

# THE ZEN DOCTRINE OF NO-MIND

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SŪTRA OF HUI-NENG (WEI-LANG)

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To Father Thana

A full's hands

the way

to rise

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'Chi-ch'eng asked: "How different?"

'Hui-neng replied: "There is a slow view, and there is a quick view."

'Chi-ch'eng begged the Master to explain *his* view of the Precept, Meditation, and Knowledge.

'The great Master said: "Listen to my teaching, then. According to my view, the Mind as it is in itself is free from ills—this is the Precept of Self-being. The Mind as it is in itself is free from disturbances—this is the Meditation of Self-being. The Mind as it is in itself is free from follies—this is the Knowledge of Self-being."

'Hui-neng, the great Master, continued: "The Triple Discipline as taught by your Master is meant for people of inferior endowments, whereas my teaching of the Triple Discipline is for superior people. When Self-being is understood, there is no further use in establishing the Triple Discipline."

'Chi-ch'eng said: "Pray tell me about the meaning of this 'no further use'."

'The great Master said: "[The Mind as] Self-being is free from ills, disturbances and follies, and every thought is thus of transcendental knowledge; and within the reach of this illuminating light there are no forms to be recognized as such. Being so, there is no use in establishing anything. One is awakened to this Self-being abruptly, and there is no gradual realization in it. This is the reason for no-establishment."

'Chi-ch'eng made bows, and never left Ts'ao-ch'i Shan. He became a disciple of the great Master and attended him always.'

From this contrast between Shen-hsiu and Hui-neng we can understand why Shen-hsiu's view of the Triple Discipline is designated by Shen-hui, one of the great disciples of Hui-neng, as belonging to the type of 'doing something', while that of Hui-neng is the type of Self-being which is



characterized as empty, serene and illuminating. Shen-hui gives a third type, called 'doing nothing', by which the Triple Discipline is understood in this way: 'When erroneous thoughts do not rise, this is Precept; when erroneous thoughts are no more, this is Meditation; and when the non-existence of erroneous thoughts is perceived, this is Transcendental Knowledge. The 'nothing doing' type and the 'self-being' type are the same; the one states negatively what the other states positively.

Besides these, Shen-hsiu is stated to have expressed his views on the following five subjects, depending on the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*, the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka*, the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, the *Shiyaku-kyo*, and the *Avatamsaka-Sūtra*. The five subjects are: (1) the Buddha-body which means perfect enlightenment expressing itself as the Dharmakāya of the Tathāgata; (2) the intuitive knowledge belonging to the Buddha, which is kept thoroughly defiled by the six senses; (3) emancipation beyond intellectual measures, which belongs to the Bodhisattva; (4) the true nature of all things as remaining serene and undisturbed; and (5) the absolutely unimpeded passageway opened to the course of enlightenment which is attained by penetrating into the truth of non-differentiation.

These views held by Shen-hsiu are interesting enough in themselves, but as they do not concern us here we shall not go into a detailed exposition. We will now proceed to Hui-neng.

## HUI-NENG'S DISTINCTIVE TEACHING

WHAT distinguishes Hui-neng most conspicuously and characteristically from his predecessors as well as from his contemporaries is his doctrine of 'hon-rai mu-ichi-motsu' (*pen-lai wu-i-wu*). This is one of the lines declared against Shen-hsiu's *gāthā* to which reference has already been made. The whole *gāthā* by Hui-neng runs thus :

There is no Bodhi-tree,  
Nor stand of mirror bright.  
Since all is void,  
Where can the dust alight?

'From the first not a thing is'—this was the first proclamation made by Hui-neng. It is a bomb thrown into the camp of Shen-hsiu and his predecessors. By it Hui-neng's Zen came to be sharply outlined against the background of the dust-brushing type of Zen meditation. Shen-hsiu was not exactly wrong in his view, for there is reason to suppose that Shen-hsiu's own teacher, Hung-jen, the Fifth Patriarch, who was also Hui-neng's teacher, had a similar view, though this was not so explicitly stated as Shen-hsiu's. In fact, Hung-jen's teaching could be construed in either way, in that of Shen-hsiu or in that of Hui-neng. Hung-jen was a great master of Zen and from him grew up many strong personalities who became great spiritual leaders of the time. Of them Shen-hsiu and Hui-neng were the most distinguished in many ways, and the camp came to be divided between them. Shen-hsiu interpreted Hung-jen in his own light, and Hui-neng in his, and, as already explained, the latter as time went on proved to be the winner as being in

better accord with the thought and psychology of the Chinese people.

In all likelihood there was in Hung-jen's teaching itself something which tended to that of Shen-hsiu, for Hung-jen seems to have instructed his pupils to 'keep their guard on the Mind' all the time. He, of course, being a follower of Bodhi-Dharma, believed in the Mind from which this universe with all its multiplicities issues, but which in itself is simple, undefiled, and illuminating as the sun behind the clouds. 'To keep one's guard on this original Mind' means to keep it clear from the beclouding mists of individualization, so that its pure light may be retained intact and ever illuminating. But in this view the conception of the Mind and of its relation to the world of multiplicities is not clearly defined, and there is every probability of getting these concepts confused.

If the Mind is originally pure and undefiled, why is it necessary to brush off its dust, which comes from nowhere? Is not this dust-wiping, which is the same thing as 'keeping one's guard', an unwarranted process on the part of the Zen Yogin? The wiping is indeed an altogether unnecessary contrivance. If from the Mind arises this world, why not let the latter rise as it pleases? To try to stop its rising by keeping one's guard on the Mind—is not this interfering with the mind? The most logical and most natural thing to do in relation to the Mind would be to let it go on with its creating and illuminating.

Hung-jen's teaching of guarding the Mind may mean to guard on the part of the Yogin his own individual mind from getting in the way of the original Mind. But at the same time there is the danger of the Yogin's acting exactly contrary to the doctrine of non-interference. This is a delicate point, and the masters have to be quite definite about it—not only in concepts but in the practical methods of training. The master himself may have a well-defined idea of what he desires to accomplish in the pupil's mind,



but the latter too frequently fails to move in unison with the master. For this reason, methods must vary not only with persons but with ages. And again, for this reason differences are more vehemently asserted among the disciples than between two masters advocating different methods.

Shen-hsiu was perhaps more inclined to teach the self-guarding or dust-wiping process than the letting-alone process. This latter, however, has in its turn deep pitfalls into which its devotees may fall. For it is fundamentally the outcome of the doctrine of emptiness or nothingness; that is, the idea that 'from the first not a thing is'.

When Hui-neng declared, 'From the first not a thing is', the keynote of his Zen thought was struck, and from it we recognize the extent of difference there is between him and his predecessors and contemporaries. This keynote was never so clearly struck before. When the Masters who followed him pointed to the presence of the Mind in each individual mind and also to its absolute purity, this idea of presence and purity was understood somehow to suggest the existence of an individual body, however ethereal and transparent it may be conceived. And the result was to dig out this body from the heap of obscuring materials. On the other hand, Hui-neng's concept of nothingness (*wu-i-wu*) may push one down into a bottomless abyss, which will no doubt create a feeling of utter forlornness. The philosophy of Prajñāpāramitā, which is also that of Hui-neng, generally has this effect. To understand it a man requires a deep religious intellectual insight into the truth of Śūnyatā. When Hui-neng is said to have had an awakening by listening to the *Vajracchedikā Sūtra* (Diamond Sūtra) which belongs to the Prajñāpāramitā group of the Mahāyāna texts, we know at once where he has his foothold.

The dominant idea prevailing up to the time of Hui-neng was that the Buddha-nature with which all beings are endowed is thoroughly pure and undefiled as to its self-being. The business of the Yogin is therefore to bring



out his self-nature, which is the Buddha-nature, in its original purity. But, as I said before, in practice this is apt to lead the Yogin to the conception of something separate which retains its purity behind all the confusing darkness enveloping his individual mind. His meditation may end in clearing up the mirror of consciousness in which he expects to see the image of his original pure self-being reflected. This may be called static meditation. But serenely reflecting or contemplating on the purity of the Mind has a suicidal effect on life, and Hui-neng vehemently protested against this type of meditation.

In the *T'an-ching*, and other Zen works after it, we often come across the term '*K'an-ching*', meaning 'to keep an eye on Purity', and this practice is condemned. 'To keep an eye on purity' is no other than a quietistic contemplation of one's self-nature or self-being. When the concept of 'original purity' issues in this kind of meditation, it goes against the true understanding of Zen. Shen-hsiu's teaching was evidently strongly coloured with quietism or the reflection type. So, when Hui-neng proclaimed, 'From the first not a thing is,' the statement was quite original with him, though ultimately it goes back to the *Prajñāpāramitā*. It really revolutionized the Zen practice of meditation, establishing what is really Buddhist and at the same time preserving the genuine spirit of Bodhi-Dharma.

Hui-neng and his followers now came to use the new term *chien-hsing* instead of the old *k'an-ching*. *Chien-hsing* means 'to look into the nature [of the Mind]'. *K'an* and *chien* both relate to the sense of sight, but the character *k'an*, which consists of a hand and an eye, is to watch an object as independent of the spectator; the seen and the seeing are two separate entities. *Chien*, composed of an eye alone on two outstretched legs, signifies the pure act of seeing. When it is coupled with *hsing*, Nature, or Essence, or Mind, it is seeing into the ultimate nature of things, and not watching, as the Samkhya's Purusha watches the

dancing of Prakṛit. The seeing is not reflecting on an object as if the seer had nothing to do with it. The seeing, on the contrary, brings the seer and the object seen together, not in mere identification but the becoming conscious of itself, or rather of its working. The seeing is an active deed, involving the dynamic conception of self-being; that is, of the Mind. The distinction made by Hui-neng between *k'an* and *chien* may thus be considered revolutionary in the history of Zen thought.

The utterance, 'From the first not a thing is,' thus effectively destroys the error which attaches itself too frequently to the idea of purity. Purity really means nothingness (*śūnyatā*); it is the negation of all qualities, a state of absolute no-ness, but it somehow tends to create a separate entity outside the 'one who sees'. The fact that *k'an* has been used with it proves that the error has actually been committed. When the idea 'from the first not a thing is' is substituted for 'the self-nature of the Mind is pure and undefiled', all the logical and psychological pedestals which have been given to one are now swept from underneath one's feet and one has nowhere to stand. And this is exactly what is needed for every sincere Buddhist to experience before he can come to the realization of the Mind. The seeing is the result of his having nothing to stand upon. \* Hui-neng is thus in one way looked upon as the father of Chinese Zen.

It is true that he sometimes uses terms as suggesting the older type of meditation when he speaks about 'cleansing the mind' (*ching-hsin*), 'self-being's originally being pure and undefiled', 'the sun being covered with clouds', etc. Yet his unmistakable condemnation of quietistic meditation rings clearly through his works: 'When you sit quietly with an emptied mind, this is falling into a blank emptiness'; and again: 'There are some people with the confused notion that the greatest achievement is to sit quietly with an emptied mind, where not a thought is allowed to be con-



ceived.' Hui-neng thus advises 'neither to cling to the notion of a mind, nor to cling to the notion of purity, nor to cherish the thought of immovability; for these are not our meditation'. 'When you cherish the notion of purity and cling to it, you turn purity into falsehood. . . . Purity has neither form nor shape, and when you claim an achievement by establishing a form to be known as purity, you obstruct your own self-nature, you are purity-bound.' From these passages we can see where Hui-neng wants us to look for final emancipation.

There are as many kinds of binding as there are kinds of clinging. When we cling to purity we thereby make a form of it, and we are purity-bound. For the same reason, when we cling to or abide with emptiness, we are emptiness-bound; when we abide with Dhyāna or tranquillization, we are Dhyāna-bound. However excellent are the merits of these spiritual exercises, they inevitably lead us to a state of bondage in one way or another. In this there is no emancipation. The whole system of Zen discipline may thus be said to be nothing but a series of attempts to set us absolutely free from all forms of bondage. Even when we talk of 'seeing into one's self-nature', this seeing has also a binding effect on us if it is construed as having something in it specifically set up; that is, if the seeing is a specific state of consciousness. For this is the 'binding'.<sup>1</sup>

The Master (Shen-hui) asked Teng: 'What exercise do you recommend in order to see into one's self-nature?'

Teng answered: 'First of all it is necessary to practise meditation by quietly sitting cross-legged. When this exercise is fully mastered, Prajñā (intuitive knowledge) grows out of it, and by virtue of this Prajñā the seeing into one's self-nature is attained.'

Shen-hui inquired: 'When one is engaged in meditation, is this not a specifically contrived exercise?'

'Yes, it is.'

<sup>1</sup> See the *Sayings of Shên-hui*, § 11.

'If so, this specific contrivance is an act of limited consciousness, and how could it lead to the seeing of one's self-nature?'

'For this seeing we must exercise ourselves in meditation (*dhyāna*): if not for this exercise, how can one ever see into one's self-nature?'

Shen-hui commented: 'This exercising in meditation owes its function ultimately to an erroneous way of viewing the truth; and as long as this is the case, exercises of such nature would never issue in [true] meditation (*dhyāna*).'

Teng explained: 'What I mean by attaining meditation by exercising oneself in meditation is this. When meditation is attained, an illumination inside and outside comes by itself upon one; and because of this illumination inside and outside, one sees purity; and because of one's mind being pure it is known as seeing into one's nature.'

Shen-hui, however, argued further: 'When the seeing into one's nature is spoken of, we make no reference to this nature as having inside and outside. If you speak of an illumination taking place inside and outside, this is seeing into a mind of error, and how can it be real seeing into one's self-nature? We read in a Sūtra: 'If you are engaged in the mastery of all kinds of Samādhi, that is moving and not sitting in meditation. The mind flows out as it comes in contact with the environment. How can it be called meditation (*dhyāna*)? If this kind of meditation is to be held as genuine, Vimalakīrti would not take Śāriputra to task when the latter claimed to be exercising himself in meditation.'

In these critical questionings Shen-hui exposes the position of Teng and his followers, the advocates of purity; for in them there are still traces of clinging, i.e. setting up a certain state of mind and taking it for ultimate emancipation. So long as the seeing is something to see, it is not the real one; only when the seeing is no-seeing—that is, when the seeing is not a specific act of seeing into a definitely



circumscribed state of consciousness—is it the ‘seeing into one’s self-nature’. Paradoxically stated, when seeing is no-seeing there is real seeing; when hearing is no-hearing there is real hearing. This is the intuition of the Prajñā-pāramitā.

When thus the seeing of self-nature has no reference to a specific state of consciousness, which can be logically or relatively defined as a something, the Zen masters designate it in negative terms and call it ‘no-thought’ or ‘no-mind’, *wu-nien* or *wu-hsin*. As it is ‘no-thought’ or ‘no-mind’, the seeing is really the seeing. Elsewhere I intend to analyse this concept of ‘no-mind’ (*wu-hsin*), which is the same thing as ‘no-thought’ (*wu-nien*), but here let me deal in further detail with the ideas of purity, illumination, and self-nature in order to shed more light on the thought of Hui-neng as one of the greatest Zen masters in the early history of Chinese Zen. To do this, I will take another quotation from *Shên-hui’s Sayings*, in which we have these points well illustrated by the most eloquent disciple of Hui-neng.

Chang-yen King asked [Shen-hui]: ‘You discourse ordinarily on the subject of Wu-nien (“no-thought” or “no-consciousness”), and make people discipline themselves in it. I wonder if there is a reality corresponding to the notion of Wu-nien, or not?’

Shen-hui answered: ‘I would not say that Wu-nien is a reality, nor that it is not.’

‘Why?’

‘Because if I say it is a reality, it is not in the sense in which people generally speak of reality; if I say it is a non-reality, it is not in the sense in which people generally speak of non-reality. Hence Wu-nien is neither real or unreal.’

‘What would you call it then?’

‘I would not call it anything.’

‘If so, what could it be?’

'No designation whatever is possible. Therefore I say that Wu-nien is beyond the range of wordy discourse. The reason we talk about it at all is because questions are raised concerning it. If no questions are raised about it, there would be no discourse. It is like a bright mirror. If no objects appear before it, nothing is to be seen in it. When you say that you see something in it, it is because something stands against it.'

'When the mirror has nothing to illuminate, the illumination itself loses its meaning, does it not?'

'When I talk about objects presented and their illumination, the fact is that this illumination is something eternal belonging to the nature of the mirror, and has no reference to the presence or absence of objects before it.'

'You say that it has no form, it is beyond the range of wordy discourse, the notion of reality or non-reality is not applicable to it; why then do you talk of illumination? What illumination is it?'

'We talk of illumination because the mirror is bright and its self-nature is illumination. The mind which is present in all things being pure, there is in it the light of Prajñā, which illuminates the entire world-system to its furthest end.'

'This being so, when is it attained?'

'Just see into nothingness (*tan chien wu*).'

'Even if it is nothingness, it is seeing something.'

'Though it is seeing, it is not to be called something.'

'If it is not to be called something, how can there be the seeing?'

'Seeing into nothingness—this is true seeing and eternal seeing.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the *Sayings of Shên-hui*, § 8.

## SEEING INTO ONE'S SELF-NATURE

THE first declaration made by Hui-neng regarding his Zen experience was that 'From the first not a thing is', and then he went on to the 'Seeing into one's self-nature', which self-nature, being 'not a thing', is nothingness. Therefore, 'seeing into one's self-nature' is 'seeing into nothingness', which is the proclamation of Shen-hui. And this seeing is the illuminating of this world of multiplicity by the light of Prajñā. Prajñā thus becomes one of the chief issues discussed in the *T'an-ching*, and this is where the current of Zen thought deviates from the course it had taken from the time of Bodhi-Dharma.

In the beginning of Zen history the centre of interest was in the Buddha-nature or Self-nature, which was inherent in all beings and absolutely pure. This is the teaching of the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*, and all Zen followers since Bodhi-Dharma are firm believers in it. Hui-neng was, of course, one of them. He was evidently acquainted with this doctrine even before he came to the Fifth Patriarch, Hung-jen, because he insisted on the identity of the Buddha-nature in all beings regardless of the racial or national differences which might be found between himself and his Master. The biography of Hui-neng known as the *Tsao-chi Tai-chi Pieh Tien*, perhaps the earliest literary composition recording his life, has him as listening to the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* recited by a nun, who was sister to his friend Lin. If Hui-neng were just a student of the *Vajracchedikā*, which we gather from the *T'an-ching*, he could never have talked with Hung-jen as described in the *T'an-ching*. His allusion to the Buddha-nature must no doubt have come from the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*. With this knowledge, and what he had gained at Hung-jen's, he was able to discourse on the original purity of self-nature and our



seeing into this truth as fundamental in the understanding of Zen thought. In Hung-jen, the teacher of Hui-neng, the idea of Prajñā was not so emphatically brought out as in the disciple. With the latter, the problem of Prajñā, especially in the relation to Dhyāna, is all-absorbing.

Prajñā is primarily one of the three subjects of the Buddhist Triple Discipline, which is Morality (*śīla*), Meditation (*dhyāna*), and Wisdom (*prajñā*). Morality consists in observing all the precepts laid down by the Buddha for the spiritual welfare of his disciples. Meditation is the exercise to train oneself in tranquillization, for as long as the mind is not kept under control by means of meditation it was of no use just to observe mechanically the rules of conduct; in fact, the latter were really meant for spiritual tranquillization. Wisdom or Prajñā is the power to penetrate into the nature of one's being, as well as the truth itself thus intuited. That all these three are needed for a devoted Buddhist goes without saying. But after the Buddha, as time went on, the Triple Discipline was split into three individual items of study. The observers of the rules of morality set down by the Buddha became teachers of the Vināya; the Yogins of meditation were absorbed in various Samādhis, and even acquired something of supernatural faculties, such as clairvoyance, mind-reading, telepathy, knowledge of one's past lives, etc.; and lastly, those who pursued Prajñā became philosophers, dialecticians, or intellectual leaders. This one-sided study of the Triple Discipline made the Buddhists deviate from the proper path of the Buddhist life, especially in Dhyāna (meditation) and Prajñā (wisdom or intuitive knowledge).

This separation of Dhyāna and Prajñā become particularly tragic as time went on, and Prajñā came to be conceived as dynamically seeing into the truth. The separation at its inception had no thought of evil. Yet Dhyāna became the exercise of killing life, of keeping the mind in a state of torpor and making the Yogins socially useless; while



Prajñā, left to itself, lost its profundity, for it was identified with intellectual subtleties which dealt in concepts and their analysis. Then the question arose as to whether or not Dhyāna and Prajñā were two distinct notions, each of which was to be pursued independently of the other. At the time of Hui-neng, the idea of separation was emphasized by Shen-hsiu and his followers, and the result was exercises in purification; that is, in dust-wiping meditation. We can say that Shen-hsiu was the advocate of Dhyāna first and Prajñā second, while Hui-neng almost reversed this, saying that Dhyāna without Prajñā leads to a grave error, but when Prajñā is genuine, Dhyāna comes along with it. According to Hui-neng, Dhyāna is Prajñā and Prajñā is Dhyāna, and when this relation of identity between the two is not grasped there will be no emancipation.

To begin with Dhyāna, Hui-neng's definition is: 'Dhyāna (tso-ch'an) is not to get attached to the mind, is not to get attached to purity, nor is it to concern itself with immovability. . . . What is Dhyāna, then? It is not to be obstructed in all things. Not to have any thought stirred up by the outside conditions of life, good and bad—this is tso (dhyāna). To see inwardly the immovability of one's self-nature—this is ch'an (dhyāna). . . . Outwardly, to be free from the notion of form—this is ch'an. Inwardly, not to be disturbed—this is ting (dhyāna).

'When, outwardly, a man is attached to form, his inner mind is disturbed. But when outwardly he is not attached to form, his mind is not disturbed. His original nature is pure and quiet as it is in itself; only when it recognizes an objective world, and thinks of it as something, is it disturbed. Those who recognize an objective world, and yet find their mind undisturbed, are in true Dhyāna. . . . In the Vimalakīrti it is said that "when a man is instantly awakened, he comes back to his original mind", and in the Bodhisattva-sīla, that "My own original self-nature is pure and non-defiled". Thus, O friends, we recognize in each one of

like yourself. If, on the other hand, you are in a state of unconsciousness, plants and rocks can enter into a Samādhi.'

'Huang replied: "When I enter into a Samādhi, I am not conscious of either condition."

'Yung said: "If you are not conscious of either condition, this is abiding in eternal Samādhi, and there can be neither entering into a Samādhi nor rising out of it."

'Huang made no reply. He asked: "You say you come from Neng, the great master. What instruction did you have under him?"

'Yung answered: "According to his instruction, no-tranquillization (*ting-Samādhi*), no-disturbance, no-sitting (*tso*), no-meditation (*ch'an*)—this is the Tathāgata's Dhyāna. The five Skandhas are not realities; the six objects of sense are by nature empty. It is neither quiet nor illuminating; it is neither real nor empty; it does not abide in the middle way; it is not-doing, it is no-effect-producing, and yet it functions with the utmost freedom: the Buddha-nature is all-inclusive."

'This said, Huang at once realized the meaning of it and sighed: "These thirty years I have sat<sup>1</sup> to no purpose!"'

Another quotation from the *Life of Ts'ao-ch'i*, the Great Master will make the import of the above passages much clearer. The emperor Chung-tsung of the T'ang dynasty, learning of the spiritual attainment of Hui-neng, despatched a messenger to him, but he refused to come up to the capital. Whereupon the messenger, Hsieh-chien, asked to be instructed in the doctrine he espoused, saying: "The great masters of Zen in the capital invariably teach their followers to practise meditation (*ts'o-ch'an*, *dhyāna*), for according to them no emancipation, no spiritual attainment is possible without it."

To this Hui-neng replied: "The Truth is understood by

<sup>1</sup> 'To sit' technically means 'to sit cross-legged in meditation', 'to practise Dhyāna', and it is generally used coupled with *ch'an* (*Zen* = *dhyāna*).



the mind (*hsin*), and not by sitting (*ts'ò*) in meditation. According to the *Vajracchedikā*: "If people say that the Tathāgata sits or lies, they fail to understand my teaching. For the Tathāgata comes from nowhere and departs nowhither; and therefore he is called the Tathāgata ('Thus come')." Not coming from anywhere is birth, and not departing anywhither is death. Where there is neither birth nor death, there we have the purity-dhyāna of the Tathāgata. To see that all things are empty is to practise sitting (in meditation). . . . Ultimately, there is neither attainment nor realization; how much less sitting in meditation!

Hui-neng further argued: 'As long as there is a dualistic way of looking at things there is no emancipation. Light stands against darkness; the passions stand against enlightenment. Unless these opposites are illuminated by Prajñā, so that the gap between the two is bridged, there is no understanding of the Mahāyāna. When you stay at one end of the bridge and are not able to grasp the oneness of the Buddha-nature, you are not one of us. The Buddha-nature knows neither decrease nor increase, whether it is in the Buddha or in common mortals. When it is within the passions, it is not defiled; when it is meditated upon, it does not thereby become purer. It is neither annihilated nor abiding; it neither comes nor departs; it is neither in the middle nor at either end; it neither dies nor is born. It remains the same all the time, unchanged in all changes. As it is never born, it never dies. It is not that we replace death with life but that the Buddha-nature is above birth and death. The main point is not to think of things good and bad and thereby to be restricted, but to let the mind move on as it is in itself and perform its inexhaustible functions. This is the way to be in accord with the Mind-essence.'

Hui-neng's conception of Dhyāna, we can now see, was not that traditionally held by followers of the two vehicles.

His Dhyāna was not the art of tranquillizing the mind so that its inner essence, pure and undefiled, may come out of its casings. His Dhyāna was not the outcome of dualistically conceiving the Mind. The attempt to reach light by dispelling darkness is dualistic, and this will never lead the Yogin to the proper understanding of the mind. Nor is the attempt to annihilate the distinction the right one. Hui-neng therefore insisted on the identity of Dhyāna and Prajñā, for so long as Prajñā is kept apart from Dhyāna and Dhyāna from Prajñā, neither of the two is legitimately valued. One-sided Dhyāna is sure to tend towards quietism and death, as has abundantly been exemplified in the history of Zen and of Buddhism. For this reason we cannot treat Hui-neng's Dhyāna apart from his Prajñā.

The motive of the compiler of the *T'an-ching* was evidently to expound as the chief object of his work Hui-neng's idea of Prajñā, and to distinguish it from its traditional understanding. The title of the Tun-huang MS. unmistakably indicates this motive. It reads: 'The Sūtra of Mahā-prajñāpāramitā, of the Very Highest Mahāyāna (belonging to) the Southern School, and (Expounding its) Doctrine of Abrupt Awakening', while what follows reads something like a sub-title, 'The Platform Sermons (*sūtra=ching*) (containing) the Doctrine Given out by Hui-neng the Great Teacher, the Sixth Patriarch, at Tai-fan Ssu, of Shao-chou'. As these titles stand, it is difficult to tell which is the principal one. We know, however, that the Sūtra contains the sermons on Prajñā or Prajñāpāramitā as given out by Hui-neng, and that this doctrine belongs to the highest order of the Mahāyāna and of the Southern School, and is concerned with the Abrupt Doctrine which has come to characterize since the time of Hui-neng the teaching of all Zen schools.

After these titles, the opening passage acquaints us at once with the subject of the Sermon, perhaps the first ever given by Hui-neng, which deals with the doctrine of



ness does not penetrate so deeply as the Mahāyāna's into the constitution of our knowledge. The two notions of the Hīnayāna and of the Mahāyāna regarding emptiness, we can say, are of different orders. When emptiness was raised to a higher order than formerly, the Mahāyāna began its history. To grasp this, Prajñā was needed, and naturally in the Mahāyāna Prajñā and Śūnyatā go hand in hand. Prajñā is no more mere knowledge dealing with relative objects; it is knowledge of the highest order permitted to the human mind, for it is the spark of the ultimate constituent of all things.

In the terminology of Chinese philosophy, *hsing* stands in most cases for the ultimate constituent, or that which is left after all that accidentally belongs to a thing is taken away from it. It may be questioned what is accidental and what is essential in the constitution of an individual object, but I will not stop to discuss the point, for I am more concerned with the exposition of the *T'an-ching* than with Chinese philosophy. Let us take it for granted that there is such a thing as *hsing*, which is something ultimate in the being of a thing or a person, though it must not be conceived as an individual entity, like a kernel or nucleus which is left when all the outer casings are removed, or like a soul which escapes from the body after death. *Hsing* means something without which no existence is possible, or thinkable as such. As its morphological construction suggests, it is 'a heart or mind which lives' within an individual. Figuratively, it may be called vital force.

The Chinese translators of the Sanskrit Buddhist texts adopted this character *hsing* to express the meaning contained in such terms as *buddhatā*, *dharmatā*, *svabhāva*, etc. *Buddhatā* is *fo-hsing*, 'Buddha-nature'; *dharmatā* is *fa-hsing*, 'nature or essence of all things'; and *svabhāva* is 'self-nature' or 'self-being'. In the *T'an-ching* we find *hsing* in the following combinations: *tzu-hsing*, 'self-nature'; *pen-hsing*, 'original nature'; *fo-hsing*, 'Buddha-nature'; *shih-*

*hsing*, 'realizing-nature'; *chen-hsing*, 'truth nature'; *miao-hsing*, 'mysterious nature'; *ching-hsing*, 'pure nature'; *ken-hsing*, 'root-nature'; *chiao-hsing*, 'enlightenment-nature'. Of these combinations the one which the reader will meet most frequently in Hui-neng is *tzu-hsing*, 'self-nature' or 'self-being', 'being-in-itself'.

And this *hsing* is defined by Hui-neng in the following manner: 'The *hsin* (mind or heart) is the dominion, *hsing* is the lord: the lord rules over his dominion, there is *hsing*, and there is the lord; *hsing* departs, and the lord is no more; *hsing* is and the body and mind (*hsin*) subsists, *hsing* is not and the body and mind is destroyed. The Buddha is to be made within *hsing* and not to be sought outside the body. . . .'<sup>1</sup>

In this, Hui-neng attempts to give us a clearer understanding of what he means by *hsing*. *Hsing* is the dominating force over our entire being; it is the principle of vitality, physical and spiritual. Not only the body but also the mind in its highest sense is active because of *hsing* being present in them. When *hsing* is no more, all is dead, though this does not mean that *hsing* is something apart from the body and mind, which enters into it to actuate it, and departs at the time of death. This mysterious *hsing*, however, is not a logical *a priori* but an actuality which can be experienced, and it is designated by Hui-neng as *tzu-hsing*, self-nature or self-being, throughout his *T'an-ching*.

Self-nature, otherwise expressed, is self-knowledge; it is not mere being but knowing. We can say that because of knowing itself, it is; knowing is being, and being is knowing. This is the meaning of the statement made by Hui-neng that: 'In original Nature itself there is Prajñā-knowledge, and because of this self-knowledge. Nature reflects itself in itself, which is self-illumination not to be expressed in words' (par. 30). When Hui-neng speaks of Prajñā-knowledge as if it is born of self-nature (par. 27),

<sup>1</sup> Par. 37.



this is due to the way of thinking which then prevailed, and often involves us in a complicated situation, resulting in the dualism of self-nature and Prajñā, which is altogether against the spirit of Hui-neng's Zen thought. We must, therefore, be on the watch when interpreting the *T'an-ching* in regard to the relation of Prajñā to self-nature.

However this may be, we have now come to Prajñā, which must be explained in the light of Dhyāna, whose Mahāyānist signification we have just examined. But before doing this I wish to say a few more words about self-nature and Prajñā. In Mahāyāna philosophy there are three concepts which have been resorted to by scholars to explain the relation between substance and its function. They are *tai* (body), *hsing* (form), and *yung* (use), which first appeared in *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*, usually ascribed to Aśvaghosha. Body corresponds to substance, Form to appearance, and Use to function. The apple is a reddish, round-shaped object: this is its Form, in which it appeals to our senses. Form belongs to the world of senses, i.e. appearance. Its Use includes all that it does and stands for, its value, its utility, its function, and so on. Lastly, the Body of the apple is what constitutes its appleship, without which it loses its being, and no apple, even with all the appearances and functions ascribed to it, is an apple without it. To be a real object these three concepts, Body, Form, and Use, must be accounted for.

To apply these concepts to our object of discourse here, self-nature is the Body and Prajñā its Use, whereas there is nothing here corresponding to Form, because the subject does not belong to the world of form. There is the Buddha-nature, Hui-neng would argue, which makes up the reason of Buddhahood; and this is present in all beings, constituting their self-nature. The object of Zen discipline is to recognize it, and to be released from error, which are the passions. How is the recognition possible, one may inquire? It is possible because self-nature is self-knowledge. The Body is



no-body without its Use, and the Body is the Use. To be itself is to know itself. By using itself, its being is demonstrated, and this using is, in Hui-neng's terminology, 'seeing into one's own Nature'. Hands are no hands, have no existence, until they pick up flowers and offer them to the Buddha; so with legs, they are no legs, non-entities, unless their Use is set to work, and they walk over the bridge, ford the stream, and climb the mountain. Hence the history of Zen after Hui-neng developed this philosophy of Use to its fullest extent: the poor questioner was slapped, kicked, beaten, or called names to his utter bewilderment, and also to that of the innocent spectators. The initiative to this 'rough' treatment of the Zen students was given by Hui-neng, though he seems to have refrained from making any practical application of his philosophy of Use.

When we say, 'See into thy self-nature,' the seeing is apt to be regarded as mere perceiving, mere knowing, mere statically reflecting on self-nature, which is pure and undefiled, and which retains this quality in all beings as well as in all the Buddhas. Shen-hsiu and his followers undoubtedly took this view of the 'seeing'. But as a matter of fact, the seeing is an act, a revolutionary deed on the part of the human understanding whose functions have been supposed all the time to be logically analysing ideas, ideas sensed from their dynamic signification. The 'seeing', especially in Hui-neng's sense, was far more than a passive deed of looking at, a mere knowledge obtained from contemplating the purity of self-nature; the seeing with him was self-nature itself, which exposes itself before him in all nakedness, and functions without any reservation. Herein we observe the great gap between the Northern School of Dhyāna and the Southern School of Prajñā.

Shen-hsiu's school pays more attention to the Body aspect of self-nature, and tells its followers to concentrate their effects on the clearing up of consciousness, so as to see in it the reflection of self-nature, pure and undefiled.

They have evidently forgotten that self-nature is not a somewhat whose Body can be reflected on our consciousness in the way that a mountain can be seen reflected on the smooth surface of a lake. There is no such Body in self-nature, for the Body itself is the Use; besides the Use there is no Body. And by this Use is meant the Body's seeing itself in itself. With Shen-hsiu this self-seeing or Prajñā aspect of self-nature is altogether ignored. Hui-neng's position, on the contrary, emphasizes the Prajñā aspect we can know of self-nature.

This fundamental discrepancy between Hui-neng and Shen-hsiu in the conception of self-nature, which is the same thing as the Buddha-nature, has caused them to run in opposite directions as regards the practice of Dhyāna; that is, in the method of *tso-ch'an* (*zazen* in Japanese). Read the following *gāthā*<sup>1</sup> by Shen-hsiu:

Our body is the Bodhi-tree,  
And our mind a mirror bright;  
Carefully we wipe them hour by hour  
And let no dust alight.

In the dust-wiping type of meditation (*tso-ch'an*, *zazen*) it is not easy to go further than the tranquillization of the mind; it is so apt to stop short at the stage of quiet contemplation, which is designated by Hui-neng 'the practice of keeping watch over purity'. At best it ends in ecstasy, self-absorption, a temporary suspension of consciousness. There is no 'seeing' in it, no knowing of itself, no active grasping of self-nature, no spontaneous functioning of it, no *chen-hsing* ('Seeing into Nature') whatever. The dust-wiping type is therefore the art of binding oneself with a self-created rope, an artificial construction which obstructs the way to emancipation. No wonder that Hui-neng and his followers attacked the Purity school.

<sup>1</sup> The *T'an-ching* (Kosjohi edition), par. 6.



The quietistic, dust-wiping, and purity-gazing type of meditation was probably one aspect of Zen taught by Hung-jen, who was the master of Hui-neng, Shen-hsiu, and many other. Hui-neng, who understood the real spirit of Zen most likely because he was not hampered by learning, and consequently by the conceptual attitude towards life, rightly perceived the danger of quietism, and cautioned his followers to avoid it by all means. But most other disciples of Hung-jen were more or less inclined to adopt quietism as the orthodox method of Dhyāna practice. Before Tao-i, popularly known as Ma-tsu, saw Huai-jang, of Nan-yueh, he was also a quiet-sitter who wanted to gaze at the pure nothingness of self-nature. He had been studying Zen under one of Hung-jen's disciples when he was still young. Even when he came up to Nan-yueh, he continued his old practice, keeping up his *tso-ch'an* ('sitting in meditation'). Hence the following discourse between himself and Huai-jang, who was one of the greatest disciples of Hui-neng.

Observing how assiduously Ma-tsu was engaged in practising *tso-ch'an* every day, Yuan Huai-jang said: 'Friend, what is your intention in practising *tso-ch'an*?' Ma-tsu said: 'I wish to attain Buddhahood.' Thereupon Huai-jang took up a brick and began to polish it. Ma-tsu asked: 'What are you engaged in?' 'I want to make a mirror of it.' 'No amount of polishing makes a mirror out of a brick.' Huai-jang at once retorted: 'No amount of practising *tso-ch'an* will make you attain Buddhahood.' 'What do I have to do then?' asked Ma-tsu. 'It is like driving a cart,' said Huai-jang. 'When it stops, what is the driver to do? To whip the cart, or to whip the ox?' Ma-tsu remained silent.

Another time Huai-jang said: 'Do you intend to be master of *tso-ch'an*, or do you intend to attain Buddhahood? If you wish to study Zen, Zen is neither in sitting cross-legged nor in lying down. If you wish to attain Buddhahood by sitting cross-legged in meditation, the Buddha has no specified form. When the Dharma has no fixed abode, you



cannot make any choice in it. If you attempt to attain Buddhahood by sitting cross-legged in meditation, this is murdering the Buddha. As long as you cling to this sitting posture you can never reach the Mind.'

Thus instructed, Ma-tsu felt as if he were taking a most delicious drink. Making bows, he asked: 'How should I prepare myself in order to be in accord with the Samādhi of formlessness?' The master said: 'Disciplining yourself in the study of Mind is like sowing seeds in the ground; my teaching in the Dharma is like pouring rain from above. When conditions are matured, you will see the Tao.'<sup>1</sup>

Asked Ma-tsu again: 'The Tao has no form, and how can it be seen?'

The master replied: 'The Dharma-eye belonging to the Mind is able to see into the Tao. So it is with the Samādhi of formlessness.'

MA-TSU: 'Is it subject to completion and destruction?'

MASTER: 'If one applies to it such notions as completion and destruction, collection and dissipation, we can never have insight into it.'

In one sense Chinese Zen can be said to have really started with Ma-tsu and his contemporary Shih-tou, both of whom were the lineal descendants of Hui-neng. But before Ma-tsu was firmly established in Zen he was still under the influence of the dust-wiping and purity-gazing type of Dhyāna, applying himself most industriously to the practice of *tso-ch'an*, sitting cross-legged in meditation. He had no idea of the self-seeing type, no conception that self-nature which is self-being was self-seeing, that there was no Being besides Seeing which is Acting, that these three terms Being, Seeing, and Acting were synonymous and interchangeable. The practice of Dhyāna was therefore to be furnished with an eye of Prajñā, and the two were to be considered one and not two separate concepts.

<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'Way', meaning truth, the Dharma, ultimate Reality.

To go back to Hui-neng. We now understand why he had to insist on the importance of Prajñā, and theorize on the oneness of Dhyāna and Prajñā. In the *T'an-ching* he opens his Sermon with the seeing into one's self-nature by means of Prajñā, with which every one of us, whether wise or ignorant, is endowed. Here he adopts the conventional way of expressing himself, as he is no original philosopher. In our own reasoning which we followed above, self-nature finds its own being when it sees itself, and this seeing takes place by Prajñā. But as Prajñā is another name given to self-nature when the latter sees itself, there is no Prajñā outside self-nature. The seeing (*chien*) is also called recognizing or understanding, or, better, experiencing (*wu* in Chinese and *satori* in Japanese). The character *Wu* is composed of 'heart' (or 'mind'), and 'mine'; that is, 'mine own heart', meaning 'to feel in my own heart', or 'to experience in my own mind'.

Self-nature is Prajñā, and also Dhyāna when it is viewed, as it were, statically or ontologically. Prajñā is more of epistemological signifiante. Now Hui-neng declares the oneness of Prajñā and Dhyāna. 'O good friends, in my teaching what is most fundamental is Dhyāna (*ting*) and Prajñā (*chin*). And, friends, do not be deceived and led to thinking that Dhyāna and Prajñā are separable. They are one, and not two. Dhyāna is the Body of Prajñā, and Prajñā is the Use of Dhyāna. When Prajñā is taken up, Dhyāna is in Prajñā; when Dhyāna is taken up, Prajñā is in it. When this is understood, Dhyāna and Prajñā go hand in hand in the practice (of meditation). O followers of the truth (*tao*), do not say that Dhyāna is first attained and then Prajñā awakened, or that Prajñā is first attained and then Dhyāna awakened; for they are separate. Those who advocate this view make a duality of the Dharma; they are those who affirm with the mouth and negate in the heart. They regard Dhyāna as distinct from Prajñā. But with those whose mouth and heart are in agreement, the inner



and the outer are one, and Dhyāna and Prajñā are regarded as equal (*i.e.* as one).<sup>1</sup>

Hui-neng further illustrates the idea of this oneness by the relation between the lamp and its light. He says: 'It is like the lamp and its light. As there is a lamp, there is light; if no lamp, no light. The lamp is the Body of the light, and the light is the Use of the lamp. They are differently designated, but in substance they are one. The relation between Dhyāna and Prajñā is to be understood in like manner.'

This analogy of the lamp and its light is quite a favourite one with Zen philosophers. Shen-hui also makes use of it in his Sermon discovered by the author at the National Library of Peiping. In his *Sayings* (par. 19) we have Shen-hui's view on the oneness of Dhyāna and Prajñā, which was given as an answer to one of his questioners. 'Where no thoughts are awakened, and emptiness and nowhere-ness prevails, this is right Dhyāna. When this non-awakening of thought, emptiness, and nowhere-ness suffer themselves to be the object of perception, there is right Prajñā. Where this (mystery) takes place, we say that Dhyana, taken up by itself, is the Body of Prajñā, and is not distinct from Prajñā, and is Prajñā itself; and further, that Prajñā, taken up by itself, is the Use of Dhyāna, and is not distinct from Dhyāna, and is Dhyāna itself. (Indeed) when Dhyāna is to be taken up by itself, there is no Dhyāna; when Prajñā is to be taken up by itself, there is no Prajñā. Why? Because (Self-) nature is suchness, and this is what is meant by the oneness of Dhyāna and Prajñā.'

In this, Hui-neng and Shen-hui are of the same view. But being still too abstract for the ordinary understanding, it may be found difficult to grasp what is really meant by it. In the following, Shen-hui is more concrete or more accessible in his statement.

Wang-wei was a high government officer greatly in-

<sup>1</sup> The *T'an-ching* (Koshoji edition), par. 14.

Wang Wei  
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terested in Buddhism, and when he learned of the disagreement between Shen-hui and Hui-ch'eng, who was evidently a follower of Shen-hsiu, regarding Dhyāna and Prajñā, he asked Shen-hui: 'Why this disagreement?'

Shen-hui answered: 'The disagreement is due to Ch'eng's holding the view that Dhyāna is to be practised first and that it is only after its attainment that Prajñā is awakened. But according to my view, the very moment I am conversing with you, there is Dhyāna, there is Prajñā, and they are the same. According to the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*, when there is more of Dhyāna and less of Prajñā, this helps the growth of ignorance; when there is more of Prajñā and less of Dhyāna, this helps the growth of false views; but when Dhyāna and Prajñā are the same, this is called seeing into the Buddha-nature. For this reason, I say we cannot come to an agreement.'

WANG: 'When are Dhyāna and Prajñā said to be the same?'

SHEN-HUI: 'We speak of Dhyāna, but as to its Body there is nothing attainable in it. Prajñā is spoken of when it is seen that this Body is unattainable, remaining perfectly quiescent and serene all the time, and yet functioning mysteriously in ways beyond calculation. Herein we observe Dhyāna and Prajñā to be identical.'

Both Hui-neng and Shen-hsiu lay stress on the significance of the Prajñā-eye, which, being turned on itself, sees into the mysteries of Self-nature. The unattainable is attained, the eternally serene is perceived, and Prajñā identifies itself with Dhyāna in its varied functionings. Therefore, while Shen-hui is talking with Wang-wei, Shen-hui declares that in this talking Dhyāna as well as Prajñā is present, that this talking itself is Prajñā and Dhyāna. By this he means that Prajñā is Dhyāna and Dhyāna is Prajñā. If we say that only while sitting cross-legged in meditation there is Dhyāna, and that when this type of sitting is completely mastered, there for the first time Prajñā is awakened, we effect a complete severance

of Prajñā and Dhyāna, which is a dualism always abhorred by Zen followers. Whether moving or not-moving, whether talking or not-talking, there must be Dhyāna in it, which is ever-abiding Dhyāna. Again, we must say that being is seeing and seeing is acting, that there is no being, i.e. Self-nature, without seeing and acting, and that Dhyāna is Dhyāna only when it is at the same time Prajñā. The following is a quotation from Ta-chu Hui-hai, who was a disciple of Ma-tsu:

Q.: 'When there is no word, no discourse, this is Dhyāna; but when there are words and discourses, can this be called Dhyāna?'

A.: 'When I speak of Dhyāna, it has no relationship to discoursing or not discoursing; my Dhyāna is ever-abiding Dhyāna. Why? Because Dhyāna is all the while in Use. Even when words are uttered, discoursing goes on, or when discriminative reasoning prevails, there is Dhyāna in it, for all is Dhyāna.'

'When a mind, thoroughly understanding the emptiness of all things, faces forms, it at once realizes their emptiness. With it emptiness is there all the time, whether it faces forms or not, whether it discourses or not, whether it discriminates or not. This applies to everything which belongs to our sight, hearing, memory, and consciousness generally. Why is it so? Because all things in their self-nature are empty; and wherever we go we find this emptiness. As all is empty, no attachment takes place; and on account of this non-attachment there is a simultaneous Use (of Dhyāna and Prajñā). The Bodhisattva always knows how to make Use of emptiness, and thereby he attains the Ultimate. Therefore it is said that by the oneness of Dhyāna and Prajñā is meant Emancipation.'

That Dhyāna has nothing to do with mere sitting cross-legged in meditation, as is generally supposed by outsiders,



or as has been maintained by Shen-hsiu and his school ever since the days of Hui-neng, is here asserted in a most unmistakable manner. Dhyāna is not quietism, nor is it tranquillization; it is rather acting, moving, performing deeds, seeing, hearing, thinking, remembering; Dhyāna is attained where there is, so to speak, no Dhyāna practised; Dhyāna is Prajñā, and Prajñā is Dhyāna, for they are one. This is one of the themes constantly stressed by all the Zen masters following Hui-neng.

Ta-chu Hui-hai continues: 'Let me give you an illustration, that your doubt may be cleared up and you may feel refreshed. It is like a brightly-shining mirror reflecting images on it. When the mirror does this, does the brightness suffer in any way? No, it does not. Does it then suffer when there are no images reflected? No, it does not. Why? Because the Use of the bright mirror is free from affections, and therefore its reflection is never obscured. Whether images are reflected or not, there are no changes in its brightness. Why? Because that which is free from affections knows no change in all conditions.

'Again, it is like the sun illumining the world. Does the light suffer any change? No, it does not. How, when it does not illumine the world? There are no changes in it, either. Why? Because the light is free from affections, and therefore whether it illumines objects or not, the unaffected sunlight is ever above change.

'Now the illumining light is Prajñā, and unchangeability is Dhyāna. The Bodhisattva uses Dhyāna and Prajñā in their oneness, and thereby attains enlightenment. Therefore it is said that by using Dhyāna and Prajñā in their oneness emancipation is meant. Let me add that to be free from affections means the absence of the passions and not that of the noble aspirations (which are free from the dualistic conception of existence).''

In Zen philosophy, in fact in all Buddhist philosophy, no distinctions are made between logical and psychological



terms, and the one turns into the other quite readily. From the viewpoint of life no such distinctions can exist, for here logic is psychology and psychology is logic. For this reason Ta-chu Hui-hai's psychology becomes logic with Shen-hui, and they both refer to the same experience. We read in Shen-hui's *Sayings* (par. 32): 'A bright mirror is set up on a high stand; its illumination reaches the ten-thousand things, and they are all reflected in it. The masters are wont to consider this phenomenon most wonderful. But as far as my school is concerned it is not to be considered wonderful. Why? As to this bright mirror, its illumination reaches the ten-thousand things, and these ten-thousand things are not reflected in it. This is what I would declare to be most wonderful. Why? The Tathāgata discriminates all things with non-discriminating Prajñā (*chih*). If he has any discriminating mind, do you think he could discriminate all things?'

The Chinese term for 'discrimination' is *fen-pieh*, which is a translation of the Sanskrit *vikalpa*, one of the important Buddhist terms used in various Sūtras and Śāstras. The original meaning of the Chinese characters is 'to cut and divide with a knife', which exactly corresponds to the etymology of the Sanskrit *viklp*. By 'discrimination', therefore, is meant analytical knowledge, the relative and discursive understanding which we use in our everyday worldly intercourse and also in our highly speculative thinking. For the essence of thinking is to analyse—that is, to discriminate; the sharper the knife of dissection, the more subtle the resulting speculation. But according to the Buddhist way of thinking, or rather according to the Buddhist experience, this power of discrimination is based on non-discriminating Prajñā (*chih* or *chih-hui*). This is what is most fundamental in the human understanding, and it is with this that we are able to have an insight into the Self-nature possessed by us all, which is also known as Buddha-nature. Indeed, Self-nature is Prajñā itself, as has been

that as it is no more so, it must be polished up and its original brightness be restored. The brightness is there all the time, even when it is thought to be covered with dust and not reflecting objects as it should. The brightness is not something to be restored; it is not something appearing at the completion of the procedure; it has never departed from the mirror. This is what is meant when the *T'an-ching* and other Buddhist writings declare the Buddha-nature to be the same in all beings, including the ignorant as well as the wise.

As the attainment of the Tao does not involve a continuous movement from error to truth, from ignorance to enlightenment, from *mayoi* to *satori*, the Zen masters all proclaim that there is no enlightenment whatever which you can claim to have attained. If you say you have attained something, this is the surest proof that you have gone astray. Therefore, not to have is to have; silence is thunder; ignorance is enlightenment; the holy disciples of the Purity-path go to hell while the precept-violating Bhikshus attain Nirvāṇa; the wiping-off means dirt-accumulating; all these paradoxical sayings—and Zen literature is filled with them—are no more than so many negations of the continuous movement from discrimination to non-discrimination, from affectibility to non-affectibility, etc., etc.

The idea of a continuous movement fails to account for the facts, first, that the moving process stops at the originally bright mirror, and makes no further attempt to go on indefinitely, and secondly, that the pure nature of the mirror suffers itself to be defiled, i.e. that from one object comes another object absolutely contradicting it. To put this another way: absolute negation is needed, but can it be possible when the process is continuous? Here is the reason why Hui-neng persistently opposes the view cherished by his opponents. He does not espouse the doctrine of continuity which is the Gradual School of Shen-hsiu. All those who hold the view of a continuous movement belong to the



latter. Hui-neng, on the other hand, is the champion of the Abrupt School. According to this school the movement from *mayoi* to *satori* is abrupt and not gradual, discrete and not continuous.

That the process of enlightenment is abrupt means that there is a leap, logical and psychological, in the Buddhist experience. The logical leap is that the ordinary process of reasoning stops short, and what has been considered irrational is perceived to be perfectly natural, while the psychological leap is that the borders of consciousness are overstepped and one is plunged into the Unconscious which is not, after all, unconscious. This process is discrete, abrupt, and altogether beyond calculation; this is 'Seeing into one's Self-nature'. Hence the following statement by Hui-neng:

'O friends, while under Jen the Master I had a *satori* (*wu*) by just once listening to his words, and abruptly saw into the original nature of Suchness. This is the reason why I wish to see this teaching propagated, so that seekers of the truth may also abruptly have an insight into Bodhi, see each by himself what his mind (*hsin*) is, what his original nature is. . . . All the Buddhas of the past, present, and future, and all the Sūtras belonging to the twelve divisions are in the self-nature of each individual, where they were from the first. . . . There is within oneself that which knows, and thereby one has a *satori*. If there rises an erroneous thought, falsehoods and perversions obtain; and no outsiders, however wise, are able to instruct such people, who are, indeed, beyond help. But if there takes place an illumination by means of genuine Prajñā, all falsehoods vanish in an instant. If one's self-nature is understood, one's *satori* is enough to make one rise to a state of Buddhahood. O friends, when there is a Prajñā illumination, the inside as well as the outside becomes thoroughly translucent, and a man knows by himself what his original mind is, which is no more than

emancipation. When emancipation is obtained, it is the Prajñā-samādhi, and when this Prajñā-samādhi is understood, there is realized a state of *mu-nen* (*wu-nien*), "thoughtless-ness".

The teaching of abrupt *satori* is then fundamental in the Southern School of Hui-neng. And we must remember that this abruptness or leaping is not only psychological, but dialectical.

Prajñā is really a dialectical term denoting that this special process of knowing, known as 'abruptly seeing', or 'seeing at once', does not follow general laws of logic; for when Prajñā functions one finds oneself all of a sudden, as if by a miracle, facing Sūnyatā, the emptiness of all things. This does not take place as the result of reasoning, but when reasoning has been abandoned as futile, and psychologically when the will-power is brought to a finish.

The Use of Prajñā contradicts everything that we may conceive of things worldly; it is altogether of another order than our usual life. But this does not mean that Prajñā is something altogether disconnected with our life and thought, something that is to be given to us by a miracle from some unknown and unknowable source. If this were the case, Prajñā would be of no possible use to us, and there would be no emancipation for us. It is true that the functioning of Prajñā is discrete, and interrupting to the progress of logical reasoning, but all the time it underlies it, and without Prajñā we cannot have any reasoning whatever. Prajñā is at once above and in the process of reasoning. This is a contradiction, formally considered, but in truth this contradiction itself is made possible because of Prajñā.

That almost all religious literature is filled with contradictions, absurdities, paradoxes, and impossibilities, and demands to believe them, to accept them, as revealed truths, is due to the fact that religious knowledge is based on the



working of Prajñā. Once this viewpoint of Prajñā is gained, all the essential irrationalities found in religion become intelligible. It is like appreciating a fine piece of brocade. On the surface there is an almost bewildering confusion of beauty, and the connoisseur fails to trace the intricacies of the threads. But as soon as it is turned over all the intricate beauty and skill is revealed. Prajñā consists in this turning-over. The eye has hitherto followed the surface of the cloth, which is indeed the only side ordinarily allowed us to survey. Now, the cloth is abruptly turned over; the course of the eyesight is suddenly interrupted; no continuous gazing is possible. Yet by this interruption, or rather disruption, the whole scheme of life is suddenly grasped; there is the 'seeing into one's self-nature'.

The point I wish to make here is that the reason side has been there all the time, and that it is because of this unseen side that the visible side has been able to display its multiple beauty. This is the meaning of discriminative reasoning being always based on non-discriminating Prajñā; this is the meaning of the statement that the mirror-nature of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) retains all the time its original brightness, and is never once beclouded by anything outside which is reflected on it; this is again the meaning of all things being such as they are in spite of their being arranged in time and space and subject to the so-called laws of nature.

This something conditioning all things and itself not being conditioned by anything assumes various names as it is viewed from different angles. Spatially, it is called 'formless' against all that can be subsumed under form; temporarily, it is 'non-abiding', as it moves on for ever, not being cut up into pieces called thoughts and as such detained and retained as something abiding; psychologically it is 'the unconscious' (*wu-nien*=*mu-nen*) in the sense that all our conscious thoughts and feelings grow out of the Unconscious, which is Mind (*hsin*), or Self-nature (*tzu-hsing*).

As Zen is more concerned with experience and hence with psychology, let us go further into the idea of the Unconscious. The original Chinese is *Wu-nien* (*mu-nen*) or *Wu-hsin* (*mu-shin*), and literally means 'no-thought', or 'no-mind'. But *nien* or *hsin* means more than thought or mind. This I have elsewhere explained in detail. It is rather difficult to give here an exact English equivalent for *nien* or *hsin*. Hui-neng and Shen-hui use principally *nien* instead of *hsin*, but there are other Zen masters who prefer *hsin* to *nien*. In point of fact, the two designate the same experience: *wu-nien* and *wu-hsin* point to the same state of consciousness.

The character *hsin* originally symbolizes the heart as the organ of affection, but has later come to indicate also the seat of thinking and willing. *Hsin* has thus a broad connotation, and may be taken largely to correspond to consciousness. *Wu-nien* is 'no-consciousness', thus the unconscious. The character *nien* has *chien* 'now', over the heart, and might originally have meant anything present at the moment in consciousness. In Buddhist literature, it frequently stands for the Sanskrit *Kṣāṇa*, meaning 'a thought', 'a moment regarded as a unit of time', 'an instant'; but as a psychological term it is generally used to denote 'memory', 'intense thinking', and 'consciousness'. *Wu-nien* thus also means 'the unconscious'.

What, then, do the Zen masters mean by 'the unconscious'?

It is evident that in Zen Buddhism the unconscious is not a psychological term either in a narrower or in a broader sense. In modern psychology the scientists refer to the unconscious as underlying consciousness, where a large mass of psychological factors are kept buried under one name or another. They appear in the field of consciousness sometimes in response to a call, and therefore by a conscious effort, but quite frequently unexpectedly and in a disguised form. To define this unconsciousness baffles the



psychologists just because it is the unconscious. The fact is, however, that it is a reservoir of mysteries and a source of superstitions. And for this reason the concept of the unconscious has been abused by unscrupulous religionists, and some people hold that Zen is also guilty of this crime. The accusation is justifiable if Zen philosophy is no more than a psychology of the unconscious in its ordinary definition.

According to Hui-neng, the concept of the unconscious is the foundation of Zen Buddhism. In fact he proposes three concepts as constituting Zen, and the unconscious is one of them; the other two are 'formlessness' (*wu-hsing*) and 'non-abiding' (*wu-chu*). Hui-neng continues: 'By formlessness is meant to be in form and yet to be detached from it; by the unconscious is meant to have thoughts and yet not to have them; as to non-abiding it is the primary nature of man.'

His further definition of the unconscious is: 'O good friends, not to have the Mind tainted while in contact with all conditions of life,<sup>1</sup>—this is to be Unconscious. It is to be always detached from objective conditions in one's own consciousness, not to let one's mind be roused by coming in contact with objective conditions. . . . O good friends, why is the Unconscious established as fundamental? There are some people with confused ideas who talk about seeing into their own nature, but whose consciousness is not liberated from objective conditions, and (my teaching) is only for the sake of such people. Not only are they conscious of objective conditions, but they contrive to cherish false views, from which all worldly worries and vagaries rise. But in self-nature there is from the first not a thing which is attainable. If anything attainable is here conceived, fortune and misfortune will be talked about; and

<sup>1</sup> *Ching* in Chinese. It means 'boundaries', 'an area enclosed by them', 'environment', 'objective world'. In its technical sense it stands contrasted with *hsin*, mind.

this is no more than worrying and giving oneself up to vagaries. Therefore in my teaching, unconsciousness is established as fundamental.

'O good friends, what is there for *wu* (of *wu-nien*, unconsciousness) to negate? And what is there for *nien* to be conscious of? *Wu* is to negate the notion of two forms (dualism), and to get rid of a mind which worries over things, while *nien* means to become conscious of the primary nature of Suchness (*tathatā*); for Suchness is the Body of Consciousness, and Consciousness is the Use of Suchness. It is the self-nature of Suchness to become conscious of itself; it is not the eye, ear, nose, and tongue that is conscious; as Suchness has (self-) nature, consciousness rises in it; if there were no Suchness, then eye and ear, together with forms and sounds, would be destroyed. In the self-nature of Suchness there rises consciousness; while in the six senses there is seeing, hearing, remembering, and recognizing; the self-nature is not tainted by objective conditions of all kinds; the true nature moves with perfect freedom, discriminating all forms in the objective world and inwardly unmoved in the first principle.'

While it is difficult and often misleading to apply the modern way of thinking to those ancient masters, especially masters of Zen, we must to a certain extent hazard this application, for otherwise there will be no chance of even a glimpse into the secrets of Zen experience. For one thing, we have what Hui-neng calls self-nature, which is the Buddha-nature of the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* and other Mahāyāna writings. This self-nature in terms of the *Prajñāpāramitā* is Suchness (*tathatā*), and Emptiness (*sūnyatā*). Suchness means the Absolute, something which is not subject to laws of relativity, and therefore which cannot be grasped by means of form. Suchness is thus formlessness. In Buddhism, form (*rūpa*) stands against no-form (*arūpa*), which is the unconditioned. This unconditioned, formless, and consequently



unattainable is Emptiness (*śūnyatā*). Emptiness is not a negative idea, nor does it mean mere privation, but as it is not in the realm of names and forms it is called emptiness, or nothingness, or the Void.

Emptiness is thus unattainable. 'Unattainable' means to be beyond perception, beyond grasping, for emptiness is on the other side of being and non-being. All our relative knowledge is concerned with dualities. But if emptiness is absolutely beyond all human attempts to take hold of in any sense whatever, it has no value for us; it does not come into the sphere of human interest; it is really non-existent, and we have nothing to do with it. But the truth is otherwise. Emptiness constantly falls within our reach; it is always with us and in us, and conditions all our knowledge, all our deeds, and is our life itself. It is only when we attempt to pick it up and hold it forth as something before our eyes that it eludes us, frustrates all our efforts, and vanishes like vapour. We are ever lured towards it, but it proves a will-o'-the-wisp.

It is Prajñā which lays its hands on Emptiness, or Suchness, or self-nature. And this laying-hands-on is not what it seems. This is self-evident from what has already been said concerning things relative. Inasmuch as self-nature is beyond the realm of relativity, its being grasped by Prajñā cannot mean a grasping in its ordinary sense. The grasping must be no-grasping, a paradoxical statement which is inevitable. To use Buddhist terminology, this grasping is accomplished by non-discrimination; that is, by non-discriminating discrimination. The process is abrupt, discrete, an act of the conscious; not an unconscious act but an act rising from self-nature itself, which is the Unconscious.

Hui-neng's Unconscious is thus fundamentally different from the psychologists' Unconscious. It has a metaphysical connotation. When Hui-neng speaks of the Unconscious in Consciousness, he steps beyond psychology; he is not

referring even to the Unconscious forming the basis of consciousness, which goes to the remotest part when the mind has not yet evolved, the mind being still in a state of mere sustenance. Nor is Hui-neng's Unconscious a kind of world-spirit which is found floating on the surface of chaos. It is timeless, and yet contains all time with its minutest periods as well as all its aeons.

Shen-hui's definition of the Unconscious which we have in his *Sayings* (par. 14) will shed further light on the subject. When preaching to others on the *Prajñāpāramitā* he says: 'Be not attached to form. Not to be attached to form means Suchness. What is meant by Suchness? It means the Unconscious. What is the Unconscious? It is not to think of being and non-being; it is not to think of good and bad; it is not to think of having limits or not having limits; it is not to think of measurements (or of non-measurements); it is not to think of enlightenment, nor is it to think of being enlightened; it is not to think of Nirvāṇa, nor is it to think of attaining Nirvāṇa: this is the Unconscious. The Unconscious is no other than *Prajñāpāramitā* itself. *Prajñāpāramitā* is no other than the Samādhi of Oneness.

'O friends, if there are among you some who are still in the stage of learners, let them turn their illumination (upon the source of consciousness) whenever thoughts are awakened in their minds. When the awakened mind is dead, the conscious illumination vanishes by itself—this is the Unconscious. This Unconscious is absolutely free from all conditions, for if there are any conditions it cannot be known as the Unconscious.

'O friends, that which sees truly sounds the depths of the Dharmadhātu, and this is known as the Samādhi of Oneness. Therefore, it is said in the *Smaller Prajñāpāramitā*: "O good men, this is *Prajñāpāramitā*, that is to say, not to have any (conscious) thoughts in regard to things. As we live in that which is unconscious, this golden-coloured body, with the thirty-two marks of supreme manhood, emits rays



of great effulgence, contains Prajñā altogether beyond thinking, is endowed with all the highest Samādhis attained by the Buddhas, and with incomparable knowledge. All the merits (accruing from the Unconscious) cannot be recounted by the Buddhas, much less by the Śrāvakas and the Pratyeka-Buddhas." He who sees the Unconscious is not tainted by the six senses; he who sees the Unconscious is enabled to turn towards the Buddha-knowledge; he who sees the Unconscious is called Reality; he who sees the Unconscious is the Middle Way and the first truth; he who sees the Unconscious is furnished at once with merits of the Gangā; he who sees the Unconscious is able to produce all things; he who sees the Unconscious is able to take in all things.<sup>7</sup>

This view of the Unconscious is thoroughly confirmed by Ta-chu Hui-hai, a chief disciple of Ma-tsu, in his *Essential Teaching of the Abrupt Awakening*: "The Unconscious means to have no-mind in all circumstances, that is to say, not to be determined by any conditions, not to have any affections or hankerings. To face all objective conditions, and yet to be eternally free from any form of stirring, this is the Unconscious. The Unconscious is thus known as to be truly conscious of itself. But to be conscious of consciousness is a false form of the Unconscious. Why? The Sūtra states that to make people become conscious of the six vijñānas is to have the wrong consciousness; to cherish the six vijñānas is false; where a man is free from the six vijñānas, he has the right consciousness."

"To see the Unconscious" does not mean any form of self-consciousness, nor is to sink into a state of ecstasy or indifference or apathy, where all traces of ordinary consciousness are wiped out. "To see the Unconscious" is to be conscious and yet to be unconscious of self-nature. Because self-nature is not to be determined by the logical category of being and non-being, to be so determined means to bring self-nature into the realm of empirical psychology,

in which it ceases to be what it is in itself. If the Unconscious, on the other hand, means the loss of consciousness, it then spells death, or at best a temporary suspension of life itself. But this is impossible inasmuch as self-nature is the Mind itself. This is the sense of the following passage which we come across everywhere in the *Prajñāpāramitā* and other Mahāyāna Sūtras: 'To be unconscious in all circumstances is possible because the ultimate nature of all things is emptiness, and because there is after all not a form which one can say one has laid hands on. This unattainability of all things is Reality itself, which is the most exquisite form of the Tathāgata.' The Unconscious is thus the ultimate reality, the true form, the most exquisite body of Tathāgatahood. It is certainly not a hazy abstraction, not a mere conceptual postulate, but a living experience in its deepest sense.

Further descriptions of the Unconscious from Shen-hui are as follows:

'To see into the Unconscious is to understand self-nature; to understand self-nature is not to take hold of anything; not to take hold of anything is the Tathāgata's Dhyāna. . . . Self-nature is from the first thoroughly pure, because its Body is not to be taken hold of. To see it thus is to be on the same standing with the Tathāgata, to be detached from all forms, to have all the vagaries of falsehood at once quieted, to equip oneself with merits of absolute stainlessness, to attain true emancipation, etc.'

'The nature of Suchness is our original Mind, of which we are conscious; and yet there is neither the one who is conscious nor that of which there is a consciousness.'

'To those who see the Unconscious, karma ceases to function, and what is the use for them to cherish an erroneous thought and to try to destroy karma by means of confusion?'

'To go beyond the dualism of being and non-being,



and again to love the track of the Middle Way—this is the Unconscious. The Unconscious means to be conscious of the absolutely one; to be conscious of the absolutely one means to have all-knowledge, which is Prajñā. Prajñā is the *Tathāgata-Dhyāna*.’

We are back again here at the relationship of Prajñā and Dhyāna. This is in fact one of the recurring subjects in the philosophy of Buddhism, and we cannot get away from it, especially in the study of Zen. The difference between Shen-hsiu’s and Hui-neng’s school is no more than the difference which exists between them in regard to this relationship. Shen-hsiu approaches the problem from the point of view of Dhyāna, while Hui-neng upholds Prajñā as the most important thing in the grasping of Zen. The latter tells us first of all ‘to see’ self-nature, which means to wake up in the Unconscious; Shen-hsiu, on the other hand, advises us ‘to sit in meditation’, so that all our passions and disturbing thoughts may be quieted, and the inherent purity of self-nature shine out by itself. These two tendencies have been going on side by side in the history of Zen thought, probably due to the two psychological types to be found in us, intuitive and moral, intellectual and practical.

Those who emphasize Prajñā, like Hui-neng and his school, tend to identify Dhyāna with Prajñā, and insist on an abrupt, instantaneous awakening in the Unconscious. This awakening in the Unconscious may be, logically speaking, a contradiction, but as Zen has another world in which to live its own life, it does not mind contradictory expressions and continues to use its peculiar phraseology.

Hui-neng’s school thus objects to Shen-hsiu’s on the grounds that those who spend their time in sitting cross-legged in meditation, trying to realize the state of tranquillity, are seekers after some tangible attainment; they are upholders of the doctrine of original purity, which they

consider to be something intellectually demonstrable; they are gazers at a special object which can be picked up among other relative objects and shown to others as one point at the moon; they cling to this specific object as something most precious, forgetting that this clinging degrades the value of their cherished object because it is thereby brought down to the same order of being as themselves; because of this clinging to it and abiding in it, they cherish a certain definite state of consciousness as the ultimate point they should attain; therefore they are never truly emancipated, they have not cut the last string which keeps them still on this side of existence.

According to Hui-neng's Prajñā school, Prajñā and Dhyāna become identical in the Unconscious, for when there is an awakening in the Unconscious, this is no awakening, and the Unconscious remains all the time in Dhyāna, serene and undisturbed.

The awakening is never to be taken for an attainment or for an accomplishment as the result of such strivings. As there is no attainment in the awakening of Prajñā in the Unconscious, there is no abiding in it either. This is the point most emphatically asserted in all the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras. No attainment, and therefore no clinging, no abiding, which means abiding in the Unconscious or abiding in non-abiding.

In Ta-chu Hui-hai we have this dialogue:

*Q.* 'What is meant by the simultaneous functioning of the Triple Discipline?'

*A.* 'To be pure and undefiled is Śīla (precept). The mind unmoved remaining ever serene in all conditions is Dhyāna (meditation). To perceive the mind unmoved, and yet to raise no thoughts as to its immovability; to perceive the mind pure and undefiled, and yet to raise no thoughts as to its purity; to discriminate what is bad from what is good, and yet to feel no defilement by them, and to



be absolute master of oneself: this is known as Prajñā. When one perceives thus that Śīla, Dhyāna, and Prajñā are all beyond attainability, one at once realizes that there is no discrimination to be made between them, and that they are of one and the same Body. This is the simultaneous functioning of the Triple Discipline.'

Q. 'When the mind abides in purity, is this not clinging to it?'

A. 'When abiding in purity, one may have no thoughts of abiding in it, and then one is said not to be clinging to it.'

Q. 'When the mind abides in emptiness, is this not clinging to it?'

A. 'When one has thoughts as to thus abiding, there is a clinging in one.'

Q. 'When the mind abides in the non-abiding, is this not clinging to the non-abiding?'

A. 'When one cherishes no thoughts as to emptiness, there is no clinging. If you wish to understand when the mind comes to realize the moment of non-abiding, sit in the right meditation posture, and purge your mind thoroughly of thoughts—thoughts about all things, thoughts about goodness and badness of things. Events past are already past; therefore have no thoughts of them, and your mind is disconnected from the past. Thus past events are done away with.<sup>1</sup> Present events are already here before you; then have no attachment to them. Not to have attachment means not to rouse any feeling of hate or love. Your mind is then disconnected from the present, and the events before your eyes are done away with. When the past, present, and future are thus in no way taken in, they are completely done away with. When thoughts come and go, do not follow them, and your pursuing mind is cut off. When abiding (with thoughts) do not tarry in them, and your

<sup>1</sup> Events to come are not yet come, and you need not worry about them; do not seek for them. Thus your mind is disconnected from the future.

abiding mind is cut off. When thus freed from abiding (with thoughts), you are said to be abiding with the non-abiding. If you have a thoroughly clear perception of yourself, you may remain abiding with thoughts, and yet what remains abiding is thoughts (and as to your Unconscious), it has neither an abiding place nor a non-abiding place. If you have a thoroughly clear perception as to the mind having no abiding place anywhere, this is known as having a thoroughly clear perception of one's own being. This very Mind which has no abiding place anywhere is the Buddha-Mind itself; it is called Emancipation-Mind, Enlightenment-Mind, the Unborn Mind, and Emptiness of Materiality and Ideality. It is what is designated in the sūtras as Recognition of the Unborn. . . . All this is understood when one has the Unconscious in evidence anywhere.'

The doctrine of the Unconscious as expounded here is, psychologically translated, that of absolute passivity or absolute obedience. It may also be represented as the teaching of humility. Our individual consciousness merged into the Unconscious must become like the body of a dead man, as used by St. Francis of Assisi to illustrate his idea of the perfect and highest obedience.

To make oneself like a corpse or a piece of wood or rock, though from a very different standpoint, seems to have been a favourite simile with Zen Buddhists too.

In Huang-po Hsi-yun we have this:

Q. 'What is meant by worldly knowledge?'

A. 'What is the use of involving yourself in such complexities? (The Mind) is thoroughly pure from the first, and no wordy discussions are needed about it. Only have no mind of any kind, and this is known as undefiled knowledge. In your daily life, whether walking or standing, sitting or lying, let not your speech of any nature be



attached to things of the world; then whatever words you utter and in whichever way your eyes blink, they are all of undefiled knowledge. The world is at present on the way to general decline, and most Zen students are attached to things material and worldly. What concern have they after all with Mind? Let your mind be like vacuity of space, like a chip of dead wood and a piece of stone, like cold ashes and burnt-out coal. When this is done, you may feel some correspondence (to the true Mind). If otherwise, some day you will surely be taken to task by the old man of the other world. . . .'

Ignatius Loyola's recommendation of obedience as the foundation of his Order differs naturally in spirit from the idea of the Zen masters' recommendation of what may be called absolute indifference. They are indifferent to things happening to them, because they consider them as not touching the Unconscious which lies at the back of their surface consciousness. As they hold themselves intimately to the Unconscious, all the outer happenings, including what is popularly known as belonging to one's consciousness, are like shadows. Being so, they are suffered to assail the Zen master, while his Unconscious remains undisturbed. This suffering is, to use Christian terminology, a sacrifice, a holocaust consumed for the honour of God.

William James quotes Lejeune's *Introduction à la Vie Mystique* in his *Varieties of Religious Experience* (p. 312): 'By poverty he immolates his exterior possessions; by chastity he immolates his body; by obedience he completes the sacrifice, and gives to God all that he yet holds as his own, his two most precious goods, his intellect and his will.' By this sacrifice of the intellect and the will Catholic discipline is completed; that is to say, the devotee turns into a block of wood, a mere mass of burnt coal and cold ashes, and is identified with the Unconscious. And this experience is told by Catholic writers in terms of God, as a sacrifice to

him; whereas Zen masters resort to more intellectual or psychological phraseology.

To quote further from Ignatius's *Sayings*: 'I must consider myself as a corpse which has neither intelligence nor will: be like a mass of matter which without resistance lets itself be placed wherever it may please anyone; like a stick in the hand of an old man, who uses it according to his needs and places it where it suits him.' This is the attitude he advises his followers to take towards the Order. The intent of the Catholic discipline is altogether different from that of Zen, and therefore Ignatius's admonition takes on quite a different colouring on the surface. But so far as its psychological experience is concerned, both the Zen masters and the Catholic leaders aim at bringing about the same state of mind, which is no other than realizing the Unconscious in our individual consciousnesses.

The Jesuit Rodriguez gives a very concrete illustration<sup>1</sup> in regard to the virtue of obedience: 'A religious person ought in respect to all the things that he uses to be like a statue which one may drape with clothing, but which feels no grief and makes no resistance when one strips it again. It is in this way that you should feel towards your clothes, your books, your cell and everything else that you make use of. . . .' For your clothes, your books, etc., substitute your griefs, worries, joys, aspirations, etc., which are your psychological possessions just as much as are your physical goods. Avoid using these psychological possessions as if they were your private property, and you are Buddhists living in the Unconscious or with the Unconscious.

Some may say that physical goods are not the same as psychological functions, that without the latter there is no mind and without a mind no sentient being. But I say, without these physical possessions which you are supposed to be in need of, where is your body? Without the body, where is the mind? After all, these psychological

<sup>1</sup>James, pp. 315-16.



functions do not belong to you to the same extent as your clothes, your table, your family, your body, etc., belong to you. You are always controlled by them, instead of your controlling them. You are not master even of your own body which seems to be most intimate to you. You are subject to birth and death. With the body your mind is most closely connected, and this seems to be still more out of your control. Are you not throughout your life a mere plaything of all your sensations, emotions, imaginations, ambitions, passions, etc.?

When Hui-neng and other Zen masters speak of the Unconscious, they may appear to be advising us to turn into cold dead ashes with no mentality, with no feelings, with no inner mechanism commonly associated with humanity, to turn into mere nothingness, absolute emptiness; but in truth this is the advice given by all religionists, this is the final goal all religious discipline aspires to reach. Apart from their theological or philosophical interpretations, to my mind Christians and Buddhists refer to the same fact of experience when they talk about sacrifice and obedience. A state of absolute passivity dynamically interpreted, if such is possible, is the basis of the Zen experience.

The Unconscious is to let 'thy will be done', and not to assert my own. All the doings and happenings, including thoughts and feelings, which I have or which come to me are of the divine will as long as there are on my part no clingings, no hankerings, and 'my mind is wholly disconnected with things of the past, present, and future' in the way described above. This is again the spirit of Christ when he utters: 'Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.' Replace 'the morrow' with 'the future' and 'the day' with 'the present', and what Christ says is exactly what the Zen master would say, though in a more philosophical manner. 'The

Q. 'Is there anything resembling it?'

A. 'Not a thing resembling it; the world knows no compeer.'

From this dialogue between Hui-chung and his disciple Ling-chiao, quoted at some length, we can have a glimpse into the meaning of such terms as *wu-hsin*, *wu-nien*, *wu*, *kung*, and *wang*, which we frequently meet in Zen literature and which constitute the central idea, negatively expressed, of Zen philosophy. 'No-mind-ness', 'no-thought-ness' (or 'thought-less-ness'), 'no-ness', 'emptiness', and 'forgetting' are uncouth terms in the English language as employed by the Chinese Zen masters. They sound barbarous, and in many respects utterly unintelligible, and this was indeed the case with the Chinese disciple of Hui-chung, who found it extremely difficult to comprehend the meaning of his master. One must really have an experience in order to get into the spirit of the master, and then the understanding will follow by itself. Whatever this is, all these negative terms tend to point to the conception of the Unconscious, not indeed in the psychological sense but in the deepest metaphysical sense. Although they are mere negations they have a positive signification, and therefore they are identified with Buddhahood, Buddha-nature, Self-nature, Self-being, Suchness, Reality, etc.

So long as one stays in the Unconscious there is no awakening of Prajñā. The Body is there, but no Use; and when there is no Use there is no 'seeing into self-nature', and we all return literally to a static quietness of inorganic matter. Hui-neng was very much against this conception of Dhyāna; hence his philosophy of Prajñā and the motto of Zen Buddhism; the 'seeing into self-nature is becoming the Buddha'.

The greatest advance Hui-neng made in the study of Zen is this idea of seeing into one's self-nature or self-being. Before his time the idea was to contemplate on the serenity



and purity of it, which tended to quietism or mere tranquillization. This has already been noticed before, and I will give a further passage bearing on the subject, hoping to clarify the meaning of Hui-neng's notion of seeing into self-being.

A monk asked Chih of Yun-chu of the eighth century, 'What is meant by seeing into one's Self-nature and becoming a Buddha?'

CHIH: 'This Nature is from the first pure and undefiled, serene and undisturbed. It belongs to no categories of duality such as being and non-being, pure and defiled, long and short, taking-in and giving-up; the Body remains in its suchness. To have a clear insight into this is to see into one's Self-nature. Self-nature is the Buddha, and the Buddha is Self-nature. Therefore, seeing into one's Self-nature is becoming the Buddha.'

MONK: 'If Self-nature is pure, and belongs to no categories of duality such as being and non-being, etc., where does this seeing take place?'

CHIH: 'There is a seeing, but nothing seen.'

MONK: 'If there is nothing seen, how can we say that there is any seeing at all?'

CHIH: 'In fact there is no trace of seeing.'

MONK: 'In such a seeing, whose seeing is it?'

CHIH: 'There is no seer, either.'

MONK: 'Where do we ultimately come to?'

CHIH: 'Do you know that it is because of erroneous discrimination that one conceives of a being, and hence the separation of subject and object. This is known as a confused view. For in accordance with this view one is involved in complexities and falls into the path of birth and death. Those with a clearer insight are not like this one. Seeing may go on all day, and yet there is nothing seen by them. You may seek for traces of seeing in them, but nothing, either of the Body or of the Use, is discoverable

here. The duality of subject and object is gone—which is called the seeing into Self-nature.

It is evident that this seeing into self-nature is not an ordinary seeing, in which there is a duality of one who sees and that which is seen. Nor is it a special act of seeing, which, ordinarily understood, takes place at a definite moment and in a definite locality. Nevertheless there is the fact of seeing which cannot be gainsaid. How can such a fact take place in this world of dualities? As long as we cling, to use Buddhist terminology, to this way of thinking, we can never comprehend this Zen experience of seeing into self-nature. To understand it one must have the experience, and at the same time there must be a specially constructed logic or dialectic—by whatever name it may be known—to give to the experience a rational or an irrational interpretation. The fact comes first, followed by an intellectualization. Chih of Yun-chu has done his best in the above quotation to express his idea of the seeing according to the way of thinking which then prevailed. This expression may fail to satisfy our present logical demand, but that has nothing to do with the fact itself.

To come back to Hui-neng, Prajñā is awakened in self-nature abruptly (*tun*), and this term *tun* not only means 'instantaneously', 'unexpectedly or suddenly', but signifies the idea that the act of awakening which is seeing is not a conscious deed on the part of self-nature. In other words, Prajñā flashes from the Unconscious and yet never leaves it; it remains unconscious of it. This is the sense of saying that 'Seeing is no-seeing, and no-seeing is seeing', and that the Unconscious or self-nature becomes conscious of itself by means of Prajñā, and yet in this consciousness there is no separation of subject and object. Therefore, says Hui-neng, 'One who understands this truth is *wu nien* ("without thought"), *wu-i* ("without memory"), and *wu-chao* ("without attachment").' But we must remember that Hui-neng



never advocated the doctrine of mere nothingness, or mere doing-nothing-ness, nor assumed an unknown quantity in the solution of life.

This latter type of misunderstanding seems to have been prevalent soon after the death of Hui-neng, or even while he was alive. In a way this misconstruction appeals to many who have no adequate grasp of the meaning of the transcendental nature of self-being (*svabhāva*). In fact, it is the popular conception of a soul. According to Hui-chung, whose long dialogue with one of his disciples, Ling-chiao, has already been quoted, the popular followers of Hui-neng seem to have gone to the extent of revising the contents of the *T'an-ching* to suit their own interpretation of the Master.

To the inquiry of Hui-chung about Zen Buddhism in the south his visitor had this to report: 'There are at present many Zen masters in the south, and according to them there is the Buddha-nature in every one of us, and this nature is what does all the seeing, hearing, and thinking in him. When he moves his legs or hands, it is the Nature which does it in him, and it is conscious of this experience. The body is subject to birth and death, but the Nature escapes from it as the snake comes out of its skin, or as a man leaves his old house.' To this report of the visitor from the south, Hui-chung adds: 'I also know of this class of Buddhist teachers, and have met many of them in my days of pilgrimage. They are like those heretical philosophers in India who hypostatize a soul. This is really to be deplored. For they tamper with the *T'an-ching*, carrying out all kinds of alteration according to their own ideas against the teaching of their revered Master. The result is the destruction of the principle for which we real followers of our Master stand. . . .'

From the point of textual criticism the *T'an-ching* has apparently suffered much at the hands of succeeding compilers, and even the oldest T'ang copy may not be too exact a report of Hui-neng's discourses. But there is no

doubt that even the current copy of the *T'an-ching* contains much of Hui-neng's characteristic standpoint, especially his doctrine of Prajñā, as distinguished from his predecessors and his contemporaries.

The conception of a soul-substance is not so subtle a misconception of Hui-neng as that of mere nothingness. We can say that these two conceptions of Prajñā or Self-nature are the two great pitfalls into which most Zen followers, and indeed most Buddhists, are liable to fall. Students of Zen have to guard themselves against committing these faults. What leads them to the pitfall is the attempt to substitute an intellectual or conceptual understanding of an experience for the genuine Zen experience itself. This false proceeding is the source of all grave errors.

Let me quote more from the annals of Zen following Hui-neng, to illustrate how easily we go astray in understanding the relation between Self-nature and Prajñā, Body and Use, the Unconscious and consciousness, Emptiness and a world of becoming, the Unattainable and the attainable, Non-abiding Nirvāṇa and a realm of birth and death, non-discrimination and logic, no-ness and pluralities, etc.

In what follows, the masters are shown trying hard to make their pupils experience something which lies beyond and yet in dualities, as exemplified above. Fundamentally, the Zen experience consists in seeing into the working of Prajñā, from which starts our ordinary world of contradictions.

Shih-kung Hui-tsang of Fu-chou, who was one of the great disciples of Ma-tsu of the T'ang dynasty, wishing to see what understanding of Zen his head monk had, proposed this question: 'Can you take hold of vacant space?' The monk replied: 'Yes, Master.' 'How do you proceed?' was the demand of the master. The monk thereupon, extending his arm, made a grab at empty space. Remarked



the master: 'How can you take hold of space that way?' 'How then?' retorted the monk. No sooner was this said than the master grabbed the monk's nose and pulled it hard. The monk cried aloud, saying: 'This is altogether too hard; you will pull it out!' The master concluded: 'In no other way can you take hold of empty space.'

Here we see that the Unconscious is by no means unconscious of itself, and also that Emptiness is quite a concrete substance which can be held in our own hands. In Hui-neng's days this truth was not so graphically, so vividly, demonstrated. When Hui-neng told one of his disciples, who was a devoted student of the *Puṇḍarīka*, not to be 'turned about' by the Sūtra but to make it 'turn about', the master meant all that was evidenced by Shih-kung, but he was still busy fighting over the field with the same weapon which was in the hands of his disciples; that is, on a more or less conceptual ground.

When Buddhists are told that the Buddha comes from no-whence and departs no-whither, or that the Dharmakāya is like empty space and to be found where there is no-mindness (*wu-hsin*), they are at a loss, or they try to snap at empty space, imagining that this may lead them somewhere. But they will never wake up to Prajñā until their nose is twisted hard and tears come from their eyes.

Even when they are told that every being is endowed with the Buddha-nature and that they are Buddhas, even as they are, they keep themselves from Buddha-hood by reason of their own discriminative understanding, which creates an artificial barrier between themselves and Buddha. Hui-neng's whole mission was to break down this barrier; hence his statement: 'From the first not a thing is.' This must have troubled his disciples ever since it came out of the mouth of a supposedly ignorant wood-cutter of Shinchou.

Shih-kung, the aforementioned master, was asked by a monk: 'How should I escape birth and death?' The master said: 'What is the use of escaping it?' Another time

the master's answer was: 'This one knows no birth-and death.' From the point of view of the questioner, 'this one' is the problem indeed.

Is 'this one' the Buddha?

Yu-ti asked Tao-t'ing, another disciple of Ma-tsu: 'Who is the Buddha?' The master called out: 'O Yu-ti!' Yu-ti responded: 'Yes, Master!' Whereupon the master said: 'Don't seek him elsewhere.'

Later, a monk carried this story to Yao-shan, who said: 'Alas, he has bound up that fellow too tightly!' 'What does that mean?' said the monk. Yao-shan too called out: 'O monk!' The monk responded: 'Yes, Master!' Shan then demanded: 'What is that?'

'That' again! What is it this time? Is it once more the Buddha? Let us see if another similar quotation helps us to see into the matter.

A monk asked Pai-chang Hui-hai, the founder of the Zen monastery: 'Who is the Buddha?'

CHANG: 'Who are you?'

MONK: 'I am such and such.'

CHANG: 'Do you know this such and such?'

MONK: 'Most certainly!'

CHANG then raised his *hossu* and said: 'Do you see?'

MONK: 'I see.'

The master did not make any further remark.

Why did Pai-chang remain silent? Did the monk understand who the Buddha was? Or did the master give up the monk as a hopeless case? As far as our ordinary human understanding goes, the monk apparently answered the master correctly. Nothing faulty, then, with the monk? But the trouble with Zen is that it always refuses to remain ordinary, though claiming to be ordinary. One day Pai-chang gave this sermon:

'There is one who, though not eating any rice for a long time, yet feels no hunger; there is another who, though eating rice all day, yet does not feel satisfied.'



is all right, but all the same you are very ill-mannered.' P'u-hua retorted: 'What a blind fellow you are! Don't you know that there is no room in Buddhism for such remarks as yours on manners?'

Te-shan, a contemporary of Lin-chi, was famous for this statement: 'Whether you can say a word or not, you get thirty blows just the same.' Lin-chi told Lo-p'u, one of his own disciples, to go and interview Te-shan, and Lin-chi gave him this instruction: 'You ask why one gets thirty blows even when one can say a word. When Te-shan strikes you, take hold of his stick and push him out with it. See how he will behave then.' Everything went as planned with Te-shan. When pushed with the stick, however, he quietly walked back to his own quarters. This was reported to Lin-chi, whose remark was: 'I had some doubt about him until now, but do you, Lo-p'u, understand him?' Lo-p'u showed some hesitation, whereupon Lin-chi struck him.

Chung-i Hung-en, a disciple of Ma-tsu, was once asked by Yang-shan: 'How can one see into one's self-nature?' Chung-i said: 'It is like a cage with six windows, and there is in it a monkey. When someone calls at the east window, "O monkey, O monkey!" he answers. At the other windows the same response is obtained.' Yang-shan thanked him for the instruction, and said: 'Your instructive simile is quite intelligible, but there is one thing on which I wish to be enlightened. If the inside monkey is asleep, tired out, what happens when the outside one comes to interview it?' Chung-i got down from his straw seat and taking Yang-shan's arm began to dance, saying: 'O monkey, O monkey, my interview with you is finished. It is like an animalcule making its nest among the eyebrows of a mosquito: it comes out at the street crossing and makes a loud cry: "Wide is the land, few are the people, and one rarely meets friends!"'

Chien-nin of Chen-chou was another disciple of Ma-tsu.

6. Tsung-yin of San-chiao Shan one day gave this sermon: 'If we are to discuss this matter, even the raising of the eyebrows puts us out of the way.' Ma-ku at once asked: 'We don't talk about the raising of the eyebrows; what do you mean by "this matter"?' Tsung-yin said: 'There, you are already out of the way!' Ma-ku upset the master's chair, and the master struck him. Ma-ku had nothing further to say.'

7. A monk asked Pao-yun, of Lu-tsu Shan: 'What is meant by "speaking is no-speaking"?' The master said: 'Where is your mouth?' 'I have no mouth.' 'If so, how do you eat your rice?' To this the monk made no reply. Later, Tang-shan commented: 'That fellow is never hungry, does not want any rice.'

8. While Chang-hsing of Le-tan was found sitting cross-legged facing the wall, Nan-chuan came up and stroked his back. Chan-hsing said: 'Who are you?' 'I am P'u-yuan' (which was Nan-chuan's personal name). 'How are you?' asked Chang-hsing. To this, 'As usual,' was the reply. Said Chang-hsing: 'What a busy life you lead then!'

9. A monk asked Pao-chi, of Pan-shan: 'What is the Toa?'

MASTER: 'Come on.'

MONK: 'I am not yet able to grasp the meaning.'

MASTER: 'Go out.'

10. When Pao-che of Ma-ku Shan one day accompanied his master, Ma-tsu, in his walk, he asked: 'What is Great Nirvāṇa?' The master said: 'Hasten!' 'What is to be hastened, O master?' 'Look at the stream!' was the answer.

11. A Buddhist scholar called on Yen-kuan Ch'i-an, who asked: 'What is your special branch of study?'

SCHOLAR: 'I discourse on the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*.'

MASTER: 'How many Dharmadhātus does it teach?'

SCHOLAR: 'From the broadest point of view, there are innumerable Dharmadhātus related to one another in the



closest possible relationship; but summarily stated, four are reckoned.'

The master then held up his *hossu*, saying, 'To which of those Dharmadhātus does this belong?'

The scholar meditated for a while, trying to find the right answer. The master was impatient and gave out this statement: 'Deliberate thinking and discursive understanding amount to nothing; they belong to the household of ghosts; they are like a lamp in the broad daylight; nothing shines out of them.'

12. A monk asked Tai-mei about Bhodi-Dharma's coming from the West to China, and the master answered: 'No idea whatever in this.' Ch'i-an, learning of this remark, said: 'Two corpses in one coffin.'

13. A monk asked Ling-mo of Wu-hsieh Shan: 'What is the beginning and end of this affair?'

LING-MO: 'Tell me how long this present moment has gone on?'

MONK: 'I am unable to follow you.'

LING-MO: 'I have no room here to cherish questions like yours.'

MONK: 'But you must know some means to treat persons like yourself.'

LING-MO: 'When they come and ask of my treatment, I deal it out to them.'

MONK: 'I then beg of you for treatment.'

LING-MO: 'Is anything lacking with you?'

14. A monk asked Wei-kuan of Hsing-shan Ssu: 'What is Tao?'

WEI-KUAN: 'What a fine mountain!'

MONK: 'I am asking you about Tao, so why do you talk about the mountain?'

WEI-KUAN: 'As long as you only know about the mountain there is no chance for you to attain Tao.'

15. Another monk asked Wei-kuan: 'Where is Tao?'

KUAN: 'Right before us.'

MONK: 'Why don't I see it?'

KUAN: 'Because of your egoism you cannot see it.'

MONK: 'If I cannot see it because of my egoism, does your Reverence see it?'

KUAN: 'As long as there is "I and thou", this complicates the situation and there is no seeing Tao.'

MONK: 'When there is neither "I" nor "thou" is it seen?'

KUAN: 'When there is neither "I" nor "thou", who is here to see it?'

16. When Chih-chang of Kuei-sung Ssu had tea with Nan-chuan P'u-yuan, Nan-chuan said: 'We have been good friends, talked about many things and weighed them carefully, and we know where we are now that we each go our own way, what would you say when someone comes up and asks you about ultimate things?'

CHIH-CHANG: 'This ground where we sit now is a fine site for a hut.'

NAN-CHUAN: 'Let your hut alone; how about ultimate things?'

Chih-chang took the tea-set away, and rose from his seat. Whereupon Nan-chuan said: 'You have finished your tea, but I have not.'

CHIH-CHANG: 'The fellow who talks like that cannot consume even a drop of water.'

17. Chih-chang one day came to the Hall and announced: 'I am now going to discourse on Zen. All come up to me.' When the monks came up, the master said: 'When you have listened to the deeds of Kwannon you are able to behave properly in accordance with circumstances.' The monks asked: 'What are the deeds of Kwannon?' The master then snapped his fingers and said: 'Do you all hear that?' The monks said: 'Yes, we hear.' 'This nonsensical company of yours, what do you want to get by coming here?' So saying, the master drove them out of the Hall with a stick, and himself, laughing heartily, returned to the abbot's quarters.



18 (a). A monk asked Li-shan: 'All things return to Emptiness, but where does Emptiness return?'

LI-SHAN: 'The mouth is unable to locate it.'

MONK: 'Why not?'

LI-SHAN: 'Because of the oneness of inside and outside.'

(b) On another occasion a monk asked: 'What is the idea of Dharma's coming over here from the West?'

LI-SHAN: 'There is no "what" here.'

MONK: 'What is the reason?'

LI-SHAN: 'Just because things are such as they are.'

These two propositions given by Li-shan may be considered commentaries upon one and the same subject; that is, Emptiness and Suchness.

19. Pai-ling one day met P'ang, the lay-Buddhist, in the street. Pai-ling said: 'Have you had occasion to hold up to anyone the truth which you in olden days experienced at Nan-yueh?'

P'ANG: 'Yes, I have.'

PAI-LING: 'To whom?'

P'ANG, pointing to himself, said: 'To this old man.'

PAI-LING: 'Even the praise of Mañjuśrī and Subhūti fails to do justice to you.'

P'ANG now asked: 'Is there anyone who knows of the truth you have experienced?' Pai-ling put on his bamboo hat and went off. P'ang said: 'Good-bye, old man, take good care of yourself.' But Ling walked straight on without looking back.

20. Tan-hsia T'ien-jan, who was a disciple of Shih-tou, one day called on Hui-chung the National Teacher, and asked the attendant if the master was to be seen. The attendant said, 'The master is at home but is not to be seen by visitors.'

TAN-HSIA: 'How unfathomably deep!'

ATTENDANT: 'Even the Buddha's eye is unable to penetrate the depths.'

TAN-HSIA: 'Indeed, the dragon's son is a dragon, the phoenix's is a phoenix.'

Chung the National Teacher having waked from a siesta, the attendant told him about the visitor. Chung gave him twenty blows and chased him out of the house. When Tan-hsia later learned this he said, 'Chung is truly the National Teacher'; and on the following day he called on him again. As soon as he came in his presence, Tan-hsia spread out his cushion to perform his bowing. But Chung the Teacher said: 'Not necessary, not necessary.' When Tan-hsia stepped backward, Chung said: 'That's right.' Tan-hsia then walked around the master and left. Chung's conclusion was: 'Being far away from the time of the old masters, people are neglectful of what they ought to do. Even in thirty years from now such a fellow as this one is rarely met.'

21. When Hui-lang of Chao-t'i saw Ma-tsu, the latter asked: 'What do you seek here?'

HUI-LANG: 'I am after the insight attained by the Buddha.'

MA-TSU: 'The Buddha has no such insight; such belongs to Evil Ones. You say you come from Nan-yueh, but you seem not to have seen Shih-tou yet. You had better go back to him.'

Hui-lang accordingly went back to Nan-yueh and asked: 'What is the Buddha?'

SHIH-TOU: 'You have no Buddha-nature.'

HUI-LANG: 'How about those natures moving about us?'

SHIH-TOU: 'They have it.'

HUI-LANG: 'Why then not I?'

SHIH-TOU: 'Because you fail to see to it yourself.'

This is said to have opened his eye to his self-nature. Afterwards he lived at Cho-t'i and whatever monks came to him for instruction were sent away with: 'Begone! you have no Buddha-nature!'



25. A monk asked: 'I have a doubt which I wish you to decide.'

YAO-SHAN: 'Wait until I come up to the Hall this evening, when I will have your doubt settled.'

When the Brotherhood assembled in the Hall, the master told the monk to appear before him. The monk walked up to him, when Yao-shan came down from his chair and taking hold of him said: 'O monks, here is one who has a doubt.' So saying, he pushed away from him and returned to his own quarters.

Later, Hsuan-chiao commented: 'Did Yao-shan really settle the doubt the monk had? If this was the case, where was the point? If this was not the case, why did the master tell the monk he would settle it for him at the time of the evening service?'

26. Yang-shan asked Kuei-shan about Bodhi-Dharma's idea of coming over to China from India, and Kuei-shan replied: 'What a fine lantern this is!'

YANG-SHAN: 'Is this not it, and no other?'

KUEI-SHAN: 'What do you mean by "this"?''

YANG-SHAN: 'What a fine lantern this is!'

KUEI-SHAN: 'Sure enough, you do not know.'

Let me remark in passing that in Zen it is often difficult for the uninitiated to know where to locate the intention of the master's statement. For instance, in the present case Kuei-shan's 'You do not know' is not to be understood in its popular sense of ignorance. For here Kuei-shan is not referring to Yang-shan's not knowing Zen; on the contrary, Kuei-shan knows well where Yang-shan stands, and also that Yang-shan understands well where Kuei-shan stands. For this reason we cannot merely follow what they say to each other; we have first to get into the inner side or into the intent of their expressions. A monk asked Yao-shan to enlighten him, as he was still groping in the dark as to the meaning of his own life. Yao-shan kept quiet for a while. This keeping quiet is pregnant with meaning, and if the

monk were ready for it he could have comprehended what made Yao-shan remain silent. But in point of fact the monk failed, and Yao-shan continued: 'It is not difficult for me to say a word to you on the matter before us. The point, however, is to grasp the meaning, as soon as it is uttered, without a moment of deliberation. When this is done there is an approach to the truth. On the other hand, there is a delay on your part, and you begin to reason things out, and the fault will be finally laid at my door. It is after all better to keep the mouth closed so that we both escape further complications.' This statement by Yao-shan is quite to the point. Words appeal to our discursive understanding and lead to ratiocination, while Zen's course is in the other direction, pointing to the time before words are uttered.

27. A monk came to Shih-lou, a disciple of Shih-tou, and asked: 'I am still ignorant of my original birth. Will you kindly find some means to enlighten me?'

SHIH-LOU: 'I have no ears.'

MONK: 'I know that I was at fault.'

SHIH-LOU: 'Oh no, it is my own fault.'

MONK: 'Where is your fault, O Master?'

SHIH-LOU: 'The fault is where you say you are at fault.'

The monk made bows, and the master struck him.

28. Hua-lin was asked by Shih-tou his teacher: 'Are you a Zen monk or an ordinary one?'

HUA-LIN: 'I am a Zen monk.'

SHIH-TOU: 'What is Zen?'

HUA-LIN: 'Raising the eyebrows, moving the eyes.'

SHIH-TOU: 'Bring your original form forward and let me see; I have no use for the raising of the eyebrows or the moving of the eyes.'

HUA-LIN: 'O Master, do away with your raising the eyebrows, and moving the eyes, and see me where I am.'

SHIH-TOU: 'They are done away with.'

HUA-LIN: 'The presentation is over.'

29. Ts'ui-wei Wu-hsiao was one day taking a walk inside



YAO: 'What is tune Number 1?'

KAO filled his bowl with rice from the vessel and went away.

From these 'questions and answers' which were exchanged between Zen students during the one hundred and fifty years after the passing of Hui-neng, the reader can gauge the extent of development effected by Zen thought. The scene has almost entirely changed from that which was visible until the time of the Sixth Patriarch. Only what may be called Sūtra terminology had been in use in the exposition of Zen. No one had ever thought that beating, kicking, and other rough methods of treatment would be accorded to the students. 'Mere seeing' is gone, and acting has taken its place. Has that materially changed in any way the spirit of Zen in its transmission from Bodhi-Dharma down to the Sixth Patriarch? Outwardly yes, but in spirit no. For there is a constant flow of the same thought underlying all those 'questions and answers'. What has undergone change is the method used. The spirit is that of Hui-neng, who declares: 'I establish no-thought-ness (*wu-nien* the Unconscious) as the Principle [of my teaching], formlessness as the Body, and abodelessness as the Source.' This declaration is the foundation of Zen teaching, and can be traced in those varied answers given by the masters either in words or gestures.

*Wu-nien* (no-thought) is psychological, *wu-hsiang* (no-form) ontological, and *wu-chu* (no-abode) is moral. The first and the third have a subjective sense while the second has an objective sense. They all practically and ultimately mean the same thing, but Zen is most interested in psychology, in realizing the Unconscious; in going beyond it, for when this is gained an abode that is no-abode is found, and the mind is altogether detached from form, which also means detachment from the mind itself; and this is a state of *wu-men*, 'no-thought-ness'. Hitherto this has been studied in connection with Prajñā, because Hui-neng was

intensely occupied with the problem of Prajñā and Dhyāna, reflecting the spirit of his age. Now, let us see in what light this no-thought-ness or the Unconscious is to be understood when it is related to our ethical life.

We now come to the most significant discussion in the teaching of Zen. As far as the seeing into one's inner being, known as self-nature, is concerned, the matter is more or less on the epistemological plane, and does not seem to affect our practical life from the ethical point of view. But when Prajñā is considered not from the point of view of seeing but from the point of view of acting, it goes directly into the very heart of life. Most of the 'questions and answers' cited above have been extracted from annals of the early history of Zen with a view to showing the individual masters' methods of teaching how to awaken Prajñā in the minds of the pupils—minds most obstinately warped because of their dualistic interpretation of life and the world. In the following examples we will try to see into the inner working of Prajñā in their daily behaviour.

1. A monk asked Ching-t'sen, of Chang-sha: 'What is meant by 'one's everyday thought is the Tao'?'

CHING-T'SEN: 'When I feel sleepy, I sleep; when I want to sit, I sit.'

MONK: 'I fail to follow you.'

CHING-T'SEN: 'In summer we seek a cool place; when cold we sit by a fire.'

2. A Vināya master called Yuan came to Tai-chu Hui-hai, and asked: 'When disciplining oneself in the Tao, is there any special way of doing it?'

HUI-HAI: 'Yes, there is.'

YUAN: 'What is that?'

HUI-HAI: 'When hungry one eats; when tired, one sleeps.'

YUAN: 'That is what other people do; is their way the same as yours?'



WHAT do we gather from all these citations about Zen life? What are the outward expressions or behaviour of the Unconscious?

The most famous saying of Ma-tsu is, 'This mind is the Buddha himself,' which has been in fact one of the main thoughts advocated by all the Zen masters preceding him; but to this Ma-tsu added: 'One's everyday thought (or mind) is the Tao.' In Chinese the same character *hsin* is used for 'thought' as well as for 'mind', and by thought or mind in this case is meant the state of consciousness we have in ordinary circumstances, in our everyday life, when we live like the sun which shines on the just and on the unjust, like the lilies of the field which bloom in their full glory even when not admired. The mind in 'everyday mind (or thought)' has thus no reference to our psychological conception of mind or soul; it is rather a state of mind in which there is no specific consciousness of its own workings, reminding one of what the philosophers call 'transcendental apperception'. This may correspond to what I have called the Unconscious (*wu-hsin* or *wu-nien*) in the preceding sections.

When Ma-tsu and other Zen leaders declare that 'this mind is the Buddha himself', it does not mean that there is a kind of soul lying hidden in the depths of consciousness, but that a state of unconsciousness, psychologically stated, which accompanies every conscious and unconscious act of mind is what constitutes Buddhahood.

Understanding Ma-tsu's statements in this light, the commentaries by Ching-t'sen and Tai-chu became intelligible. 'When I feel sleepy, I sleep; when I want to sit, I sit.' Or: 'When hungry I eat, when tired, I sleep.' Or: 'In summer we seek a cool place, and when cold we sit by a fire.' Are these not our everyday acts, acts done

several masters but did not find much satisfaction with them. In the meantime his own master's fame went out far and wide. He hurriedly came back and asked: 'O Master, when you are such a worker of wonders why did you not teach me long before I was sent away on pilgrimage?' The master said: 'When you were here with me, you wanted to prepare rice, and I started a fire; you set the table, dished out rice, and I got out my bowl. When did I ever behave contrary to your order?' This is said to have enlightened the young disciple. A similar story is told of Ch'ung-hsin, who succeeded Tao-wu.

Te-shan Hsuan-chien (780-865), of Shu, was a great student of the *Diamond Sūtra* before he had his eyes opened to the truth of Zen. As a full-fledged master he was known for his swinging a stick on his students. He is popularly coupled with Lin-chi (Rinzai), who uttered a '*Kwatz!*' over anybody approaching him with a question. Te-shan's famous statement was: 'Thirty blows when you can say a word, thirty blows when you cannot say a word!' 'To say a word' is almost a technical term with Zen, and means anything which is brought forward, whether in words or in gestures, regarding the central fact of Zen. 'Giving a blow' in this case means that all such demonstrations are of no avail whatever. In short, according to Te-shan, Zen is a philosophy of absolute negations which are at the same time absolute affirmations; unless one gains a certain insight into this dialectic of negation-affirmation one has no right to say a word about Zen.

When one evening Te-shan made this declaration, a monk came out from the audience, and was about to make bows before him when the master struck him. The monk protested: 'How is it that you strike me, Master, even before I have proposed a question?' The master asked: 'Where do you come from?' 'I come from Kona.' 'Even before you boarded a boat, you deserved thirty blows,' was his verdict.



Lung-ya asked: 'If I threatened to cut your head off with the sharpest sword one can find in the world, what would you do?'

The master pulled his head in.

Lung-ya said: 'Your head is off!'

The master smiled.

Later, Lung-ya came to Tung-shan and mentioned this episode to him. Tung-shan asked: 'What did Te-shan say?'

LUNG-YA: 'He said nothing.'

TUNG-SHAN: 'Don't say that he said nothing. Show me the head you then cut off.'

Lung-ya acknowledged his fault and apologized.

This story was reported back by someone to Te-shan, who then remarked: 'Old Tung-shan has no judgment. That fellow (Lung-ya) has been dead for some time, and what is the use of trying to save him?'

A monk asked: 'What is Bodhi (enlightenment)?'

The master responded: 'Don't scatter your dirt here!'

A monk asked: 'Who is the Buddha?'

The master said: 'He is an old Bhikshu of the Western country.'

One day Te-shan gave a sermon in which he said: 'When you question, you commit a fault; when you do not, you give offence.' A monk came forward and began to bow, whereupon the master struck him. The monk said: 'I have just begun my bowing, and why do you strike me?' 'If I wait for you to open your mouth, all will be over.'

The master sent his attendant to fetch I-t'sun (i.e. Hsueh-feng). When he came, the master said: 'I have just sent for I-t'sun, and what is the use of *your* coming up?' T'sun made no reply.

Seeing a monk approach, Te-shan closed the gate. The monk came up and knocked. The master said: 'Who are you?'

MONK: 'I am a lion.'

The master opened the gate and the monk bowed to the ground. Seeing this, the master got astride his neck and said: 'O beast, why do you keep loitering about here (i.e. in a monastery)?'

Te-shan was ill, and a monk asked: 'Is there one who is not ill?'

'Yes, there is one.'

'Who is this one who is not ill?'

'O Father!' cried the master.

Do we not also here have tidings of 'your everyday thought which is the Tao'? Do we not trace here the working of the Unconscious which responds almost 'instinctively' to the requirements of the occasion?

Let me give another quotation from Pen-hsien (941-1008), who belongs to the Hogen (Fa-yuan) school of Zen. He once said: 'In the study of Buddhism it is not necessary to know much about those Zen interviews which have taken place before us, nor is it necessary to pick out certain striking phrases from the sūtras or from the śāstras and regard them as expressing the highest truth. Discussions on such subjects are left to those addicted to intellectualization. Mere cleverness is not meant to cope with the facts of birth and death. If you really wish to get into the truth of Zen, get it while walking, while standing, while sleeping or sitting, while talking or remaining silent, or while engaged in all kinds of your daily work. When you have done this, see whose doctrine you are following, or what sūtras you are studying.'

On another occasion he had this to say: 'We get up early in the morning, wash our hands and faces, clean our



feeling something in his own mind which echoed the Orient; but the following is the verse uttered by a dying Japanese warrior under a shower of swords:

Both the slayer  
 And the slain  
 Are like a dew-drop and a flash of lightning;  
 They are thus to be regarded.

The last two lines are from the *Diamond Sūtra*, in which he was undoubtedly well versed.

In Shen-hui we have this: 'He who has definitely attained the experience of Mind retains his no-thoughtness (*wu-nien*) even when his body is cut to pieces in a mêlée between two fiercely contending armies. He is solid as a diamond, he is firm and immovable. Even when all the Buddhas, numbering as many as the sands of the Gangā, appear, not the least feeling of joy moves in him. Even when beings equal in number to the sands of the Gangā disappear all at once, not the least feeling of pity moves in him. He abides in the thought of emptiness and absolute sameness.'

This may sound terribly inhuman; but think of a great modern war in which hundreds of thousands of human lives are wantonly destroyed, and with this ruthless massacre before us we do not stop even for a moment, but plan another great war at its heels. God is apparently unconcerned with these trifling human affairs; God seems to have an infinitely grander idea of things than petty human imagination can paint. From Shen-hui's point of view a mustard seed hides worlds in itself as numerous as the Gangā sands, and quantities and magnitudes and anything based on intellectual discrimination mean to his unconscious nothing.

The *Diamond Sūtra* tells about a former life of the Buddha when his body was terribly mutilated by a despotic king:

'Subhūti, the Pāramitā of humility (patience), is told by the Tathāgata to be no-Pāramitā of humility, and therefore it is the Pāramitā of humility. Why? Subhūti, anciently, when my body was cut to pieces by the King of Kāliṅga, I had neither the idea of an ego, nor the idea of a person, nor the idea of a being, nor the idea of a soul. Why? When at that time my body was dismembered, limb by limb, joint after joint, if I had had the idea either of an ego, or of a person, or of a being, or a soul, the feeling of anger and ill-will would have been awakened in me. . . .'<sup>1</sup>

What is *mushin* (*wu-hsin* in Chinese)? What is meant by 'no-mind-ness' or 'no-thought-ness'? It is difficult to find an English equivalent except the Unconscious, though even this must be used in a definitely limited sense. It is not the Unconscious in its usual psychological sense, nor in the sense given it by the analytical psychologists, who find it very much deeper than mere lack of consciousness, but probably in the sense of the 'abysmal ground' of the mediaeval mystics, or in the sense of the Divine Will even before its utterance of the Word.

*Mushin*, or *munen*, is primarily derived from *muga*, *wu-wo*, *anātman*, 'non-ego', 'selflessness' which is the principal conception of Buddhism, both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna. With the Buddha this was no philosophical concept, it was his very experience, and whatever theory developed around it was a later intellectual framework to support the experience. When the intellectualization went further and deeper the doctrine of anātman assumed a more metaphysical aspect, and the doctrine of Śūnyatā developed. So far as the experience itself was concerned it was the same, but the doctrine of Śūnyatā has a more comprehensive field of application, and as a philosophy it goes deeper into the source of the experience. For the concept of Śūnyatā is now applied not only to the experience of egolessness, but to that of formlessness generally. The *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras* all

<sup>1</sup> *Manual of Zen Buddhism*, D. T. Suzuki, p. 51.



emphatically deny the notion of a person, of a being, of a creator, of a substance, etc. Anātman and Śūnyatā are practically the same teaching. Along with Śūnyatā there comes Prajñā, which now becomes one of the principal topics of the Sūtras.

In Hui-neng's *T'an-ching* the Buddha-nature and self-nature are subjects of constant reference. They mean the same thing, and they are primarily by nature pure, empty, *Śūnyā*, non-dichotomic, and unconscious. This pure, unknown Unconscious moves, and Prajñā is awakened, and with the awakening of Prajñā there rises a world of dualities. But all these risings are not chronological, are not events in time, and all these concepts—Self-nature, Prajñā, and a world of dualities and multiplicities—are just so many points of reference in order to make our intellectual comprehension easier and clearer. Self-nature, therefore, has no corresponding reality in space and time. The latter rise from Self-nature.

Another point I have to make clearer in this connection is that Prajñā is the name given to Self-nature according to Hui-neng, or the Unconscious, as we call it, when it becomes conscious of itself, or rather to the act itself of becoming conscious. Prajñā therefore points in two directions to the Unconscious and to a world of consciousness which is now unfolded. The one is called the Prajñā of non-discrimination and the other the Prajñā of discrimination. When we are so deeply involved in the outgoing direction of consciousness and discrimination as to forget the other direction of Prajñā pointing to the Unconscious, we have what is technically known as *Prapañca*, imagination. Or we may state this conversely: when imagination asserts itself, Prajñā is hidden, and discrimination (*vikalpa*) has its own sway, and the pure, undefiled surface of the Unconscious or Self-nature is now dimmed. The advocates of *munen* or *mushin* want us to preserve Prajñā from going astray in the direction of discrimination, and to have our eyes looking

steadily in the other direction. To attain *mushin* means to recover, objectively speaking, the Prajñā of non-discrimination. When this idea is developed in more detail we shall comprehend the significance of *mushin* in Zen thought.



TO UNDERSTAND the scheme of thought conceived by Hui-neng and his school, the following interpretation may be of use to readers who are not used to the Oriental way of viewing the world.

What comes first in importance in the philosophy of Hui-neng is the idea of self-nature. But self-nature, I must warn the reader, is not to be conceived as something of substance. It is not the last residue left behind after all things relative and conditional have been extracted from the notion of an individual being. It is not the self, or the soul, or the spirit, as ordinarily regarded. It is not something belonging to any categories of the understanding. It does not belong to this world of relativities. Nor is it the highest reality which is generally ascribed to God or to Ātman or to Brahma. It cannot be described or defined in any possible way, but without it the world even as we see it and use it in our everyday life collapses. To say it is to deny it. It is a strange thing, but as I go on my meaning will become clearer.

In the traditional terminology of Buddhism, self-nature is Buddha-nature, that which makes up Buddhahood; it is absolute Emptiness, *Śūnyatā*, it is absolute Suchness, *Tathatā*. May it be called Pure Being, the term used in Western philosophy? While it has nothing to do yet with a dualistic world of subject and object, I will for convenience' sake call it Mind, with the capital initial letter, and also the Unconscious. As Buddhist phraseology is saturated with psychological terms, and as religion is principally concerned with the philosophy of life, these terms, Mind and the Unconscious, are here used as synonymous with Self-nature, but the utmost care is to be taken not to confuse them with those of empirical psychology; for we have not

yet come to this; we are speaking of a transcendental world where no such shadows are yet traceable.

In this Self-nature there is a movement, an awakening, and the Unconscious becomes conscious of itself. This is not the region where the question 'Why?' or 'How' can be asked. The awakening or movement or whatever it may be called is to be taken as a fact which goes beyond refutation. The bell rings, and I hear its vibrations as transmitted through the air. This is a plain fact of perception. In the same way, the rise of consciousness in the Unconscious is a matter of experience; no mystery is connected with it, but, logically stated, there is an apparent contradiction, which once started goes on contradicting itself eternally. Whatever this is, we have now a self-conscious Unconscious or a self-reflecting Mind. Thus transformed, Self-nature is known as Prajñā.

Prajñā, which is the awakening of consciousness in the Unconscious, functions in a twofold direction. The one is towards the Unconscious and the other towards the conscious. The Prajñā which is orientated to the Unconscious is Prajñā properly so called, while the Prajñā of consciousness is now called mind with the small initial letter. From this mind a dualistic world takes its rise: subject and object, the inner self and the external world, and so on. In the Mind, therefore, two aspects are also distinguishable: Prajñā-mind of non-discrimination and dualistic mind. The mind of the first aspect belongs to this world, but so long as it is linked with Prajñā it is in direct communication with the Unconscious, it is the Mind; whereas the mind of the second aspect is wholly of this world, and delighted with it, and mixes itself with all its multiplicities.

The mind of the second aspect is called by Hui-neng 'thought', *nen nien*. Here, mind is thought, and thought mind; *nien (nen)* is *hsin (shin)* and *hsin nien*. From the relative point of view, the mind of the first aspect may be designated 'no-mind' in contradistinction to the mind of



thought, helped by the diagrammatic analysis, read the following definitions of *munen* (*wu-nien*), 'no-thought' or 'no-mind' gathered from the *T'an-ching*, and I hope Hui-neng will become more intelligible, and with him all the rest of the Zen masters cited above in various connections:

Hui-neng defines *wu-nien*, 'To have thoughts as not having them' (or would it better to translate: 'To have thoughts and yet not to have them?'). This evidently means to be conscious of the Unconscious or 'to find the Unconscious in consciousness', both of *C* grade above the empirical plane. A few lines below, Hui-neng has this for *wu-nien*: 'Facing all environing objects the mind remains unstained'; that is, no thoughts are raised in the mind. By 'environing objects' a world of consciousnesses is meant, and not to be stained in it pointed to the Unconscious, a state where no 'thoughts', no consciousness, interfere with the functioning of the mind. Here we recognize again the Unconscious of *C* grade.

The following statements by Hui-neng are quite clear without comments:

'Turning thoughts on Self[-nature], they are kept away from the environing objects; thoughts are not raised on the environing objects.'

'To raise thoughts towards the environing objects, and on these thoughts to cherish false views, this is the source of worries and imaginations.'

'What is *wu-nien*, no-thought-ness? Seeing all things and yet to keep your mind free from stain and attachment, this is no-thought-ness.'

'He who understands the idea of no-thought-ness has a perfect thoroughfare in the world of multiplicities. He who understands the idea of no-thought-ness sees the realm of all the Buddhas; he who understands the idea of no-thought-ness attains to the stage of Buddhahood.'

What Hui-neng wishes to express by the idea of *munen* (*wu-nien*, no-thought-ness) may be gathered from these

functioning knows no pause. This is the Samādhi of Prajñā, a masterly emancipation, and known as the deed of no-thought-ness.'

The Samādhi of Prajñā so called is the Unconscious itself. When Prajñā is entirely directed towards Self-nature and its other direction is ignored, it extricates itself, if we can say so, from its own contradictory nature and is itself. This is a dialectical contradiction inherent in our experiences, and there is no escape from it; in fact all our experiences, which means our life itself, are possible because of this supreme contradiction. To escape it is the sign of a confused mind. Therefore, says Hui-neng:

'As to not making your mind move towards anything, this is extirpating thoughts, which means being bound up in the Dharma, and is known as a perverting view.'

This citation may not be quite clear, as it has a historical significance. At the time of Hui-neng, indeed prior to him and even after him, there were some who endeavoured to escape the fundamental contradiction inherent in life itself by destroying all thought-activities, so that there was a state of absolute void, of utter nothingness, of negation imagined to be most thoroughgoing. Such are killing life itself, deceiving themselves thereby to gain it in its true form. They bind themselves by false ideas, taking the Dharma for annihilation. In point of fact, however, annihilation in any form is impossible; what one imagines to be such is simply another way of affirmation. However violently or boisterously one may protest, no shrimps can get out of the closed-up basket.

Hui-neng's idea of *wu-nien*, which constitutes the central thought of Zen teaching, is continued naturally in the *Sayings of Shên-hui*, and then more definitely explained, as already set out. Let us now quote Te-shan and Huang-po. One of Te-chan's sermons reads thus:

'When you have nothing disquieting within yourself, do not try to seek anything outside. Even when you gain



what you seek, this is not real gain. See to it that you have nothing disquieting in your mind, and be "unconscious" about your affairs.<sup>1</sup> Then there will be Emptiness which functions mysteriously, vacuity which works wonders. When you start to talk about the beginning and the end of this [mystery], you deceive yourself. Cherish an iota of thought, and this will cause karma to work, which puts you on evil paths. Allow a flash of imagination to cross your mind, and you will put yourself in bondage for ten-thousand *kalpas*. Such words as holiness and ignorance are no more than idle names; excellent forms and inferior shapes are both mere illusions. If you hanker after them, how can you escape complications? But trying to shun them will also bring great calamities upon you. In either case all ends in utter futility.'

Huang-po Hsi-yun, in the beginning of his book, to which reference has already been made, alludes to the Mind which is the Buddha, and outside which there is no way to realize Enlightenment. The Mind means 'no-mind-ness', to attain which is the ultimate end of the Buddhist life. Read the following in the light of Diagram 1, and also in connection with Hui-neng's idea of Buddhahood, and the central teaching of Zen will become more comprehensible.

'The Master (Huang-po Hsi-yun) said to P'ei-hsin: Both the Buddhas and all sentient beings are of one Mind only, and there are no other dharma (objects). This Mind has no beginning, was never born, and will never pass away; it is neither blue nor yellow; it has no shape, no form; it does not belong to [the category of] being and non-being; it is not to be reckoned as new or old; it is neither short nor long, neither large nor small; it transcends all measurements, nameability, marks of identification, and forms of antithesis. It is absolute thisness; the wavering of a thought at once misses it. It is like vacuity of space, it has no boundaries, it is altogether beyond calculation.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 132 *et seq.* for fuller explanation.

‘There is just this One Mind, which constitutes Buddhahood, and in it are the Buddhas and all sentient beings, showing no distinction, only that the latter are attached to form and seek [the Mind] outside themselves. Thus the more they seek, the farther it is lost. Let the Buddha seek himself outside himself, let the Mind seek itself outside itself, and to the end of time there will be no finding. Stop your thoughts, forget your hankerings, and the Buddha reveals himself right before your eyes.

‘This Mind is no other than the Buddha, and the Buddha is no other than sentient beings. When it is sentient beings, this Mind shows no decrease; when it is the Buddha, it shows no increase. It inherently holds within itself all the six virtues of perfection, all the ten-thousand deeds of goodness, and all the merits numbering as many as the Gangā sands; there is in it nothing added from outside. When conditions present themselves before it, it gives itself freely; but when conditions cease, it becomes quiet. Those who have no firm faith in this Mind, which is the Buddha, and seek merit by attaching themselves to form and going through various disciplinary measures, cherish false ideas which are not in accord with the Tao.

‘This Mind is the Buddha, and there are no Buddhas besides this, nor are there any other minds [which are the Buddha]. The purity of the Mind is like the sky with not a speck of form in it. When a mind is raised, when a thought is stirred, you turn away from the Dharma itself, which is known as attaching to form. Since beginningless time there have never been Buddhas attached to form. If you wish to attain Buddhahood by practising the six virtues of perfection and all the ten-thousand deeds of goodness, this is prescribing a course, and since beginningless time there have never been Buddhas graduating from a prescribed course. Only have an insight into One Mind, and you find that there is not a thing which you can claim to be your own. This constitutes true Buddhahood.



'The Buddha and sentient beings, they are of One Mind and there are no distinctions. It is like space with no mixtures, with nothing destructible in it; and it is like the great sun illumining the four worlds. When the sun rises, brightness fills the world, but space itself is not bright; when the sun sets, darkness fills the world, but space itself is not dark. Brightness and darkness are conditions, replacing each other; as for the characteristic vast vacuity of space, it remains ever unchanged. The Mind which constitutes the Buddha and all sentient beings is like that; if you regard the Buddha as a form which is pure, bright, and emancipated, and sentient beings as a form which is soiled, murky, benighted, and subject to birth and death, you cannot, as long as you hold this view, attain enlightenment even after the lapse of *kalpas* equal to the Gangā sands, because you are attached to form. You should know that there is One Mind only, and besides this there is not an atom of anything you can claim to be your own.

'The Mind is no other than the Buddha himself. Truth-seekers of this day fail to understand what this Mind is, and, raising a mind on the Mind, seek the Buddha in a world outside it, and attaching themselves to form practise discipline. This is a bad way, and not at all the one leading to enlightenment.

'[It is said that] it is better to make offerings to one monk who has realized no-mind-ness (*wu-hsin*) than to make offerings to all the Buddhas of the ten quarters. Why? No-mind-ness means having no mind (or thoughts) whatever. The body of Suchness inwardly is like wood or stone; it is immovable, unshakable; outwardly, it is like space where one knows no obstructions, no stoppage. It transcends both subject and object, it recognizes no points of orientation, it has no form, it knows neither gain nor loss. Those who run [after things outside] do not venture to enter into this Dharma, for they imagine that they will fall into a state of nothingness where they are completely

at a loss what to do. Therefore they just give it a glance and beat a retreat. Thus they are generally seekers of wide learning. Indeed, those seekers of wide learning are like hairs [i.e. too many], whereas those who understand the truth are like horns [i.e. too few].'

Chinese expressions, especially those used in connection with Zen thought, are full of significance which, when translated into such languages as English, loses altogether its original suggestiveness. The very vagueness so characteristic of the Chinese style of writing is in fact its strength: mere points of reference are given, and as to how to connect them, to yield a meaning, the knowledge and feeling of the reader are the real determinant.

Zen, being no believer in verbosity, uses, when pressed for expression, the fewest possible words, not only in its regular, formal '*mondo*' (dialogue), but in all ordinary discourse in which Zen thought is explained. In Huang-po's sermon, quoted above, and also in Te-shan's, we come across some highly significant phrases, one of which by Te-shan is *tan wu shih yu hsin, wu hsin yu shih*, and another by Huang-po, *chih hsia wu hsin*. Here is the gist of Zen teaching. Te-shan's is literally 'only [have] nothing in the mind, have no-mind in things': while Huang-po's is 'Immediately-down [have] no-mind.'

Both in Te-shan and Huang-Po, Zen is taught to be something in direct contact with our daily life; there are no speculations soaring heavenward, no abstractions making one's head reel, and no sentimental sweetness which turns religion into a love-drama. Facts of daily experience are taken as they come to us, and from them a state of no-mind-ness is extracted. Says Huang-po in the above citations: 'The original Mind is to be recognized along with the working of the senses and thoughts; only it does not belong to them, nor is it independent of them.' The Unconscious, the recognition of which makes up *mushin*, lines every experience which we have through the senses and



thoughts. When we have an experience, for example, of seeing a tree, all that takes place at the time is the perceiving of something. We do not know whether this perception belongs to us, nor do we recognize the object which is perceived to be outside ourselves. The cognition of an external object already presupposes the distinction of outside and inside, subject and object, the perceiving and the perceived. When this separation takes place, and is recognized as such, and clung to, the primary nature of the experience is forgotten, and from this an endless series of entanglements, intellectual and emotional, takes its rise.

The state of no-mind-ness refers to the time prior to the separation of mind and world, when there is yet no mind standing against an external world and receiving its impressions through the various sense-channels. Not only a mind, but a world, has not yet come into existence. This we can say is a state of perfect emptiness, but as long as we stay here there is no development, no experience; it is mere doing-nothing, it is death itself, so to speak. But we are not so constituted. There rises a thought in the midst of Emptiness; this is the awakening of Prajñā, the separation of unconsciousness and consciousness, or, logically stated, the rise of the fundamental dialectical antithesis. *Mushin* stands on the unconscious side of the awakened Prajñā, while its conscious side unfolds itself into the perceiving subject and the external world. This is what Huang-po means when he says that the original Mind is neither dependent upon nor independent of what is seen (*dṛiṣṭa*), heard (*śrūta*), thought (*mata*) or known (*jñāta*). The Unconscious and the world of consciousness are in direction opposition, yet they lie back to back and condition each other. The one negates the other, but this negation is really affirmation.

Whatever this may be, Zen is always close to our daily experience, which is the meaning of Nansen's (Nanch'uan's) and Baso's (Ma-tsu's) utterance: 'Your every-

'How?'—all these are questions irrelevant to the fundamental understanding of life. But our minds are saturated with them, and this fact is a curse on us all. Hsiang-nien fully realized it, and does not attempt any intellectual solution. His most practical matter-of-fact answer, 'Softly, softly!', was enough to settle the gravest question at one blow.

2. A monk asked Hsiang-nien: 'What is the Body of space?' Space may here be translated as the sky or void; it was conceived by ancient people to be a kind of objective reality, and the monk asks now what supports this void, what is its Body around which this vast emptiness hangs. The real meaning of the question, however, does not concern the vacuity of space, but the monk's own state of mind, at which he arrived probably after a long meditation practised in the conventional manner; that is, by wiping thoughts and feelings off his consciousness. He naturally imagined, like so many Buddhists as well as lay-people, that there was a being, though altogether indefinable, still somehow graspable as supporter of the unsupported. The master's answer to this was: 'Your old teacher is underneath your feet.' 'Why, Reverend Sir, are you underneath the feet of your own pupil?' The master decided: 'O this blind fellow!' The monk's question sounds in a way abstruse enough, and if Hsiang-nien were a philosopher he would have discoursed at great length. Being, however, a practical Zen master who deals with things of our daily experience, he simply refers to the spatial relation between himself and his pupil, and when this is not directly understood and a further question is asked, he is disgusted, and despatches the questioner with a slighting remark.

3. Another time Hsiang-nien was approached with this request: 'I, a humble pupil of yours, have been troubled for long with an unsolved problem. Will you be kind enough to give it your consideration?' The master brus-



quely answered: 'I have no time for idle deliberation.' The monk was naturally not satisfied with this answer, for he did not know what to make of it. 'Why is it so with you, Reverend Sir?' 'When I want to walk, I walk; when I want to sit, I sit.' This was simple enough; he was perfect master of himself. He did not need any deliberation. Between his deed and his desire there was no moral or intellectual intermediary, no 'mind' interfered, and consequently he had no problems which harassed his peace of mind. His answer could not be anything but practical and truly to the point.

4. A monk asked Hsiang-nien: 'What is your eye that does not deceive others?' This is a liberal translation; the question really demands the expression of the master's genuine, undeceiving attitude of mind which controls all his experiences. Our eye is generally found covered with all kinds of dust, and the refraction of light thereby caused fails to give us the correct view of things. The master responded right away, saying: 'Look, look, winter is approaching.'

Probably this *mondo* took place in a mountain monastery surrounded with trees, now bare and trembling in the wind, and both were looking at the snow-bearing clouds. The approach of the winter was quite certain; there was no deception about it. But the monk wondered if there were not something more than that and said: 'What is the ultimate meaning of it?' The master was perfectly natural and his answer was: 'And then we have the gentle spring breeze.' In this there is no allusion to deep metaphysical concepts, but a plain fact of observation is told in the most ordinary language. The monk's question may elicit in the hands of the philosopher or theologian quite a different form of treatment, but the Zen master's eye is always on facts of experience accessible to everybody, and verifiable by him whenever he wants. Whatever mysticism enveloped the master was not on his side, but on the side of him who looks for it because of his own blindness.

These passages are enough to show the Zen masters' attitude towards the so-called metaphysical or theological questions which torment so many people's religiously susceptible hearts, and also the method they use in handling the questions for the edification of their pupils. They never resort to discussions of a highly abstract nature, but respect their daily experiences, which are ordinarily grouped under the 'seen, heard, thought, and known'. Their idea is that in our 'everyday thought' (*ping-chang hsin*) the Unconscious is to be comprehended, if at all; for there is no intermediary between it and what we term 'the seen, heard, thought, and known'. Every act of the latter is lined with the Unconscious. But to impress my readers to the point of tedium, I will give a few more examples.

5. A monk asked Ta-tung of T'ou-tzu Shan: 'When the Prince Nāta returns all the bones of his body to his father, and all the flesh to his mother, what remains of his Original Body?'

Ta-tung threw down the staff which was in his hand.

The question is really a very serious one, when conceptually weighed, as it concerns the doctrine of *anātman* so called. When the five *skandhas* are broken up, where does the person go which was supposed to be behind the combination? To say that the five *skandhas* are by nature empty and their combination an illusion is not enough for those who have not actually experienced this fact. They want to see the problem solved according to the logic which they have learned since the awakening of consciousness. They forget that it is their own logic which entangles them in this intellectual *cul-de-sac*, from which they are at a loss how to get out. The teaching of *anātman* is the expression of an experience, and not at all a logical conclusion. However much they try to reach it by their logical subtleties they fail, or their reasoning lacks the force of a final conviction.

Since the Buddha, many are the masters of the Abhi-



dharma who have exhausted their power of ratiocination to establish logically the theory of *anātman*, but how many Buddhists or outsiders are there who are really intellectually convinced of the theory? If they have a conviction about this teaching it comes from their experience and not from theorizing. With the Buddha, an actual personal conviction came first; then came a logical construction to back up the conviction. It did not matter very much indeed whether or not this construction was satisfactorily completed, for the conviction, that is the experience itself, was a *fait accompli*.

The position assumed by the Zen masters is this. They leave the logical side of the business to the philosopher, and are content with conclusions drawn from their own inner experiences. They will protest, if the logician attempts to deny the validity of their experience, on the ground that it is up to the logician to prove the fact by the instruments which he is allowed to use. If he fails to perform the work satisfactorily—that is, logically to confirm the experience—the failure is on the side of the logician, who has now to devise a more effective use of his tools. The great fault with us all is that we force logic on facts whereas it is facts themselves that create logic.

6. A monk asked Fu-ch'i: 'When the conditions (such as the four elements, five *skandhas*, etc.) are dispersed, they all return to Emptiness, but where does Emptiness itself return?' This is a question of the same nature as the one cited concerning the original body of Prince Nata. We always seek something beyond or behind our experience, and forget that this seeking is an endless regression either way, inward or outward, upward or downward. The Zen master is well aware of this, and avoids the complications. Fu-ch'i called out, 'O Brother!' and the monk answered: 'Yes, Master.' The master now asked: 'Where is Emptiness?' The poor monk was still after conceptual images, and completely failed to realize the whereabouts of Emptiness. 'Be pleased to tell me about it.' This was his second re-

quest. The master had no more to say, but quizzically added: 'It is like a Persian tasting red pepper.'

In his day—that is, in the T'ang period—the Chinese capital must have harboured people from the various strange countries of the West, and we find, as in the present case, references to Persians (*po-ssu*) in Zen literature. Even Bodhi-Dharma, the founder of Zen Buddhism in China, was regarded by some to be a Persian, perhaps by this no more than a man from a foreign country. Evidently some T'ang historians did not distinguish Persians from Indians. By a Persian tasting red pepper, the master means his inability to express the experience in the proper Chinese words, being a stranger to the country.

7. A monk came to T'ou-tzu and asked: 'I have come from a distant place with the special intention of seeing you. Will you kindly give me one word of instruction?' To this, the master replied: 'Growing old, my back aches today.' Is this one word of instruction in Zen? To a pilgrim who has come a long way from the remotest part of the country to be specially instructed by the old master, 'My back aches' seems to be giving the cold shoulder—altogether too cold. But it all depends how you look at the matter. Inasmuch as Zen deals with our everyday experience, this old master's expression of pain in his back must be regarded as directly pointing to the primary Unconscious itself. If the monk were one who had long pondered on the matter, he would at once see where T'ou-tzu is trying to make him look.

But here is a point on which to be on guard concerning the conception of the Unconscious. Although I have repeatedly given warnings on the subject, I here quote T'ou-tzu again. A monk asked him: 'How about not a thought yet arising?' This refers to a state of consciousness in which all thoughts have been wiped out and there prevails an emptiness; and here the monk wants to know if this points to the Zen experience; probably he thinks he has



come to the realization itself. But the master's reply was: 'This is really nonsensical!' There was another monk who came to another master and asked the same question, and the master's answer was: 'Of what use can it be?' Evidently the master had no use for the state of unconsciousness conceived by most Buddhists.

T'ou-tzu on another occasion was asked: 'What about the time when the golden cock has not yet crowed?' This purports to cherish the same view as expressed by the two preceding monks. T'ou-tzu said: 'There is no sound.' 'What after the crowing?' 'Everybody knows the time.' Both are matter-of-fact answers, and we may wonder where this mysterious, elusive, incomprehensible Zen may be.

To imagine that Zen is mysterious is the first grave mistake which many make about it. Just because of this mistake the Unconscious fails to act in its unconscious way, and the real issue is lost in conceptual entanglements. The mind is divided between two opposing concepts, and the result is unnecessary worry. The following illustrates the way to avoid the contradiction, or rather to live it, for life is in reality a series of contradictions. A monk asked T'ou-tzu: 'Old Year is gone and New Year has arrived: is there one thing that has no relation whatever to either of the two, or not?'

As has already been seen, Zen is always practical, and lives with events of daily occurrence. The past is gone and the present is here, but this present will also soon be gone, indeed it is gone; time is a succession of these two contradicting ideas, and everything which takes place in this life of ours bestrides the past and present. It cannot be said to belong to either of the two, for it cannot be cut in pieces. How, then, does an event of the past go over to the present so that we have a complete conception of the event as complete? When thought is divided like this, we may come to no conclusion. It is thus for Zen to settle the matter in the

we form the notion of selfhood, and when this notion forgets the fact that its very existence is backed by no-mind-ness, personal egoism is asserted. The Buddhist doctrine of Anatta is the same as the doctrine of no-mind-ness. That there is no ego-substance or ego-soul means that the notion of an ego is only possible by contradicting itself; that is, the apperceiving mind is no-mind-ness itself.

The unconscious mind has its pathological states on the plane of sense (*driṣṭa-śruta*) and thought (*mata-jñāta*), corresponding to the 'Unconscious' of Analytical Psychology or Psycho-analysis. The Unconscious is the rendezvous of gods and demons. Unless one is properly guided by Prajñā and understands the meaning and function of the Unconscious, one is liable to fall into the black hands of the monster. The psycho-analytical Unconscious cannot go deep enough to include the question of no-mind-ness.

Diagram 3 attempts to explain the same fact of experience as the second, but from the spatial point of view. Below the bisecting line we have two divisions of the Unconscious, psychological and super-psychological. In the latter, Prajñā the Unconscious and no-mind-ness are included to show that they have for all purposes the same content. No-mind-ness gains its name in opposition to the empirical mind, but from the Prajñā side of experience it is no other than Prajñā itself.

Prajñā on the plane of the conscious may be said to correspond to the apperceiving mind. But the mind in its apperceiving character points to the plane of the *mata-jñāta*, whereas Prajñā is essentially of the Unconscious. If we follow some philosophers and postulate 'transcendental apperception', Prajñā may be said to share something of it. Ordinarily the apperceiving mind is occupied too much with the outgoing attention, and forgets that at its back there is an unfathomable abyss of Prajñā the Unconscious. When its attention is directed outwardly, it clings to the



THE ZEN DOCTRINE OF NO-MIND

idea of an ego-substance. It is when it turns its attention within that it realizes the Unconscious.

This Unconscious is Prajñā on its unconscious plane, which, however, is too frequently wrongly recognized as the void, a state of utter blankness. Here is still a stain of

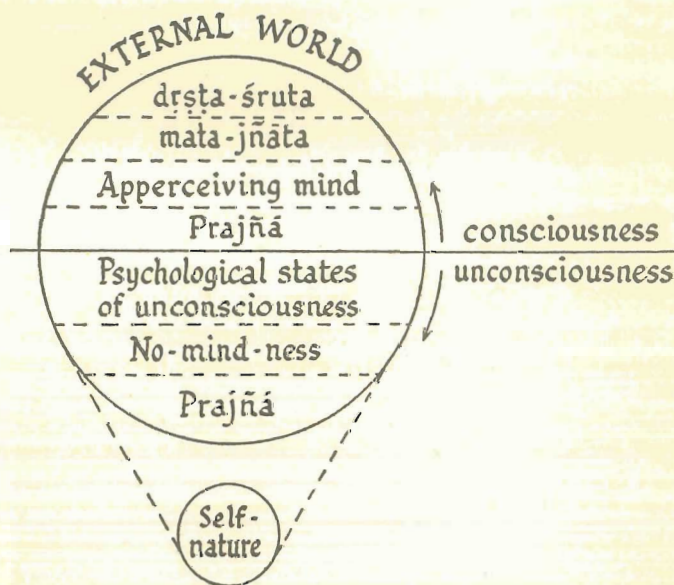


DIAGRAM 3.

dualism; the void so called still stands in opposition to being, hence the teaching of Anatta is disquieting to many people. They try to understand it on the plane of logic; that is, in antithesis to the notion of the ego. When, however, the teaching of Anatta is experienced, as when the Buddha uttered the following *gāthā*, it becomes free from logical complications, and there is no gaping abyss before

them, but a peaceful joy and a lasting sense of happiness.  
The *gāthā* runs :

Many a House of life  
Hath held me—seeking ever him who wrought  
These prisons of the senses, sorrow-fraught ;  
Sore was my ceaseless strife !

But now,  
Thou Builder of this Tabernacle—Thou !  
I know Thee ! Never shalt Thou build again  
These walls of pain,  
Nor raise the roof-tree of deceits, nor lay  
Fresh rafters on the clay ;  
Broken Thy house is, and the ridge-pole split !  
Delusion fashioned it !  
Safe pass I thence—Deliverance to obtain.

*The Light of Asia.*

We are too apt to argue on the plane of the *Mata-jñāta*, thinking of the apperceiving mind all the time. But experience purged of its intellectual fabrications never points to the void but to rest and contentedness.

Those who fail to grasp the teaching of Anatta often ask : Who is this contented one when there is no soul ? When this is logically answered to their satisfaction they think that the teaching is absurd. But Anatta is not the result of logical reasoning ; it is a fact of experience. If logic is needed here, take up the fact first and try to build a logical structure about it, not conversely. If one form of logic somehow fails, try another until satisfied. Let the logicians remember this fact, that religion is experience and in this sense irrational.

A monk asked a Zen master : ‘What would you say when both the mind and its objects are forgotten?’ ‘The mind and its objects’ means this world of relativity, where the subject stands against the object, the knower against the known,



the one against the many, the soul against God, I against thee, and so on. To forget this means to transcend a world of dualities, and to be merged into the Absolute. Evidently the monk is following the course of logic as most of us do, as most Buddhists did in the day of the Buddha when, for instance, Malunḳyaputta asked the Buddha about various metaphysical questions. The Buddha was always patient with his questioners, and, like the true Indian seer of the truth, quietly told them what constitutes the religious life apart from logically arguing about it.

But the Chinese Zen master is not so patient and grandmotherly, and when he does not beat his monks he gives out an utterly nonsensical reply. In the present case, Hung-t'ung of Yu-wang Shan, to whom the above question was put, gave this as an answer: 'A three-legged toad carries a huge elephant on its back.' What could such a dictum really mean? If it is not the climax of absurdity, it is at least highly disrespectful towards the earnest seeker of truth. Apart from its being disrespectful, however, the answer is meant to be absurd, irrational, and to make us go beyond the ken of logical understanding, so that we can discover a truth which directly expresses our experience itself uncoloured by intellection. Here lies the genuine kind-heartedness of the Zen master.

Before, however, this way of treating metaphysical problems found its way among the Zen masters of China, they were more 'rational', so to speak, and followed common sense. In one of the Tun-huang MSS. discovered recently, which contain an early history of Zen, we have the following story.

This was told by the Master Wu-chu of the T'ang dynasty for the benefit of his disciple called Wu-yu: 'I have a story. There was once a man standing on a high elevation. A company of several men who happened to be walking on the road noticed from the distance the man standing on a high place, and talked among themselves

about this man. One of them said: 'He must have lost his favourite animal.' Another man said: 'No, it must be his friend whom he is looking for.' A third one said: 'He is just enjoying the cool air up there.' The three could not agree and the discussion went on until they reached the high place where the man was. One of the three asked: 'O friend, standing up there, have you not lost your pet animal?' 'No, sir, I have not lost any.' The second man asked: 'Have you not lost your friend?' 'No, sir, I have not lost my friend, either.' The third man asked: 'Are you not enjoying the fresh breeze up there?' 'No, sir, I am not.' 'What, then, are you standing up there for, if you say "no" to all our questions?' The man on high said: 'I just stand.'

In our daily life we are always arguing about things from the premise of an experience so deeply embedded in consciousness that we cannot get rid of it, and we are thereby enslaved. When we are awakened to this fact of slavery, we enter the religious life, and it is in this religious life that experience is all in all and there is no need for logic. To some minds, Buddhism appears ratiocinative, because of its reference to the Four Noble Truths, to the Twelfefold Chain of Orientation, to the Eightfold Path of Righteousness, etc. But we must remember that all these systematic arrangements are the after-product of the experience itself which the Buddha had under the Bodhi-tree.

In this respect Christianity and Buddhism are of the same order. Christianity may appeal more to the affective side of our life, while Buddhism appeals to its intellectual side, and for this reason Buddhism is regarded by some to be more scientific. But in truth Buddhism is based on personal experience as much as Christianity. This is especially the case with Zen Buddhism, which stands firmly on experience as the basic principle of its teaching. Therefore, all the doings and sayings in Zen point to this basis. There is no evading it, no going round it, no reasoning away of



whatever absurdities may come up in giving expression to the fundamental experience. While a monk was attending on T'sao-shan, the master said:

'O Brother, it is terribly hot.'

'Yes, Master.'

'When it is so terribly hot, where should one go to escape the heat?'

'By throwing oneself into a boiling cauldron, into a scorching fire.'

'But when in the cauldron or in the fire, where should one go to escape the heat?'

'No pains reach here.'

Thereupon the master kept silent.

All this is the expression of life itself, and there is no intellectual arguing about it. If there were, the master and the disciple might have talked about otherworldliness, or about a land of bliss, or about some available summer resorts, or about egolessness. That they talked nothing of such, but stood firmly on the solid ground of our daily experience, most eloquently demonstrates the character of Zen. It is true that we cannot do without logic and philosophy because it is also the expression of life; to ignore it is nothing short of madness; but let us remember that there is another plane of life where only he is permitted to enter who has actually lived it.

A monk asked Hsing-chuan of Lo-shan: 'Why is not the stone gate of Lo-shan open to anybody?' The master said: 'O you stupid fellow!' 'If you unexpectedly come across a fellow of fine intelligence, would he be permitted to enter, or not?' The master answered: 'Have a cup of tea.' The entering into what some imagine to be the mystery of Zen is occasionally regarded as the most difficult thing in the world. But, according to this master, it is no more difficult than taking a cup of tea. At any rate, all arguing is on the plane of the *mata-jñāta*, as shown in Diagram 3. When one enters the plane of no-mindness it subsides, and Prajñā the

Unconscious controls the whole situation. To talk like this may already be deviating from the right Zen path. The point is to grasp the central key to the entire business.

A monk asked Fa-i of T'sao-an: 'It is said that when the mind is applied [to it] it deviates, when a thought is stirred it is contradicted; this being so, how does one proceed?' The quotation is from an ancient master, and means that the central mystery of Zen, if this expression is acceptable, is not to be comprehended by means of thought or intellection, and therefore that when the mind is applied and moves in that direction, the mystery will entirely elude one's efforts. If this is the case, the monk wants to know how he could ever make any advance in the study of Zen, for studying is a mental application, and the question is quite natural. The master answered: 'There is one whose mind is constantly applied that way, and yet there is no deviation in him.' 'How do things stand at this moment?' was the next question. 'There is a deviation already!' The awakening of Prajñā was the first grand deviation, and ever since we live in the midst of deviations. There is no way to escape them except living them as they follow one another. To say 'to escape' is already a deviation, a contradiction, a negation. 'Have a cup of tea!'; so runs Chao-chou's advice.

After surveying Hui-neng's Self-nature from the spatial as well as from the temporal point of view, what do we know of it? We have spent many pages in elucidating its Body, its Use and its Form, and have talked a great deal about it, but no more than that. 'About it' is not the same as 'it', and in matters religious understanding is experiencing, outside of which there is no way of getting at 'it'. No amount of abstractions avail any more than one word uttered on a most propitious occasion. A monk asked Chih-fu, of E-hu: 'What is the one word?' The master's counter-question was: 'Do you understand?' The monk said: 'If so, is that not it?'