

ZEN ☸

SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN ZEN  
FROM A THOMISTIC  
THEOLOGICAL POINT OF VIEW

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SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN ZEN  
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THEOLOGICAL POINT OF VIEW

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\* Section Second of Chapter One has been more extensively treated in a dissertation submitted by the author to the Faculty of Theology of the University of Montreal.

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## PART ONE :

### THE THOUGHT OF ZEN : SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS

#### CHAPTER I

#### SOME IMPORTANT NOTIONS CONCERNING THE ABSOLUTE IN MAHAYANA BUDDHISM AND IN TAOISM

In this chapter some important notions concerning the absolute in Mahāyāna Buddhism and in Taoism are studied.

##### I. Mahāyāna Buddhism

##### 1. Mahayanist Ontological (Epistemologico-metaphysical) Thought

##### a) Emptiness or Void (*Sūnyatā*)

*Sūnyatā*, Emptiness is a most fundamental notion of Mahayanist philosophy and it is a central idea of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*.

But unfortunately it has been often misunderstood as relativity or as nothingness.

Emptiness is neither an absolute nihilism which denies all existence nor nothingness.<sup>1</sup> On the contrary Emptiness is the very foundation of the existence of all things.

"*Sūnyatā* is a concept even prior to the rise of this world of pluralities, at the same time conditioning the latter so that all individual existence have their being in it".<sup>2</sup>

It is the negation of the absoluteness of all things. It signifies that all things in the world are relative and have not an ultimate existence.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. SUZUKI, D.T., *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, Vol. III, Rider & Co., London, 1958, p. 218, f. 4, p. 253; *Studies in the Lankāvatāra Sūtra*, George Routledge & Son Ltd., London, 1930, p. 115; *The Essence of Buddhism*, The Buddhist Society, London, 1946, p. 20; TAKAKUSU, J., *The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 47; PRATT, J.B. *The Pilgrimage of Buddhism and a Buddhist Pilgrimage*, p. 265; CONZE, E., *Buddhism Its Essence and Development*, Philosophical Library, N.Y., pp. 130-132.

<sup>2</sup> SUZUKI, D.T., *Buddhist Philosophy and Its effects on the life and thought of the Japanese people*, Kokusai Bunka Shinkōkai, Tōkyō, 1936, p. 5; Cf. PRATT, J.B., *Op. Cit.*, p. 250.



"The idea is that the Buddhist doctrine of emptiness is not absolute annihilation but the denial of the relative world as final reality where birth and death actually take place."<sup>3</sup>

Emptiness transcends all relativity and therefore it is the absolute.<sup>4</sup>

Emptiness is the absolute and it is a negative expression of the ultimate reality. The way to attain the absolute which is beyond all intellection is nothing but *via negativa*.<sup>5</sup>

Emptiness sometimes is expressed as *Chen-Kung-Miao-Yu* in Chinese, as *Shin-Kū-Myō-Yū* in Japanese, True Emptiness-Ineffable Existence.<sup>6</sup>

According to D.T. Suzuki, *Shin-Kū*, True Emptiness means the absolute Emptiness, *Zettai-Mu*, the absolute Non-being, that is, Emptiness is not relative but absolute, *Myō* means marvelous, ineffable, supernatural, beyond intellect. *Yū* means existence. *Myō-Yū*, therefore does not mean a relative existence but it means the mode of marvelous existence which transcends a discriminative knowledge. *Shin-Kū-Myō-Yū* indicates the mode of supernatural existence. Here *Shin-Kū-Myō-Yū* suggests very much a certain allusion to the sublime Deity in the supernatural order in Catholic theology. The ultimate reality is the Emptiness which is beyond the intellectual sphere.

Since Emptiness transcends the relative categories, it is expressed as unattainable (*anupalabdha*) unthinkable (*acintya*).<sup>7</sup>

Emptiness may be called the self-existent. "Emptiness is above when it stands alone, rejecting all predicability."<sup>8</sup>

Emptiness, therefore, is not grasped by reason but only by the transcendental wisdom, *Prajñā*. "Naturally, such a doctrine as this goes beyond the logical survey based on our discursive understanding as it belongs to the realm of intuition, which is, to use the *Lanka* terminology, the realisation of supreme wisdom in the inmost consciousness,"<sup>9</sup>

Because Emptiness is identified with *Prajñā*, Emptiness is *Prajñā*, and *Prajñā* is Emptiness. Emptiness in itself undifferentiated is contemplation, Emptiness to differentiation is creation.<sup>10</sup> Here it must be noticed that the notion

<sup>3</sup> SUZUKI, D.T., *Studies in the Lankavatāra Sūtra*, p. 297; Cf. PRATT, J.B., *Op. Cit.*, p. 239, f. 12.

<sup>4</sup> SUZUKI, D.T., *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, Vol. III, p. 218, f. 4.

<sup>5</sup> The eighteen forms of emptiness are enumerated. See SUZUKI, D.T., *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, Vol. III, pp. 248-254.

<sup>6</sup> SUZUKI, D.T., *Senshū Tsuikan*, Vol. I, *Nippon Bukkyō*, Shunjūsha, Tōkyō, 1958, pp. 14-15.

<sup>7</sup> The Emptiness is expressed by many words; "Absolutely solitary, absolutely pure, unattainable, unattached, neither bound nor emancipated, neither born nor extinguished, not abiding anywhere, not depending on anything, not exhausted, pathless, trackless, etc." Cf. SUZUKI, D.T., *Essays*, Vol. III, p. 274.

<sup>8</sup> SUZUKI, D.T., *Essays*, Vol. III, p. 277.

<sup>9</sup> SUZUKI, D.T., *Studies in the Lankavatāra Sūtra*, p. 446; Cf. Also SUZUKI, D.T., *Essays*, Vol. III, p. 254.

<sup>10</sup> SUZUKI, D.T., *Studies in Zen*, p. 123.



of Emptiness is epistemological rather than ontological.<sup>11</sup>

The true world of Emptiness does not exist apart from the phenomenal world, but the phenomenal world is the world of Emptiness, if we accept the intuition of *Prajñā*.

Therefore the *Heart Sūtra* says: "O *Sariputra*, form is here emptiness, emptiness is form; form is no other than emptiness, emptiness is no other than form; what is form, is emptiness, what is emptiness, is form."<sup>12</sup>

The intuition of Emptiness is *Nirvāna*, Enlightenment. As *Sūnyatā* is not nothingness, *Nirvāna* also is not an annihilation of the soul.<sup>13</sup>

*Nirvāna* is to see one's nature in the ultimate truth. "*Nirvāna* is where there is no birth, no extinction, it is seeing into a state of suchness (or thatness) absolutely transcending all categories constructed by the mind, for it is the *Tathāgata's* own inner consciousness."<sup>14</sup>

"To attain *Nirvāna*, therefore, is to see into the truth of things *Yathābhūtam*, that is, as unborn, as not affected by categories of intellectual construction."<sup>15</sup>

When *Sūnyatā* is expressed positively, it is called *Tathatā*, suchness.

#### b) Suchness (*Tathatā*)

*Tathatā*, suchness is the positive expression of the ultimate reality and it is indeed the basis of all existence, "According to the Buddha, all beings are of Suchness (*Tathatā*) and are in Suchness; not only wise and holy persons but every one of us."<sup>16</sup>

*Tathatā*, the ultimate truth in its static sense is absolutely transcendent, and in its dynamic sense is immanent and can assume any form. The former is the truth itself and the latter is its manifestation.<sup>17</sup>

It is eternal, permanent, absolute and the all embracing first principle of all things.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>11</sup> This is a very important thing when we compare it with the very ontological thought of Lao-Tzu.

<sup>12</sup> *Prajñā-Pāramitā-Hridaya Sūtra*. Cf. SUZUKI, D.T., *Essays*, Vol. III, p. 216; PRATT, J.B., *Op. Cit.*, p. 255.

<sup>13</sup> D.T. Suzuki says: "Notice that *Nirvāna* is not inactivity or nothingness as commonly supposed. It is, according to *Asvaghosha*, the annihilation of the ego-conception, freedom from subjectivity, insight into the essence of suchness, or the recognition of the oneness of existence". *Asvaghosha's Discourse on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana*, translated by D.T. Suzuki, the Open Court Publishing Co., Chicago, 1900, p. 87, f. 2.

<sup>14</sup> SUZUKI, D.T., *Studies in the Lankāvatara Sūtra*, p. 125.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>16</sup> SUZUKI, D.T., *Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 10.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. TAKAKUSU, J., *Op. Cit.*, p. 39; This view must not be understood as pantheistic. Cf. ELIOT, S.C., *Japanese Buddhism*, p. 45; Suchness may correspond to the Undifferentiated consciousness and the Differentiated consciousness in Dionysius the Areopagite.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. ASVAGHOSHA, *The Awakening of Faith*, p. 95.

It is also called the *Tathāgata's* womb (*Tathāgata garbha*) or the *Dharma-kāya*.<sup>19</sup>

Suchness transcends all categories of intellect. "Suchness is neither that which is existence, nor that which is not existence.... that it is neither that which is unity, nor that which is plurality."<sup>20</sup>

Suchness is called also *Vastu* or *Arya-Vastu*, the highest reality, self-abiding (*Svastha*) or remaining in its own abode (*Svasthanē Vatishtate*).<sup>21</sup>

Suchness is therefore the self-subsistent itself.<sup>22</sup> "It is a self-sufficient cause not depending on anything".<sup>23</sup>

"They would realise that there is indeed something really subsisting and endowed with self-substance. The eye that sees into the truth is an eye of wisdom."<sup>24</sup>

Suchness is considered as the Deity of Buddhism.<sup>25</sup>

### c) Mind-Only (*Citta-Matra*)

*Citta* is another name for the ultimate reality and it is a central idea in the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra*, and in *the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 96; TAKAKUSU, J., *Op. Cit.*, p. 39.

<sup>20</sup> ASVAGHOSHA, *Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>21</sup> See D.T. Suzuki's *Introduction in The Lankāvatāra Sūtra.*, George Routledge & Sons Ltd., London, 1932, p. XXVII.

<sup>22</sup> This view seems to be contrary to the traditional Buddhist thought. Because Buddhist scholars commonly emphasize the negation of the substantiality of the Absolute. For instance see: HANAYAMA, S., *Buddhism of the one Great Vehicle*, (*Mahāyāna*) in *Essays in East-West Philosophy — An attempt of World Philosophical Synthesis*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1951, Japanese translation: *Tōyōshisō to Seiyōshisō*, Risōsha, Tōkyō, 1955, pp. 218-239; generally speaking the Buddhist thought is not ontological but epistemological. The absolute, therefore, is comprehended as the intellect-ion which has no distinction between the subject and the object more than the substance which subsists. It is a very important fact that substance or substantiality in the Buddhist terminology is not the same concept used in Thomistic philosophy. One of the illustrative cases is K. Nishitani's following words; NISHITANI, K., in *Living Buddhism in Japan A Report of Interviews with Ten Japanese Buddhist Leaders*, International Institute for the Study of Religions, Tōkyō, 1960, p. 52: "In this case, may we regard Buddha as existing substantially instead of being a mere ideal image? No. We may not do so from the standpoint of Buddhism. This concept differs considerably from something substantial like God in Christianity. However, it cannot be said that it does not exist, because it is not substantial. For example, the mind of man cannot be readily regarded as substantial, but we feel that there is something more real to it than various other things that are substantial. What is usually regarded as substantial, such as the human body and other things, it is easily destroyed; but mind, which is not substantial, appears to contain something eternal or real in its true sense." Here it is obvious that K. Nishitani uses a word "substantial" in the sense of "material". Therefore, he denies the materiality of the absolute, using a term substantial, but he does not deny the spiritual existence of the absolute. We deny also the materiality in the absolute.

<sup>23</sup> SUZUKI, D.T., *Studies in Lanka.*, p. 147.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 305.

<sup>25</sup> HUMPHREYS, C., *Buddhism*, p. 148.



*Citta* has several meanings, but here *Citta* does not signify an empirical or psychological consciousness, it signifies a metaphysical consciousness in the highest sense: the absolute.<sup>26</sup>

Therefore what is said about Emptiness and Suchness may also be said about Mind-Only. Mind-Only is nothing but Emptiness or Suchness.

The author of the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* says: "Suchness, Emptiness, Limit, *Nirvāṇa*, *Dharmadhātu*, variety of will-bodies — they are nothing but Mind, I say."<sup>27</sup>

Mind is the absolute, therefore like Emptiness or Suchness transcends all relative categories. "It is not an existence nor it is a non-existence; it is indeed beyond both existence and non-existence; it is Suchness; it is even released from Mind. I say, there is nothing but Mind."<sup>28</sup>

Mind, the ultimate truth, therefore is not grasped by intellect but only by the transcendental wisdom.<sup>29</sup>

Mind-Only will not be interpreted as an absolute idealism which denies the existence of all things in the world, but it denies the absolute existence of them.

It teaches that all things in the world are contingent beings and Mind-Only is the absolute, the necessarily existent.<sup>30</sup> All things are the manifestation of the absolute *Citta*. The thought of Zen develops on this absolute-Mind, *Citta*.

#### d) Dharma-Body (*Dharma-Kāya*)

*Dharmakāya* is the most ontological concept to signify the ultimate reality and it may be called the notion which expresses the constitutive essence of Buddhahood. *Dharma* in general means, primarily, object, thing, substance, and secondarily, law, doctrine and here it signifies the supreme substance, the

<sup>26</sup> Cf. D.T. Suzuki's *Introduction in The Lankāvatāra*., p. XXVI: "Mind (*Citta*) here does not mean our individual mind which is subject to the law of causation. Absolute *Citta* transcends the dualistic conception of existence, it belongs neither to the *Vijñāna* system nor to our objective world. Therefore, in the *Lanka* this *Citta* is frequently described in ontological terms." Cf. Also *Studies in the Lankāvatāra*., pp. 247-253.

<sup>27</sup> SUZUKI, D.T., *Studies in the Lankāvatāra*., p. 241, Sanskrit text edited by Nanjo, p. 153 line 31.

<sup>28</sup> SUZUKI, D.T., *Ibid.*, p. 242, Sanskrit text, p. 153 line 30.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 244, Sanskrit text, p. 87; *Citta* is unattainable by intellect: "Language, O *Mahamati*, is not the ultimate truth, what is attainable by language is not the ultimate truth"; *Ibid.*, p. 241, Sanskrit text p. 153, line 29: "Mind is beyond all philosophical views, is apart from discrimination, it is not attainable, nor is it ever born; I say there is nothing but Mind." Cf. Lao-Tzu's *Tao-Te-Ching*, Ch. 1.

<sup>30</sup> D.T. Suzuki points out the difficulty in which such affirmation of the existence of the absolute may be thought as contrary to the traditional Buddhist thought. *Studies in the Lanka*., p. 260: "The existence of the transcendental ego as maintained by Buddhists, which apparently contradicts their traditional view of non-ego, is hard to understand for the ignorant as well as for these of the Two Vehicles." But there is no contradiction. They indicate the same truth.

ultimate reality. Kāya means body or person, Dharmakāya, therefore, signifies Dharma-body or Dharma-personality. "The Dharmakāya, therefore, means the Buddha-personality when it is perfectly identified with the Dharma, or the absolute truth itself making up the essence of Buddhism."<sup>31</sup>

And "Dharmakāya therefore signifies that which constitutes the ultimate foundation of existence, one great whole in which all forms of individuation are obliterated, in a word, the absolute. This objective absolute being meanwhile has been idealized by Mahayanists so that which knows is now identical with that which is known, because they say that the essence of existence is nothing but intelligence pure, perfect, and free from all possible worries and evils."<sup>32</sup>

It is a very interesting thing to notice here that the Buddhist constitutive nature of the Deity corresponds to the opinion of some Thomists, "subsistent intellection" (*ipsum intelligere subsistens*).<sup>33</sup>

In the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra*, *Dharmakāya* is expressed by the word *Dharmatā-Buddha* which signifies the transcendental substance, the very foundation of all existence.

"*Dharmatā-Buddha* = a transcendental substance of all Buddhas and *Bodhisattvas* without which nothing can exist, nothing can come into existence."<sup>34</sup>

"The *Dharmakāya* is also known as *Svabhāvakāya*, meaning "Self-Nature-body", for it abides in itself, it remains as such retaining its self-nature."<sup>35</sup>

*Dharmakāya*, therefore, is self-subsistent and constitutes the ultimate nature of Buddha. We may say that it corresponds to what formally constitutes the divine nature, the Deity in Thomistic theology.<sup>36</sup>

*Dharmakāya* is absolutely transcendent, and because of its absolute transcendence it is present in all things. The Buddha-nature is in all things.<sup>37</sup>

Regarding *Dharmakāya*, the Doctrine of the Triple-body, *Tri-Kāya*, which is the posterior dogmatic development is very important concerning the doctrine of the Buddhist salvation.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>31</sup> SUZUKI, D.T., *Studies in the Lanka.*, p. 320.

<sup>32</sup> SUZUKI, D.T., *The Awakening of Faith.*, p. 62, f. 1.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, R., O.P., *De Deo Uno*, Marietti, Rome, 1950, p. 127.

<sup>34</sup> SUZUKI, D.T., *Studies in the Lanka.*, p. 325.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 308.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 308, D.T. Suzuki says: "It belongs to the Buddha, it is what inwardly and essentially constitutes Buddhahood, for without it a Buddha loses altogether his being. We may regard the *Dharmakāya* as corresponding to the Christian idea of the Godhead."

<sup>37</sup> Cf. PRATT, J.B., *Op. Cit.* p. 262; D.T. Suzuki's *Introduction in The Lanka.*, p. XXIX; *Essays.*, III, p. 329, f. 1: "The *Dharmakāya* is the essence-being of all the Buddhas and also of all beings. What makes at all possible the existence of anything is the *Dharmakāya*, without which the world itself is inconceivable. But, specifically, the *Dharmakāya* is the essence-body of all beings which forever is. In this sense it is *Dharmatā* or *Buddhatā*, that is, the Buddha-nature within all beings."

<sup>38</sup> The Triple body is the same in its nature and it differs only in aspects. The first body which is the Buddha in his absolute essence is called *Dharmakāya*. The second body which is the Buddha in his derivative form is called *Sambhogakāya*, Body of



## 2. Mahayanist Epistemological Thought

Transcendental Wisdom or Intuition (*Prajñā*)

One key to understand Mahayanist thought is *Prajñā* thought and especially in connection with Zen thought *prajñā* is one of the most important notions.

Generally *prajñā* is translated as transcendental wisdom or knowledge, sometimes is used as a synonym with *Alaya-vijñāna* "All-conserving mind" and *prajñā* is distinguished from *vijñāna*, reason.

*Prajñā* is one of six virtues or perfections, (*pāramitās*) but *prajñā* is not like other virtues, it is the principle and the form of the other virtues.<sup>39</sup>

It should be called the form and the principle of virtues (*forma et principium virtutum*). Without *prajñā*, other virtues or perfections cannot exist.

*Prajñā* is the indispensable means for Enlightenment, "Sambodhi" and at the same time it is its end, that is, Enlightenment itself.

D.T. Suzuki says:

The *Prajñā* was said in the beginning to be the means of attaining enlightenment, the highest end of the Buddhist discipline. But it has now come to be identified with the end itself — *Prajñā* is enlightenment (*sambodhi*); for in the Buddhist experience the working of the *Prajñā* in its original purity is possible only when there is enlightenment..... *Prajñā* is seen in enlightenment, and enlightenment in *Prajñā*. .... *Prajñā* is one name, enlightenment is another, *Nirvāṇa* is a third, and so on. ....

*Prajñā* is then *Sambodhi* (enlightenment), *Prajñā* is *Sarvajñatā* (all-knowledge), *Prajñā* is *Nirvāṇa*, *Prajñā* is *Tathatā* (suchness), *Prajñā* is *Citta* (mind), *Prajñā* is *Buddhatā* (Buddhahood); *Prajñā* taken in itself then is preeminently the Unattainable (*anupalabdha*) and the Unthinkable (*acintya*). And this Unattainable and Unthinkable is the basis of all realities and thoughts.<sup>40</sup>

Recompence or Enjoyment. It manifests the glory of Buddhahood, because in him there is everything good, beautiful and holy. The third body which is the Buddha in his transformations is called *Nirmānakāya*, Body of Transformation or Assumed Body. It manifests the Buddhist incarnation doctrine of the supreme Buddha into the sentient beings to communicate the Buddha-nature with the mortals. (*Bonum sui diffusivum!*). It is the manifestation of the great compassionate love of the Buddha. Man can communicate the Buddha-nature only through its transformed forms, because the *Dharmakāya* is so supreme that man cannot grasp it. Cf. SUZUKI, D.T., *Studies in the Lanka.*, pp. 282-338; *The Awakening of Faith.*, pp. 95-106; *Essays.*, III, p. 329, f. 1; This is the fundamental idea of the Buddhist salvation and because of the theory of the Body of Transformation, Buddhism is often considered as pantheistic. D.T. Suzuki says in his *Introduction in The Lanka.*, p. XIV: "As the incarnation of a great compassionate heart, the Buddha ought to be able to take any form he wishes when he sees the sufferings of sentient beings. The will-body is a part of the Buddha's plan of world salvation. This is one of the reasons why Buddhism is often regarded as polytheistic and at the same time pantheistic."

<sup>39</sup> Cf. SUZUKI, D.T., *Essays.*, III, p. 236; Six *Pāramitās* are; Charity, Morality, Striving, Humility, Meditation and Transcendental knowledge; Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 327-328.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 240-241.

Thus *Prajñā* is Enlightenment itself and Enlightenment is the ultimate reality itself.

*Vijñāna* is the principle of differentiation, and the acquisition of all human knowledge is by *Vijñāna*, the discriminative knowledge. On the contrary *Prajñā* the higher knowledge which transcends *Vijñāna* knowledge, is the knowledge of non-distinction, non-thinking, unknowing.<sup>41</sup>

*Prajñā* is the transcendental wisdom, "grasping the ungraspable, attaining the unattainable, comprehending the incomprehensible."<sup>42</sup>

*Prajñā* is seeing one's nature in the ultimate truth. It is the cognition in which there is no distinction between the object and subject: in a word, the divine intellection.

According to the terminology of D.T. Suzuki, *Prajñā* is a spiritual cognition or spiritual consciousness which surpasses the intellect.<sup>43</sup>

Spiritual consciousness is the absolute cognition and this undifferentiated consciousness may be called super-consciousness or God-consciousness.<sup>44</sup>

*Prajñā* is the divine eye by which man can judge all facts of daily life from the divine viewpoint — "*sub specie aeternitatis*"<sup>45</sup>

*Prajñā* surpasses all *Vijñāna* intellectual activities but at the same time *Prajñā* is the very foundation of all *Vijñāna* intellectual activities. The human mind is never satisfied by *Vijñāna* knowledge and the restlessness of the mind itself proves the existence of *Prajñā*. The human mind does not rest until it attains the absolute identity, the divine intellection.

According to Mahayanist philosophy *Prajñā* is innate in us, it must be realized by an inner realization.

But awakening to *Prajñā* is also the act of *Prajñā*. "*Prajñā* is the ultimate reality itself, and *Prajñā*-intuition is its becoming conscious of itself."<sup>46</sup> Here *Prajñā* is identified with *Sūnyatā*, *Tathatā*, *Nirvāna*, *Dharmakāya* and so on.<sup>47</sup> The ultimate reality is not recognized without *Prajñā* and *Prajñā* is the ultimate reality itself.

41 Cf. SUZUKI, D.T., *Senshū*, Vol. II, *Zen no Shiso*, p. 66; Cf. WATTS, A., *Op. Cit.*, 88; SUZUKI, D.T., *The Essence of Buddhism*, p. 7: "*Prajñā* is therefore the knowledge of non-distinction or non-thinking, in the sense that all thought involves the distinction of this and that, for to think means to analyse. *Acintya*, non-thinking, means not to divide that is, to pass beyond all intellection, and the whole of Buddhism revolves about this central idea of non-thought, or non-thinkingness".

42 SUZUKI, D.T., *Essays*, III, p. 243.

43 Cf. SUZUKI, D.T., *The Essence of Buddhism*, pp. 14-18.

44 Cf. SUZUKI, D.T., *Living by Zen*, pp. 95-107.

45 SUZUKI, D.T., *The Essence of Buddhism*, p. 17.

46 SUZUKI, D.T., *Studies in Zen*, p. 100.

47 Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 101; "Epistemologically interpreted, reality is *prajñā*. Metaphysically interpreted reality is *sūnyatā*. *Sūnyatā* then is *prajñā*, and *prajñā* is *sūnyatā*."



### 3. Mahayanist Religio-philosophical Thought

Great Compassion (*Mahā-Karunā*) or Great Love (*Mahā-Mariti*).

The central idea which constitutes Buddhist religious philosophy with *Prajñā* is *Karunā*, Compassion. "There are two pillars supporting the great edifice of Buddhism, the *Daichi*, or *Mahā-Prajñā*, the great wisdom, and the *Daihi*, or *Mahā-Karunā*, the great compassion."<sup>48</sup>

Buddha is the great wisdom and at the same time the great compassion.  
The identification of the great wisdom and the great compassion in the absolute person constitutes the very essence of Buddhist philosophy.

"The Wisdom flows from the Compassion and the Compassion from the Wisdom, for the two are in fact one, though from the human point of view we have to speak of them as two. Regarding them as one, we may think of them as a person, for the two are not united mathematically but spiritually. As living principles, therefore, they may be thought of as uniting in an absolute Person."<sup>49</sup>

Here Buddhism reveals its highest secret; on the one hand, the absolute is the divine intellect and on the other hand, it is the divine love. They are united in the divine person. It is not too much to say that Buddhist religious philosophy and Catholic theology fundamentally agree on this point<sup>50</sup>

Great Compassion thought is intimately connected with the doctrine of the Triple body in the Buddhist salvation doctrine. Buddha, the supreme love itself wants to save all sentient beings, assumes the body of a transformation being lived by Buddha's infinite love to work not only for one's own salvation but for the salvation of all is *Bodhisattva*'s way.

"The essential nature of all *Bodhisattvas* is a great loving heart (*Mahā-Karunā-Citta*), and all sentient beings constitute the object of his love."<sup>51</sup> This is the characteristic of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Buddha's love towards all sentient beings is called "purposeless". It is said to be *Tathāgata*'s great love.

"The Buddha's love is not something ego-centered... it is above the dualism of being and non-being, it rises from the heart of non-discri-

<sup>48</sup> SUZUKI, D.T., *The Essence of Buddhism*, p. 19; Cf. PRATT, J.B., *Op. Cit.*, p. 269.

<sup>49</sup> SUZUKI, D.T., *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>50</sup> D.T. Suzuki argues that the Great Compassion-the Great Wisdom is the characteristic of the Oriental thought, (Cf. *Senshū*, II, *Zen no Sekai*, pp. 70-73; p. 89) but once he pointed out a striking similarity between two Religions. Cf. *The Awakening of Faith.*, p. 66, f. 4: "The differentiation of enlightenment into two distinct qualities wisdom and action, or according to the terminology of later Mahayanists, wisdom and love, constitutes one of the principal thoughts of the Mahāyāna Buddhism and shows a striking similarity to the Christian conception of God who is considered to be full of infinite love and wisdom."

<sup>51</sup> HUMPHREYS, C., *Buddhism*, p. 159; from *A Treatise on the Transcendentality of the Bodhicitta*, quoted by D.T. Suzuki in *Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism*, p. 292.

mination, it manifests itself in conduct of purposelessness, (*Anabhogacarya*). It is *Tathāgata*'s great love (*Mahā-Karunā*) of all beings, which never ceases until everyone of them is happily led to the final asylum of *Nirvāṇa*; the *Tathāgata* is indeed the one who endowed with a heart of all-embracing love and compassion regards all beings as if they were his only child."<sup>52</sup>

Here the purposelessness does not mean no purpose for salvation, but means no selfishness. It will correspond to the charity, the highest love in Thomistic theology.

In the identification of the great wisdom and the great compassion the ultimate reality appears as the absolute. In Buddhism the secret of the Deity is the secret of the person as well as in Christianity.

All the above-mentioned conceptions are almost interchangeable, because they indicate the one reality and each concept is seen from a different viewpoint. Personal one Buddha has many names. The unique and the ultimate purpose of Mahāyāna Buddhism is to attain to ultimate reality, that is, to become Buddha. "To know God, to enter into the *Dharmakāya* is the aim of all worship and of all life. For the Mahāyāna Buddhist the only true worship is realization."<sup>53</sup> The unique way to attain to ultimate reality is the inner awakening by *Prajñā*.

In Buddhism the absolute is comprehended first as immanent, second transcendent. D.T. Suzuki says:

"Christianity conceives God as transcendent, without neglecting his immanent existence, while Buddhism conceives God, first as immanent yet without forgetting his transcendental nature as well. In Christianity God is transcendental immanence; in Buddhism God is conceived as immanently transcendental."<sup>54</sup>

The Buddhist way to find God, therefore, is to find the immanent absolute in us.

"Thus, according to Buddhist philosophy reality must be grasped in this world and by this world, for it is that, "beyond which is also within". The *Lanka* compares it to the moon in water or a flower in a mirror. It is within and yet outside, it is outside and yet within."<sup>55</sup>

That is the reason why Buddhism often is considered as pantheism. But in the author's opinion the pantheistic interpretation cannot be proclaimed as the unique and the authentic interpretation. One of the greatest authorities on Buddhism, D.T. Suzuki, refuses repeatedly the pantheistic interpretation of Buddhism.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>52</sup> SUZUKI, D.T., *The Lankāvatāra Sūtra.*, p. XII.

<sup>53</sup> PRATT, J.B., *Op. Cit.*, p. 268.

<sup>54</sup> SUZUKI, D.T., *The Essence of Buddhism*, p. 30.

<sup>55</sup> SUZUKI, D.T., *The Lankāvatāra Sūtra.*, p. XXIX.

<sup>56</sup> One of the most illustrative examples is quoted by D.T. Suzuki: SUZUKI, D.T., *Essays.*, III, pp. 332-333: "Another criticism made against Mahāyāna Buddhism is that



Buddha-nature exists in all things, but we must not forget that it is also transcendent. It is beyond intellect, therefore, its nature is incomprehensible. The cognition of the absolute is realized only by the transcendental wisdom which surpasses the intellectual sphere. The whole of Mahāyāna Buddhism consists in the cognition of the identity with the absolute, the spiritual consciousness, — “to become Buddha”.

## II. Taoism

Since it is an obvious fact that Zen was influenced much by Taoism, it is of great importance to know *Tao* thought in Lao-Tzu for the understanding of Zen thought.<sup>1</sup>

it is pantheistic. When the Mahayanist sees the Buddha-nature in everything, even in things inanimate, he seems to be pantheistically inclined in his philosophy. But read the following carefully and see where the whole trend of the discourse is:

*Wei-Kuan* (*Chuan-teng*, VII) was asked, “Is there the Buddha-nature in the dog?”

“Yes”.

“In you too?”

“No, not in me.”

“How is it that there is no Buddha-nature in you when all beings are endowed with one?”

“I am no one of “all beings”.”

“If you are not, are you Buddha himself?”

“I am not Buddha.”

“What are you, then?”

“I am not a “What” either.”

“Is it then something at all tangible or thinkable?”

“No, monk, it is altogether beyond thought, beyond comprehension. Therefore, it is called the unthinkable.”

When we go over this dialogue carefully we see that the Mahayanist sees something beyond individual realities which cannot be wholly included in them, or that, according to the Mahāyāna, the Buddha-nature is manifested in every particular object — in the dog, in the plant, in a piece of rock, in a stream of water, in a particle of dust, in you, in me, in the ignorant, as well as in the Buddha; but at the same time it goes beyond them and cannot be grasped by our thought and imagination. This view of reality cannot be called pantheistic.” We can see here the idea of participation in Mahāyāna thought.

<sup>1</sup> We know very little about Lao-Tzu. There are some scholars who deny his fact of being or history. Cf. TAKEUCHI, Y., *Rōshi no Kenkyū*, Kaizōsha, Tōkyō, 1927, pp. 405-419; Generally his historical life is admitted. According to the traditional opinion, Lao-Tzu lived about the same time as Confucius and a little before Confucius. Cf. YUTANG, L., *The Wisdom of Lao-Tse*, The Modern Library, N.Y., 1948, pp. 8-9; TAKEUCHI, Y., *Op. Cit.*, pp. 51-62; WATTS, A.W., *The Way of Zen*, p. 26; FUNG, Y.L., *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, Vol. I, Henri Vetch, Peiping, 1937, p. 170; According to the more probable opinion Lao-Tzu lived after Confucius (about 400 years B.C.); Y.L. Fung argues this opinion from the external and internal critic of *Tao-Te-Ching*, and Y. Takeuchi argues from the number of the generations of his descendants.

*Tao* is one of the key concepts in the history of Chinese thought. It is also one of the most important notions in regards to Taoism and Zen Buddhism. The first and commonly accepted meaning of *Tao* is "road" or "way" on which the people pass. Then this meaning becomes a moral way which man must take. Confucius and Confucians use *Tao* in this sense as "moral law". The moral law is not a man-made creation, but it is firmly rooted in the laws of nature. From this point of view *Tao* has a more metaphysical connotation. That is *Tao* in Lao-Tzu.<sup>2</sup>

### 1. The Nature of *Tao*

#### a) *Tao* is *Wu-Ming*, the Nameless.

According to Lao-Tzu, *Tao* is ineffable and nameless, because human knowledge is relative and human words, i.e., names can express only the relative things but cannot express the absolute *Tao*. For the absolute transcends all relative knowledge and all human cognition. Therefore, there are names about relative things, namely all things, but there is no name to express the beginning of all things, the absolute *Tao*.

"The *Tao* that can be told of is not the Absolute *Tao*,

The names that can be given are not absolute names,

The Nameless is the origin of Heaven and Earth,

The Named is the Mother of all things."<sup>3</sup>

There is no name for *Tao*, the origin of Heaven and Earth, but according to the generation of all things there are names; therefore he calls *Tao*, the Mother

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Both authorities hold this opinion. Cf. Fung, Y.L., *Op. Cit.*, pp. 170-172; TAKEUCHI, Y., *Op. Cit.*, pp. 13-84; But Y.L. Fung assumes another position in his later publication in *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, The Macmillan Co. N.Y., 1960, pp. 93-94. The historicity of *Tao-Te-Ching* which is composed of five thousand characters is generally admitted by scholars. According to the study of Y. Takeuchi, the doctrine of Lao-Tzu was transmitted by oral tradition 120 to 130 years after his death and about the year 240 B.C. the book *Tao-Te-Ching* was compiled by the Legalists. It is, therefore, reasonable to admit that the majority of this book is authentic, but some points do not come from him. Cf. TAKEUCHI, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 110-132; FUNG, L.Y., *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, pp. 171-172; The original text of *Tao-Te-Ching* will be found in *Rōshi no Kenkyū* by Y. Takeuchi, and also in *The Canon of Reason and Virtues Being Lao-Tze's Tao Teh King* by P. CARUS, The Open Court Publishing Co., Chicago, 1927; The author uses L. Yutang's translation except in a few cases which he mentioned.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. FUNG, L.Y., *Op. Cit.*, pp. 177; SUZUKI, D.T., *Mysticism Christian and Buddhist*, Collier books, N.Y. 1962, p. 21; TAKEUCHI, Y., *Rōshi no Kenkyū*, pp. 420-430; For the various translations of the word *Tao* in Lao-Tzu, see, LEGGE, J., *The Texts of Taoism*, The Julian Press, Inc., N.Y., pp. 58-61.

<sup>3</sup> LAO-TZU, *Op. Cit.*, Ch. 1; The ultimate reality is incomprehensible and ineffable in Mahāyāna Buddhism, in *Lao-Tzu* and in Christianity. See, *Lankāvatāra Sūtra*, p. 87, in *Studies in the Lankāvatāra*, p. 244; CARUS, P., *Op. Cit.*, p. 131: "Lao-Tze speaks with reverence of the Unnamable, which closely corresponds to the Ineffable of Western mystics." Cf. LAO-TZU, *Op. Cit.*, Ch. 32; "Tao is absolute and has no name."



c) *Tao* is *I*, the One.

Since *Tao* is the being which transcends human knowledge, *Tao* is the unique being which transcends the sense of sight, hearing and touch. *Tao* is therefore called the One.

"Looked at, but cannot be seen,  
That is called the Invisible,  
Listened to, but cannot be heard,  
That is called the Inaudible,  
Grasped at, but cannot be touched,  
That is called the Intangible,  
These three elude all our inquiries,  
And hence blend and become One."<sup>10</sup>

*Tao* is also called the One, because it is the principle of unity.<sup>11</sup>

d) *Tao* is *Wu-Wu*, the Non-Being.

*Tao* is transcendent being and ineffable, but if we do not explain it there is no way to understand. To explain this, therefore, Lao-Tzu uses three notions: *Yu* (being), *Wu* (non-being), *Chang* (constant or abiding).

*Yu*, being, is the word which describes the phenomenal world, all things. Since the phenomenon is cognoscible by us: we call it *Yu*, being. Being, therefore, means relative things. Since *Tao* is the ultimate reality which transcends human knowledge, we cannot express this reality by word. If forced to say it, we cannot find an expression except *Wu*, non-being. Therefore non-being means non-relative, that is, absolute.<sup>12</sup> Therefore Lao-Tzu says: The things of this world come from being, and being comes from non-being.<sup>13</sup> Here care must be taken, non-being does not mean nothingness, but rather means the absolute being, the supra-being.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, Lao-Tzu says:

"And reverts again to the thing of Non-Being,  
That is why it is called the Form of Non-Form,

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, Ch. 14.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, Ch. 39:

"There were those in ancient times possessed of the One:  
Through possession of the One, the Heaven was clarified,  
Through possession of the One, the Earth was stabilized,  
Through possession of the One, the Spirits were spiritualized,  
Through possession of the One, the Valleys were made full,  
Through possession of the One, all things lived and grew,  
Through possession of the One, the princes and dukes became the  
ennobled of the people,  
That was how each became so."

<sup>12</sup> TAKEUCHI, Y., *Rōshi no Kenkyū*, pp. 213-216; *Chūgoku Shishōshi*, pp. 46-50.

<sup>13</sup> LAO-TZU, *Op. Cit.*, Ch. 40.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. FUNG, Y.L., *Op. Cit.*, p. 179. The author will say later that the notion of "non-being" in Lao-Tzu greatly resembles the notion of "non-existence" of Dionysius the Areopagite and of St. Thomas.

ultimate reality.<sup>24</sup>

Since all human action is based on a discrimination, our cognition goes far from *Tao*, and it is necessary to give up this discrimination and follow the nature of *Tao*, namely, to do non-doing, to do without discrimination.<sup>25</sup>

All those attributes indicate *Tao*, the ultimate reality, the transcendental absolute, the supreme Deity. If we compare Taoist *Tao* with Buddhist *Sūnyatā*, we may say that the former is a very ontological concept of the absolute, and the latter is a very epistemological one.<sup>26</sup>

From lack of a personal name of God in Lao-Tzu, we cannot conclude that *Tao* is impersonal, because Lao-Tzu concerns the transcendence of the absolute, that is, the Deity. In fact Lao-Tzu's *Tao* seems to be impersonal, but it must be rather interpreted as the origin of all personality.<sup>27</sup>

We can find the same notion of *Tao* in the thought of Chuang-Tzu, his most eminent successor<sup>28</sup>

In the following chapter, through the development of Zen thought we will see the identification of the Buddhist thought of *Sūnyatā* and of the Taoist thought of *Tao*. *Tao* becomes one of the most important notions in Zen Buddhism.

<sup>24</sup> LAO-TZU, *Op. Cit.*, Ch. 16. Lao-Tzu says:

Attain the utmost in Passivity,  
Hold firm to the basis of Quietude,  
The Myriad things take shape and rise to activity,  
But I watch them fall back to their repose,  
Like vegetation that luxuriantly grows,  
But return to the root from which it springs,  
To return to the root is Quietude,  
It is called going back to one's Destiny,  
Going back to one's Destiny is eternal,  
To know the Eternal is Enlightenment,  
And not to know the Eternal,  
Is to court disaster.

<sup>25</sup> Since the attribute of *Tao* is Quietude, *Tao* is always *Wu-Wei*, non-action, and by the non-action *Tao* does everything. Lao-Tzu says: (*Ibid.*, Ch. 37.) "The *Tao* never does, yet through it everything is done." *Wu-Wei* literally means non-doing, non-action and *Wei-Wu-Wei* means to do non-doing, to act non-action.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. TAKEUCHI, Y., *Chūgoku Shisōshi*, Iwanamishoten, Tōkyō, 1960, p. 184; D.T. Suzuki identifies *Tao* with *Dharma*. See, SUZUKI, D.T., *Mysticism.*, p. 21; OGATA, S., *Op. Cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. BLAKNEY, R.B., *Op. Cit.*, p. 43: "The ultimate Reality is therefore not impersonal; to coin a word, it is proto-personal, that is, pregnant like a mother with men as well as things. It is One and God is in it; it therefore involves personality."

<sup>28</sup> Cf. FUNG, Y.L., *Op. Cit.*, p. 223. Chuang-Tzu, Book VI, 7. This version from Y.L., Fung's book, p. 223. Other translation, LEGGE, J., *The Text of Taoism*, pp. 291-292: "*Tao* has reality and evidence, but no action and form. It may be transmitted but cannot be received. It may be attained to, but cannot be seen. It exists by and through itself. It existed prior to Heaven and Earth, and indeed for all eternity. ...."



manifest itself is due to the overwrapping of external objects and false thoughts. When a man, abandoning the false and embracing the true, in singleness of thought practises the *Pi-Kuan* (literally Wall-contemplation), he finds that there is neither self nor other, that the masses and the worthies are of one essence and he firmly holds on to this belief and never moves away therefrom. He will not then be a slave to words, for he is in silent communion with the Reason itself, free from conceptual discrimination; he is serene and not-acting. This is called Entrance by Higher Intuition.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore man has to abandon the false and embrace the true by the exercise of the *Pi-Kuan* (Wall-contemplation). Through this man unites with the True Nature and man can arrive at the state of serenity and non-action. This is the True Nature.<sup>4</sup> This is the *Tao*, the absolute, the ultimate reality. The purpose of Bodhidharma's Zen is to unite with the True Nature or even to become the True Nature, the immanent absolute itself. This is the way of the Higher Intuition.

According to Bodhidharma the Enlightenment is realized by *Pi-Kuan*. The *Pi-Kuan* is considered his great originality and it is said to be the most meritorious work of Bodhidharma.<sup>5</sup> But the literary meaning "Wall-contemplation" does not explain here his true doctrine and we have difficulty knowing a true meaning of *Pi-Kuan*. D.T. Suzuki holds that *Pi-Kuan* might be interpreted from the later development of Zen thought and he gives an allusion to the Wisdom of *Dhyāna-Prajña*. He identifies it with the supreme intuition, the Enlightenment.<sup>6</sup>

It is certain that *Pi-Kuan* does not mean merely a sitting meditation to a wall or an annihilation of all thoughts. It might be interpreted as the transcendental Wisdom which surpasses the discriminative knowledge, as if the absolute intellection in which seer and seen are one and the same. Here the Enlightenment is realized by *Pi-Kuan*, and also *Pi-Kuan* is the Enlightenment.

According to him the other way to enter the *Tao* is the way of Conduct which is the one side of the way of Higher Intuition.<sup>7</sup> *Li-Ju* must be *Hang-Ju*, and *Hang-Ju* must be *Li-Ju*. The way of Conduct is also the very essence of

<sup>3</sup> BODHIDHARMA, *Erh-Ju-Ssü-Hang-Kuan*, 1, 2; Cf. SUZUKI, D.T., *Manual of Zen Buddhism*, pp. 73-74; *Essays*, I, pp. 180-181.

<sup>4</sup> According to Bodhidharma the True Nature which is one and the same is serene and non-active. The author believes that the same flavor will be found in St. Bonaventure. Cf. BONAVENTURE, ST., *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, c. 5, *Opera Omnia*, t. XII, p. 18.

<sup>5</sup> Tao-Hsuan, the author of the Biographies refers to Bodhidharma as *Tai-Cheng-Pi-Kuan* (Mahayanistic Wall-contemplation), *Kung-Yeh-Tsui-Kao* (most meritorious work). Cf. UI., *Op. Cit.*, p. 24; About the originality of *Pi-Kuan* for *Chüeh-Kuan*, see, SUZUKI, D.T., *Essays*, I, p. 184.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. SUZUKI, D.T., *Senshū*, II, *Zen no Shisō*, p. 19, and pp. 34-35.

<sup>7</sup> BODHIDHARMA, *Op. Cit.*, 3; SUZUKI, D.T., *Essays*, I, p. 181; By Entrance by Conduct is meant the Four Acts in which all other acts are included.

Zen. We find in his thought a very striking similarity with the thought of Lao-Tzu.

In Bodhidharma the ultimate reality is called *Tao* and this is the one and same True Nature which is serene and non-active. The way to enter the *Tao* is believing in the True Nature which is one and the same by *Pi-Kuan* and Four Conducts which are based on non-action.

In Lao-Tzu the ultimate reality is called *Tao*, and this is quietude, action of non-action. The way to enter the *Tao* is holding quietude, action of non-action. But also here attention should be given to the difference in which Lao-Tzu's attitude to enter the *Tao* is extrinsic, as the imitation of the attribute of *Tao*, but Bodhidharma's attitude is intrinsic as *Pi-Kuan*, non-discriminative mind.

It seems to depend on the difference between Mahāyāna Buddhist thought and Taoist thought. It is certain that Bodhidharma, the founder of Zen, taught the recognition of the True Nature which is one and the same, that is the identification with the immanent absolute as the very essence of Zen.<sup>8</sup>

## II. The Thought of Sêng-Ts'an (Sōsan), the Third Patriarch in the *Hsin-Hsin-Ming* (*Shinjinmei*)

*Hsin-Hsin-Ming* is recognized as the work of Sêng-Ts'an (+606), Third Patriarch of Zen Buddhism. It is considered one of the most important works of the early Zen thought, because of its historical authenticity and of its deep philosophical character.<sup>9</sup>

The subject of *Hsin-Hsin-Ming* is the supreme *Tao* and his opening phrases show his fundamental attitude to grasp the ultimate reality and the ending

What are the four?

1. How to requite hatred;
2. To be obedient to *karma*;
3. Not to seek after anything; and
4. To be in accord with the *Dharma*.

<sup>8</sup> Bodhidharma's Zen is called the way to obtain Peace of Mind. Cf. The prefatory note by T'an-Lin. See, SUZUKI, D.T., *Essays*, I, p. 180; A human mind has no peace until it rests in the absolute Mind.

<sup>9</sup> According to D.T. Suzuki we may find the very essence of Zen in his poem; Cf. SUZUKI, D.T., *Senshū*, II, *Zen no Shisō*, p. 37; This is considered as the summary of Mahāyāna Buddhism, the origin and the conclusion of Zen; Cf. OKADA, S., in *Gendai Zen Kōza*, Vol. V, Kadokawashoten, Tōkyō, 1960, p. 31; About the historical study on Sêng-Ts'an, see, UI, H., *Op. Cit.*, pp. 63-71; The original Chinese text and the Japanese version; SUZUKI, D.T., *Zen no Shisō*, pp. 37-50; OKADA, S., *Op. Cit.*, pp. 32-47; The English versions are; D.T. Suzuki's version in *Manual of Zen Buddhism*, pp. 76-82; and in *Buddhist Scriptures* by E. Conze, Penguin Books, London, 1956, pp. 171-175; are preferable. The other version of D.T. Suzuki in *Essays*, I, pp. 196-201, differs only in last phrases. R.H. Blyth's translation is in *Zen and Zen Classics*, Vol. I, Hokuseido, Tōkyō, 1960, pp. 100-103.



Therefore he says:

"The two exist because of the One,  
But hold not even to this One;  
When a mind is not disturbed,  
The ten thousand things offer no offence."<sup>15</sup>

*Tao* is called also one Emptiness, but this does not exist apart from this world.

"In one Emptiness the two are not distinguished,  
And each contains in itself all the ten thousand things;  
When no discrimination is made between this and that,  
How can a one-sided and prejudiced view arise?"<sup>16</sup>

This is the great *Tao* which is serene and has no dualistic opposition in it.

"The Great *Tao* is calm and large-hearted,  
For it nothing is easy, nothing is hard;  
Small views are irresolute,  
The more in haste the tardier they go."<sup>17</sup>

*Tao* is also called the one Vehicle, the Enlightenment, and the *Dharma* (Reality), in which there is no individuation.<sup>18</sup> If we arrive to the non-discriminative cognition we realize that all things come from Suchness.

"If the Mind retains its absoluteness,  
The ten thousand things are of one Suchness."<sup>19</sup>

The Suchness is beyond our description, beyond the intellectual order. It belongs to the spiritual order in which there is a perfect identity.

"When the deep mystery of our Suchness is fathomed,  
All of a sudden we forget the external entanglements;  
When the ten thousand things are viewed in their oneness,  
We return to the origin and remain where we ever have been."<sup>20</sup>

There is no duality in the Suchness, the absolute. There is a perfect identification in it. Therefore he says:

"In the higher realm of true Suchness,  
There is neither "self" nor "other";  
When direct identification is sought,  
We can only say, "Not two."<sup>21</sup>

*Tao* is called also the absolute Reason which transcends time and space. It is Now of Eternity, "*nunc aeternitatis*."

<sup>15</sup> *Loc. Cit.*, 11, p. 78; According to D.T. Suzuki those phrases are a center of *Hsin-Ming*.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 14, p. 78.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 15, p. 79.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 18, 19, p. 79.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 21, p. 80.

<sup>20</sup> *Loc. Cit.*, 22, p. 80.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 25, p. 81.



III. The Thought of Hui-Neng (Eno), the Sixth Patriarch  
in the *Liu-Tsu-Ta-Shih-Fa-Pao-T'an-Ching* (*Rokusodaishi Hōhōdankyō*)

The Sixth Patriarch, Hui-Neng (638-713) is one of the most eminent Masters in Zen history and the *T'an-Ching* is the collection of his sermons.<sup>26</sup>

His fundamental thought is the *Prajñā* thought, His terminology *Ting-Hui-Pu-Erh* (*Dhyāna* and *Prajñā* do not differ), *Chih-Hsin*, (*Straightforward Mind*), *Wu-Hsin* (*No-Thought*), *Wu-Hsiang*, (*Formlessness*), *Wu-Chu*, (*Non-Abiding*), *Chien-Hsin*, (*Seeing into one's Nature*), *Pen-Hsin*, (*Fundamental Mind*), manifests the characteristic of his thought.

*Ting-Hui-Pu-Erh*

According to Hui-Neng, *Ting* and *Hui* do not differ because *Ting* (*dhyāna*) is the substance of *Hui* (*prajñā*) and *Hui* (*prajñā*) is the function of *Ting* (*dhyāna*). He says:

Learned friends, *dhyāna* (meditation) and *prajñā* (wisdom) are the fundamentals of this *Dharma* door of mine. Make no mistake about this and do not say that *dhyāna* and *prajñā* differ from each other. *Dhyāna* and *prajñā* are one and are not two (separate) things. *Dhyāna* is the substance of *prajñā* and *prajñā* is the function of *dhyāna*. Whenever *prajñā* is at work, *dhyāna* is within it, (and) when *dhyāna* is at work, *prajñā* is within it. To understand this is to understand simultaneously (both) *dhyāna* and *prajñā*.<sup>27</sup>

He explains this truth by the metaphor of a lamp and its light. Saying:

Learned friends, what are *dhyāna* and *prajñā* like? They are like a lamp and its light. Where there is a lamp, there is light and where there is no lamp, there is darkness. The lamp is the substance of light and light is the function of the lamp. Although there are two (different) names, fundamentally there is one body. *Dhyāna-prajñā* is just like that.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> About his life and a critical study of the text; See, UI, H., *Daini Zenshūshi Kenkyū*, Iwanamishoten, Tōkyō, 1941; Critical study of the text; pp. 1-116; His life; pp. 173-248; The original Chinese text with Japanese version; pp. 117-172; The English versions; LUK, C., *Ch'an and Zen Teaching*, III, Rider & Co., London, 1962, pp. 19-115; Edited by GODDARD, D., *A Buddhist Bible*, pp. 497-588. D.T. Suzuki emphasizes the importance of Hui-Neng in the development of Zen thought. See, SUZUKI, D.T., *Essays*, I, pp. 218-226; *Studies in Zen*, pp. 136-164.

<sup>27</sup> HUI-NENG, *Liu-Tsu-Ta-Shih-Fa-Pao-T'an-Ching*, n. 8, pp. 44. Number indicates a classified number in the critical Chinese text of H. UI's edition in *Daini Zenshūshi Kenkyū*; Page indicates a page of the version by C. Luk in *Ch'an and Zen Teaching*, III. The author uses mainly the version by C. Luk, but sometimes he tried to change it according to his own interpretation.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 10, p. 45.

*Dhyāna* does not mean just sitting with an empty mind and without thinking of anything. He says:

"There are also ignorant people who sit in meditation with an empty mind and without thinking of anything and who call themselves great. It is useless to talk to them because of their heterodox views."<sup>29</sup>

*Ting* is not an annihilation of thoughts nor a concentration of thoughts but it is *Prajñā* (Wisdom or Intuition) in which there is no distinction between seer and seen.

This is his great originality in the history of Zen thought in China, because he discerned *Prajñā* as the very essence of Zen.<sup>30</sup> *Dhyāna* is nothing but *Prajñā*, and it is none other than *Pi-Kuan* of Bodhidharma and *Hsin-Hsin-Pu-Erh* of Sêng-Ts'an. Therefore *Ting* (*dhyāna*) and *Hui* (*prajñā*) are identified. As we saw in the first Chapter *Prajñā* is a means and at the same time its purpose. *Prajñā* is acquired by *Prajñā*.

*Chih-Hsin.*

When *Ting-Hui* which is *Samādhi* (Enlightenment) is expressed positively, it is called *Chih-Hsin*, (one straightforward mind). He says:

*Samādhi* of one act is the unceasing state of one straightforward mind in all places, while walking, standing, sitting and lying. The *Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra* says: "The straightforward mind is the holy site; the straightforward mind is the Pure Land." Your minds should not practice flattery and crookedness while your mouths speak of straightforwardness. Do not speak of the *samādhi* of one act when you do not act straightforwardly.

Just be straightforward and do not cling to anything. Deluded men grasp the *Dharma* and hold on to the *samādhi* of one act. They claim that the *samādhi* of one act consists in sitting motionless all the time without any uprise in the mind. Such an interpretation makes the meditators inanimate and hinders the (realization of) *Tao*.<sup>31</sup>

According to Hui-Neng, therefore, *Samādhi* is not an annihilation of all thoughts, but it is *Chih-Hsin* (Straightforward mind), *Prajñā* (Intuition).

*Wu-Hsin, Wu-Hsiang, and Wu-Chu.*

When this supreme state is expressed negatively, it is called *Wu-Hsin*, (No-thought or Thoughtlessness), *Wu-Hsiang*, (No-form or Formlessness) and *Wu-Chu*, (Non-abiding).

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 18, p. 31.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. SUZUKI, D.T., *Studies in Zen*, p. 139; D.T. Suzuki says: "That *dhyāna* is no other than *prajñā* was Hui-Neng's intuition, which was really revolutionary in the history of Buddhist thought in China."

<sup>31</sup> HUI-NENG, *Op. Cit.*, n. 9, p. 45.



He says:

Learned friends, this *Dharma* door of mine was established by past Patriarchs with: No-thought as its doctrine, No-form as its substance, and Non-abiding as its fundamental. No-form is detachment from all forms, aspects and characteristics whilst in the midst of forms, aspects and characteristics. No-thought is the absence of all thoughts while in the process of thinking. Non-abiding is men's fundamental nature.<sup>32</sup>

This triple terminology signifies the same reality, and indicates the very characteristic of his thought *via negativa* and it signifies the transcendental wisdom, *prajñā* which surpasses all discriminative knowledge.

This transcendental wisdom is called the thought of no-thought, the thought of unknowing (or ignorance) and the knowledge of non-discrimination. It transcends all thought of discrimination, therefore, it is called no-thought. It transcends all forms, therefore, it is called no-form. It is not abiding in anything, therefore, it is called non-abiding. It is not depending on anything, therefore, it is a perfect freedom-a straightfoward mind.

"If there are no thoughts abiding in all *dharma*s this is freedom from bondage. Therefore, non-abiding is set up as the fundamental of my *Dharma* door."<sup>33</sup>

To get a perfect freedom is the purpose of Zen. According to Hui-Neng, therefore, the Enlightenment will be attained by *Prajñā*, namely No-thought, No-form, Non-abiding and they are the Enlightenment itself.

*Prajñā* (the transcendental wisdom) is identified with *Tathatā*, (Suchness, the ultimate truth) itself. The ultimate truth is nothing but *Prajñā*. He says:

Suchness is the substance of thought and thought is the function of Suchness. When the nature gives rise to a thought, although the six sense organs see, hear, feel and know, there is no taint of myriad externals and the true nature is always independent.

The *Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra* says: He who is versed in the skilful discerning of all phenomena remains immutable in the Primary Object (the Supreme Reality).<sup>34</sup>

The immutable thought in the primary object is Suchness itself. It is the absolute intuition. It is immutable, independent and absolutely free from all objects. It may be called the undifferentiated consciousness, the principle of identification, but it is also the principle of multiplicity.

Hence all differentiated consciousness, discrimination, multiplicity come from the undifferentiated consciousness. *Prajñā* is the very foundation of *Vijñāna*.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 11, p. 46.

<sup>33</sup> *Loc. Cit.*, n. 11, p. 46.

<sup>34</sup> *Loc. Cit.*, n. 11, p. 47.

*Chien-Hsing*

He explains the *Prajñā* intuition, the very essence of Zen by his famous *Chien-Hsing*, (Seeing Nature, or Seeing into one's own Nature).

Seeing into one's Nature is to see all things in Suchness, *Yathābhūtatā*, that is to see all things in the absolute or to see the absolute in all things. It may be said seeing the divine nature. This *Chien-Hsing*, (Seeing into one's Nature) is *Cheng-Fo* (to become Buddha). He says:

Learned friends, when I was with (the fifth Patriarch) Hung Jen and heard (his words) I immediately became enlightened and instantly saw Suchness-True Nature. This is why I am spreading this *Dharma* so that seekers of the truth will instantly be awakened to *Bodhi* and that each of them will (succeed in) looking into his self-mind and perceive his essential nature.

.....  
But if there arises the correct and true contemplation by *prajñā*, all false thoughts will instantly disappear. If one's own nature be known, one's awakening will enable one to reach the Buddha stage<sup>35</sup>

Learned friends, if you wish to enter the very deep *Dharmadhatu* and *prajñā-samādhi*, you should practice the *prajñā-pāramitā* performance. Keep the Diamond *Sūtra* which will enable you to see the nature and to enter into *prajñā-samādhi*.<sup>36</sup>

Here *Hsing* (Nature) must be understood as the absolute which is transcendent and immanent. Buddha is nothing but the absolute itself. Therefore seeing the nature is the attainment of Buddhahood.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 24, p. 35.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 21, p. 33.

<sup>37</sup> One of the most illustrative examples on *Chien-Hsin-Cheng-Fo* from *Ching-Te-Chuan-Teng-Lu* (*Keitoku Dentōroku*) is cited by D.T. Suzuki in *Living by Zen*, pp. 42-45. From this *Mondo* (Question and Answer) we realize that the Nature is the Absolute, Buddha who is transcendent and at the same time immanent, and also we realize that seeing the Nature is nothing but becoming Buddha and this is the absolute intuition in which there is no distinction between seer and seen.

"Keishu the Monk asked Ungo-chi about the meaning of the dictum which is considered characteristically belonging to the teaching of Zen "By seeing into one's own Nature one becomes a Buddha."

Ungo-chi gave this answer:

The Nature is primarily pure, absolutely tranquil, altogether free from disturbances, does not belong to the category of being and non-being, purity and defilement, it is serenity itself.

When one has a clear insight of it, one is said to have seen into one's own Nature. The Nature is the Buddha, and the Buddha is the Nature. Hence seeing into the Nature is becoming the Buddha."

The Monk: "If the Nature is pure in essence and has no attribute, either being or non-being, how can there be any seeing at all?"



Here in the ultimate state *Chien*, (Seeing) is *Hsing* (the Nature), *Hsing*, (the Nature) is *Chien*, (Seeing).<sup>38</sup>

Here again Zen thought shows a striking similarity or fundamental identity to the Thomistic theology. *Chien-Hsing* must be understood as the divine intellection. As a result, in the divine intellection, seeing the divine nature is the divine nature itself, and the divine nature is seeing the divine nature.

### *Shih-Pen-Hsin*

He calls also the same reality by *Shih-Pen-Hsin* (Knowing the fundamental Mind). *Shih-Pen-Hsin* is no more than *Chien-Hsing*. He says:

The contemplation of *prajñā* which thoroughly penetrates the internal and external ensures the knowledge of one's fundamental Mind. If the fundamental Mind is known, this is fundamental liberation. If the fundamental liberation is realized, this is *prajñā-samādhi*. *Prajñā-samādhi* is No-thought. What is No-thought? The *Dharma* of No-thought is seeing all *dharma*s (things) without the mind being stained by and clinging to them. Its functioning pervades everywhere without attachment to anything.<sup>39</sup>

By this *Dharma* of No-thought, namely *Prajñā*, man knows all things and attains Buddhahood.

"He who is awakened to the *Dharma* of No-thought thoroughly knows all *dharma*s, perceives all Buddha realms and reaches the Buddha stage."<sup>40</sup>

Finally the most remarkable thought is that meeting Buddha is not outside of us but inside of us. Buddha appears in us.

Chi: "Though there is seeing, there is nothing seen." \*

Monk: "If there is nothing seen, how can there be any seeing".

Chi: "The seeing itself is not."

Monk: "In this kind of seeing, whose seeing is it?"

Chi: "There is no seer either."

Monk: "Where are we then?"

Chi: "Do you know that the idea of being is the product of false thinking?

Because of this there is subject and object, which we call an error. When there is a seeing (dualistically conceived), difference of opinion arises, and one falls into birth-and-death.

It is not so with the one who has a clear seeing. He sees all day, and yet he sees nothing.

The seeing has neither substance nor manifestation; action and reaction are both lacking in it; therefore, it is called seeing into the Nature."

Monk: "Is the Nature present everywhere?"

Chi: "Yes, there is nowhere it is not present."

.....

<sup>38</sup> Cf. SUZUKI, D.T., *Senshū*, I, *Nipponteki Reisei*, pp. 340-341; *Senshū*, VII, *Zen Mondō to Satori*, p. 92; *Living by Zen*, pp. 80-107.

<sup>39</sup> HUI-NENG, *Op. Cit.*, n. 24, pp. 35-36.

<sup>40</sup> *Loc. Cit.*, n. 24, p. 36.

He says:

Learned friends, now that you have surrendered yourselves to and relied on your own Triple Gem, all of you should listen attentively to my talk on the *Trikāya* in one body of the self-natured Buddha so that you can perceive the threefold body and realize self-awakening to be self-nature. Please all of you repeat after me: We return to and rely on the pure and clean *Dharmkāya* Buddha who is in our physical body; We return to and rely on the completely perfect *Sambhogakāya* Buddha who is in our physical body; and We return to and rely on myriads of *Nirmānakāya* Buddha who is in our physical body. ....Every worldly man possesses the *Trikāya* Buddha in his own nature (*Dharmata*). When his mind is deluded, he does not perceive his inner nature, so he looks for the *Trikāya Tathāgata* from without, but does not see the *Trikāya* Buddha who is in his own body. As you have listened to my talk, you will be able to see that in your own bodies, your self-nature (*Dharmata*) possesses the *Trikāya* Buddha, which is begotten by your own nature and does not come from without.<sup>41</sup>

*Trikāya* is nothing but Buddha himself and Buddha is living in every one of us. Following the tradition from Bodhidharma he advances the way of introspection or personification in seeking the absolute. Buddha is grasped as the immanent absolute, the very foundation of our existence more than the transcendent absolute.

"If one can perceive the real in one's mind, the real found,  
Therein will be the cause of Buddhahood's attainment.

He who perceives not his self-nature, but will seek elsewhere,  
For Buddha, with such thought in mind is the most stupid man"<sup>42</sup>

Buddha exists in all sentient beings. The way to attain Buddhahood is seeing the immanent absolute, that is, the Nature which is pure and clean. Therefore, he says:

If enlightened in the time of a thought, even a sentient being is Buddha. Therefore, we know that all *dharmas* are inherent in our self-mind. Why do not we (try to) perceive instantly our Suchness-True Nature which is immanent in our self-mind? The *Bodhisattvasīla Sūtra* says: Fundamentally our own Nature is pure and clean; if we know the Mind and see the Nature, we will attain Buddhahood, and instantly obtain a clear understanding and regain the Fundamental Mind.<sup>43</sup>

Buddha is nothing but the Nature, the Mind. Here we find the fundamental identity between Bodhidharma's doctrine, "seeing true Nature which is one and the same by *Pi-Kuan*," and Hui-Neng's "seeing into one's Nature is the attainment of Buddhahood."

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 13, p. 54.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 35, p. 99.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 23, p. 35.



#### IV. The Thought of Yung-Chia (Yōka) in the *Cheng-Tao-Ke* (*Shōdōka*)

*Cheng-Tao-Ke* is said to be a masterpiece of Zen literature and Yung-Chia (665-713) is recognized as the author of this poem.<sup>44</sup> His fundamental thought will be found in the opening words.<sup>45</sup> In him we see a synthesis of Mahāyāna Buddhism and Taoism.

The ultimate reality is called *Tao*. The way to attain *Tao* is the act of *Wu-Wei*, non-action. He says:

"Have you not seen a man of *Tao* at his ease,  
In his non-action and beyond learning states,  
Who neither suppresses thoughts nor seeks the real?"<sup>46</sup>

The action of non-action is the highest action, by this man knows that all things are the manifestation of *Tao*. The discriminative knowledge keeps away from the truth, because the absolute *Tao* is beyond discrimination. Man by the non-discriminative knowledge knows that "ignorance" is Buddha-Nature and Empty Body is no less than *Dharmakāya*. "The real nature of ignorance is *Buddhatā*, and the empty body of illusion is *Dharmakāya*."<sup>47</sup>

The absolute *Tao* is beyond being and non-being, but is not apart from this phenomenal world. If man has *prajñā*, the transcendental wisdom, he recognizes that the phenomenal world is nothing but *Dharmakāya*.

"When one knows what the *Dharmakāya* is,  
there is not an object (to be known as such),  
The source of all things, as far as its self-nature goes,  
is the Buddha in his absolute aspect."<sup>48</sup>

*Dharmakāya* which is the constitutive nature of the ultimate reality, the Buddha in his absolute aspect, the origin of all things is the supreme wisdom, the spiritual intuition in which there is no object outside of seeing. Because seeing is the Nature and the Nature is seeing. This is the supreme Enlightenment.

<sup>44</sup> About his life and his work. See, UI, H., *Daini Zenshūshi Kenkyū*, pp. 269-281; The original Chinese text with the Japanese version in *Gendai Zen Kōza*, V, pp. 52-64; The English versions are: D.T. Suzuki's in *Manual of Zen Buddhism*, pp. 89-103; C. LUK's in *Ch'an and Zen Teaching*, III, pp. 116-145; MCCANDLESS, N., in *Buddhism and Zen* (Free translation), Philosophical Library, N.Y., 1953, pp. 31-72; The author uses mainly D.T. Suzuki's version and C. Luk's one.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. LUK, C., *Op. Cit.*, p. 116; C. Luk says: "The whole teaching of the Supreme Vehicle is condensed into the above lines. A man of *Tao*, or a follower of the transcendental Path, is one who is unconcerned with his illusory surroundings, whose mind is passionless and non-creative and who dwells in the absolute thatness which is beyond study."

<sup>46</sup> YUNG-CHIA, *Cheng-Tao-Ke*, 1; Number is the number classified by D.T. Suzuki; LUK, C., *Op. Cit.*, p. 116.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 1. LUK, C., *Op. Cit.*, p. 116.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 2. SUZUKI, D.T., *Manual.*, p. 89.

In *Cheng-Tao-Ke*, the ultimate reality is called the *Tao*, the *Dharmakāya*, the *Dharma* (the Reality), the Unthinkable, the Unborn, the Mind, the Emptiness.<sup>49</sup>

To know that all things are empty, that is, contingent is the perfect Enlightenment.

"Where all things of relativity are transient and ultimately empty, There is seen the great perfect enlightenment of the *Tathāgata* realized."<sup>50</sup>

*Sūnyatā* (The Emptiness) is *Samādhi* (the Enlightenment), and *Prajñā* (the Transcendental Wisdom).

Yung-Chia explains the relation between the absolute and the relative.

The absolute, because of its absoluteness, has no limit and exists in all relative things including everything and transcending everything. He uses the famous metaphor of the moon and the water.

"One Nature, perfect and pervading, circulates in all natures;

One *Dharma*, (the Reality), all comprehensive,

contains within itself all realities;

The one moon reflects in all waters;

All the moons in all waters are embraced within the one moon;

The *Dharmakāya* of all the Buddhas enters into my nature;

My nature unites with all *Tathāgatas*."<sup>51</sup>

✓ Each individual is not identified ontologically with the absolute, as if the moons in all waters are not the one moon. But the absolute is known by him who is immanent in each individual, as if the one moon is known by all the moons in all waters, because they are the reflection of the one moon. All the moons exist in waters, because they participate in the one moon. It must be interpreted in this sense when all things are said to be the manifestation of the absolute. The absolute, *Dharmakāya* exists in each individual and each individual has existence in the *Dharmakāya*.<sup>52</sup>

✓ Yung-Chia does not make any conceptual clarity between the absolute and the individual, but he does not make an ontological identity, just as all the moons in all waters are not the same one moon. We must say that he admits rather ontological difference. Because it is the unique purpose of Zen to realize epistemologically, not ontologically, the identity between the absolute and the individual.

✱ This is called the Enlightenment, the spiritual consciousness. The complete Enlightenment will be realized when the distinction between seer and seen disappears. It may be understood as the idea of idea, the thought of thought,

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 1, 2, 3, 27, 28, 30, etc.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 7; *Manual.*, pp. 90-91.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 32; *Manual.*, p. 97.

<sup>52</sup> This view may be interpreted as non-panteistic. We may find here the idea of participation. According to St. Thomas man is an image of God. Cf. THOMAS, A. ST., *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 93, a. 1-a. 9.



the consciousness of consciousness, in a word, the absolute cognition. In this spiritual consciousness, there is no other object to be seen, because all things are seen in the ultimate reality. This is called *Wu-I-Wu* (no-object).

Therefore, he says:

"As to seeing it, the seeing is clear enough,  
but no object is here to be seen,  
Not a person here, nor the Buddha;  
Chiliocosmos numberless are mere bubbles in the ocean,  
All the sages and worthies are flashes of lightning.  
However rapidly revolves the iron-wheel over my head,  
The perfect brightness of *Dhyāna* and *Prajñā* in me is never effaced."<sup>53</sup>

According to Yung-Chia, the whole of Zen efforts consists in the absolute cognition—to become the absolute Buddha, that is, the spiritual intuition.

#### V. The Thought of Huang-Po (Wōbaku) in the *Chuan-Hsin-Fa-Yao* (*Denshinhōyō*)

Huang-Po (+850) is also one of the most outstanding masters in Zen history and the *Chuan-Hsin-Fa-Yao* is the collection of his words by his disciple Pei-Hsin.<sup>54</sup>

Since we may find the words of Bodhidharma, the founder of Zen, the citations from the *Hsin-Hsin-Ming*, the *Cheng-Tao-Ke* and the idea of Hui-Neng in his sermons, it is certain that he succeeded the earlier Zen thought and developed it.

His thought is also one example of the excellent synthesis of Mahāyāna Buddhist thought and Taoist thought.

The central idea of his thought is *I-Hsin*, the One Mind. Since *Citta-Matra*, the Mind-Only theory is found in the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* and the Mind thought is the traditional thought of Zen from Bodhidharma; we cannot find any newness in the word of the One Mind, but we can find a great originality in the way to grasp the absolute which is transcendent and immanent, immanent and transcendent through the Mind.

The opening sermon of his *Chung-Ling-Lu*, the first part of the *Chuan-Hsin-Fa-Yao* already manifests the whole of his thought on the absolute.

According to Huang-Po, the unique absolute, the One Mind is an absolutely transcendent being, because the Mind is no-beginning, no-birth, no-form and which transcends the categories of being and non-being, time and space. It is

<sup>53</sup> YUNG-CHIA, *Op. Cit.*, 54, 55; *Manual.*, p. 103.

<sup>54</sup> About his life and his work; Cf. SHIBAYAMA, Z., *Denshinhōyō* in *Gendai Zen Kōza*, V, pp. 82-88; The original Chinese text which is based on the *Kuanbun* edition (1673) in *Kokuyahu Zengaku Taikei*, Vol. XVIII, Nishōdōshoten, Tōkyō, 1932, pp. 2-24; The Japanese version, pp. 1-70; The English version, BLOFELD, J., (Chu-Chan), *The Zen teaching of Huang Po.*, Rider & Co., London, 1959, pp. 27-132. A partial version, SUZUKI, D.T., in *Manual.*, pp. 112-119.

eternal, nameless, ineffable and incomprehensible. He says:

This Mind exists without beginning: it is neither born nor extinguished; it is neither blue nor yellow; it has neither shape nor form; it does not belong to the categories of being and non-being; it is not to be measured by terms of new or old; it is neither long or short; it is neither big nor small, for it transcends all limits, measures, names, traces, and opposites. It must be taken just as it is in itself; when an attempt is made on our part to grasp it in our thoughts, it eludes. It is like space whose boundaries are altogether beyond measurement; no concepts are applicable here.<sup>55</sup>

He also calls this absolute Mind *Ling-Choi-Hsing*, spiritually enlightening Nature or the Nature of spiritual consciousness. The Nature of spiritual consciousness transcends all relative categories. It is impossible to be grasped by the intellect, because the Nature transcends the intellectual order. It belongs to the spiritual order. Therefore only *Prajñā*, spiritual consciousness which is beyond the intellect, can attain the Nature-the Mind-the Buddha. Because the Nature-the Mind-the Buddha is nothing but *Prajñā*, spiritual consciousness. He says:

They do not know that the Emptiness is not really empty, but the realm of the real *Dharma*. This Nature of Spiritual Consciousness is without beginning, as ancient as the Emptiness, subject neither to birth nor to destruction, neither existing nor not existing, neither impure nor pure, neither clamorous nor silent, neither old nor young, occupying no space, having neither inside nor outside, size nor form, colour nor sound. It cannot be looked for or sought, comprehended by wisdom or knowledge, explained in words, contracted materially or reached by meritorious achievement. All the Buddhas and *Bodhisattvas*, together with all wriggling things possessed of life, share in this great Nirvanic Nature. This Nature is the Mind; The Mind is the Buddha, and the Buddha is the *Dharma* (Reality).<sup>56</sup>

The Mind is also called *Tao*, the supreme *Tao*, the great *Tao*. Here Taoist absolute *Tao* (the Way) is identified with Mahayanist absolute *Hsin* (The Mind). He says:

"*Tao* is not something specially existing; it is called the Mahāyāna Mind, the Mind which is not to be found inside, outside or in the middle. Truly it is not located anywhere..... This *Tao* is spiritual Truth and was originally without name and title..... Fearing that nobody would understand, they selected the name *Tao* (the Way)."<sup>57</sup>

<sup>55</sup> HUANG-PO, *Chung-Ling-Lu*, p. 3; BLOFELD, J., *Op. Cit.*, p. 29; The page indicates the page of the original text. The author uses mainly the version by J. Blofeld, but sometimes he uses his own version. This is his version.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6; BLOFELD, J., *Op. Cit.*, pp. 41-42.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10; *Ibid.*, p. 55.



Huang-Po affirms that this *Tao* is the same with the True Nature which is one and the same in Bodhidharma. He says:

....."The Great *Tao* is voidness of opposition. Bodhidharma firmly believed in being the True Nature which is one and the same in his life. The Mind and the Nature do not differ and the Nature is the Mind. The Mind does not differ from the Nature. ....The moment of realizing the unity of the Mind and the Nature which constitutes reality may truly be said Unthinkable (Incomprehensible)."58

According to Huang-Po, therefore, the Mind, the Nature, the Buddha, the *Tao*, the *Dharmakāya*, the Emptiness, the *Dharma* are the same. They indicate the unique ultimate reality. Now we see the way of grasping the absolute Mind in Huang-Po.

He says in his opening sermon:

All the Buddhas and all sentient beings are nothing but the One Mind, besides which nothing exists. ....The One Mind alone is the Buddha, and there is no distinction between the Buddha and sentient beings, but that sentient beings are attached to forms and so seek externally for Buddhahood. By their very seeking they lose it, for that is using the Buddha to seek for the Buddha and using mind to grasp the Mind. Even though they do their utmost for a full aeon, they will not be able to attain to it. They do not know that, if they put a stop to conceptual thought and forget their anxiety, the Buddha will appear before them, for this Mind is the Buddha and the Buddha is sentient beings.<sup>59</sup>

Therefore the absolute Mind, the Buddha who is the transcendent absolute is also omnipresent in all sentient beings because of the transcendentality of the Mind. Here the attention must be drawn to the fact that while Buddha is no other than sentient beings this does not mean that man is Buddha himself.

Man is not the Buddha, because man is losing the Mind, the Buddha by his discriminative mind. But if man grasp the Mind in him, he becomes the Buddha, because the Mind is nothing but the Buddha. The Mind cannot be grasped by a discriminative mind, because the Mind transcends the intellectual order. Therefore it is necessary to give up our discriminative mind for the purpose of finding the absolute Mind - the Buddha.

This is the mind of no-mind, the *Prajñā* intuition in which there is no distinction between seer and seen. Therefore, he says:

This *Dharma* is the Mind, beyond which there is no *Dharma*, and this Mind is the *Dharma*, beyond which there is no Mind. If your mind is no-mind, there is not a so called no-mind. If you annihilate the Mind through your mind, the Mind will become a relative being (a relative mind). Let there be a silent understanding and no more.

58 HUANG-PO, *Wan-Ling-Lu*, p. 15; Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

59 HUANG-PO, *Chung-Ling-Lu*, p. 3; *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

It is beyond all thinking. Therefore, it is said that words fail and acts of the mind cease to exist. This Mind is the Pure-Source-Buddha, and every one has it.<sup>60</sup>

The cognition of the Mind is the absolute cognition which we fail to express in this truth, because this cognition is beyond the intellect. This may be understood only in silence. This supra-intellectual cognition is nothing but the *Prajñā* intuition which is expressed in him as the mind of no-mind. This is no more than seeing into one's Nature, which is seeing all things in the ultimate truth or seeing the ultimate truth in all things. The Nature is the Mind and the Mind is the Nature.

The Mind is also called the original and pure Mind, the Substance of the spiritual brilliance:

This original and pure Mind shines forever and on all with the brilliance of its own perfection. But the people of the world do not awaken to it, regarding only that which sees, hears, feels and knows as mind. Blinded by their own sight, hearing, feeling, and knowing, they do not perceive the Substance of the spiritual brilliance. If their mind will be no-mind immediately, the Substance will manifest itself like the sun ascending through the sky and illuminating the whole universe without hindrance or bounds.<sup>61</sup>

He calls also this Mind *Pen-Hsin* (fundamental Mind) as Hui-Neng did. The fundamental Mind is nothing but the *Prajñā*. He says:

"Only realize that, though the fundamental Mind is expressed in these perceptions, it neither forms part of them nor is separate from them."<sup>62</sup>

"This is the only truth; all else is false. *Prajñā* is wisdom, wisdom is the fundamental Mind of No-form."<sup>63</sup>

We know already that in Mahayanist philosophy *Prajñā* is a means for the Enlightenment and at the same time its purpose, the Enlightenment itself. Therefore *Prajñā* can be grasped only through *Prajñā*. The Mind can be grasped only through the mind of no-mind, that is, the Mind. We see here the most energetic expression of this truth, *I-Hsin-Chuan-Hsin* (Transmission of the Mind through the Mind). He says:

"Therefore you students of *Tao*, your mind should be no-mind immediately and be a tacit understanding. Any mental process must lead to error. There is just a transmission of the Mind through the Mind. This is the correct view."<sup>64</sup>

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4; Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5; Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>62</sup> *Loc. Cit.*, p. 5; *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7; *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6; Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 42.



And also, he expresses *I-Hsin-Yin-Hsin* (the Mind is transmitted through the Mind), and *Hsin-Hsin-Pu-I* (the Mind and one's mind do not differ):

"Thus the Mind is transmitted through the Mind and the Mind and one's mind do not differ. Transmitting and receiving transmission are both a most difficult kind of mysterious understanding; so that few indeed have been able to receive it. In fact, however, the Mind is no-mind, and transmission is no-transmission."<sup>65</sup>

"The transmission of the Mind through the Mind, and the Mind and one's mind do not differ" mean the same reality; that is, the absolute intuition in which there is no distinction between the object and the subject. Because the object, the Mind is the subject, the subject, one's mind is the object, the Mind. It is nothing but the *Prajñā* intuition, seeing into one's Nature and spiritual consciousness.<sup>66</sup> It may be said as if it were the divine intellection. The transmission of the Mind through the Mind is the essence of his Zen and this is becoming the Buddha. He calls a person who realizes this "a man of tranquility".<sup>67</sup> A man of tranquility is a man of *Tao*.

Huang-Po makes an advance in the way of a personification of the absolute. According to him the absolute is present in all sentient beings. Buddha is present in us, but man does not know this truth because of his blinded eyes. The unique way to find Buddha is to awaken to the transcendental Wisdom, *Prajñā*, the mind of no-mind. The Mind can be grasped only through the mind of no-mind, that is, the Mind itself. Following the traditional doctrine of One Mind from Bodhidharma he made a strong step to Personalism, a breakthrough to the Person even if this accomplishment had to wait for Lin-Chi, his disciple.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9; *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>66</sup> In J. Blofeld's version we find the part in which Huang-Po affirms that the Nature and the Seeing into it are one and the same. Cf. *The Zen teaching of Huang Po.*, (*Wan-Ling-Lu*, 42-43) pp. 116-119. The author fails to get the original text of this part because of the difference of the edition. If this part were authentic, his thought is marvelous concerning "the Seeing into one's Nature" (*Chien-Hsing*).

<sup>67</sup> HUANG-PO, *Op. Cit.*, p. 11; *Ibid.*, p. 57.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE THOUGHT OF LIN-CHI (RINZAI) ON CHEN-JEN (TRUE MAN)

Lin-Chi (+867), a disciple of Huang-Po, the founder of Lin-Chi Sect (Rinzai Shū) is one of the most prominent Masters in the history of Zen thought. *Lin-Chi-Lu* is the collection of his sermons.<sup>1</sup>

Traditionally his thought is formulated as *Shiryōken*, (Four Arrangements of Subject and Object), *Shihinju*, (Fourfold Relation of Guest and Host), *Sanku*, (Three Phrases), *Sangen Sanyō*, (Three Mysteries and Three Essentials), *Shishoyū*, (Fourfold Precedence and Subsequence of Light and Activity), *Shikatsu* (Four Shouts).... etc.<sup>2</sup> But *Jen* (Person or Man) thought is most important as his religio-philosophical thought. *Jen* thought in Lin-Chi should be called one of the completions of Zen thought.

We already saw that in Hui-Neng and Huang-Po the cognition of the absolute would be realized in our mind. The Buddha must be found within us not outside of us. The Buddha is nothing but sentient beings, and sentient beings are nothing but the Buddha. The newness in Lin-Chi is the personification of the absolute, that is, the dynamic, total and experiential cognition of the absolute. It is to grasp the absolute in the bottom of one's self-existence.

In the traditional expression of the absolute, — since Bodhidharma, that is — the Mind seems closer to man than the other expressions of the absolute, *Sūnyatā* or *Tao*. But it has still an epistemologico-psychological connotation. In Lin-Chi the absolute is expressed by a word *Jen*, man or person, which is the very foundation of one's existence and actions. Here the absolute appears as a Person.

According to the unique study of D.T. Suzuki on the thought of Lin-Chi, *Jen* is Lin-Chi's fundamental thought and because of this thought he occupies the unique position in the history of Zen thought.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> About his life, see FURUTA, S., *Rinzairoku no Shisō*, Shunjūsha, Tōkyō, 1956, pp. 14-26; ITO, K., *Rinzai*, Kōbundō, Tōkyō, 1941, pp. 44-110; About *Lin-Chi-Lu*, FURUTA, S., *Op. Cit.*, pp. 213-232; The original Chinese text; The critical edition by ASAHINA, S., *Rinzairoku*, Iwanamishoten, Tōkyō, 1961, with a Japanese version. There is no complete English translation, but there is a version from *Chih-Yueh-Lu*, by LUK, C., in *Ch'an and Zen Teaching*, II, Rider & Co., London, 1961, pp. 110-126. The author uses this version many times, sometimes he uses his own version. D.T. Suzuki's partial translation will be found in *Essays*, III, pp. 51-55.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. ITO, K., *Op. Cit.*, pp. 11-150; FURUTA, S., *Op. Cit.*, pp. 44-71, 102-113; DUMOULIN, H., S.J., *The Development of Chinese Zen*, The first Zen Institute of America, N.Y., 1953, pp. 21-24.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. SUZUKI, D.T., *Zoku Senshū*, II, *Rinzai no Kihon Shisō*, Shunjūsha, Tōkyō, 1955, p. 40, 67, 223, 224, 238, etc.....



I. The Existence of *Jen*, Person

The famous story on *Wu-Wei-Chen-Jen*, a true man of no title follows:

In the hall Lin-Chi said, "In your heart, there is a true Man of no title who comes in and goes out through your forehead; those who have not yet testified to this, Look! Look!" A monk came forward and asked, "Who is a true Man of no title?" The Master came down from his meditation chair and taking hold of the monk demanded, "Speak! Speak!" As the monk hesitated, the Master pushed him away, saying, "Is the true Man of no title such a toilet stick?" He then returned to his room.<sup>4</sup>

According to him, one person, a true man of no title dwells in each individual and he urges him to testify to this true man by his most intimate experience. This true man of no title is also called a non-dependant man of *Tao*.<sup>5</sup>

"Virtuous ones, what do you look for? Now, in front of you, the non-dependent Man of *Tao* who is listening to (my expounding of) the *Dharma*, is clearly distinguishable and does not lack in anything."<sup>6</sup>

"Therefore, the realization of the non-existence of the six; form, sound, smell, taste, touch and *dharma* is freedom from bondage. This non-dependent Man of *Tao*, although still possessing the five vulgar aggregates, is already a supernatural one walking on earth."<sup>7</sup>

"Only a non-dependent Man of *Tao* who is listening to the *Dharma* is Mother of all *dharms*."<sup>8</sup>

From these citations we know that Lin-Chi is talking about one Person who is present in each one, and here and now is listening to the *Dharma*. How can we interpret this true man? Lin-Chi says:

Virtuous ones, you have only to know that the Person who is playing with these shadows is the fundamental source of all Buddhas, and followers of *Tao*, that every place is on the road to your own home.

.....

<sup>4</sup> LIN-CHI, *Lin-Chi-Lu*, p. 26; Cf. LUK, C., *Ch'an.*, II, pp. 110-111; SUZUKI, D.T., *Living by Zen*, p. 23; *Essays.*, I, p. 21. The page number indicates the page of the original text of Asahina edition. C. Luk notices a term *Chen-Jen*, true man in Chuang-Tzu, the most eminent successor of Lao-Tzu. Cf. Chuang-Tzu, BK. VI, *Ta-Zung-Shih*, 1-6; LEGGE, J., *The Texts of Taoism*, pp. 284-291, Taoist, Chuang-Tzu uses this term in the sense that "The true man is the one whose nature is in agreement with *Tao*." Cf. p. 183. It is evident that Lin-Chi uses this term as his central thought with another connotation which we will see now.

<sup>5</sup> We saw already a term *Tao-Jen*, a man of *Tao* used in Hui-Neng, Yung-Chia and Huang-Po, but it signified just a follower of *Tao*. But in Lin-Chi there is another significance.

<sup>6</sup> LIN-CHI, *Op. Cit.*, p. 58; LUK, C., *Op. Cit.*, p. 122.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62; *Ibid.*, p. 123.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46; *Ibid.*, p. 118.

Then who knows how to expound the *Dharma* or listen to it? Just that solitary light, clearly distinguishable before your eyes, is the One who can expound the *Dharma* or listen to it. If you can thus perceive it, you will not differ from the Patriarchs and Buddha.<sup>9</sup>

*Jen* is nothing but the absolute, the Buddha himself, who exists through all beings as the fundamental source of all beings. This absolute does not exist apart from the individual existence of each one. He is with the existence of each one. He is in the existence of each one. It is he who enables each to exist. It is he who enables Lin-Chi to be as Lin-Chi, and at the same time he is existing in Lin-Chi but is not Lin-Chi. He cannot be identified with each individual but he is acting in each individual and using each one. Lin-Chi says:

"Followers of *Tao*, the One, who is now listening to the *Dharma* is not your four elements but One who can make use of your four elements. If you hold such a view, you will then be free to go or stay."<sup>10</sup>

Here we must note that an ordinary man is not *Jen*, Person.<sup>11</sup> Lin-Chi is asking a correct view, namely, the experiential cognition of *Jen*. This cognition is not the intellectual knowledge, but it must be the supra-intellectual knowledge, because the absolute transcends the intellectual order. Lin-Chi is asking the personal and total cognition of the existence of *Jen*, Person. This cognition must be called the cognition of the immanence of the absolute.

According to Lin-Chi, the way to find the absolute, the Buddha, is not outside of each one but inside of each one. He says repeatedly "do not seek outside." "If you do not want to differ from the Patriarchs and Buddha, it will suffice for you to seek nothing outside."<sup>12</sup> He recommends that the absolute be found within each one, following the internal lights which illuminate one's inside:

The pure and clean light that shines in your one thought, this is your own *Dharmakāya* Buddha. The non-discriminative light that shines in your one thought, this is your own *Sambhogakāya* Buddha. The non-differentiating light that shines in your one thought, this is your own *Nirmānakāya* Buddha. This triple body is the Person — who is here and now listening to (my expounding of) the *Dharma*. This can only be achieved if nothing is sought from without.<sup>13</sup>

We may say that this has a certain similarity to the thought of the internal light, the inner Master in St. Augustine. Since man is created in the image of God, the discovery of God will be realized in the inmost soul of man.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 34-36; *Ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48; *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. FURUTA, S., *Op. Cit.*, p. 76.

<sup>12</sup> LIN-CHI, *Op. Cit.*, p. 34; LUK, C., *Op. Cit.*, p. 112.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34; Cf. LUK, C., *Ibid.*, p. 112; SUZUKI, D.T., *Essays.*, III, p. 52.



Lin-Chi is asking the discovery of the absolute *Jen*, Person, who is living and acting in each one as the very source of the individual existence and all actions. Since this *Jen*, Person, is the absolute, he is not only immanent, but also transcendent. He can exist in everyone and everytime. *Jen* is living in each one and each one is living in *Jen*. But an ordinary man does not know this fact. Man is seeking the absolute outside. Man cannot recognize who is within him and at the same time outside him. For man's mind remains in the intellectual order and it does not reach the spiritual order which transcends the intellectual order.

According to Lin-Chi, the whole of Zen efforts consists in the total and experiential cognition of this absolute Person who is in each one and is not in each one. This total and absolute cognition is no other than to become the absolute Person itself.

## II. The Characteristic of *Jen*

Although the true Man of no title — the non-dependent Man of *Tao* in Lin-Chi — is the immanent, it is clear that this Person is also the transcendent. The term, no title or non-dependent itself indicates a transcendental character, self-subsistent and independent. Lin-Chi says:

“Now, in front of you, the non-dependent Man of *Tao* who is listening to the *Dharma*, is clearly distinguishable and does not lack in anything.”<sup>14</sup>

*Jen* is the perfect One who does not lack in anything. *Jen* is self-subsistent, self-sufficing, independent. His action is perfectly independent and free, therefore, there is no place to escape from his being and his action. He is the transcendent which surpasses time and space. He is eternal and omnipresent. Lin-Chi says:

Followers of *Tao*, I am talking only about that which is distinctly solitary and bright, and is listening to the *Dharma*. This “One Person” knows no obstructions and is omnipresent in the three worlds of existence in the ten directions of space; it can freely and comfortably enter all the different states without being infected by them..... It will go to all places and journey to lands where it will convert the living. It has never even for the time of a thought, strayed from omnipresent purity and cleanness, shining through the ten directions of space where myriad things are in the state of suchness.<sup>15</sup>

Having a supernatural power shows the *Jen* is that transcendent. Lin-Chi says:

“This non-dependent Man of *Tao*, although still (appearing as) possessing the five vulgar aggregates, is already a supernatural One

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58; *Ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44; *Ibid.*, p. 117.

walking on earth. Followers of *Tao*, the true Buddha has no form and the true *Dharma* has no aspect."<sup>16</sup>

"Followers of *Tao*, there is only the One Person who is now present here and is listening to the *Dharma*. He enters fire without being burned by fire, water without being drowned by water, the three hells of suffering with the same attitude of a man strolling in a garden, and the realms of animals and hungry ghosts without suffering from any retribution. How can all this come about? Because of this *Dharma* of non objection."<sup>17</sup>

The absolute, because of its absoluteness transcends everything and at the same time it is present in everything, because the transcendence and the immanence are both sides of the absoluteness. The absolute cannot lack any side.

Lin-Chi asks the total and experiential cognition of this Person who is transcendent and immanent. Lin-Chi says:

If you want to be free from birth and death and free to go or stay and to be comfortably independent, you should recognize the One Person who is here and now listening to the *Dharma*. This One has neither form nor shape and neither roots nor branches; this One has no place of abode; and this One is lively and active and performs its function according to circumstances beyond all conceptions of location. If you search for him, he will flee away from you and if you long for him, he will oppose you. So it is called the Secret.<sup>18</sup>

Since *Jen* is the transcendent, *Jen* is said to be "no-form", "no-shape", "no-root", "not-abiding", and since *Jen* is the immanent, *Jen* is said to be "lively and active and performs its function according to circumstances." If *Jen* is just immanent, he does not flee away from one, when one searches for him. Therefore, *Jen* is the transcendental immanent, immanent transcendental, the supra-individual and individual, the individual and supra-individual.

Lin-Chi calls this the Secret or the Mystery, because its cognition transcends the intellectual knowledge. This is the supra-intellectual knowledge. Lin-Chi calls this "the true and correct view." He says:

"If you are true students of *Tao*, you should not see other's faults but should speed up your search for the true and the correct view. Only when you have attained the true and correct view and have been awakened to the perfectly bright nature, can your work be considered complete."<sup>19</sup>

"There is only a non-dependent Man of *Tao*, who is Mother of all Buddhas. Therefore Buddha comes from non-dependence. If you

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62; *Ibid.*, p. 123.

<sup>17</sup> *Loc. Cit.*, p. 62; *Ibid.*, p. 124.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46; *Ibid.*, p. 118.

<sup>19</sup> *Loc. Cit.*, p. 46; *Loc. Cit.*, p. 118.



recognize the non-dependence, Buddha also is no-gain. The holding of such a view is the true and correct view."<sup>20</sup>

"If you get the true and correct view you will be free from birth and death, from going out and abiding."<sup>21</sup>

Man who recognizes this *Jen*, the absolute Person has a peaceful mind. Because *Jen* is the very foundation of the existence of man. *Jen* is the unique end of man. Lin-Chi calls this man "a man of tranquility." "The Buddha and the Patriarchs are a man of tranquility."<sup>22</sup>

### III. *Jen-Hsin-Reiseiteki Jikaku*: Spiritual Consciousness

The cognition of *Jen* transcends the intellectual order. This is the supra-intellectual cognition — according to the terminology of D.T. Suzuki, this is *Reiseiteki Jikaku*, a spiritual consciousness.<sup>23</sup> D.T. Suzuki says:

"*Jen* is a spiritual consciousness, a spiritual consciousness is *Jen*. Therefore *Jen* is the self-consciousness which the Supra-individual possesses in the individual, and *Jen* is the self-consciousness which the individual possesses in the Supra-individual. Because of this self-consciousness it is said that One in all, all in One".<sup>24</sup>

When man arrives at the spiritual consciousness, man recognizes *Jen*, the Person, because *Jen* is the spiritual consciousness.

*Jen* is called also *Hsin*, (literally faith, but here it signifies Intuition or Seeing). *Hsin* is *Jen* and *Jen* is *Hsin*. Lin-Chi says:

If you have no faith (intuition or vision), you will be flustered and cling to externals which will displace your self and you will lose your freedom. If you can only stop every thought of your searching mind, you will not differ from the Patriarch and the Buddha. Do you want to know who is the Patriarch or the Buddha? He is just the One Person in front of you, listening now to the *Dharma*. But students have no faith (intuition) in him and look for something else outside.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>20</sup> *Loc. Cit.*, p. 46; *Loc. Cit.*, pp. 118-119.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54, p. 34.

<sup>23</sup> The term *Reiseiteki Jikaku*, (spiritual cognition, spiritual consciousness or spiritual self-consciousness) manifests the very essence of D.T. Suzuki's Zen thought or Zen interpretation. Cf. SUZUKI, D.T., *The Essence of Buddhism*, The Buddhist Society, London, 1946, pp. 4-31; The new edition, Hōzōkan, Kyōto, 1948, pp. 3-49; in *The Essentials of Zen Buddhism* edited by B. Philips, Dutton, N.Y., 1962, pp. 383-414; *Zokusenshū*, IV, *Reiseiteki Nippon no Kensetsu*, Shunjūsha, Tōkyō, 1953, pp. 17-93.

<sup>24</sup> SUZUKI, D.T., *Zokusenshū*, II, *Rinzai no Kihonshisō*, p. 180: "*Nin*" wa *Reiseiteki Jikaku* de, *Reiseiteki Jikaku* wa "*Nin*" de aru. Sore de "*Nin*" wa *Chōkoshu* ga *Koki* no ueni motsu jikaku de aru. "*Nin*" wa *Koki* ga *Chōkoshu* no ueni motsu jikaku de aru. Ichi soku Ta toka, Ta soku Ichi toka iwareru nowa kono Jikaku no yue de aru."

<sup>25</sup> LIN-CHI, *Op. Cit.*, p. 32; *Op. Cit.*, p. 112.

The lack of faith (intuition) is the lack of the absolute cognition. He says:

"If you do not want to differ from the Patriarchs and the Buddha, just hold this correct view and do not use the doubt. If the Mind and your mind do not differ, this is called the Living Patriarch."<sup>26</sup>

*Hsin-Hsin-Pu-I* (the Mind and one's mind do not differ) signifies that there is no distinction between the absolute Mind and one's mind, that is, the absolute cognition in which there is no distinction between the object and the subject, the object is the subject and the subject is the object. This is Undifferentiated Consciousness, God-Consciousness, the divine intellection.<sup>27</sup>

If one has this divine intellection one becomes the absolute in the absolute. This is *Hsin* (Intuition), and *Hsin* is *Jen* (the Person).<sup>28</sup> What is said as *Jen* in Lin-Chi does not differ with what Zen Masters were seeking, that is, the absolute intuition by *Prajñā*, the transcendental wisdom. That is *Pi-Kuan* (Wall-contemplation) of Bodhidharma, *Hsin-Hsin-Pu-Erh* (The Believing (seeing) mind and the Mind are not two) of Sēng-Ts'an, *Chien-Hsing* (Seeing into one's Nature) of Hui-Neng, *Wu-I-Wu* (No object) of Yung-Chia, *Hsin-Hsin-Pu-I* (The Mind and one's mind do not differ) of Huang-Po and Lin-Chi, and *Reiseiteki Jikaku* (Spiritual consciousness) of D.T. Suzuki.<sup>29</sup> But prior to Lin-Chi, in the *Sūnyatā* (Emptiness) thought of Mahāyāna Buddhism, the *Tao* (Way) thought of Lao-Tzu, the *Hsin* (Mind) thought since Bodhidharma, a grasping the absolute Person is not explicit.<sup>30</sup>

In the thought of Lin-Chi the absolute appears as Person. The uniqueness of Lin-Chi is to grasp dynamically the absolute as Person. Can we not say the true Man who penetrates into all beings, giving the existence and moving them, and who is the immanent transcendent, the transcendental immanent is an aspiration to That Man, the Man-God?

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>27</sup> We saw already the same idea in Huang-Po. Cf. HUANG-PO, *Chung-Ling-Lu*, p. 9: "Thus the Mind is transmitted through the Mind and the Mind and one's mind do not differ."

<sup>28</sup> Cf. SUZUKI, D.T., *Zokusenshū*, II, *Rinzai no Kihonshisō*, pp. 60-64.

<sup>29</sup> According to D.T. Suzuki the perfect *Tao* of Sēng-Ts'an is nothing but the absolute Person. Cf. *Senshū*, II, *Zen no Shisō* p. 63; D.T. Suzuki says: "Zen is the Person, and apart from the Person there is no Zen": "Zen wa Jinkaku de aru, Jinkaku wo hanarete Zen wa nai", *Senshū*, III, *Zen no Michi*, p. 146.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. SUZUKI, D.T., *Zokusenshū*, II, *Rinzai no Kihonshisō*, pp. 223, 255.



The absolute is nothing but *Jen* (the Person) who exists and acts in each one. *Jen*, this absolute Person is immanent but also transcendent. The ultimate reality, the absolute appears as the Person. This is his great uniqueness in the history of Zen thought. According to Lin-Chi the total and experiential cognition of this absolute Person is the unique purpose of Zen. *Jen* is the consciousness of the absolute in the individual and the consciousness of the individual in the absolute. *Jen* (the Person) is *Hsin* (the Vision) and *Hsin* (the Vision) is *Jen* (the Person).

Bodhidharma's *Pi-Kuan*, Sēng-Ts'an's *Hsin-Hsin-Pu-Erh*, Hui-Neng's *Chien-Hsing*, Yung-Chia's *Wu-I-Wu*, Huang-Po's *I-Hsin-Chuan-Hsin* and *Hsin-Hsin-Pu-I*, Lin-Chi's *Jen* are the same in their essence, namely, they are the *Prajñā* intuition.

According to the terminology of D.T. Suzuki this is the Spiritual consciousness or the Spiritual self-consciousness. D.T. Suzuki expounds the Spiritual consciousness as the metaphysical essence of Zen thought.

We summarize here the modern interpretation of Zen thought by D.T. Suzuki.

The all activity of the intellect is the discrimination or the multiplicity. But the intellect always is seeking the perfect identity. Because the all activity of the intellect is based on something superior to the intellect and there is something superior to the intellect in it. This must be called a Supra-intellectual or Spiritual consciousness. It belongs to a higher order than the intellectual order. This is the non-discriminative knowledge, the transcendental wisdom. This is called by D.T. Suzuki Unconsciousness, Supra-consciousness, Undifferentiated consciousness, Quasi-God-consciousness.<sup>1</sup>

D.T. Suzuki says:

Spiritual self-consciousness is a *sui generis* kind of consciousness. It is a form of intuition unanalyzable into subject and object, into one who intuits and that which is intuited. It is an intuition in which there is no opposition of the seer and the seen; it is a case of absolute self-identification. It is an intuition which is not intuition, for it is an intuition of non-distinction distinguished and of non-discrimination discriminated.<sup>2</sup>

This is nothing but the so called divine intuition. Zen postulates the divine intellection. This God-consciousness or Buddha-consciousness is the Spiritual consciousness.<sup>3</sup> D.T. Suzuki identifies the divine intellection with the Seeing into one's Nature.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. SUZUKI, D.T., *Living by Zen*, pp. 95-107.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. SUZUKI, D.T., *The Essentials of Zen Buddhism*, p. 411.

<sup>3</sup> "God can only be known through God" is cited by D.T. Suzuki in *Senshū*, IV, *Reiseiteki Nippon no Kensetsu*, p. 78.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

According to the expression of Mahāyāna Buddhism, it is called *Acintya-Mothisha*, Unthinkable-Emancipation. This is the state unattainable without the divine Revelation. This is called the absolute Present, Now of Eternity (*nunc aeternitatis*).<sup>5</sup> This is the Spiritual consciousness.

The ultimate reality is nothing but the absolute Person. The unique purpose of Zen consists in the total and experiential cognition of the Person — "Zen is the Person, and apart from the Person there is no Zen."<sup>6</sup> That is the Spiritual consciousness.

The experience of this spiritual consciousness is called *Satori* (in Japanese), *Wu* (in Chinese).<sup>7</sup> The Spiritual consciousness is considered from the metaphysical viewpoint and *Satori* is considered from the side of the experience.

In the following part the author will compare this Zen thought with the thought of St. Thomas.

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.

<sup>6</sup> SUZUKI, D.T., *Senshū*, III, *Zen no Michi*, p. 146.

<sup>7</sup> Zenists proclaim the possibility and the facts of the *Satori* experience. Here again the author wants to emphasize that he does not treat the *Satori* experience itself nor the possibility and the facts of this experience. About the *Satori* experience. See, SUZUKI, D.T., *On Satori*, in *Essays*, I, pp. 229-266; *On the Kōan Exercise*, in *Essays*, II, pp. 17-135; *Senshū*, VII, *Satori*, shunjūsha, Tōkyō, 1954, pp. 81-184.



## PART TWO:

### COMPARISON WITH THE THOUGHT OF ST. THOMAS

#### CHAPTER IV

#### THE TRANSCENDENCE OF GOD

Mahāyāna Buddhist thought and Taoist thought are often considered as pantheistic and characterized as a pantheistic immanentism. Christian scholars considering Buddhism a pantheistic immanentism often fail to notice the transcendental character of the ultimate reality in Buddhist thought, and even when they notice this, they consider Buddhism as an agnosticism. However, this is a misunderstanding, for to realize the ultimate reality is the unique purpose of the Buddhist life.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, when Buddhist scholars consider the notion of God in Christianity, for instance, the Creator lacks the absolute transcendence, they refuse the notion of a Christian God because of its anthropomorphic and relative character. However this is also a misunderstanding of the notion of the Creator and creation in Catholic theology.<sup>2</sup>

We have already studied the source of Zen thought, namely Mahāyāna Buddhist thought and Taoist thought on the notion of the absolute and remarked its transcendental character as one of the characteristics of both thoughts. In Mahāyāna Buddhism, the absolute is expressed by the term *Sūnyatā*, (the Emptiness or the Void), hence the absolute is considered as unattainable or unattained, and unthinkable or incomprehensible.

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

<sup>2</sup> This is due to a misunderstanding of the meaning of the Creator and also to the incorrect comparison. Because first, they misunderstand the meaning of the Creator and creation—they think that the Creator is correlative to creatures, therefore, the Creator is not the transcendental absolute. Anyone who is familiar with the theology of St. Thomas knows that creation is nothing but the relation between creatures and God, and the real relation exists only from creatures to God but not from God to creatures. Cf. *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 45, a. 3, and ad 3.: "Creatures are like God, but God is not like anything." *C. Gent.*, I, 1, c. 29: "Non igitur Deus creaturae assimilatur, sed magis converso." Cf. *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 3, a. 5, ad 1; *In Div. Nom.*, c. 9, l. 3, n. 832; DIONYSIUS, *Div. Nom.*, c. 9, l. 3, § 6, n. 374. Secondly, they do not compare the nature of the ultimate reality in Buddhism with the Deity in Christianity.

Therefore God has no name which can express the very nature of God. "The reason why God has no name, or is said to be above being named, is because His essence is above all that we understand about God and signify in word."<sup>12</sup>

In other words, our intellect cannot grasp the essence of God in any of the concepts which signifies the divine essence. Because God is not being in the ordinary sense, but He is the Supra-being.

For a definition we need genus and specific difference, but the divine essence is not included under any genus or species. Therefore the definition of God is absolutely impossible.<sup>13</sup> Since there is no name which expresses quidditatively the divine essence, God is ineffable.<sup>14</sup>

Here we find exactly the same way of thinking between Lao-Tzu and St. Thomas. For Lao-Tzu expresses the same idea, saying:

"The *Tao* that can be said, is not the Eternal (Absolute) *Tao*,  
The Nameless is the origin of Heaven and Earth.  
The Named is the Mother of all things."<sup>15</sup>  
"The *Tao* is eternal (absolute) and has no name."<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, I, q. 13, a. 1, ad 1.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *Com. Theol.*, c. 26. A.D. Sertillanges elucidates marvelously on this point, *Dieu*, t. II, Desclée, Paris, 1926, pp. 382-383:.... "Nous ne savons pas *ce que Dieu est*; nous ne le savons *à aucun degré*, et nous ne pouvons donner de Dieu aucune *définition*, même partielle. .... On voit que l'exclusion de tout élément de définition touchant Dieu s'étend jusqu'à la qualification de Dieu en tant qu'être. Dieu n'est pas un être, au sens humain du mot, il est la Source d'être, "se tenant en dehors de tout l'ordre des êtres" parce qu'il le cause (Périherméias, leçon 14). Ceci est très important; car si Dieu était proprement un être, il devrait revêtir l'une ou l'autre des qualifications de l'être, ou bien toutes; .....

Dans le premier cas on ferait de Dieu une créature limitée; on tomberait dans l'anthropomorphisme. Dans le second cas, on verserait au panthéisme... Nous ne savons donc *nullement, en rien, à aucun degré*, ce que Dieu est." Cf. GILSON, E., *Le Thomisme*, 5ème édition, Librairie philosophique J. Vrin, Paris, 1944, pp. 140; 141: "Or il se trouve que, dans le cas de Dieu, toute définition est impossible. On peut le nommer, mais le désigner par un nom n'est pas le définir. Pour le définir, il faudrait lui assigner un genre. .... On ne peut donc pas dire que l'essence de Dieu appartienne au genre être, et comme on ne saurait lui attribuer aucune autre essence, toute définition de Dieu est impossible." Cf. also DE DUBAC, H., S.J., *Op. Cit.*, pp. 157-158.

<sup>14</sup> Suarez teaches explicitly the ineffability of God. SUAREZ, F., S.J., *Opera Omnia*, t. I, l. 2, c. 31, Vivès, Paris, 1856, pp. 181-188. n. 2: "Atque imprimis dicendum est, Deum vere, ac proprie dicti et esse ineffabilem. ....

Ratio vero horum Patrum, quia nos effari non possumus, nisi quae cognoscimus, at Deus qualis sit, cognoscere non possumus, est ergo nobis ineffabilis." n. 10: "Nullum est nomen Dei, quod ipsum quidditative significat, seu repraesentat, et hoc ratione mente ineffabili dicitur, et in eodem sensu dici potest innominabilis. ....

Ratio denique facilis est ex dictis, quia nobis impossibile est in hac vita Deum cognoscere quidditative, ergo, nec habere nomen, quod ipsum quidditative repraesentet."

<sup>15</sup> LAO-TZU, *Tao-Te-Ching*, Ch. 1.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, Ch. 32.



According to Lao-Tzu, *Tao* is the absolute which is beyond all relative things, therefore, it transcends all relative knowledge and words. All names are suitable to express relative things, but they are not suitable to express the essence of the absolute *Tao*. Therefore the absolute *Tao* has no name.

In Mahāyāna Buddhism we also find the incomprehensibility and consequently the ineffability of the ultimate reality. For instance, as we pointed out in the first part, in the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* we find a very similar expression. The words which are relative cannot express the nature of the ultimate truth. Hence, "Language, is not the ultimate truth, what is attainable by language is not the ultimate truth."<sup>17</sup> Since the ultimate reality is beyond all categories of our thoughts, it is absolutely unattainable and unexpressible.<sup>18</sup> Therefore in Mahāyāna Buddhism the ultimate reality is beyond the intellect and unattainable, incomprehensible and unexpressible.

The thought of Zen is characterized as the way to grasp the absolute as immanent, but the transcendental character of the absolute is not lost. We present here one example in Zen thought on the incomprehensibility and the ineffability of the absolute.

As we already pointed out, the One Mind (*I-Hsin*) in Huang-Po is the transcendental absolute. This absolute Mind transcends all limits, measures, names, traces, and oppositions. It does not belong to the categories of being and non-being. It is absolutely transcendent and no concepts are applicable; therefore it has no name.<sup>19</sup>

Therefore the Nameless is the first character of the absolute in the thought of the East and the West, of Christians and Non-Christians.

<sup>17</sup> SUZUKI, D.T., *Lankāvatāra Sūtra*, p. 87; *Studies in the Lankāvatāra Sūtra*, p. 244.

<sup>18</sup> For instance, Cf. *Surangama Sūtra* (*Ryōgonkyō*), 7, SUZUKI, D.T., *Manual of Zen Buddhism*, p. 67: "...In this Essence of eternal truth there is indeed neither going nor coming, neither becoming confused nor being enlightened, neither dying nor being born; it is absolutely unattainable and unexplainable by the intellect, for it lies beyond all the categories of thought."

<sup>19</sup> Cf. HUANG-PO, *Chung-Ling-Lu*, p. 3. This fundamental character, namely the transcendence of the absolute in the thought of Zen continues also in Zen Buddhism in Japan as well as in Zen Buddhism in China. The illustrative example is Daio Kokushi's words on Zen. SUZUKI, D.T., *Manual*, pp. 145-146:

"There is a reality even prior to heaven and earth;

Indeed, it has no form, much less a name;

Eyes fail to see it;

It has no voice for ears to detect;

To call it Mind or Buddha violates its nature;

For it then becomes like a visionary flower in the air;

It is not Mind, nor Buddha;

Absolutely quiet, and yet illuminating a mysterious way,

It allows itself to be perceived only by the clear-eyed.

It is *Dharma* truly beyond form and sound;

It is *Tao* having nothing to do with words."

The incomprehensibility and the ineffability of God are nothing but the transcendence of God.<sup>20</sup> This is not only the Thomistic doctrine but also the Catholic doctrine, because the Church explicitly declared this truth.<sup>21</sup>

We may conclude here that Mahayanist thought, Taoist thought, and the thought of Zen are in accord with the thought of St. Thomas on the incomprehensibility and the ineffability of the absolute.

## II. The Supra-substantiality of God

Since the absolute in Mahāyāna Buddhism is transcendent, the absolute is expressed by the negative term, that is *Sūnyatā*, the Emptiness and sometimes it is called *Zettai-Mu* in Japanese, the absolute non-being or non-existent.

In Lao-Tzu because of its absolute transcendence *Tao* is called *Wu* or *Wu-Wu* the non-being, non-existent which transcends the notion of being.

In Dionysius and St. Thomas, God is called the non-existent (*non-existens*). Dionysius says: "It is the universal cause of existence while itself is non-existent, as it is beyond all substance."<sup>22</sup> St. Thomas accepts this Dionysian expression of God, the non-existent.<sup>23</sup>

It is evident that the notion of non-existence does not signify nothingness and it will be a serious error to consider this negative expression as the relative negation of being.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. DE DUBAC, H, S.J. *Op. Dit.*, p. 144.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *Msi* 22, 982. (*Con. Lateranense* IV, c. 1, *De fide Catholica*; D. 428): "Firmiter credimus et simpliciter confitemur, quod unus solus est verus Deus, aeternus, universus, omnipotens, incommutabilis et ineffabilis;... Cf. *A.S.S.* 5 (1867) 462. (*Con. Vaticanum Oecumenicum* XX, *Sessio* III, c. I, *De Deo Rerum Omnium Creatore*, D. 1782).

<sup>22</sup> DIONYSIUS, *Op. Cit.*, c. 1, l. 1, § 1, n. 7.

<sup>23</sup> In *Div. Nom.*, c. 1, l. 1, n. 3; c. 4, l. 2, n. 298; c. 1, l. 3, n. 83; *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 12, a. 1, ad 3. It is a very important point to notice that St. Thomas does not refuse this negative expression of the absolute, because Buddhist scholars consider often that Christian theology does not recognize the notion of non-being or non-existence. E. Gilson remarks the important difference between Dionysius and St. Thomas. *Le Thomisme*, p. 203: "Pour Denys, Dieu était un *superesse*, parce qu'il n'était "pas encore" l'*esse* qu'il ne devient que dans ses processions les plus hautes; pour saint Thomas, Dieu est le *superesse* parce qu'il est superlativement être: l'*Esse* pur et simple, pris dans son infinité et sa perfection. Comme touchée par une baguette magique, la doctrine de Denys sort de la transformée. Saint Thomas la conserve tout entière, mais rien n'y a conservé le même sens." C.E. Rolt also remarks the same view. ROLT, C.E., *Dionysius the Areopagite on the Divine Names and the Mystical Theology*, Macmillan Co. N.Y., 1940, p. 212: "It is not only that St. Thomas wrote a commentary on the Divine Names, but in the works of Aquinas his ideas are constantly reappearing. ....

But it is almost needless to say that Aquinas treats the Areopagite critically. St. Thomas is profoundly averse from everything which resembles a Pantheistic tendency." But this is less important concerning the comparison with Buddhist and Taoist thought.



It is more than the negative concept. For we already remarked that *Sūnyatā*, the Emptiness in Mahāyāna Buddhism and *Wu-Wu*, the non-being in Lao-Tzu are not mere negative notions which express the reality of the supra-being.

In Dionysius and St. Thomas this negative expression does not signify nothingness but signifies supra-substantiality which is above all substances.

Mahayanist thought goes to the very ontological notion of *Dharmakāya* (Dharma-Body), *Shinkū-Myōyū* (True Emptiness-Ineffable Existence) from epistemological notion of *Sūnyatā*, the Emptiness and Lao-Tzu also recognizes the very ontological positive notion of the self-subsistent being (Standing alone).

The thought of St. Thomas proceeds to the notion of the Deity from the notion of non-existence. In St. Thomas, God is said to be non-existent, not because of the lack of the existence, but because of the excess of the substance, that is, because the substance of God is above the substance of all things. For God is the subsistent being and is segregated supra-eminently from all beings.<sup>24</sup>

We see here very clearly the signification of the non-existence in St. Thomas; "God is not said to be non-existent as if He is not existent at all, but because He is existent above all, inasmuch as He is His own existence (*suum esse*)."<sup>25</sup> We find here the marvelous transition from the *via negativa* to the *via eminentiae* in the thought of St. Thomas.

Therefore, in Dionysius and St. Thomas that God is called the non-existent does not signify that God does not exist, but it signifies that God is the existence itself which transcends all beings, that is, He is the supra-substantial.

In Lao-Tzu and his successor Chuang-Tzu, *Tao* which is called the non-being does not signify that *Tao* does not exist, but that *Tao* is not a relative being but the absolute being, which is the origin of all things.

In Mahāyāna Buddhism, when the ultimate reality is called "True Emptiness" this does not signify nothingness, but it signifies the mysterious existence which exists in a higher order than the natural order in which all relative things exist.

Therefore we cannot deny a striking similarity between both thoughts on the negative expression of the transcendental absolute.

### III. The Eminence of the Deity

The consideration on the transcendence of God leads us necessarily to know the reason of the transcendence of God, that is, the ultimate reason why God is incomprehensible and ineffable for our intellect.

The Thomistic theology reveals to us that this is because of the eminence of the Deity, that is, the Deity, as it is in itself, cannot be known by our

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *In Div. Nom.*, c. 1, l. 1, n. 30; c. 6, l. 2, n. 298; c. 1, l. 3, n. 83.

<sup>25</sup> *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 12, a. 1, ad 3.

natural power.

As we already established, from creatures we can prove the existence of God, the Creator, by natural reason and so we can know the attributes of God, but we cannot know the very essence of God, that is, the Deity by which God is God. For the essence of God transcends the human and angelic intellectual order. We realize here the very profound signification of the necessity of revelation and the existence of the supernatural order. The incomprehensibility of the divine essence indicates the existence of the supernatural order in which the Deity subsists and absolutely transcends the natural order.<sup>26</sup>

According to Dionysius, the supreme Deity transcends all categories; "We declare the unity of the whole single Deity which is the one cause of all things; prior to all distinctions of one and multiplicity, part and whole, definiteness and indefiniteness, finitude and infinitude."<sup>27</sup>

The Deity is the One which is the cause of all things and the principle of the unity. There is nothing in the world without a share in the One, the Deity. But, strictly speaking, the Deity is prior to the One. For the one relates to the multiplicity. Therefore the Deity is prior to all distinctions of one and many.<sup>28</sup>

Dionysius in his Mystical Theology also teaches the eminence of the Deity which transcends all categories of affirmation and negation. According to him, the Deity inasmuch as it is the perfect and unique Cause of all things transcends all affirmation, and inasmuch as the pre-eminence of its simple and absolute Nature transcends all negation — free from every limitation and beyond them all.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Cf. GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, R., O.P., *Dieu Son Existence et Sa Nature*, t. II, Beauchesne, Paris, 1953, pp. 343-349. R. Garrigou-Lagrange remarks here, saying: (p. 346) "Ce qu'il importe de remarquer ici, c'est que la raison formelle de D  it   dans ce qui la constitue en propre reste naturellement inconnaissable. Et c'est la preuve qu'il existe en Dieu un ordre de v  rit  s surnaturelles." (I, q. 12, a. 4)

<sup>27</sup> DIONYSIUS, *Div. Nom.*, c. 13, l. 3, § 3, n. 456.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. ROLT, C.E., *Op. Cit.*, p. 5: "Consciousness, Life and Existence, as we know them, are finite states, and the Infinite Godhead is beyond them. We cannot even, strictly speaking, attribute to It Unity, for Unity is distinguished from Plurality. We must instead describe It as a Super-Unity which is neither One nor Many and yet contains in an undifferentiated state that Numerical Principle which we can only grasp in its partial forms as Unity and Plurality."

<sup>29</sup> Cf. DIONYSIUS, *Mys. Theol.*, c. 5, (P.G. 3, 1046); See ALBERTUS, M.D., O.P., *Opera Omnia*, t. XIV, (*De Mystica Theologia*) c. 5, p. 862: "Unde patet, quod enuntiatio est unitio praedictae primae causae est super omnem affirmationem: quia cum omnes nobilitates sint in ipso, sunt tamen idem re cum ipso, omnis autem affirmatio ponit aliquam compositionem et excessus ejus qui est supra omnia, excedit omnem negationem, ideo dictum est quod nomina quae negantur ab ipso, negantur propter ejus excessum, et non propter defectum qui est in creaturis: et ideo excessus suus separat omnem negationem: et ideo neque negationes neque affirmationes pertinent ad sufficientiam laudis ipsius, cujus et virtus et magnificentia infinita et aeternitas per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen."



Cajetan following Dionysius expresses marvelously the thought of St. Thomas on the eminence of the Deity:

In the order of realities (so far as a thing is), in God a thing is one, not in a purely absolute sense nor in a purely relative sense nor is it mixed or composite or a result of both these, but it is one in a most eminent and formal way, containing in itself something relative (in fact, many things relative) and also something absolute. In the formal order (that of formal concepts), in itself, not according to our manner of speaking, in God there is but one formal concept, which is not purely absolute nor purely relative nor purely communicable, nor purely incommunicable. But it is a concept which in a most eminent and formal way contains whatever there is of absolute perfection, and whatever is demanded by the Trinity in a relative sense. It must be so, because to anything absolutely simple in itself and absolutely one, there must correspond a formal and adequate concept: otherwise the thing would not be intrinsically and immediately the one intelligible of whatsoever intellect. We have a confirmation of this in the *Verbum Dei*, because it is the only one of its kind. Evidently if the word is perfect, it should adequately represent that of which it is the word. We make a mistake, however, in arguing from absolute and relative things to the knowledge of God, in that we imagine that the distinction between the absolute and the relative is, as it were, prior to the divine reality. Yet quite the opposite is the case: for the divine reality is prior to being and all its differences. It is above being and above the one.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> CAJETAN, O.P., *In Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 39, a. 1, n. 7, p. 397. This English version is from the *God His Existence and His essence*, Vol. II, translated by Dom. Bede Rose O.S.B.D.D., Herder, St. Louis, 1955, p. 7: "Sicut in Deo, secundum rem, sive in ordine reali, est una res non pure absoluta; nec pure respectiva, nec mixta aut composita aut resultans ex utraque; sed eminentissime et formaliter habens quod est respectivi (imo multarum rerum respectivarum) et quod est absoluti: ita in ordine formali seu rationum formalium, secundum se, non quoad nos loquendo, est in Deo unica ratio formalis, non pure absoluta, nec pure respectiva, non pure communicabilis, nec pure incommunicabilis; sed eminentissime ac formaliter continens quidquid absolute perfectionis est, et quidquid Trinitas respectiva exigit. Oportet autem sic esse, quia oportet cuilibet simplicissimae rei secundum se maxime uni, respondere unam adaequatam rationem formalem: alioquin non esset per se primo unum intelligibile a quovis intellectu. Et confirmatur: quia Verbum Dei unicum tantum est. Constat enim verbum, si perfectum est, adaequare id cuius est. Fallimur autem ab absolutis et respectivis ad Deum procedendo, eo quod distinctionem inter absolutum et respectivum quasi priorem re divina imaginamur; et consequenter illam sub altero membro oportere poni credimus. Et tamen est totum oppositum. Quoniam res divina prior est ente et omnibus differentiis ejus; est enim super ens et super unum, etc. ...."; Cf. GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, O.P., *De Deo Trino*, Marietti, Rome, 1951, pp. 176-177; *De Gratia*, Marietti, Rome, 1947, pp. 108-109; *Dieu.*, t. II, pp. 346-349.

If the *Tao* is not the One, then what is the *Tao*? What is the One? we may find here a probable interpretation.

*Tao* is the Taoist undifferentiated Deity and it is called the One, because it is the unique and absolute being. But, strictly speaking, *Tao*, the Deity, is not the one, for the one relates to the multiplicity. It must be called the Supra-one, the Supra-unity. Therefore, the *Tao* generates the One, the *Tao* is prior to the One. This is in accord with the thought of Dionysius and Cajetan.

Now we will see another example of the eminence of the Deity in the thought of Zen. The so-called central thought of the *Hsin-Hsin-Ming* of Sēng-Ts'an is no more than the absolute transcendence of the Deity, *Tao*.

Sēng-Ts'an says:

"The two exists because of the One,

But hold not even to this One."<sup>34</sup>

According to Sēng-Ts'an "the two exists because of the One" namely, "All number preexists indivisibly in the number one, and this number contains all things in itself under the form of unity..... All number exists as unity in number one."<sup>35</sup>

Therefore, we must then attribute all things in the One all-segregated Unity,<sup>36</sup> but strictly speaking, we cannot attribute the One to the Deity, *Tao*, because the Deity, *Tao* is prior to the One. Therefore he says: "But hold not even to this One." This expression is very psychological, but it must be understood as the eminence of the *Tao*, as well as the eminence of the Deity in Dionysius and Cajetan.

Here the thought of Dionysius and Cajetan will not be easily distinguished from the thought of Mahayanist, Taoist and Zen, however we do not identify it directly with the Buddhist ultimate reality, *Dharmakāya*, or the Taoist ultimate reality, *Tao*, or with the Deity in Christian theology, that is, the Holy Trinity. Because Dionysius, St. Thomas and Cajetan are talking about the Trinity, the intimate life of God, the direct identification of the Buddhist Deity or the Taoist Deity with the Christian Deity will be a theological error which confuses the natural order and the supernatural order.

However we see here in both thoughts a possibility of attaining the truth of Christian Revelation. There is just the one true Absolute, not two. We note here the difference between Mahayanist thought and Taoist thought on the constitutive nature of the ultimate reality.

When we compare Mahayanist *Sūnyatā* with Taoist *Tao*, we realize that in *Sūnyatā* the ultimate reality is comprehended with the intellectual (epistemological) connotation, namely, as the supreme intuition in which there is no distinction between the object and the subject, that is, the "self-subsistent

<sup>34</sup> SENG-TSAN, *Hsin-Hsin-Ming*, n. 11.

<sup>35</sup> DIONYSIUS, *Op. Cit.*, c. 5, l. 1, § 6, n. 269.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 5, l. 3, § 9, n. 284.



We may say that Zen is correct in seeking the ultimate repose of the intellect in the absolute identification, and the whole aim of Zen consists in the realization of this absolute identification; it may be regarded as an expression of a most profound natural desire to become God.

Next we consider the identification of the divine intellect and the divine love with regards to the Buddhist fundamental thought of the identification of the Great Wisdom and the Great Compassion.

According to D.T. Suzuki, the fundamental thought of Mahāyāna Buddhism is the identification of the Great Wisdom (*Mahā-Prajñā*) and the Great Compassion (*Mahā-Karuna*) in the Absolute Person. In Buddhism, the secret of the Deity is the secret of the Person just as it is in Christianity.<sup>42</sup>

It may be a surprising thing for many to note that Buddhism has such a monotheistic fundamental truth. This suggests that we cannot characterize Buddhism merely as pantheistic. D.T. Suzuki argues that this identification of the Great Wisdom and the Great Compassion is a characteristic of Oriental thought which is not found in Occidental thought.<sup>43</sup>

This assertion, evidently, is due to some exaggeration or a misunderstanding of the fundamentals of Catholic theology. But he has correctly pointed out the striking similarity between Buddhism and Christianity on this point.<sup>44</sup>

According to St. Thomas, God is the subsisting intellect: Wisdom; and at the same time He is the subsisting will: Love. The will follows the intellect and the first act of the will is love.

In God the will of God is not really distinct from the divine intellect and the divine essence. Hence God is the Divine intellect: Wisdom; and at the same time is the divine love; Charity<sup>45</sup>

According to St. Thomas the Love of God in regard to creatures is a creative love. The creatures are not worthy of the Love of God, but God creates goodness in creatures. Goodness is diffusive of itself. (*Bonum sui diffusivum!*)

In Mahāyāna Buddhism the Love of the Buddha for sentient beings is a gratuitous and infinite love and it is called "Purposeless Compassion". This does not mean that it has no purpose at all, because the so-called purposeless compassion has a purpose i.e. to save sentient beings, but it has nothing for itself. This compassion asks nothing for itself — absolutely unselfish love. It may be called, what we call the love of charity.

Thus we have compared Zen thought with the thought of St. Thomas on the transcendence of the absolute.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. DE DUBAC, H., S. J., *Op. Cit.*, p. 165: "S'il est vrai qu'en chacun de nous le secret devenir c'est sa personnalité, Dieu est l'Etre caché par excellence, parce qu'il est par excellence l'Etre personnel."

<sup>43</sup> Cf. SUZUKI, D. T., *Senshū*, III, *Zen no Sekai*, p. 89.

<sup>44</sup> SUZUKI, D. T., *The Awakening of Faith.*, p. 66, f. 4: "...According to the terminology of later Mahayanists, wisdom and love constitute one of the principal thoughts of the Mahayana Buddhism and show a striking similarity to the Christian conception of God who is considered to be full of infinite love and wisdom."

<sup>45</sup> Cf. *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 19, a. 1, ad 2; *Com. Theol.*, c. 32.

## CHAPTER V

### THE IMMANENCE OF GOD

One of the characteristics of Mahāyāna thought is the transcendence of the absolute and another is the immanence of the absolute.

The nature of the absolute Buddha is present in all sentient beings, but the ordinary man does not know this presence of the Buddha-Nature because of his discriminative mind. To know this truth is the inner realization, and it is called the Awakening, the Enlightenment, the *Nirvāṇa* and the Attainment of Buddhahood.

In Lao-Tzu the transcendental *Tao* is incomprehensible and unnominable, but its operation is manifest in all things; hence the existence of the transcendental *Tao* is known from the existence of all things and their operations. This immanent power of *Tao* is called *Te* (power, virtue).

The thought of Zen from the beginning traces the way of seeking the absolute which is immanent. According to Bodhidharma, the True Nature, which is one and the same, is present in all things. The experiential cognition of this True Nature by *Pi-Kuan* (the Wall-contemplation) was the very essence of his Zen. This cognition of truth necessarily brings peace of soul. It is of great significance that Bodhidharma required the cognition of truth for people who were seeking peace of soul. Without truth there is no peace in man. Since Bodhidharma in the tradition of Zen thought the way to attain *Tao* is always the interior way.

According to Sēng-Ts'an, the Third Patriarch, the union with *Tao* is where a discriminative knowledge ceases and a non-discriminative wisdom arises. It is realized in the One, the eternal intuition in which the object is subject, the subject is object. It is said *Hsin-Hsin-Pu-Erh* (The believing (seeing) mind and the Mind are not two) which transcends the intellectual order; it is a spiritual leap (*élan spirituel*).

In Hui-Neng, the Sixth Patriarch, the whole of Zen is expressed by *Chien-Hsing* (Seeing into one's own Nature), that is, seeing all things in the Suchness, the Truth; in other words, seeing the Absolute Nature which is present in all things. He taught that sentient beings are nothing but the absolute Buddha and emphasized that "Becoming the Buddha" is the internal realization by the *Prajñā*, that is, No-thought, No-form, Non-abiding.

In Yung-Chia, *Dharmakāya*, which is the transcendental absolute, is present in all things like the moon which is reflected in all waters.

In Huang-Po the Buddha is nothing but sentient beings and Becoming the Buddha is nothing but the cognition of the absolute Mind. The Buddha must not be sought outside but inside, because the Buddha-Nature is present in all sentient beings.



In Lin-Chi the immanent absolute is comprehended as the Person, True Man, and this total and experiential cognition of the Person is the "all" of his Zen. The Buddha must not be sought outside but inside. He urged that, being guided by the inner light, each one has to testify by his own experience in the inmost part of his soul to the presence of the absolute which is the very foundation of his existence and operation. According to Lin-Chi, Zen is not less nor more than this spiritual (supra-intellectual) and experiential cognition of the absolute.

Thus we know that the ultimate reality in Zen is transcendent and immanent, immanent and transcendent. If the ultimate reality, the absolute, were transcendent, it must be also immanent.

In Catholic theology, God is transcendent and at the same time He is immanent. For the immanence of God is the necessary consequence of the transcendence of God. Because if God were not immanent, the transcendence of God would be limited and consequently God would become relative; He would not be the Absolute. The transcendence of God itself requires the immanence of God.<sup>1</sup>

God is transcendent and consequently He is incomprehensible, ineffable, but at the same time He is immanent and present intimately in all creatures, especially in the soul. Therefore it is possible to meet God in the inmost part of the soul.

We consider the immanence of God in St. Thomas as the omnipresence of God and the special mode of the presence of God.

### I. The Omnipresence of God

In the Bible God is called the Hidden God and for the Fathers of the Church the path of discovery of God is to return to inner self.

God is present everywhere but more especially the Hidden God appears intimately in one's self. We have many testimonies of this inner path among the Fathers.<sup>2</sup>

According to St. Thomas, "God is in all things and innermost."<sup>3</sup> And this because all things participate in the nature of God and God is present more intimately in all things, in so far as all things participate more in the nature of God.

Before studying the thought of St. Thomas we will consider the thought of St. Bonaventure on the immanence of God. It is interesting to find a Zen

<sup>1</sup> Cf. DE DUBAC, H., S. J., *Sur les Chemins de Dieu*, pp. 112-113; KNOWLES, D., *The English Mystical Tradition*, Burns & Oates, London, 1962, pp.5-6.

<sup>2</sup> For instance. ATHANASY, ST., *Epistola de decretis nicaenae synodi*, II, P. G. 25, 441; HILARY, ST., *Tractatus super Psalmos*, 118, 19, P. L. 9, 629; GREGORY THE GREAT, ST., *Moralia*, 2, 12, 20, P. L., 75, 565; AUGUSTINE, ST., *Confessionum*, I, 1, c. 2, c. 4, P. L. 32, 661-662.

<sup>3</sup> *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 8, a. 1.

flavor in the thought of St. Bonaventure.<sup>4</sup>

According to St. Bonaventure God is present in all things because of two reasons, namely, the simplicity of God and the contingency of creatures. First, God is most simple, therefore, God's simplicity postulates the omnipresence of God in all things, not only as power but also as substance, because in God his substance and his power are identical.<sup>5</sup> Secondly, since all creatures are not pure act but contingent, they need the continuous support of God for their existence. Therefore God is present and operates in all creatures as an efficient cause.<sup>6</sup>

St. Bonaventure mentions the immanence of God from the simplicity of God in his *Itinerarium Mentis In Deum*:

Because He is the most simple and the greatest, hence the whole is within all and the whole is outside all, and through this He can be imagined as a sphere, whose center is everywhere and the circumference nowhere. Because He is the most actual and the most immutable, hence remaining stable, His movement gives the universe. Because most perfect and immense, hence He is within everything, not included; outside everything, not excluded; above everything, not elated; below everything, not prostrated. Because indeed He is the greatest One and total modality, hence He is everything in everything: although all things may but He is only One: and this because through

<sup>4</sup> This seems to depend on the fact that as a Franciscan, St. Bonaventure is more neoplatonic than a Dominican, St. Thomas. It is an obvious fact that Zen thought has a certain similarity to Neoplatonism especially the thought of Plotinus. D. T. Suzuki mentions that the thought of Zen — the Spiritual consciousness is in accord with the thought of Plotinus on some points. "Flight of the Alone to the Alone" (Enneads, 6, 9, 11). Cf. SUZUKI, D. T., *Zokusenshū*, II, *Rinzairoku no Kihonshisō*, pp. 245-255.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. BONAVENTURE, ST., *In I Sent.*, d. 37, p. 1, a. 1, q. 1; *Opera Omnia*, t. II, Vivès 1864, p. 40: "Necessitas autem existendi Deum in omnibus sumitur tum a parte perfectionis ipsius, tum a parte indigentiae rerum: a parte ipsius, propter summam immensitatem, et summam potestatem; et utriusque ratio est summa simplicitas. Quia enim summe simplex est, ad nihil arctatur: ideo in omnibus invenitur tamquam immensum. Quia summe simplex ideo in infinitum virtuosissimus; et ideo virtus ejus in omnibus: et virtus idem est quod substantia: et ideo necesse est, quod sit in omnibus." Cf. FUERST, A., O. S. B., *The Omnipresence of God in Selected Writings between 1220-1270*, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, 1951, p. 149, p. 169.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Loc. Cit.*, p. 40: "Ex parte creatura est necessitas, quia creatura habet in se possibilitatem, et vanitatem: et utriusque causa est, quia producta est de nihilo. Quia enim creatura est, et accepit esse ab alio, qui eam fecit esse, cum prius non esset; ex hoc non est sum esse: et ideo non est purus actus, quia habet possibilitatem: et ratione hujus habet flexibilitatem, et variabilitatem: ideo caret stabilitate, et ideo non potest esse nisi per praesentiam ejus qui dedit ei esse.

.....  
Et iterum, quia creatura de nihilo producta est, ideo habet vanitatem: et quia nihil vanum in se ipso fulcitur, necesse est, quod omnis creatura sustentetur per praesentiam veritatis." Cf. FUERST, A., O. S. B. *Ibid.*, p. 150; pp. 169-170.



the most simple Unity, the most serene Truth, and the most sincere Goodness, all communicability is in Him, and through this "of Him and by Him and in Him are all things." (Rom. II: 36)<sup>7</sup>

Here St. Bonaventure explains the omnipresence of God by the famous metaphor of an infinite sphere. St. Thomas also knew this metaphor but he used it for another signification.<sup>8</sup> B. Pascal and M. Eckhart also use this metaphor.<sup>9</sup>

As we already pointed out in the first part, there is a similar expression in the thought of Zen, namely, in the *Hsin-Hsin-Ming*, and the *Chuan-Hsin-Fa-Yao*. *Tao* is expressed by the metaphor of the Great Space:

"*Tao* is perfect like unto Great Space,  
With nothing wanting, nothing superfluous;  
It is indeed due to making choice,  
That its suchness is lost sight of."<sup>10</sup>

It is used as the expression of the perfection. According to the study of V. Lossky, M. Eckhart uses this metaphor for the identification between all things and the One.<sup>11</sup>

D.T. Suzuki uses this metaphor in the same sense as M. Eckhart.<sup>12</sup> For he uses this metaphor for the explanation of the identity between the individual and the absolute. Each individual is a center of this sphere. However,

<sup>7</sup> BONAVENTURE, ST., *Itinerarium Mentis In Deum*, c. 5, *Opera Omnia*, t. XII, p. 18: Quia simplicissimum et maximum, ideo totum intra omnia, et totum extra omnia, ac per hoc est sphaera intelligibilis, cuius centrum est ubique, et circumferentia nusquam. Quia actualissimum et immutabilissimum, ideo, stabile manens, moveri dat universa. Quia perfectissimum et immensum, ideo est intra omnia non ex inclusum; extra omnia, non exclusum, supra omnia, non elatum; infra omnia, non prostratum. Quia vero est summe unum et omnimodum, ideo est omnia in omnibus: quamvis omnia sint multa, et ipsum non sit nisi unum: et hoc quia per simplicissimam unitatem, serenissimam veritatem, et sincerissimam bonitatem, est in eo omnis communicabilitas, ac per hoc "ex ipso, et per ipsum, et in ipso sunt omnia." (Rom. 11: 36).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *De Verit.*, q. 2, a. 3, Praet. 11; SERTILLANGE, A. D., O. P., *Op. Cit.*, pp. 392-393.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. PASCAL, B., *Pensées*, édition Léon Brunschvicg, Hachette, 1950, p. 40, p. 314, n. 9; LOSSKY, V., *Théologie Négative et Connaissance de Dieu chez Maître Eckhart*, Libr. phil. J. Vrin, Paris, pp. 72-73, pp. 171-173; DE WULF, M., *Histoire de la Philosophie Médiévale*, II, Librairie Éditions, Paris, 1925, p. 122.

<sup>10</sup> SENG-TSAN, *Op. Cit.*, n. 3

<sup>11</sup> V. Lossky remarks (p. 73): "Le paradoxe de la "sphère infinie," chez Maître Eckhart, consiste à réunir les deux perspectives dans une seule vision de la toute-puissance, ce qui permet de distinguer dans le plan divin l'un ponctuel et le omnia périphérique, pour souligner d'avantage leur identité et indistinction." He agrees to the interpretation by M. D., Mahnke saying, (p. 172) "M. D. Mahnke, *Unendliche Sphäre und Allmittelpunkt* (Hall, 1937), remarque très justement, à la p. 150, que Maître Eckhart, en utilisant cette image géométrique des "24 philosophes", n'a pas en vue, comme la source qu'il cite les "parties" de la Divinité, mais les parties minimales du monde crée; dans tout être particulier toute la sphère divine, avec son centre et sa périphérie infinie, et présente."

image of creation, re-creation, and likeness:

Wherefore we see that the image of God is in man in three ways, first, inasmuch as man possesses a natural aptitude for understanding and loving God; and this aptitude consists in the very nature of the mind, which is common to all men. Secondly, inasmuch as man actually or habitually knows and loves God, though imperfectly; and this image consists in the conformity of grace. Thirdly, inasmuch as man knows and loves God perfectly: and this image consists in the likeness of glory.<sup>22</sup>

It is very significant to realize that man, in the natural order without grace, already is capable of knowing and loving God, because man has a natural aptitude for this. Therefore even outside of Revelation we may say that man can know and love God who is present in man's mind.

The participation of the nature of God in creatures is one aspect of the same reality of the presence of God in creatures, because God is present in creatures in so far as creatures participate in the nature of God.

## II. The Special Mode of the Presence of God

Now we consider the special mode of the presence of God in intellectual creatures.

According to St. Thomas, God is in all things by nature, namely, by power, presence and essence, in the saints by grace, and in Christ by union. The different modes of union arise according to the different modes of existence in things.

The first mode of union is according to likeness (*secundum similitudinem*) in so far as the likeness of divine goodness is found in all things. In this way God is in all things by essence, presence, and power: God is present in all things by essence, because His power is identical with His essence; God is present in all things by presence, because God is operating in all things as the agent and the agent must, in a certain way, be in its effect; God is present in all things by power, because the operation does not leave the divine power from which it went forth. This is the general mode of the presence of God in all things in the natural order.

The second mode of union is according to His substance (*secundum substantiam*) not according to likeness only, that is, by operation; faith and charity. In this way God is especially present in the soul of the saints by grace. This is the special mode of the presence of God in the soul of the saints in the supernatural order.

The third mode of union is not according to operation only, but also according to being (*secundum esse*). In this way God is in Christ in the hypostatic union. This is the final mode of the presence of God.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, I, q. 93, a. 4.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. *In I Sent.*, d. 37, q. 1, a. 2, solutio.



According to John of St. Thomas the special mode of the presence of God by grace presupposes the general mode of the presence of God by His immensity, and in the new mode God is present in the soul of the just as the experimentally cognoscibile and enjoyable object (*ut objectum experimentaliter cognoscibile et fruibile*). God is cognoscibile and enjoyable by a certain experimental touch (*quodam experimentalitactu*) of the soul but this experiential or experimental knowledge is obscure, as if we know our soul but we cannot see it. Hence God is present really and substantially in the soul of the just.<sup>32</sup>

This experimental cognition is not only cognition by faith but also cognition by the gift of wisdom, as by tasting, and a certain internal experience; this wisdom comes from a certain union and a connaturality to the divine, that is, a certain intimate experience of the divine (*ex quadam intima experientia divinorum*).<sup>33</sup> This is the experience of God Himself and the soul is united by a certain connaturality with God, the vivifying principle of our life, who is, as it were, the life of our life and the soul of our soul (*tamquam vivificante nos, sicut si esset vita vitae nostrae et anima animae nostrae*).<sup>34</sup>

Therefore God is present really in the souls of the just as the experimentally cognoscibile and enjoyable object. This special mode of the presence of God is called the indwelling of the Holy Trinity in the soul of the just.<sup>35</sup>

We do not here need to enter further into the theological controversy on the nature of the indwelling of the Holy Trinity in the soul of the just, but we intend to point out the doctrine of St. Thomas on the special mode of the presence of God with regard to the thought of Zen, especially the thought of Lin-Chi on *Chen-Jen*, the True Man.

We considered in the third chapter the thought of Lin-Chi on *Chen-Jen*, the True Man. He urges us to recognize the existence of the Person who dwells and operates in each one by one's most intimate experience:

"In your heart, there is a true Man of no title who comes in and goes out through your forehead; those who have not testified to this, Look! Look!"<sup>36</sup>

"Virtuous ones, what do you look for? Now, in front of you, the non-dependent Man of *Tao* who is listening to (my expounding) of the *Dharma*, is clearly distinguishable and does not lack anything."<sup>37</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Cf. JOHN OF ST THOMAS, *Cursus Theol.*, t. IV, d. 17, a. 3, n. 10, p. 472.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, n. 12, p. 473.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. *Loc.*, *Cit.*, n. 12, p. 474.

<sup>35</sup> This is not merely theological opinion but Catholic Doctrine which is based on Sacred Scripture and Tradition. There are many texts in the Bible. For instance: Mt. 10: 20; Mk, 13: 11; Jn, 14: 23; Rom. 5: 5; 1 Cor. 3: 16-17; 6: 19-20.

There are many testimonies among the Fathers. One of the most important Ecclesiastical documents is the Encyclical *Divinum Illud Munus* of Pope Leo XIII. Cf. *A.S.S.* 29 (1897) 650-658.

<sup>36</sup> LIN-CHI, *Op. Cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

He does not ask mere intellectual cognition but a total and experiential or experimental cognition of this absolute Person. This Person is nothing but the absolute, the Buddha himself who is the foundation of the existence and operations of each one. He is transcendent from each one and at the same time immanent in each one: He dwells in the inmost part of the soul of each one and operates as the agent, as it were, the life of each one. However Lin-Chi does not identify ontologically each one with the Person. He says clearly: "Followers of the *Tao*, The One (Person) who is now listening to the *Dharma*, is not your four elements but One who can make use of your four elements."<sup>38</sup> ??

This absolute Person is considered as the object of the total and experiential cognition, and the Enlightenment of Zen is nothing but this total and experiential cognition — spiritual (supra-intellectual) cognition.

The True Man of Lin-Chi is not necessarily the effect of the absolute in all things but He is the Person who dwells and operates as the very foundation of each one's existence and operations.

Since cognition, in one sense, means to become the object of cognition then one's experiential cognition can arrive at a conception of the absolute, namely, the consciousness of the absolute.

This experiential cognition may be possible just as a natural cognition of the absolute, but there is another possibility. We will consider this problem in the following chapter.

We have to avoid a tendency to condemn "*a priori*" all spiritual experiences outside of the Church as pantheistic.<sup>39</sup> ✓

It is certain that we cannot identify this Lin-Chi's total and experiential cognition of the Person with the quasi-experimental cognition of God who dwells in the soul of the just by grace; however, it is also certain that his thought on the absolute Person is quite far from a lifeless pantheism which identifies ontologically the nature of God and all creatures.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>39</sup> Undoubtedly in Zen many pantheistic expressions could be found if one is always searching for such tendencies. However the most important thing is to know what they really signify. Can we say that the thought of St. Paul: "I live, now not I; but Christ in me" is pantheistic? Or again, can we say that the following beautiful words of J. Olier are pantheistic? OLIER, J. J., S.S. *Traicté des Attributs Divins*, t. I, pp. 1-6 cited by P. Pourrat in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, t. I, Fas. IV, col. 1085: "Et comme, ajoutez-il, dans la communion à Jésus-Christ et à son humanité sainte. *Erat omnia in omnibus Christus*, Jésus-Christ était tout en tous (en sorte que tous doivent dire comme saint Paul: Je n'ai plus de vie en moi, c'est Jésus-Christ qui vit en moi, il ne paraît plus que Jésus-Christ qui m'a consommé tout en lui, de même que le feu consomme et dévore le bois), ainsi par la communion que nous avons avec Dieu qui nous pénètre, nous consomme et nous absorbe en lui, il n'y a plus de nous en nous, il n'y a plus qu'un Dieu en nous, qui vient nous perfectionner absolument et totalement en lui." It is certain that these are nothing but the dynamic expressions of the truth that God dwells in us.



## CHAPTER VI THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD

We have considered in the first part the essence of Zen thought, the *Prajñā* intuition in which there is no distinction between seer and seen. This is expressed by D.T. Suzuki *Reiseiteki-Jikaku*, the Spiritual Consciousness. It is also called the Metaphysical Unconsciousness, Supra-consciousness, Undifferentiated Consciousness and quasi-God Consciousness. The same reality is expressed by the more traditional term, that is, by the *Chien-Hsing*, Seeing the Nature.

This is the highest intuition in Zen and Zenists proclaim that the experience of this spiritual consciousness is sudden, immediate, perfect and experiential intuition. This is the Enlightenment of Zen in which all Zen effort consists. Therefore we consider now, first, the perfect intuition of God, that is, the beatific vision, secondly, the highest knowledge of God in this life, that is, the infused contemplation, comparing it with Zen's concept of spiritual consciousness.

### I. The Eternal Vision of God

Since God is pure act and has no potentiality, God is most knowable, intelligible to Himself, but not to our intellect.<sup>1</sup> The Deity in the supernatural order transcends the sensitive and intellectual natural order; hence the essence of God remains as invisible, incomprehensible, ineffable for our intellect. However the natural desire to see God in us is the sign of the possibility to see God; and from this we realize the possibility of seeing God in the supernatural order.<sup>2</sup>

The beatific vision belongs strictly to the supernatural order and surpasses the sensitive, intellectual faculties, because it is to see the Deity as it is in itself. St. Thomas emphasizes that man or any creature cannot attain the immediate vision of the divine essence by his natural faculties, because it surpasses infinitely all created substance.<sup>3</sup>

According to Zen thought the ultimate reality transcends infinitely the natural intellectual order and the human intellect cannot penetrate the ultimate reality — this is the fundamental doctrine of Zen. As the author has tried to show, this must not be interpreted as agnostic but like the eminence of the Deity in Thomistic theology. St Thomas explains the reason of the impossibility

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 12, a. 1; q. 14, a. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, I, q. 12, a. 1; I-II, q. 3, a. 8; *C. Gent.*, I, 3, c. 50; GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, R., *O.P. Dieu.*, p. 392.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, I-II, q. 5, a. 5.

of the vision of the divine essence by the natural power. In order to see the divine essence there must be some likeness to the divine essence, but because of the lack of this likeness, the human intellect cannot see the divine essence by its natural power.

As we mentioned in the previous chapter, man is the image of God according to the reason of being, life and wisdom. But those similitudes are not the likeness of the divine essence. Hence there is required some similitude in the visual faculty, namely, the light of glory strengthening the intellect to see the divine essence, which is spoken of in Psalm (35:10) "In thy Light we shall see Light."<sup>4</sup>

Therefore in heaven we see the Light through the Light. These words of the Psalm remind us of the words of Zen Master Huang-Po "The transmission of the Mind through the Mind," "Therefore you student of *Tao*, your mind should be no-mind immediately and be a tacit understanding. Any mental process must lead to error. There is just a transmission of the Mind through the Mind."<sup>5</sup>

There is no way to know the absolute Mind by our conceptual mind. The absolute Mind is known for us only through the Mind itself. The doctrine of St. Thomas is the same. Since the human intellect is an abstractive knowledge, it cannot attain the intuitive, immediate and concrete vision unless it be elevated by grace: "Therefore the created intellect cannot see the essence of God, unless God by His grace unites Himself to the created intellect, as an object made intelligible to it."<sup>6</sup>

Seeing the divine nature, the Self-subsistent being is natural only to the divine intellect, the Self-subsistent intellection, and this is beyond the natural power of any created intellect.<sup>7</sup>

Hence St. Thomas argues the necessity of the supernatural light and the infused virtues. The increase of the intellectual power by divine grace is called the illumination of the intellect and the intelligible object is called the light of illumination.<sup>8</sup>

In the illumination of Zen, the *Prajñā* may be said to be the Light by which man can see the Light, that is the Ultimate Reality. For in Buddhist philosophy, the *Prajñā* is a means to know the Ultimate Reality and at the same time the *Prajñā* is the Ultimate Reality itself.

Thus God elevates our natural intellect to the supernatural order by sanctifying grace and enables us to see the divine. The beatific vision is seeing the divine nature through the essence and man becomes God by participation. This is a fundamental Christian truth.

St. Peter proclaims the divinization of the soul by grace: "By whom he

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, I q. 12, a. 2; *De Verit.*, q. 18, a. 1, ad 1.

<sup>5</sup> HUANG-PO, *Chung-Ling-Lu*, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 12, a. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Loc. Cit.*, I, q. 12, a. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, I, q. 12, a. 5.



hath given us most great and precious promises, that by these you may be made partakers of the divine nature."<sup>9</sup>

St. John teaches this sublime truth clearly: "Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when He shall appear we shall be like to Him; because we shall see Him as He is."<sup>10</sup>

St. Paul declares the intuition face to face: "We see now through a glass in a dark manner, but then face to face. Now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am known."<sup>11</sup>

Therefore in the beatific vision man becomes God in the sense that man sees the divine essence and comes to be like to God. Hence man is called "God by participation". Cajetan affirms that to see God is, in a certain way, to become God, that is, to be like to God.<sup>12</sup>

Now we consider a very interesting similarity between Zen and Christianity.

Seeing the divine nature and Becoming God may be said to be the very essence of Zen. This is expressed by the famous phrase of Zen: "Seeing the Nature and Becoming the Buddha." All doctrine of Zen is crystallized in this four worded phrase, *Chien-Hsing-Cheng-Fo*. Seeing the Nature (*Chien-Hsing*) is nothing but Becoming the Buddha (*Cheng-Fo*) and Becoming the Buddha (*Cheng-Fo*) is nothing but Seeing the Nature (*Chien-Hsing*).

The author has explained Seeing the Nature is Seeing all things in the Suchness, the Ultimate Reality. This may correspond to seeing everything in the divine essence. The following explanation of St. Thomas on the natural desire of the rational creature seems to be a good commentary on "Seeing the Nature" in Zen:

"The natural desire of the rational creature is to know everything that belongs to the perfection of the intellect,... Yet if God alone were seen, who is the fount and principle of all being and all truth. He would so fill the natural desire of knowledge and the seer would be completely beatified."<sup>13</sup>

But Zen goes further than this, because this highest intuition in Zen may signify the divine intellection in which there is no real distinction between the object and subject. For Zen proclaims that the ultimate state Seeing (*Chien*) is the Nature (*Hsing*) and the Nature (*Hsing*) is Seeing (*Chien*).

We have considered this with many examples; Bodhidharma's *Pi-Kuan* (the Wall-contemplation) may be interpreted as the perfect intuition in which there is no distinction between the seer and the seen.

<sup>9</sup> 2 Pet. 1 : 4.

<sup>10</sup> 1 Jn. 3 : 2.

<sup>11</sup> 1 Cor. 13 : 12.

<sup>12</sup> CAJETAN, *I Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 12, a. 2, n. 12, p. 118; MARITAIN, J., *Les Degrés du Savoir*, Desclée de Brouwer, Paris, 1946, p. 504.

<sup>13</sup> *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 12, a. 8, ad 4.

Sêng-Ts'an's *Hsin-Hsin-Pu-Erh* (the believing (seeing) mind and the Mind are not two) signifies the identity of the subject and object in this eternal intuition. Hui-Neng speaks of Seeing the Nature (*Chien-Hsing*) and Yung-Chia's *Wu-I-Wu* (No-object) may signify the absolute intuition in which there is no object to be seen, because in this intuition the object is nothing but the subject.

These expressions signify the sole reality of Seeing the Nature, namely, Seeing is the Nature and the Nature is Seeing.

Therefore Seeing all things in the Nature may correspond to the following words of St. Thomas: "As the divine intellect is One, as seeing the many only in the One."<sup>14</sup> Therefore it is obvious that Zen seeks not only to see the divine essence but also to get the divine intellection itself, that is, to become God. We may say that this aim of Zen is right in spite of its excess. Zen knows profoundly the truth, "to be happy is to be God."

But, according to Catholic theology, seeing the divine essence through the essence is not the divine intellection itself. Even the beatific vision is immediate, perfect and an experimental knowledge of God, but it is not seeing the divine essence quidditatively and comprehensively.<sup>15</sup> God alone knows God Himself in His totality and in an infinitely perfect way. In this sense God is eternally inexhaustible. Hence St. Thomas distinguishes the beatific vision from the divine intellection:

"Now no created intellect can know God infinitely. For the created intellect knows the divine essence more or less perfectly in proportion as it receives a greater or lesser light of glory. Since therefore the created light of glory received into any created intellect cannot be infinite, it is clearly impossible for any created intellect to know God in an infinite degree. Hence it is impossible that it should comprehend God."<sup>16</sup>

Here we may note the very important difference between Christian "beatific vision" and Zen "spiritual consciousness."

Even Zen proclaims the possibility of the complete Enlightenment, namely, the immediate, perfect and experiential intuition of the absolute in this life; it must not be the eternal vision in our sense, because, evidently, the Zen experience is transitory.

Therefore, next we will compare Zen spiritual consciousness with Christian infused contemplation which is the highest but transitory union with God in this life.

## II. The Temporal Contemplation of God

Zen proclaims the sudden and complete Enlightenment in this life. This is the characteristic of Zen Buddhism and may be considered the specific

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, I, q. 19, a. 2, ad 4.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, R., O.P., *De Deo Uno*, p. 269.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, I, q. 12, a. 7.



Unknown God.<sup>21</sup>

As we have pointed out, since God is transcendent and incomprehensible, we cannot know what God is, by our natural intellect alone and even by grace we still do not know what God is, but only what He is not.<sup>22</sup> This is called the way of Unknowing (or Ignorance) and Unknowing is a very specific term among the mystics. There is always the divine darkness in the highest contemplation.

Dionysius the Areopagite expresses this idea in his Mystical Theology:

"We pray that we may come unto this darkness which is beyond light, and through non-seeing and unknowing, that we may see and know that which is non-seeing and unknowing, that is indeed true seeing and knowing, and thus praise, superessentially, Him Who is superessential, by the removal of all things."<sup>23</sup>

And in the same way he says in his Divine Names:

"There is the most divine knowledge of God which is knower through unknowing according to the union above the mind, when the mind, being away from all things and then leaving even itself behind, is united to the most dazzling rays from there and there, being illumined by the unsearchable depth of wisdom."<sup>24</sup>

Thus the way of Non-seeing and Unknowing in Dionysius has a striking similarity with the way of Unknowing and Non-seeing in Zen.

The same reality is expressed by Blessed Angela of Folino:

"I saw God in a darkness and necessarily in a darkness, because He is situated too far above the mind, and no proportion exists between Him and anything that can become the object of a thought. It is an ineffable delectation in the good which contains all. Nothing therein can become the object either of a word or a concept. I see nothing, I see all."<sup>25</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, II-II, q. 8, a. 7; *C. Gent.*, I, 3, c. 49; *In I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4; *De Verit.*, q. 2, a. 1, ad 9; *De Pot.*, q. 7, a. 5, ad 14; *In Boet. de Trinitate*, q. 1, a. 2, ad 1.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, I, q. 12, a. 13, ad 1.

<sup>23</sup> DIONYSIUS, *Mys. Theol.*, c. 2. (P.G. 3, 1025).

<sup>24</sup> DIONYSIUS, *Div. Nom.*, c. 7, l. 4, § 3, n. 323.

<sup>25</sup> *Acta Sanctorum*, Anvers, 1646, t. I, jan., p. 197, *vita*, c. 4, n. 72. The Latin text is cited in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, t. IV, A, Col. 786-787 and also DE DUBAC, *Op. Cit.*, p. 317. This English version is from Garrigou-Lagrange's *Christian Perfection and Contemplation*, translated by M. T. Doyle, O. P., p. 76. P. Linssen finds here a similarity between Christian mysticism and Zen. LINSEN, R., *Essais sur le Bouddhisme en général et sur le Zen en particulier*, La Colombe, Paris, 1960, pp. 260-261: "L'expression 'je ne vois rien et je vois tout' est spécifiquement Zen. Le 'vide' de nos perceptions distinctes est, pour les maîtres du Zen, la plénitude d'une perception totale défiant toutes les tentatives d'expressions du langage courant. Angèle de Folino précise ce point de vue en accordant une moindre valeur à la vision de la 'divine puissance, de la divine sagesse qu'à celle de la ténèbre...'"

Man in contemplation will be elevated to the vision in the state of innocence:

"In contemplation, God is seen by a means which is the light of wisdom, which elevates the mind to perceive the Divine, but not so that the divine essence be immediately seen: and thus by grace it is seen by the contemplation after the state of sin, though it was more perfect in the state of innocence."<sup>35</sup>

From this doctrine of St. Thomas we realize that contemplation is to perceive the Divine by the means of the light of wisdom, but it is not to see immediately the divine essence. St. Thomas gives a more perfect definition of the contemplation in the *Summa Theologica*, that is, contemplation is the simple insight (intuition) of truth (*intuitus simplex veritatis*).<sup>36</sup>

Following Dionysius, St. Thomas speaks about the circular movement of the angels. This is the metaphor of angelic contemplation.<sup>37</sup> Man becomes like an angel in contemplation, because in contemplation a twofold lack of uniformity will be removed. In other words, man has to remove the twofold lack of uniformity in order to enter contemplation.

First, that which arises from the variety of external things: this is removed by the soul with drawing from externals. Hence it is said that circular movement of the soul is the soul's withdrawal into itself from external objects. The second results from the discourse of reason: this discourse of reason must be laid aside and the soul's gaze fixed on the contemplation of the one simple truth. Hence it is said that the soul's intellectual power must be uniformly concentrated. These two things being done, that is, all things being laid aside, the soul continues in the contemplation of God alone.<sup>38</sup>

Dionysius teaches "mystical contemplation". According to him, in order to unite with the supra-essential Deity man has to exercise the mystical contemplation, leaving behind the senses and the operations of the intellect and

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through the visible, that is, creatures. In the state of innocence man did not need this medium, but needed a medium which is a quasi-species of the thing seen, because man saw God by a certain spiritual light influenced on man's mind from the Divinity, which was a quasi express likeness of the uncreated light. In heaven man will not need this medium because man will see the essence of God by itself, not by a certain intelligible or sensible likeness, because no created likeness can represent perfectly God. However man will need the light of glory in heaven. Hence, first in the actual state man needs a triple medium to see God; creatures, likeness to God and light. Secondly, before the fall man needed a duplex medium to see God; likeness to God and light. Thirdly, in heaven the blessed need one medium; light. And finally God sees Himself without any medium, because God Himself is Light whereby He sees Himself. Cf. *De Verit.*, q. 18, a. 1; a. 2; *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 12, a. 2; BULTER, D. C., *Western Mysticism*, Arrow Books, London, 1960, p. 69.

<sup>35</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 18, a. 1, ad 4.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. *Sum. Theol.*, II-II, q. 180, a. 6, ad 2.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. CAJETAN, *In Sum. Theol.*, *Opera Omnia*, t. X, II-II, q. 180, a. 6, n. 1, p. 481.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. *Sum. Theol.*, II-II, q. 180, a. 6, ad 2.



"The *Dharma* of No-thought is seeing all *dharma*s without the mind being stained by and clinging to them. Its functioning pervades everywhere without attachment to anything....

He who is awakened to the *Dharma* of No-thought thoroughly knows all *dharma*s, perceives all Buddha realms and reaches the Buddha stage."<sup>45</sup>

Huang-Po also teaches that man has to leave all discursive thoughts to find the Buddha:

"They do not know that, if they put a stop to conceptual thought and forget their anxiety, the Buddha will appear before them."<sup>46</sup>

"If your mind is no-mind, there is not a so called no-mind. If you annihilate the Mind through your mind, the Mind will become a relative being. Let there be a silent understanding and no more. It is beyond all thinking. Therefore it is said that words fail and acts of the mind cease to exist."<sup>47</sup>

He emphasizes that man must leave behind all sensitive and intellectual operations in order to perceive the ultimate reality:

"Blinded by their own sight, hearing, feeling, and knowing, they do not perceive the Substance of the spiritual brilliance. If their mind will be no-mind immediately, the Substance will manifest itself like the sun ascending through the sky and illuminating the whole universe without hindrance or bounds."<sup>48</sup>

"Your mind should be no-mind immediately and be a tacit understanding. Any mental process must lead to error. There is just a transmission of the Mind through the Mind."<sup>49</sup>

Therefore we may say that there is a striking similarity between the doctrine of contemplation in the thought of Zen and the thought of Dionysius and St. Thomas. Thus contemplation is above the multiplicity of sensible images and ideas, that is, the way of Unknowing; therefore obscurity is its first characteristic. Contemplation is not a clear and distinct vision like the beatific vision, but an obscure vision.

The second characteristic of contemplation is the supra-human mode. Theologians commonly hold the distinction between acquired contemplation and infused contemplation.<sup>50</sup> We do not consider here the so-called acquired contemplation which depends on personal effort aided by grace, but we

<sup>45</sup> *Loc. Cit.*, n. 24, pp. 35-36.

<sup>46</sup> HUANG-PO, *Chung-Ling-Lu*, p. 3.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, *Perfection Chretienne et Contemplation*, t. I, pp. 272-294; TANQUEREY, S. S., *Précis de Théologie et Mystique*, Desclée et Cie., Paris, 1924, pp. 866-878.

consider here infused contemplation which depends on the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

According to St. Thomas the gifts of the Holy Spirit are distinguished from the infused virtues. The human virtues perfect man according to human reason in his interior and exterior actions. But man needs higher perfections whereby he may be disposed to be moved by God. These perfections are called gifts, not only because they are infused by God, but also because by them man is disposed to be moved by the Holy Spirit.<sup>51</sup> Therefore gifts are distinct from infused virtues as something given by God to follow well the promptings of God.<sup>52</sup>

Thomists hold the fundamental principle that habits are specified by their object and their formal motive. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are the habits and the specific motive of the gifts is to be moved by the divine motion which is the supra-human manner.<sup>53</sup> The theological virtues are more excellent than the gifts of the Holy Spirit, because they are those whereby man's mind is united to God. But if we compare the gifts to other virtues, v.g. moral or intellectual, then the gifts of the Holy Spirit are seen to be more excellent, because the gifts perfect the soul's powers in relation to the Holy Spirit their Mover.<sup>54</sup>

St. Thomas teaches explicitly the supra-human mode of the gifts of the Holy Spirit: "The gifts are distinguished from the virtues in this that the virtues perfect acts in a human mode, but the gifts in an ultra-human mode."<sup>55</sup> The operations of the gifts should be measured by the divine rule whereby man operates as though he were made God by participation.<sup>56</sup>

Hence Thomists admit the specific difference between the human deliberate manner of the virtues and the supra-human, divine manner of the gifts of the Holy Spirit; consequently between acquired contemplation and infused contemplation.<sup>57</sup> Therefore the characteristic of infused contemplation whose principles are the gifts of the Holy Spirit is the supra-human mode.

Now we will compare this supra-human mode of infused contemplation with spiritual consciousness.

Since there is no explicit idea of the supernatural order and grace in Zen, it is natural that there be no explicit expression of the supra-human mode of Zen intuition, but we can fittingly consider that the mode of Zen intuition may be said to be above the human mode.

Hence Zen admits the specific difference between the *Prajñā* (Intuition) and the *Vijñāna* (Reason). The *Vijñāna* is a human intellectual activity and

<sup>51</sup> Cf. *Sum. Theol.*, I-II, q. 68, a. 1.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. *Loc. Cit.*, I-II, q. 68, a. 1, ad 3.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, I-II, q. 68, a. 3; a. 8.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, I-II, q. 68, a. 8.

<sup>55</sup> *In III Sent.*, d. 34, q. 1, a. 1; *Sum. Theol.*, I-II, q. 68, a. 2, ad 1; *In III Sent.*, d. 35, q. 2, a. 3; *De Caritate*, q. unic., a. 2, ad 17.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, d. 34, q. 1, a. 3.

<sup>57</sup> GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, O. P., *Perfection Chrétienne.*, t. I, pp. 403-409.



the knowledge of discrimination. But man cannot attain the ultimate reality because the ultimate reality is beyond the human intellect. The *Prajñā* is a higher principle, a transcendental wisdom and a knowledge of non-discrimination in which man can attain the ultimate reality because the ultimate reality, which is beyond the human intellect, is nothing but the *Prajñā* itself. Therefore *Prajñā* intuition, which is a non-discriminative knowledge may be said to be above the human mode.

As we already pointed out, the *Prajñā*, the transcendental wisdom is called the knowledge of Unknowing, the mind of No-mind, the thought of No-thought, the seeing of Non-seeing. These expressions manifest, as it were, the supra-human mode.

To become God, Zen requires intuition not in the ontological order but in the noetic order. Thomists hold the specific difference between the human deliberate manner of the virtue and the supra-human, divine manner of the gifts of the Holy Spirit; Zenists hold the specific difference between the human discriminative manner of the intellect and the supra-human, non-discriminative manner of the transcendental wisdom. Do we not find here an analogy between them?

## 2. The Comparison between the Principles of Spiritual Consciousness and Infused Contemplation

Now we will compare the principle of spiritual consciousness with the principles of infused contemplation.

Man needs sanctifying grace, actual grace, the theological virtues, and the intellectual gifts of the Holy Spirit for infused contemplation. The proximate principles of infused contemplation are the gifts of the Holy Spirit: the gift of knowledge, understanding and wisdom. The remote principles of infused contemplation are the theological virtues, especially faith informed by charity; the ultimate principle is sanctifying grace. Hence without sanctifying grace there is no infused contemplation.<sup>58</sup>

Since faith informed by charity and perfected by the gifts of the Holy Spirit is the immediate eliciting principle of contemplation, Thomists hold that there are not two simultaneous acts in infused contemplation; the act of infused contemplation proceeds as its substance from informed faith, and as its supra-human mode from the intellectual gifts of the Holy Spirit.<sup>59</sup>

Now we will consider the proximate principles of infused contemplation, that is, the intellectual gifts of the Holy Spirit.

According to St. Thomas the gift of knowledge is a participated likeness in the knowledge of God which is not discursive nor argumentative but

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 412, f. 2.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. CAJETAN, *In Sum. Theol., Opera Omnia*, t. VIII, II-II, q. 45, a. 1, n. 1-3, p. 340; GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, O. P., *Ibid.*, p. 411; ROY, A., O. P. and AUMANN, J., O. P., *The Theology of Christian Perfection*, The Priory Press, Dubuque, 1962, p. 531.

absolute and simple.<sup>60</sup> By this gift man can correctly judge created things.<sup>61</sup> This is to know the vanity of creatures and by this right judgement man directs creatures to the divine good.<sup>62</sup>

St. Thomas teaches that the contemplative life begins in this life and will be consummated in heaven, and the gift of understanding, whose function is to apprehend spiritual things, in heaven will attain the divine essence by intuiting it. But in this life we see spiritual things, especially God, by knowing what He is not rather than comprehending Him.<sup>63</sup>

According to John of St. Thomas, the specific nature of this gift is the illumination of the mind for connatural and experiential understanding and penetration of spiritual truths according to an interior realization.<sup>64</sup> Therefore by this gift man can enter into the mystical knowledge of God, that is, union with the Unknown God in which the soul has the simple insight of Truth. Therefore the gift of understanding is an eliciting principle of contemplation in a very proper sense.

But this mystical contemplation is not yet the beatific vision. John of St. Thomas makes this clear:

This mystical knowledge is not formally the beatific vision,... In heaven the soul... will mystically know and touch God. God Himself becomes all things in the soul. In whatever the soul sees in Him or outside of Him, it touches and touches God in all. This experience is the summit of all mystical knowledge of God, but it is not the beatific vision. It is rather a motion of the Holy Spirit regulated by the vision, so that in whatever it touches, and in whatever interior experience it may have, it tastes and experiences God.<sup>65</sup>

Finally we will consider the gift of wisdom.

According to St. Thomas, wisdom is distinguished from knowledge, that is, wisdom is knowledge of the divine things, whereas knowledge is the knowledge of human things.<sup>66</sup> The gift of wisdom has as its function to judge spiritual things infallibly and correctly and to set in order everything

<sup>60</sup> Cf. *Sum. Theol.*, II-II, q. 9, a. 1, ad 1.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, II-II, q. 9, a. 2.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, II-II, q. 9, a. 4; GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, O. P., *Op. Cit.*, p. 270.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. *In III Sent.*, d. 34, q. 1, a. 4.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. JOHN OF ST. THOMAS, *Cursus, Theol.*, t. VI, q. 70, d. 18, a. 3, n. 39, pp. 616-617; n. 50, pp. 620-621.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 73, pp. 630-631. This version is the translation by J. M. Egan, O. P. and by W. D. Hughes, O. P. in *The Thomist*, Vol. 3, Jan. 1945, p. 514. We may find the translation of the work of John of St. Thomas on gifts in *The Thomist* Vol. 3, Jan. 1945, pp. 471-519 and in *The Thomist* Vol. 9, Jan. 1946, pp. 66-116. The author is indebted to this English translation for the citation in his study.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. *Sum. Theol.*, II-II, q. 9, a. 2.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. *In III Sent.*, d. 43, q. 1, a. 4.



which is subordinated to it, and in this way man possesses a certain similitude to the Deity (or the Divinity).<sup>67</sup> Thus the gift of wisdom concerns the divine things according to the divine rule.<sup>68</sup>

Man, by this gift, does not judge from any knowledge derived from study and reasoning about causes, but judges from a connaturality and union with the supreme cause which is possessed, as it were, through experience.<sup>69</sup>

John of St. Thomas speaks of connaturality:

"The formal nature by which wisdom knows the highest cause is an internal experience of God and divine things. It is a taste, love, delight, or internal contact of the will with spiritual things. By reason of its union with the spiritual truth the soul is, as it were, made connatural to things divine."<sup>70</sup>

Hence connaturality is the characteristic of Christian mystical experience. The mystical experience is nothing but the highest state of infused contemplation and is considered properly a gift of God.

John of St. Thomas mentions this marvelously:

This mystical experience is properly considered a gift of God... God gives Himself through His Spirit and His Will inasmuch as He opens His heart. The primary thing in any gift is that the giver should open his heart and give himself or his will to another,... Therefore, the formal aspect under which the gift of wisdom reaches the highest cause, the Divine cause, is an experiential knowledge of God, in which He is united to the soul in its very depths and gives Himself to it. This is the meaning of "knowing by the spirit," knowing not from an illumination or speculation on the Divine nature, but through a loving experience of union.<sup>71</sup>

A great mystic, St. John of the Cross, expresses the same doctrine of mystical experience. According to him, in the mystical union the soul becomes God by participation (*Dios por participación*) not as perfectly as in heaven, but like the shadow of God (*sombra de Dios*), by means of the substantial transformation; the soul does in God and by God that which He does in the soul by Himself and in this way the will of God and the soul is one and thus the operation of God and the soul is one. God gives Himself to the soul and the soul possesses God Himself.<sup>72</sup>

This doctrine of mystical experience is fundamentally the same as the

<sup>68</sup> Cf. *Sum. Theol.*, II-II, q. 45, a. 1.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, II-II, q. 45, a. 2; JOHN OF ST. THOMAS, *Op. Cit.*, q. 70, d. 43, a. 4, n. 4, n. 6, pp. 635-636.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 6., p. 635, Trans. p. 70.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 9, pp. 636-637, Trans. pp. 71-72.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. JOHN OF THE CROSS, ST., *Llama de Amor Viva*, Cant. 3, n. 78, p. 1080, *Vida y Obras de San Juan de la Cruz*, B. A. C., Madrid, 1960.

doctrine of the "quasi-experimental knowledge of God" in St. Thomas.<sup>73</sup>

Now we will consider the principle of spiritual consciousness and those principles of infused contemplation.

As we saw, the principle of spiritual consciousness is the *Prajñā* alone. It is very difficult to answer, from a theological viewpoint, this question; how does the *Prajñā* correspond to the Catholic theology of grace, or the intellectual gifts of the Holy Spirit, or *gnosis*?

It is evident that Zen has no explicit idea of grace, since Zen did not know Revelation. Moreover, we cannot identify *Prajñā*, transcendental wisdom, with the gift of wisdom, because they differ considerably.

As we already saw in the first chapter, in Buddhist philosophy the *Prajñā* is one of the six virtues or perfections and is the directing principle of the other five virtues. Because, without the *Prajñā*, the other perfections will altogether lose their potentiality.<sup>74</sup> Therefore the *Prajñā* is the form and principle of the other virtues, as grace is the form and principle of charity and the other virtues in Thomistic theology.<sup>75</sup> By this comparison, however, we do not identify the *Prajñā* with grace; we simply point out a similarity between the relation of the *Prajñā* to other virtues and grace to other virtues. The directing principle of Buddhist perfections, the *Prajñā*, is identified with the all-knowledge (*savajñatā*) by Mahayanists. Therefore the *Prajñā* is said to be the all-illuminating light which demands our respect. It illumines all the darkness there is in this world of dualities.<sup>76</sup> It reveals to man the truth of all things, which is all-knowledge. And it is the Truth itself, the Emptiness itself, it is called the Mother of all the Buddhas and *Bodhisattvas*.<sup>77</sup>

Therefore the *Prajñā* is the light whereby man recognizes the Truth. Thus the *Prajñā*, the transcendental Buddhist wisdom, corresponds more to the gift of understanding than to the gift of wisdom. The *Prajñā* is a principle to attain the Enlightenment, Spiritual Consciousness and also at the same time its end namely Enlightenment, Spiritual Consciousness itself.<sup>78</sup>

Therefore the *Prajñā* is identified with the Ultimate Reality, namely the *Sūnyatā*, the *Tathatā*, the *Dharma*, the *Samādhi*, the *Citta*, the *Dharmakāya* and the *Nirvāṇa*.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Cf. *In I Sent.*, d. 14, q. 2, ad 3; d. 15, expositio secundae partis textus; *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 43, a. 5, ad 2. According to the study by J. K. Dedek the quasi-experimental knowledge of the divine persons in St. Thomas is knowledge that is joined to charity, but the interpretation of immediate or supra-discursive cognition cannot be decisively excluded. Cf. DEDEK, J. K., *Op. Cit.*, pp. 140-142; pp. 146-147.

<sup>74</sup> SUZUKI, D. T., *Essays.*, III, pp. 236-237.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. *Sum. Theol.*, I-II, q. 110, a. 3 ad 3; II-II, q. 23, a. 2; *De Verit.*, q. 27, a. 5, ad 5; a. 6, ad 3; ad 7; CAJETAN, *In Sum. Theol.*, *Opera Omnia*, t. VII, I-II, q. 110, a. 3, n. 4, p. 314.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. SUZUKI, D. T., *The Essentials of Zen Buddhism*, pp. 389-390.

<sup>77</sup> SUZUKI, D. T., *Essays.*, III, pp. 239-240.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 240-241.

<sup>79</sup> *Loc. Cit.*, p. 241.



This tremendous doctrine on the *Prajñā* reveals that the *Prajñā* is the real transcendental principle, because it is nothing but the Ultimate Reality itself, epistemologically interpreted. The *Prajñā* transcends infinitely the *Vijñāna*, i.e., reason. The *Prajñā* sees into the essence of things as they are, that is, the *Chien-Hsing* (seeing into one's nature).

The *Prajñā* is the way of Unknowing and it is called No-thought, No-form and Non-abiding. Therefore it is said that the *Prajñā* is grasping the ungraspable, attaining the unattainable, comprehending the incomprehensible.<sup>80</sup>

Hence, we find a similarity between the *Prajñā* and the gift of wisdom.

The *Prajñā*, transcendental wisdom is the transcendental principle, as it were, the divine eye whereby man can judge all facts of daily life from the divine viewpoint: "The enlightened man interprets the facts of daily experience from the spiritual point of view. When the world is thus interpreted spiritually it is no more an object of the senses and the intellect."<sup>81</sup>

The gift of wisdom is the principle of the supra-human mode whereby the perfect contemplative judges everything from the divine viewpoint.: "It is he who is not content with believing but who fully lives his faith, and who judges everything according to it, that is, according to the very thought of God, as if he saw with the eye of God."<sup>82</sup>

In the great master Lin-Chi, the Ultimate Reality appears as the Person who dwells and operates inmost in the mind. The cognition of this Absolute Person is realized by the inner realization of the *Prajñā*, that is, by the spiritual, personal and experiential cognition. The supreme Enlightenment is nothing but the cognition of this Person, namely, to become this Person: "If you want to be free from birth and death and free to go or stay and to be comfortably independent, you should recognize the One Person who is here and now listening to the *Dharma*."<sup>83</sup>

"Do you want to know who is the Patriarch or the Buddha? He is just the One Person in front of you listening now to the *Dharma*. But students have no faith (intuition) in him and look for something else outside."<sup>84</sup>

"If you do not want to differ from the Patriarchs and Buddha, just hold this correct view and do not use the doubt. If the Mind and your mind do not differ, this is called living Patriarch."<sup>85</sup>

Man becomes the Buddha by the inner realization of the *Prajñā* intuition. This is called Spiritual Consciousness in Zen and this is nothing but the absolute consciousness which man possesses by the inner realization of the *Prajñā*. In this Consciousness the Person becomes all in one's mind, as it were,

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 243.

<sup>81</sup> SUZUKI, D. T., *The Essence of Buddhism*, p. 17.

<sup>82</sup> GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, O. P., *Christian Perfection and Contemplation* (Trans.), Herder, St. Louis, 1958, p. 331.

<sup>83</sup> LIN-CHI, *Op. Cit.*, p. 46.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

the Person, as life of his life, possesses totally his mind. Therefore the *Prajñā* is the principle of the deification in Zen. From our study we cannot deny a certain similarity between the *Prajñā* and the intellectual gifts of the Holy Spirit. The *Prajñā* is said to be innate in everyone, because it is nothing but the illuminating light of the Absolute which is transcendent and at the same time immanent.

According to St. Thomas man needs to follow his inner conscience which is moved by the gifts of the Holy Spirit:

"Even the Philosopher says in the chapter *on Good Fortune* that for those who are moved by divine instinct there is no need to take counsel according to human reason, but only to follow their interior instinct, since they are moved by a principle higher than human reason."<sup>86</sup>

### 3. The Possibility of Supernatural Contemplation in Zen

We have compared Zen spiritual consciousness with Christian infused contemplation and we have seen certain similarities and differences between them. It is certain that we cannot identify spiritual consciousness with infused contemplation, likewise we cannot identify the Buddhist or Taoist Deity with the Christian Deity.

Zenists proclaim the possibility and the facts of realization of spiritual consciousness, that is, the experience of Zen Enlightenment. This problem was not the subject of our study in this dissertation, but how can we consider this experience of spiritual consciousness? Is it merely illusory self-deception or a real contemplation of the Truth? It is very difficult to think of it as an illusion.<sup>87</sup>

We know Zen still attracts many people today and invites them to a meditative life. Can any self-deception, even a mere philosophical idea, attract the people for such a long period, more than one thousand years, to the contemplative life to attain the Enlightenment? In fact Zen is still living as one of the branches of Mahāyāna Buddhism in the Orient especially in Japan, notwithstanding some change or development in its doctrine. And there, the monastic life

<sup>86</sup> *Sum. Theol.*, I-II, q. 68, a. 1.

<sup>87</sup> J. Blofeld points out this problem correctly. BLOFELD, J., *The Zen Teaching of Huang Po.*, pp. 8-9: "The great mystics of the world, such as Plotinus and Eckhart, who have plumbed the depths of consciousness and come face to face with the Inner Light, the all-pervading Silence, are so close to being unanimous concerning their experience of Reality that I, personally, am left in no doubt as to the truth of their accounts. Huang Po, in his more nearly every day language, is clearly describing the same experience as theirs, and I assume that Gautama Buddha's mystical Enlightenment beneath the Bo Tree did not differ from theirs, unless perhaps in intensity and in its utter completeness. Could one suppose otherwise, one would have to accept several forms of absolute truth! Or else one would be driven to believe that some or all of these Masters were lost in clouds of self-deception."



## CONCLUSION

We have studied the thought of Zen with regard to the Absolute, starting from a consideration of the fundamental notions in Mahāyāna Buddhism; then the thought of Lao-Tzu on *Tao*, tracing the development of Zen thought.

The thought of Zen elaborates one point, that is, the Absolute. In the Indian Buddhist thought it is called the *Sūnyatā* (the Emptiness); in the Chinese Taoist thought, the *Tao* (the Way); in the traditional Zen thought, the *Hsin* (the Mind); and finally in the Master Lin-Chi, the *Chen-Jen* (the True Man).

The aim of Zen is nothing but the spiritual, personal and experiential cognition of the Absolute through the *Prajñā*.

Generally speaking, the whole system of Buddhism may be called a mysticism because it is the path of discovery of the Absolute in the depth of the mind by the experiential intuition of *Prajñā*. In Buddhism, the Absolute is comprehended first as immanent, then as transcendent. That is the reason why Buddhism is often considered as pantheistic.

However, the author has tried to show that in the thought of Zen the ontological identity between the Absolute and all things cannot be confirmed, but rather Zen recognizes the ontological distinction between them, because Zen is seeking the identity not in the ontological order but in the noetic order. Since the absolute transcendence of God requires the immanence of God, He is transcendent and at the same time immanent. The way of great mystics is the way of the mystical union with the Unknown God, Who dwells in the soul. Therefore it is natural that there be a certain similarity between Buddhist thought and Christian mystical thought in spite of many divergences. Even if it cannot be denied that Buddhist thought has a pantheistic tendency, we must not characterize Buddhism as absolute pantheism.

The thought of the great Zen Master Lin-Chi must be considered the breakthrough to the Absolute Person as if "*Elan vers Dieu personnel*" in the pantheistic tendency. It is the supra-intellectual, experiential cognition of the Person who dwells and operates innermost in the soul.

We already have pointed out that Mahayanist, Taoist, and Zen thought are very much in accord with the thought of St. Thomas on the transcendence of God. The Ultimate Reality is incomprehensible, unnominal, and ineffable because of its transcendence; and it is called Non-being because of its supra-substantiality. The doctrine of the eminence of the Deity in the Buddhist, Taoist, and Zen thought reveals a striking similarity to the doctrine of the eminence of the Christian Deity in the supernatural order, but we do not identify the Buddhist or Taoist Deity with the Christian Deity; we simply remark the similarity between them.

We have also demonstrated that Zen thought is similar in idea to Thomistic theology on the doctrine of the immanence of the Absolute. We even find a