negative
 without past or future
 without attachment or aversion
 without affirmation or denial
 without closeness or distance

Whatever arises is pure clear light of mind
opening into the very ground of being
Thus whatever arises is liberated

Now let it be exactly as it is
Perfect openness
Perfect space
As it is already accomplished
Simply relax into it

* Excerpted from *Stromata*, Fragments of the Whole: Selected Essays of David Paul Boaz (Dechen Wangdu), ©2009 David Paul Boaz. All rights reserved. www.davidpaulboaz.org, Copper Mountain Institute, info@coppermount.org, www.coppermount.org 505-898-959

Appendix A: part II

Kosmos: Descent and Ascent of Spirit In Advaita Vedanta and Mahayana Buddhism*

Life Stage/Mind State (evolutionary, developmental) 1, 2, 3 Egocentric	Consciousness Dimension/State (<i>avastha</i>) (non-developmental, inherent in all beings.)	Corresponding Energy-Body/Kosha Dimension/Vijnana (Body, Mind, Soul, Spirit)
Physical, Emotional, Mental Stage; Individuation of lower mind. Dualistic material seeking strategies dominate the view and behavior. Sleepwaiting denial of spirit-presence. Exoteric, relative-conventional response. Gross ignorance of the essencelessness and impermanence of the five <i>skandhas</i> of existence and the five sense consciousnesses. <i>Om Gate . . .</i> 4 Ethnocentric	Waking State (Exoteric) (<i>vaishvanara/jagrat</i>) Intentional, ego-motivated, desire-mind awareness, estranged and ignorant (<i>avidya</i>) of nondual <i>Atman</i> that is Brahman. Empirical reality. Subject-object separation and dependence. The physical and lower mental phenomenal worlds. Physical and emotional body of desire. Lifeworld ruled by fear and hope. Prepersonal to personal. The Bardo of Living. <i>Nirmanakaya</i>	Gross Body (<i>sthula-sarira</i>) Gross physical matter-energy body (<i>annamaya-kosha</i>). Life, <i>Prana</i> or Emotional Body (<i>pranamaya-kosha</i>). The Quantum potential. Mental Body (<i>manomaya-kosha</i>), <i>manas</i> desire-mind/sense-mind (<i>citta</i> or <i>sems</i>). Brahman as Virat. Conditional self and its identities. The five <i>skandhas</i> /sense consciousnesses (<i>panchdvaya-vijnana</i>) plus mind (<i>manovijnana</i>) <i>Om . . .</i>
Spiritual development ground and path stage; dualist conventional religious and beginning mystical seeking; finding the master; conditional <i>savikalpa Samadhi</i> ; the lesser esoteric response. <i>Shamatha</i> mindfulness practice. The <i>Mahatman</i> or essence-self recognition; deity practice. Spiritual materialism. Path of form. Kindness. Quiescence practice. <i>Para gate . . .</i> 5, 6 Worldcentric	Dream State (Esoteric) (<i>svapna</i>) Prepersonal, preconscious, subtle body of desire. Non-empirical illusory (<i>maya</i>) subject-object independence. Objective, relative-conventional realism. Beginning compassion. Fear and hope. Personal to transpersonal. "State effects" not yet "trait effects." The Bardo of Becoming. <i>Nirmanakaya</i>	Subtle Body (<i>sukshma-sarira</i>) (<i>vijnanamaya-kosha</i>) Transcends & embraces previous <i>koshas</i> . <i>Buddhi</i> , higher mental, <i>citta</i> , reflecting and discriminating mind. The will. Intellectual and subtle dharma understanding. Beginning insight and bhakti/devotional meditation (<i>dhyana</i>). Path of the yogis/saints (love wisdom). Brahman as Prajapati or Hiranyagarbha. <i>Klishta-Manovijnana</i> , subtle body, the root of ego-I. <i>Mani . . .</i>
Spiritual completion fruition stage; deity, formless and <i>cosmic</i> mysticism; the greater esoteric inner most secret response, <i>vipashyana</i> practice. <i>Moksha-nirvikalpa samadhi</i> . Karma ceases only when in <i>turiya</i> (<i>vidya/rigpa</i>); compassionate transcendent Witness practice, <i>Dzogchen</i> , Essence <i>Mahamudra</i> Frequent "clicking" from asleep to awake states. <i>Parasam gate . . .</i> 7 Theocentric	Deep Sleep State (Greater Esoteric) (<i>formless sushupti/prajna</i>) Transpersonal, transrational; profound, wise compassion. A lifeworld devoted to surrender, renunciation and service. Subjective idealism. Transpersonal subtle to causal cognition. Path of the <i>siddhas</i> , <i>rishis</i> , <i>arhats</i> , saints and <i>bodhisattvas</i> . Transcendent Witness Presence awareness. The Bardo of Dharmata. <i>Sambhogakaya</i>	Causal Body (<i>karana-sarira</i>) (<i>anandam aya-kosha</i>) Soul, transcendent mental, wisdom-spirit-bliss; path of sages and <i>arhats</i> , <i>bodhisattva</i> late <i>bhumi</i> levels. Nondual witness practice bridging causal dimension to nondual Absolute. Saguna Brahman as <i>prana-vayu</i> or <i>satratman</i> . <i>Alayavijnana</i> (store consciousness). Very subtle body. Realization of the unity of the Two Truths. <i>Padme . . .</i>
Spiritual perfection stage; final, fruition, alpha pure nondual response and realization; full <i>bodhi</i> ; <i>Atman</i> identity with Brahman; no more learning; muni; transcendent integration of conditional self in lifeworld (<i>moksha-sahaj samadhi</i>), beyond fear and hope. Karma ceases; Maha-rishi, Christ-Buddhahood. Realization of <i>Kham Brahm</i> , "The Bright," Ultimate Spirit Itself, Tao, <i>Dharmakaya</i> , <i>Dharmata</i> . <i>Bodhi Svaha</i>	<i>Turiya</i> ("The Fourth") (The innermost secret, nondual transcendent Witness) Realization (liberation) of personal identity with Absolute Reality, Brahman, <i>Dharmakaya</i> , Buddhahood, primordial, nondual Spirit Itself in whom arises all phenomena Great compassion. Transcends and includes the previous relative states. The timeless "fourth time," prior unity of <i>Svabhavakaya/Trikaya</i> of the Base; emptiness (<i>shunyata</i>) realized through <i>yeshe/jnana/gnosis</i> , the nondual Primordial Awareness Wisdom. This final realization is <i>turiyatita</i> (<i>sahaj</i>) the fifth state. <i>Dharmakaya</i>	<i>Atman</i> The nondual untainted divine presence (<i>vidya, rigpa, logos</i>), Supreme Identity, the Witness (<i>saksin</i>) that is identical to Nirguna Brahman, the Supreme Source. Transcends and embraces previous <i>samadhis</i> , <i>koshas</i> and all conditional experience. Mouna, the great Peace in the Silence. Om Shanti Om. Tao, <i>shyunyata</i> /emptiness, <i>Dharmakaya</i> . The unobstructed Pure <i>Alaya</i> (<i>amala-vijnana</i>). Vuddha Nature Ultimate Mind Nature (<i>sems nyid/cittata, gnosis</i>). Tao <i>Hum</i> .

*The multidimensional pie of Spirit descending as phenomenal reality and the ascending realization of our non-dual Source is sliced in slightly different ways by different wisdom traditions, and even within traditions. Moreover, although the *koshas* of Vedanta and the *vijnanas* and *kayas* of Buddhism generally correlate, there is at present, no agreement on the definitions and correlation of consciousness dimensions, lifestages, bodies, levels, structures, and mindstates. Excerpted from *The Nature of Mind: The New Reformation in Religion, Science and Culture*. ©2010, David Paul Boaz, Copper Mountain Institute 505-898-9592 www.coppermount.org or www.davidpaulboaz.org

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