Zen for the Western Mind

Manly P. Hall

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A Practical Introduction

by Manly P. Hall

ZEN FOR THE WESTERN MIND

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ISBN-10: 0-89314-871-5
ISBN-13: 978-0-89314-871-3

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Compiled from the Manly P. Hall Lecture Note archive:
'A Practical Introduction to Zen: Eastern Psychology for Western Man'
'Sand, Rock and Wood: The Zen Doctrine of Dynamic Acceptance'
'Personal Cultivation of the Zen Spirit in the Home and at Work'

Layout and Design for this Edition by P. K. Austad

Published by

The Philosophical Research Society
3910 Los Feliz Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90027 USA

Telephone 323.663.2167
Fax 323.663.9443
Website www.prs.org
E-mail info@prs.org

Printed in the United States of America

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Chapter I

A PRACTICAL INTRODUCTION TO ZEN

In this discussion, we are going to use some words that may seem a little strange, and perhaps bring in some ideas with which the average person is not entirely familiar. We therefore ask you to remember that, after all, words are little bodies, and each word must have a soul. If we are able to find the soul within words, then we experience their meaning. And out of this soul-power, we also come a little nearer to the understanding of the common needs of mankind.

Let us begin by pointing out that Zen is not essentially a religion. It is not a philosophy. It is not a science. To the Zen master, Zen is only one thing—an immediate experience. It can occur to a person of any belief, so long as that person is sincere. It cannot be conjured into existence by any ulterior motive; it is not a product of intellectualism; nor is it assured by the absence of intellectualism. This interior experience is perhaps best approached, not dogmatically, but by trying to convey overtones. From the beginning, Zen has been a discipline of overtones. For a thousand years it was perpetuated without a textbook. It is not given from master to disciple by lectures or orations; it is the silent communication of heart to heart, of soul to soul.

Actually, Zen is not essentially different from many of the great convictions of mankind, but perhaps it is the most completely organized expression of these convictions. It draws its authority from many sources. It brings them together and justifies them from the common experience of human beings seeking peace, hope, justice, and integrity.

In order to get some basic concept of our principle, and become more familiar with these basic ideas, we will start with a figure well known to most thoughtful persons—grand, homely old Socrates.

This great Athenian commoner, one of the most beloved leaders of man's mental life, was once discoursing with his disciples concerning the mystery of the human soul. He showed them an empty glass, and then he took a handful of earth and placed it in the glass. Then he took a pitcher of water and poured water upon the earth until the glass was filled. The contents of the glass became murky and disturbed, and there was a strange muddy confusion of water and earth. Then Socrates took the glass in his hand and continued to shake it violently. The more he shook it, the more confused the elements became, until it was impossible to tell one from the other.

Then Socrates said, "*The earth is the body of man. This water is the symbol of his soul. By keeping this glass continually agitated, I will make certain that there can be no separation between the body and the soul. I shall keep the soul obscured with the mud of body. I will keep the body riled and agitated, until by this continual agitation, I have achieved continual confusion. This is the state of man. By the continual agitation of his mind and his emotions, his inner life is continually disturbed. It is impossible to discern the better part of him from the worse part, and when he thinks of himself, he does not know whether he thinks of the best part or the worst part.*

"Now how shall we clarify this? How shall we establish a discipline by means of which these two elements will be resolved to their natural relationships, and the obvious release of soul from the obscurity of matter can be accomplished?" He said, "My disciples, we cannot achieve this. Yet it can be achieved, because nature has ordained that it should be achieved. We accomplish our end not by our own effort, but by following nature." Then Socrates said, "I will now place this glass, with its riled contents, here on the table, and we shall discourse of many subjects, and we shall leave the glass to itself"

A little later he spoke of the glass again: *"And now look at the glass. I have no longer agitated it. I have no longer kept it artificially confused. Therefore, you will perceive that the parts have separated of themselves. The earth has again fallen to the bottom. The upper part, the water, signifying the soul, is clear again, and it is now possible to perceive the two parts in their proper and natural states. This has been accomplished*

by one thing only—I have stopped agitating the bottle; I have left it in peace. I have bestowed quietude upon it. I have no longer blown upon it with my thoughts and feelings. I have no longer confused it with hope and despair. I have simply allowed it to be quiet, and out of this stillness, nature has perfected its work."

This is a concept which we find in Socratic philosophy—namely, that man must continually, artificially agitate himself in order to remain ignorant. The moment he stops trying to be ignorant, he will gradually become wise, because this is the way of nature. This is what he was intended to accomplish, but he never kept still long enough to enjoy his birthright.

Far on the other side of the world, about six hundred years before the beginning of the Christian era, the great Indian philosopher, Gautama Buddha, sat down quietly on an old boulder on the side of a mountain, which was called "The Vulture's Peak," and here he discoursed with his disciples in the way it was done in those times. The wise man sat by the side of the road, and those who honored him gathered around to listen to his words. And as they were quietly discoursing there, a farmer, a man of no particular ability, but with a great respect for the teacher, came to bring an offering. He brought the only offering he had. He had taken from a pool not far away a beautiful lotus plant, and he brought this and laid it in the lap of the Buddha. And Gautama looked down upon the lotus plant very quietly, and he said nothing; and everyone remained silent for a long time. Then one of the disciples rose. He came and knelt before the teacher, and said, "Master, I have received the doctrine." Gautama said, "It is well, my son, tell me what you have received." The disciple said, "I have received it, master, but I cannot tell you what it is." The master said, "That is good. You have received the doctrine."

Out of this incident arose the foundation of Zen. Now, that which had been placed in the lap of Buddha was a simple plant that had grown in a pool. This plant consisted of three parts—a leaf, a blossom, and a bud; and the strange symbolism of this trinity was to influence half the world more than any other symbolism that has ever been given to man. In the philosophy of Zen, we find mingled many thoughts from ancient China and other parts of the world.

Nearly fifteen hundred years ago, there flourished in India one of the most extraordinary institutions of learning of which we have any record. It was a great university, where more than twenty-five thousand students gathered to be instructed by more than twelve hundred teachers. In this university were taught all arts and sciences, medicine and law, astronomy and architecture. Here, also, were taught literature and history, great systems of morality and ethics, and it is reported that in the 5th century A. D., at the University of Nilanda in India, Christianity was taught as comparative religion.

The great university perished with the rise of Islam in India, so we have no actual records of its students, but sometime while it was at its height in the 5th or 6th century, there graduated from it a most peculiar man. He was a heavy-set, broad shouldered, athletic type of person, with an enormous face and very large eyes. He was perhaps a considerably exaggerated counterpart of dear old Socrates himself, and just about as handsome. This man was a blue-eyed Brahmin, who wore a heavy red cloak and large golden rings in his ears. He had a grizzly beard, beetling brows, and a bald head. He was a strange, stern man, but he felt a call within himself, and he went forth out of India to make a long, dangerous journey to China, and there he remained and taught. His name was *Bodhidharma*, sometimes also called *Daruma*.

Perhaps many of you have seen a picture or a likeness of Daruma. Have you ever been in a toy store and seen a funny little red doll that looked like an egg, with a face painted on the front; and every time you tipped it over it bounced up again, and you could not tip it over because it was weighted at the bottom? This is Daruma—a favorite with children throughout Asia. The fact that you cannot tip him over is part of his philosophy. That he should be a toy, is also part of his philosophy, because there was one thing that Daruma did not want—and that is that anyone should venerate him. If they cared for him at all, he wanted them to love him as a child would love a doll or a toy. He wanted everyone who saw him to laugh—and with his general makeup, this was not difficult, because he was a rather humorous-looking person.

About the 7th century of the Christian era, the teaching of this man reached Japan, where the doctrine of Zen as we now know it, took root even more firmly than in any other part of Asia. Because it appealed to a certain basic simplicity in the Japanese consciousness, it flourished there, and became one of the most powerful forces in the cultural development of this people.

Now, we may say, "Why should we worry about Zen over here? We have our own philosophies, our own ideas." I think the answer to that is the same as to the question, "Why should we listen to our parents?" Young folks generally do not wish to listen, and it becomes necessary for them to go through a number of unhappy experiences before they discover that perhaps their parents knew something. In the world of thought and philosophy, all that has gone before constitutes, in a wonderful way, an elder. We can profit by the experiences of the past because, although our own ways of life are changing, somewhere in this world people have gone through all the experiences that we go through. Sometimes they went through these experiences long ago, and their adventures are half forgotten; but, by degrees, we are realizing that this is truly one planet, that this planet is inhabited by one humanity, and that from the beginning of time, this humanity has had a wonderful capacity to get into trouble.

Also, all over the world, there have arisen teachers—wonderful leaders, idealists, dreamers, sages, saviors, and saints—who have sought to help man. Now, if every type of humanity were essentially different, teachers could only help their own; but while races look different and have different languages and habitats, the essential problems of man are universal. A man is still hungry in any part of the world. He can still be broken-hearted on any part of the earth. He can suffer war and pillage anywhere. He knows age, sickness, and death, regardless of country or language. Thus in the great values, we are one people. We are beginning to realize that just as it is nice for us to have dishes, perhaps, that were made in Denmark, or good woolens that are made in Scotland, or enjoy various art treasures and commodities from other parts of the world, so we should have a free exchange of ideas in order that each individual may enjoy the best of what the world knows. Any less adequate attitude is a prejudice

of some kind, and prejudice does not help very much in time of trouble.

Zen, under several different names, then, represents the convictions of many people, all involved in this wonderful mystery of the lotus blossom, the bud, and the leaf. So we will pause for a moment to try to understand this trinity. In Asia, these three parts of the lotus symbolize the three parts of the universe with which man is concerned. The lotus flower is heaven; the leaf is earth; the bud is man; and heaven, earth, and man constitute the great trinity devised by the ancients. This triad finds man suspended between heaven and earth. We remember the words of Goethe in his wonderful drama of "Faust," where he says that there are two spirits within himself—one to the heaven aspires, and the other in the earth suspires.

Heaven, earth, and man represent a strange, unbalanced balance. It is everywhere in Oriental art. It has come to us in the designs on beautiful bowls and cups; it is embroidered on fine silk; it is woven into brocades. It has also come to our Western life through flower arrangement, for Oriental flower arrangement is always the same—the blossom, the leaf, and the bud.

From this triad, China developed the very ancient doctrine that we know as Taoism (pronounced as though it were spelled with a 'D', but actually spelled with a 'T'). In this doctrine, Heaven was the most important of all factors. Confucius and Lao-tse have left us wonderful stories about the mystery of Heaven and earth. Heaven is the Eternal Emperor. Imperial Heaven is the ruler of all things. Confucius says, "Heaven bestows, man receives." Everywhere in Eastern thinking, Heaven moves all other things. And by a strange and wonderful alchemical marriage, Heaven and earth were united, and the son of Heaven and earth was man.

In man, therefore, is Heaven, his upper part; and earth, his lower part. If man inclines himself to the earth, he becomes a materialist; he becomes locked in mortal concerns. If he elevates himself toward Heaven, he ascends to his own spiritual source; he becomes one with the principle of good which is real everywhere in the universe. Nobility causes man to rise to Heaven; selfishness impels him to fall back again into the earth. And because man has Heaven and earth

within himself, his nature is like the glass of water in the story of Socrates. By his doubts, he obscures Heaven; by his various selfish and unreasonable actions, he keeps confusion constantly within his own nature. He has a little of hope, which is Heaven; and a little of fear, which is earth. He has a little of good, which is Heaven; a little of ill, which is earth. In him, all polarities and opposites struggle for dominion in the mystery of his own nature.

We are also told that Heaven is motion, life. The ancient Chinese scholar, looking out into the sky, saw forever the pageantry of stars, the planets moving along the golden road. He saw the great Emperor of Heaven, veiled in his infinite robes—the mystery beyond mysteries—and he adored Heaven. To symbolize this, he made a flat disc of jade, about the size of a dinner plate, and a quarter of an inch thick, and in the center of this disc, he put a circular opening. The circle became the symbol of Heaven, because it was the sign of eternity. But man could not worship Heaven in the form of a piece of jade, so he made an opening in the center of the jade, where there was nothing, and when he wished to speak to heaven, he whispered into the hole in the center of the jade, because he could make no image of that which was real. He could not worship any form or likeness, because Heaven was universal; it was life itself.

An old Chinese philosopher was once asked what was the shape of heaven, and he replied, "What is the shape of water? If you put water in a square container, water is square; if you put it in a round bottle, it is round; if you put it in a flat dish, it is shallow; if you put it in a long vase, it is deep. It is all shapes to all things. Yet of itself, it is beyond shape. This is truth, which can appear in all appearances, yet of its own nature, is beyond all appearances."

And then the Chinese also said, "There is something about this Heaven that is like water. Water is distinguished from earth"—*again Socrates' symbol of the soul: water differentiated from earth*—"and this water is like Tao, or eternity. Let us explain, then, this mystery. For behold, the sun gathers up water from the sea and lifts it into the air, and it becomes clouds. And in the form of clouds it is carried to the mountains. And on the mountains it becomes rain and falls again. And it falls to form little rivulets, and these come together to make

brooks; and the brooks in turn unite to make rivers, and the rivers flow down the mountains and across the plains; and men live by the shores of the river, for this is the great Yangtze, the mother of waters. And they take their life from the river, and they build their homes beside it; and it waters their fields. They sail upon it, they catch fish from it, and they wash their clothes in it; they drink it, and they bury their dead in it; and the sea keeps on moving—this great water, flowing forever; and finally the water, in the end, returns to the sea from which it came. This is the great cycle of life. This is Tao, the principle of life, which sustains all things, which flows forever from itself to itself, and along the way, all creatures live, dependent upon it, nourished by it, and forever in the presence of its symbolism, although they do not understand it."

This mystery, then, has something to do with consciousness and with the life and experience of the human being. Tao is very much like Zen, and Zen, in turn, would go along with Confucius to produce what may be considered a right or proper code for human life. Confucius said that the proper person is the superior man. This sounds, at first, a little arrogant, but as we understand his meaning more, we begin to find that he has made a very constructive and important statement. What is the superior man? According to Confucius, a superior man is simply a human being who has lost the capacity to perform an inferior action. This, of course, is a hard capacity to lose, and most of us do not make it. But it is still a very interesting thought.

On one occasion, when Diogenes was speaking in the Athenian forum, a Greek soldier who disagreed with him stood on the terrace above and spat on his head. This was a rather bad moment, even for a philosopher. Diogenes looked up to see whether it was raining or not, and, discovering the source of the insult, smiled rather benignly. He said, "You know, I have an idea that about this time I should be angry with you, but I have forgotten how." This is, to a measure, the Confucian concept. The superior person is one in whose nature Heaven rules, in whose consciousness Heaven flows. He is a receptacle or vessel for Heaven, and has only one sincere and earnest desire—that he may express life, and that through him, this life may flow to bring nourishment, like the Yangtze River, to all the millions who thirst after righteousness and goodness and right principles.

So this superior being is the one in whose life beauty and truth have taken over. It is a person who has achieved the great quietude, so that he may listen to the voice of Heaven. Lao-tse said that three kinds of men write poems: one for gain—so many dollars a line; one for fame, so that his name will be in print; the third simply because he cannot help writing poetry. The third one alone is a poet. And this is the same concept—this motion from within—this motion of eternity conquering time as an experience of human consciousness.

With these introductory remarks, we can perhaps come more directly to the heart of the problem of Zen. We can now appreciate that Zen is non-creedal, that it has nothing to do with names, or places, or persons primarily. It has to do with something that every human heart must somehow learn to understand and apply. Let us then try to find a few simple things out of this Eastern psychology which may help us to organize our Western way of life.

One thing that I think Zen does for us is to live life out of historical context. Up to the present time, many persons have lived by history alone. Also, they have worshiped history. They have not realized one of the great principles that Zen points out. This Heaven, the open blossom of the lotus, has within itself the locked mystery of all dimensions—up and down, in and out, forward and backwards, yesterday and tomorrow, time and eternity, beginning and end, are all locked within the mystery of Heaven. And in this locking of all dimensions, the Zen thinker points out that Heaven itself is superior to all these things; that they exist because of it. It is the master; they are merely expressions, or avenues for its expression.

In common parlance, the life of man is divided into three parts: yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Zen points out, however, that the only one of those parts that is real is now. There is no time in all the world but now. What we call the past, is simply man remembering the past now. All that we have of the future is man's hope for the future, which he is hoping now. The individual, however, has made now negative. He has permitted the past to flow in and fill the now. One of the rewards of this is to be psychotic, a state in which the individual no longer has the power to make any decision now. He has mortgaged now to yesterday.

Plato said the same thing when he made the remark, "The living are ruled by the dead." You are a living person; you are living now; are you ruled by yesterday? Are you tied into a strange complex because of memories? Are you doing things today simply because you have always done them that way? Is today overshadowed by regrets or remorse? Are you trying to live today by the rule of yesterday? Are you completely historical? If you are, you will probably ultimately become completely hysterical. Is today merely a moment in which you are trying to get over yesterday? Is today measured by yesterday? Are you still carrying the prejudice of yesterday? Are you still making the mistakes of yesterday? Are you still trying to live by a code of conduct that was enough for yesterday? It may not be enough for today. Are you bringing forward the hates and fears of yesterday? Is your present mind actually a haunted house, ruled over by spirits and ghosts who rattle chains all night? Actually, is your sleeping and your dreaming merely a way in which yesterday escapes through psychic symbolism to plague today? Are you therefore a servant to a series of dead things?

Everything that you did yesterday is dead; it lives only in your memory. And if, for some strange reason, you developed amnesia, all of this death, all of this past, would cease to exist. Most people consider such amnesia a disaster, and yet, in some cases, we use shock therapy in order to create amnesia in an emergency, because we find that some people simply cannot continue to live with yesterday without falling to pieces now. This yesterday problem is a very big one.

As a compensation for yesterday, which is full of its regrets, we have tomorrow, and this is the *Shangri-la* we live for now. Tomorrow everything is going to be all right. But let us not forget that today was tomorrow yesterday, and this endless motion of time is causing us forever to transmute tomorrows into yesterdays. They go by so fast that the only part of this rapid and wonderful motion that gets no attention is now. Dashing after tomorrow, trying to get over yesterday, we have no immediate focus whatever. We are trying to escape in one direction toward, and in the other direction from. Zen points out that no matter how fast you run, you can never outrun yourself. Yesterday was miserable because of you; tomorrow will be miserable because of you. For wherever you go, and whatever happens, you

must live with yourself. You cannot do anything about the self of yesterday; and it is a rather abstract job to try to do anything about the self of tomorrow.

The key is now. This is the moment in which you can do. But, you say, the moment is gone. Even as we speak, now becomes the past. That may be true, but with one difference. Time moves on, but the now stays with us. Man is a creature that can live only now. Everything else is a psychological invention. The individual is part of the past only because he believes it. He is non-contemporary only because he binds himself to something outside of himself—time; and time becomes the greatest tyrant in his life. He cannot escape the tyranny of the passing hour.

So Zen takes a very simple attitude. The world around us is not an illusion. You can reach out and touch a chair, and the chair is there. There is no doubt about it. But, in some way, the chair is not real. It belongs to a world of things. Man does not. Man is a life; a principle. Put him in a square bottle, and he is square; put him in a round bottle, and he is round. But he has an existence apart from square and round. Of himself, he is always himself. His great hope, therefore, is to extricate himself from the curious dilemma of his own thinking, from the burdens which he has cast upon himself.

But how are we going to get the individual free from yesterday and tomorrow so that he can have a life? Some people say, "Well, if he gets away from yesterday and tomorrow, he is going to be very improvident. He is going to lose all his moral and ethical background. He is going to become a very dangerous citizen, because, after all, we need the moral instruction of the past. We also need the vivid hope of the future to keep us moving." This is not as true as it seems to be. The only reason we lean upon the past and the future is that the present is a vacuum. Make the present right, and that which is good in the past will live; the rest will cease. Make the present right, and that which is necessary for the future will come; that which is unnecessary will not appear to plague us. The great problem, therefore, is this question of immediate rightness.

The next point that Zen would emphasize is the fact that according to history, and to nearly all historical circumstances, man is a victim

of his time. Most persons wish they had lived at some other time, when things were much better. They will always wish this. Sometimes they look back on the dear old, good old times, which were probably just as troublesome as now, but in a little different way. We are always looking back to the peace of a golden age, and forward to some paradise to come. The individual, therefore, feels a tremendous sense of bondage. He cannot change his world; therefore he will suffer with it. This is the common attitude. He tries desperately to be a little better than those around him; no one pays much attention to him—in fact, he is probably cheated occasionally as the result of his improved intentions. Zen would point out, however, that a man is not cheated because he is better; he is cheated because he is foolish. Improvement in morals and integrity has nothing to do with gullibility. In fact, it is the individual who tries to be intensely practical, and to keep all the taboos and policies and practices of his time, who is cheated the most. He may finally be cheated out of life itself. This is not the answer.

Actually, Zen points out that no matter how corrupt the world becomes, how selfish and stupid everyone else may be, each individual can be as wise, as happy, and as good as he wishes to be. No one can prevent another man from becoming wise. No one can prevent a wise man from being happy. Nero tried it; he was only able to destroy bodies; he could not touch souls. Once the inner life is established in realities, no corruption of society can touch it; but until it is so established, it can never be safe. Security, therefore, is the victory of Heaven over earth. It is the victory of now over all other time. It is the victory of self over circumstance. Nothing in the world can keep us foolish but ourselves; nothing can make us miserable but ourselves. Other people can do their best to make us unhappy, but if we have the Heaven-consciousness inside ourselves, we cannot be touched.

Following Lao-tse and Confucius, Zen points out that this is the only concept known to man which is just. Any belief that one individual can be made miserable by another, or be the victim of the evil of another, must be unjust. And in Zen, the universe can not be unjust; it must be just. Therefore, Heaven does not punish; man

punishes himself by disobeying Heaven. Heaven cannot bring infirmity; but the man who disobeys Heaven becomes infirm. Heaven will not bestow war; but men who do not love peace will depart from Heaven and will have war. Therefore, man, by the power that he possesses within himself, may either seek Heaven or depart from it. He may choose, for he has the power of limited determinism within himself. He may make his own decisions, and these bring him peace or conflict, depending entirely upon one principle: do they obey or disobey Heaven?

Man therefore lives in a world in which good can never fail. We are sometimes worried that evil may some day become master of the world. Zen says no, evil cannot ever become the master of the world, for the reason that all evil things oppose each other. Evil men fight each other; evil ideas conflict with each other; evil policies corrupt each other. But all good things build good. Therefore, all good things work together; all bad things work against each other. Thus, good is forever preserving itself, while evil is forever destroying itself. Zen extends this idea to point out that reality, as a state of consciousness, is ever developing and releasing itself. Illusion, as a state of consciousness, is forever destroying itself. And when all illusion destroys itself, only Heaven can remain, for that, and that alone, can be real.

Thus, the individual gains a certain assurance that he may live according to Heaven, and that if he so does, the Heaven-part, not only of himself, but of all existence, must sustain him. He may have to sacrifice something of illusion if he wishes the strength of reality, the substance of Heaven. He cannot live upon two levels of consciousness at the same time. Therefore, if he seeks Heaven, he must voluntarily depart from the unreasonable excesses of earth. This does not mean that he must depart from earth, but he must depart from a wrong interpretation of it. He must depart from selfishness, superstition, ignorance and fear, or he cannot know Heaven. But if he finds Heaven, it is more than all that he has sacrificed in the attainment of it.

Zen therefore becomes the champion of the simple way, the way of Heaven. The simple way is the way of human dignity. It is proper, according to Confucius, that each individual should represent Heaven.

And in order to represent Heaven, he must be universal, for Heaven is universal. He can have no barriers in himself; no walls in his own consciousness. He cannot be for anything or against anything, for Heaven alone decides the virtues and demerits of everything that exists.

The Zen philosophy points out the wonderful simplicity of Heaven, especially in matters of instruction. In the teaching of man, men are impatient, but Heaven is always patient. Heaven never wags its finger at you and says, "Tsk, tsk, you can't do that." Heaven has one quality which survives all the mistakes of men—endurance. Heaven never obviously interferes, but it never gives up. A man may depart from it for ages, and try to build his own house upon the sands of his own purposes; but in the end, Heaven will win. One of the Zen fables has to do with a great city that men built in a jungle. Finally, the city was deserted, and in a short time, the jungle moved in. Stone by stone was broken apart by roots and twigs and creepers, and after a time, there was only the green jungle. The city was gone. All things built by men that are contrary to Heaven, will fall. Time is unimportant. All men, also, must find Heaven or suffer. For some it is a day; for some, perhaps, it is unknown aeons of time; but all must find Heaven. There is no other way of surviving.

Heaven's very simple and direct lessons to us are not taught in great books. They are swept with brushes of light across the sky. Everything around us that is natural and real tells us the story of Heaven. And everything that is not quite so good, and not quite so permanent, not quite so happy, tells the story of man. Therefore, man builds an empire of his own in the midst of Heaven. If he builds it wisely, Heaven will sustain it; if he builds it badly, Heaven will force it to crumble in the presence of immutable law.

Confucius said, "The man who is not aware of Heaven, is ignorant." If a person does not know enough to obey Heaven, he is ignorant; if he honestly believes that he can disobey Heaven, he is stupid. We cannot win against Heaven. Yet we have fought and struggled for ages to outwit this mysterious archetype, this mysterious energy, this mysterious life which flows forever according to its own plans, and will never change. There is only one answer. Man must go into part-

nership with it. He must admit that Heaven leads, and man follows. If he follows Heaven, he is happy, wise, and adjusted; if he departs from Heaven, he cuts himself off from his share of good things.

Once upon a time, there was a man who liked to eat too much. (You have heard of such people.) And because he was very unwise in his diet, and catered largely to his appetite, which was very artificial, he had dyspepsia. So his doctor gave him a little pink pill to take after each meal. One day when he was talking to a friend, he reached into his pocket for the bottle of pills, took one of the pills, and said, "You know, I have a little streak of dyspepsia this afternoon; I guess I must have broken a law." His friend looked at him, and said, "Well, you do look kind of pale. You look rather miserable. But I don't think you broke a law; I think the law broke you." This is sound Zen. Sickness is not because we break laws; it is because laws break us. Unhappiness is not because we have succeeded in breaking a law; man has never broken a law of Heaven, and never will. He may try, but the law breaks him. And the penalty of this mistake in judgment is to be traced in the bloody inscriptions upon the pages of history; the sorrows, the miseries of mankind.

We must therefore seek to understand the laws of Heaven, and in this search, Zen would point out, we should not be limited by history or geography. Let us remember that the fact that a man is born on the other side of the earth does not make him any more able to live well than if he is born on this side of the earth. We do not measure the truth of philosophies by the failures of men. We measure all things in terms of the will of Heaven. That which is true is true; geography has nothing to do with it. But if we keep an open mind, we will find certain rules and procedures that may help us to understand and obey the way of Heaven.

In the East, there is a growing tendency, which we rather admire in the West, toward a process of "uncluttering" the self. We discover that a cluttered life is a symbol of a cluttered self; that living in an environmental confusion is merely the story of our own confusion. Gradually, we have come to so disproportion our sense of values that a good housecleaning is very necessary. The one way to achieve this kind of housecleaning is to begin to discriminate value, to gradu-

ally grow in terms of appreciation, for the entrance to a better life is through the gate of appreciation. Just as we cannot all be great musicians, but can appreciate and love great music, so we may not be able to follow completely the way of Heaven, but can appreciate and move toward it.

Appreciation is man's experience of the presence of the good, and his gratitude for the privilege of having a share in the good. Appreciation strengthens discrimination, and discrimination is that faculty in man which can discover what is important. And having discovered that which is important, man can apply his will power to the preservation of what he has discovered. Discrimination and appreciation simplify life. They cause the individual to turn instinctively away from that which is not good and to cultivate the good. The gradual result of this is "uncluttering."

Now, uncluttering of the things around you is symbolic; it is an action for a purpose beyond itself. To unclutter your environment, is to begin the process of untying the psychic knots in yourself. Most persons are all tied up in knots these days. This tension results from interior cluttering; just exactly as bewilderment results from exterior cluttering. We have fifty kinds of soap, each one proclaimed to be the best; this is confusing; trying to decide among these is cluttering; and by the time we have made this decision, the precious moment of now has slipped into the ocean of the past, and we have lost time and energy. We must unclutter, not only the things around us, but also the tendency to complexity within ourselves.

One way to unclutter is to try to determine what is important and what is not important; what is good and what is not good. And, of course, the quickest and easiest way to do this is by straight thinking. A straight thought is a mysterious thing in our way of life because every day we are tempted and urged and almost required to think crooked. A little straight thinking would put some great enterprises out of business. It would lift the average family out of debt. It would reduce worry for all of us, but it would be very unsettling to the profit system. Therefore, we maintain this concept of profit by a continuous loss within ourselves. We go on with this long enough, and find that we are all sick.

The sense of appreciation and gratitude has a bearing on this problem of uncluttering. Gratitude is a very sensitive and wonderful thing, and all the small attainments in this area, brought together, result in one essential attainment, and that is sensitivity to truth. This, in turn, means sensitivity to value. It means penetration, the power of the consciousness to discover and express value; to weigh all things and cling to value.

The ancients had a term for this—*right-mindfulness.* And Zen is a peculiar concept of right-mindfulness, which achieves its end by cutting away most of the products of mind, on the ground that only a small part of thinking is right-minded. Now, we cannot expect the average Western person to suddenly develop an immediate and total right-mindfulness, but actually, it is a rather simple thing. It is an attitude which is warm and brings things close to life. It is a gentle, kindly, sympathetic addiction to truth. It is a continuous appreciation of the works of truth, and brings with it the instinct to value that which is truly valuable.

Out of this thinking has come a very interesting doctrine or code, strongly influenced by Zen. In Japan, the code of life is called *Bushido*. This is sometimes called the "Code of the Samurai." It is the code of the gentleman. Its basic premise is very simple: death before dishonor. Long ago, Shotoku Taishi, the great regent of Japan, established a code for the swashbuckling two-sword men called Samurai. He said in this code—and unfortunately his fellow citizens did not listen too well—that a brave man draws his sword; the braver man does not. This is Bushido. There is also a trend in Japan to something called Shibui. This might be described as astringency, the dynamic life of immediate recognition of value.

Now let us see what comes out of a partnership between Bushido, Zen, and Shibui. Let us take a few examples to show how these things work in the lives of those who practice them. In the old days, if you lived in an area where Bushido dominated, when you had finished with a newspaper—newspapers were harder to come by then, because they were all hand-cut from blocks of wood, and printed by hand—you did not toss that newspaper away. You did not light a fire with it or wrap fish in it. The newspaper had brought you knowledge,

and when you did not want it anymore, you would give it honorable burial. You would take the old book or the old newspaper or the old pair of shoes, and you would thank them and say, "You have served me faithfully and well. I am not going to toss you out on the street and humiliate you, any more than I would toss out on the street and humiliate my own father." So perhaps you would go into the back yard, dig a little grave, bury the old newspaper, say a little prayer, and put a flower on the grave. Why? Because you cannot help feeling like the old newspaper yourself. How would you like to be treated?

There is a very interesting and beautiful little story in one of the books of Lafcadio Hearn about the tailor who went out to bury his broken needle. The needle had served him well; it had served his father before him; and finally, out of the greatness of years, it broke. He would not toss it into the waste basket. He took it out quietly, thanked its soul, released its soul, and gave it an honorable burial. This is Zen. It is the strange thoughtfulness about things. This little burial of the old needle was an experience of consciousness. It was not that the man did not know it was an old needle. It was not simply that tradition forced this upon him. It was because somewhere in his heart he experienced with that needle.

If you go to the home of some of the people who know these doctrines, and you find that the dinner is set for twelve, you will perhaps be surprised by the fact that no two plates match. This is not because these people cannot make matched dishes; they make them for consumption in the West all the time. But matched sets are export pieces, made for those who like matched sets. Why do these people not match their sets? Very simple. You do not buy a dozen plates; you always buy only one plate. Why do you buy it? Because you like it; because it is beautiful; because it pleases you. Things do not please you by the dozen. Tomorrow you may find another plate that will give great joy to your soul. So in the course of years, you gather twelve plates. Each one is a joyous experience in appreciation, in value, in having done something that gave real pleasure to your consciousness.

Now you prepare for your dinner, and here is another example of Bushido. You have twelve guests. Which guest will most appreciate

which plate? This is important; and it is more important than arguing over politics, or watching murder on TV. You try to understand your guests. You know that this man has a certain degree of culture; therefore this plate would please him. His dinner will taste a little better. He arrives, and he sees this, and he thinks, "How thoughtful my host was." Actually, the food, if the family is not very rich, may be mostly raw fish and rice, but the meal is in the taste, the thoughtfulness, the understanding, the kindness. This is Bushido. This is thoughtfulness. And once the individual begins to master it, it changes him. He suddenly finds he has more time for things that are important, and spends less time on things that are not important.

It is said that in ancient days, the Chinese put fingernail guards on their fingers, particularly the third and fourth fingers. These guards were sometimes six inches long, and the fingernails underneath were never cut, but were protected by the guards. To our Western thinking, this would be a champion example of foolishness. Perhaps it was a little foolish, even in China; but there was an idea beneath it. If you have ever tried to pick up something with such an accumulation of gold and silver claws, you know what I mean. You have to reach over very carefully, pick it up, and put it there. This, in a sense, is Zen. Nothing should ever pass through your hands unnoticed. Everything you touch has a lesson. If you are too busy to learn it, these guards on your fingernails will make your hands so clumsy that you have to stop and think, or else spill everything. The little teacup that goes by is a beautiful thing if you have time to enjoy it. It is nothing but a cup if you have no time. The man who has no time for beauty has no time for life; he will have no beauty in his soul.

I once was entertained in a family where they served tea in little cups that were as thin as eggshells. Each was different. Each was so fragile that a clumsy Westerner was almost afraid to touch them at all. Yet those cups had been used every day in that family for nearly two hundred years. Not one had been cracked. This is Shibui. Now, you might say that no one would ever get through with dishwashing on that basis; that all our time would be wasted in all these trivialities. But actually, it does not work that way, because when you put your whole attention to a thing, it is done quickly, easily, and safely.

The simple process of fulfilling your duties and responsibilities to those things which are peculiarly your own obligations, gives great value, great experience.

Not long ago, I was talking with an art dealer, and he said, "You know, it is sometimes very difficult to impress people who collect things with one very important fact. In this world, no one ever owns anything except himself. Whatever he has, he has only as a trustee. Therefore, he has a solemn duty. Perhaps he does not appreciate a particular item. If he does not, he should not have it. But if he does buy it, he should realize that he is the custodian of something a man a thousand years from now might give his life to possess." Whatever you have, therefore, you have not for yourself, but to pass on to the ages. Everything you destroy is a break between man and the beauty of tomorrow. Keep these things, and love them. And even more, accept the responsibilities of this simple, kindly way, for it applies to everything that is vital and necessary to you—your children, your home, your friends.

Continuing right-mindfulness is to protect all things because Heaven is in them. Heaven is in the beautiful line; it is between the lines of the poem; it is in the good book. Heaven is in the eyes of your children. It is everywhere. Serve Heaven, and you will be happy. Serve only yourself, and you will be sad. For Heaven rules, and men obey. Little by little, then, something will happen. You will become rather quiet. You will find that it is no longer necessary for your pleasure that you extrovert wildly, nor that you introvert desperately. You do not need to be entertained by costly inventions. You do not need to have so many things. For the man who has found Heaven, has found all things.

Gradually, out of this comes the very essence of Zen as a philosophy for Western man, a sort of quiet reverence toward life. Everything in life is important. The happiness of your friends, the good of your child, the right of the flower to bloom—all these things are important, for they belong to Heaven. And between Heaven and earth stands man. He is the servant of Heaven, and the guardian of the earth. The earth is his garden. Here, he makes flowers or seeds to grow, and for what his harvest gives, he is accountable to Heaven.

Heaven has provided him all things necessary, and out of his own understanding, he must apply that which he has to everything that he needs.

Quietly, peacefully, Heaven moves into his experience. It is a good experience. And then comes this quiet union with life, in which the individual suddenly senses his own universality. He realizes, as Zen ultimately points out, that after all, even man is only an appearance. Man is another way of Heaven. He is the bud of Heaven, and one of these days, he shall burst open like the great lotus, and he shall be Heaven. He shall find, in his union with eternal life, the fulfillment of his every hope, his every desire, and his every dream. He finds union with Heaven, or with God, by doing the works of Heaven. We are close to that which we are like, and ever separate from that with which we are dissimilar. And that which is God-like stands forever in the presence of God.

So Zen is this quiet becoming-like-Heaven, becoming all-thoughtful, all-bestowing, all-protecting, all-serving. God loves all things that he has created, and he has fashioned man in the image of his own nature. Man, who is God-like, serves the creations of God, unfolds the God in himself, discovers the God in others, and draws pictures in the air, sings songs, writes poems, and builds for the greater glory of God. This quietude, this peace, this *at-one-ment* with eternal value—this is Zen. And it is attained by Shibui, which is the simplification of all things. It is the ability to live in a gentle surrounding, in which everything is modest, beautiful, proper, and mindful.

In the Japanese home, there is a *tokenoma*. This is a little place on the side of the room, like an alcove, perhaps about the size of the average Western fireplace. The tokenoma is the center of art in the home. In it will generally be found one picture, a beautiful painting if possible, or perhaps only a beautiful column of native characters, exquisitely written, and telling some simple, beautiful message. Beside and below, off-balance, will be found a flower arrangement, with all its wonderful branches and twigs arranged by a strange but inscrutable law. And perhaps, down in the other corner somewhere, there will be a little bowl, a precious thing, but very simple, perhaps even a little crude. This is art. This is home. This is the shrine of the

simple beauty. These people would never think of hanging up twenty pictures. Perhaps the family has many treasures, but in order that they may be appreciated, one at a time is shown. The three articles in the tokenoma always symbolize Heaven, earth, and man. They symbolize a wonderfully balanced triad: man shall protect the earth, shall adore Heaven, and he shall live well. This simple code is the basis of Bushido. It is the basis of the strong, quiet principle of Zen.

Once we have experienced this, we find something of great importance. We find, gradually moving out of ourselves, everything that is necessary. Here, truly, we have the water of life, and if we drink of this water that flows from our own center of consciousness, we shall never thirst again. This inner life bestows all grace to the spirit, the mind, and the body. The person becomes lovable, mature, dependable, understanding. Where Zen is, no one can misunderstand. There can be no intemperance or intolerance of attitude, because the individual has found this simple center of peace within himself. This peace inside is according to the Will of Heaven. It is the only peace that *surpasseth* understanding.

The person who has this, knows that this peace can never fail him. He also knows that he becomes a kind of lantern through which this peace shines out. He has a better family, a better home, and is better respected, more admired, simply because he has become the superior person. Thoughtful in small things, he has no great emergencies. Gentle in causations, he can live with the effects of his own actions. Because he thinks right, feels right, and acts right, there are no evil birds to come home to roost. He lives in the right and in the law, and in this, he feels that he has fulfilled whatever faith he belongs to. It has given him new insight into his religion. It has made his religion a living part of himself; not something to be believed by the mind or spoken by the lips, but something that has become an experience—the graciousness of the power of God over matter.

This is the concept of Zen. I know I have simplified it very much, and have left out most of the technical aspects, but this, I think, is a psychological message we can use today.

Chapter II

SAND, ROCK, AND WOOD

The Zen of Dynamic Acceptance

One of the most interesting and important doctrines under the general classification of Zen, is the concept of dynamic acceptance. This has been especially in my thoughts in recent weeks because I have talked with a number of persons who were much involved in the strenuous effort to become enlightened. These very sincere people had worked upon their problem as though enlightenment were located at the peak of a distant mountain which had to be scaled with all the arduous endeavor that we think of in connection with Alpine mountain climbing. They had gradually assembled the necessary equipment—ropes, picks, staffs, and things of that nature—and had started out on what they were convinced would prove to be a most difficult undertaking. And they struggled along, and at various points came to sheer places, cliffs, narrow defiles, where they saw no way of advancing their cause. They were overwhelmed by the tremendous significance of the journey. They considered the spiritual state of man as something so remote from his normal condition, that it was necessary to make a major change in every concept of life. Some believed they could get there by reading ten hours a day; others, by meditating until they went to sleep. These efforts were all well meant, but I think Zen brings us an interesting release from this attitude of the remoteness and difficulty of attaining a life of spiritual value.

In the Zen thinking, we do not face a tremendous obstacle. In the first place, what we are seeking is itself the natural thing. Instead of enlightenment being exceptional, it is benightedness that is exceptional; the only trouble is, so many people are exceptional in this respect. We live in a kind of world in which we have created an artificial pattern. We have come to conclude that the troubles of life are real and immediate, and the joys of life remote and reserved for

a fortunate few. We have also come to the general feeling that the knowledge necessary for our own enlightenment is extremely difficult to secure. In a sense, this is true, but it is not true because of the quality of knowledge, but only because of the attitudes we have created within our own natures. Man has created the wall or barrier between himself and the natural life which to Easterners is the life of Zen. We will try to clarify this point by means of an analogy which they themselves give us.

Some sects in Oriental Buddhism, for example, regard the Paradise of Amitabha, or the wonderful Golden Land, as a distant place to be attained only through death. In Zen, however, the Paradise of Amitabha is merely a day of seeing things as they are. In other words, this Paradise of Amitabha is here all the time. It has nothing to do with a location; it is simply the other way of seeing things. Now, this other way might sound remote and arduous, but actually, it is largely a matter of relaxation and acceptance. Zen takes the attitude that if a person will simply no longer be false to himself, the result is that he will be true to himself. As soon as man overcomes the artificial tendency to create wrong value, then right value is itself immediately available. This sounds platitudinous to us, because we have created a pattern of life that is built almost completely upon the concept of false value; but again, let us take an example.

Let us all think back a little to what was happening twenty or thirty years ago—the houses we lived in, the people we knew, the patterns which made up our friendships and acquaintances. As we look back upon that time, we see many faces in our minds that are no longer with us; we see situations that have broken up and disappeared; we see old houses that have been torn down for freeways; we see gardens that have disappeared to make way for apartment houses. The whole area of our experience has changed, and it is perfectly possible to develop a little nostalgia about this—and Zen does so quite simply. It points out that all things change; that whatever we grasp at vanishes even as we reach for it, and that most of the experiences of life have permanence only in our own memories.

So instead of regarding the world as a permanent place, Zen regards it as a shifting sand of circumstance. Every time the winds blow

the sand, its patterns change, and the sand itself slips through our fingers, even as life slips through our fingers. And as the Zen monk thinks of the faces he no longer sees, he will very quietly remember that some day his own face will be among those that will no longer be seen; but instead of getting melancholy over this, he feels that this is one of the superb values of life. In Zen this disappearing of things, this rising up of new things doomed by their very natures also to disappear—all of this, instead of being a pageantry of sorrow, is a pageantry to be understood. The moment we can see this other side of things, the moment we can see that the reality of life is its motion and not its stationary aspect, then we come to recognize that things are really motion, not objects. All objects vanish; therefore, they are more perishable than motion. Motion goes on.

To adjust to motion, is to attain understanding; to resist motion, is to attain tension, stress, pressure. If we are concerned principally with things, the changing and disappearing of these things constitutes tragedy. If, however, we are concerned primarily with motion, we shall realize that all things are in constant movement, and the most common movement of stationary objects is decay. By this means, all things which are otherwise fixed, finally disappear again into the great current of motion. So we have not a fixed world, but a moving world, and if we move with this world, we are free from the tremendous resistances which we have set up to change, to decline, or to decay, or to age, or to any of these problems which so heavily beset us. Thus, in Zen we have certain principles upon which we build, and these principles become the roots of understanding; they become the substance of insight for each and every person. To explain these concepts, we are going to use three symbols that occur not only in Zen, but in other schools of Eastern thought—rock, sand, and wood.

In Japan, there are sand gardens, in which instead of planting the garden with flowers, it is laid with sand, which is raked into constantly changing patterns and designs. The purpose here is to capture in sand the concept of motion, rather than to have the sand merely heaped up. Rock, to the Zen mind, represents the *core-ness* of things. Now, what is this core? What is this unchangeability by means of

which we are able continuously and eternally to sense security? Possibly the real concept of this core—the hard core of things—is the concept of motion. Motion is the hard core, and in this, Zen derives much from Taoism, and acknowledges it; namely, that the principle of all things is motion—the great whirling, swirling movement of eternity itself, the *inbreathing* and *outbreathing* of space, the dance of life.

To the Zen practitioner, therefore, motion is the only fixed thing that there is. Motion is that which will continue, which has always been, and always will be—a movement of life. It is this movement of life that is its very essence and substance. It is by means of this that life becomes life. Life without motion or movement is as the seed before it is quickened. Life suspended or sustained is potential, but life coming into motion is actual; it is potency itself—power, activity, ensouling everything that exists.

Within man, therefore, there is pure motion, and to the Zen disciple, it is this motion that is his reality. His self, instead of being a fixed ego, is motion. It is something that is always in a state of becoming what it has not yet attained, and releasing that which it has already acquired. Motion is from, through, and to, and this is the basic idea. Motion is from the things that have been, to the things that are, and on through all other states and conditions. Thus we live from what we have been, from what we are, and toward what we will be.

This movement is the Zen equivalent of the concept of *selfness*, as opposed to our belief in a fixed ego, or an unchanging rigidity of selfness in our own nature. If the individual is a fixed being, then this self has to be tossed about on the sea of cosmic motion, and in the process of being tossed from generation to generation, this little ship of the ego—to use a rather humorous Chinese comparison—is a little inclined to get sea sick; it finds this motion a little too much for it. If we consider the ego as a permanent being tossed about upon a sea of cosmic force, then we are compelled continuously, even at our best, to live according to the dictates of this *ego-ness* in our selves. If this ego-ness is an entity, then this entity has its memory, its nature, its constitution, its substance.

Among other unfortunate complications arising from this, is that this ego-ness is not limited to ourselves. As an innumerable group of living things, each with such an ego-ness in itself, we consist of an infinite separateness. The egos of various creatures, floating upon this great current of the sea, may bump against each other. They may form temporary attachments and patterns, and then will separate again. In this concept, therefore, each being is encased in the isolation of his own ego-ness. No matter what he does, no matter how he strives, this ego still separates him from life. It separates him because it makes him a selfness; it makes him what he is; it makes him a being capable of name and location, at least psychologically speaking, and capable of a particular personal integration which he comes to regard as the inevitable root of his own life. When he gets into difficulty, therefore, he finds that because of this ego-ness in himself, he cannot easily change his own nature. He finds that he has certain forces and patterns which do not wish to alter, but wish to remain the same even though they deprive him of a certain freedom of action.

Thus, the ego can date the individual in a pattern of time and place. It can cause him to be a separate creature, moving from his own past into his own present, and through this into his own future, and yet remaining, in all this process, the same person. It is as though a man were on a train, and as he looks out of the window, he sees all kinds of scenes go by; yet he is the same man in the same train. Zen holds the attitude that this ego is nothing more nor less than a fixation; the consequence of a self-hypnosis. Zen takes the attitude that the person, instead of being isolated by the wall of his ego, is himself actually a part of the very motion which he observes around him. Thus, there is no problem in himself about change, for change is natural to moving things.

Change is difficult only to the person who believes that his own mind never changes. It is also difficult for the individual who believes he has to reform his own mind because he is working against a mysterious subjective entity which he has great difficulty in changing or overcoming. His mental habits come to dominate his life, and instead of being able to live now, he must live in constant conflict with his own past, with all that is retained within this ego complex.

It is this ego complex that says to him, "I am a separate being; I am myself; I am John Doe." And as the consequence of affirming this John Doe-*ness*, he is stuck with it. He has to live with John Doe for the rest of his natural life.

Now, there are a few egotistic persons, perhaps, who are perfectly content, for the moment at least, to live with their own self-determined identities. But after a while, we begin to find ourselves boring. We find that this tremendous effort to retain a selfhood is an embarrassment. It prevents us from ever being free; it keeps us in the captivity of our own attitudes. Zen points out that this is an unnecessary state of affairs. It arises from a misunderstanding, from the person permitting his own mind to take on the appearance of a god, or to allow his own individuality to take on a cosmic likeness of reality, which it cannot successfully do. If, instead of this idea of a fixed self, we follow the Zen concept of a moving energy at the root of personality, then we have a perfect right to be free at all times, because there is no slavery except the slavery to a fixed idea. Individuality crucifies itself on fixed ideas, and it holds to this idea with such a dedication that it is bound to this, must live with it, and largely die because of it. To get away from this concept, then, Zen has taken a very solid substance, the substance of rock, as the symbol of the one eternal truth. This is the rock of ages sung in the hymn; this is our hope—the rock of salvation; it is the fact that in nature everything moves. Everything moves from the state of insufficiency to the state of greater sufficiency; from failure to success; from slavery to freedom. Therefore, there is in man no impediment to his own motion to completion, except the impediment which he places by his own mind.

If, then, instead of living in a fixed world, we begin to look around us, we will discover something that we already know scientifically, but which in our psychology we do not always admit to ourselves. Our earth is moving, everything that we have is moving through space as rapidly, or more rapidly than any projectile that we have yet been able to devise. Space, time, eternity, all is motion. Cosmic systems are forever moving. We are actually not standing still, even on this little planet. And motion is of two kinds—motion from place to place, and motion from quality to quality. These motions determine our real growth, our real ability to be great beings.

As an apparent inconsistency to our thinking, Zen then takes the idea of sand, and uses this concept to symbolize what we call fixedness. In other words, if rock is the symbol of motion, then sand, which apparently is a real symbol of motion, is a type of illusion itself; and this illusion is fixation. So the sand, which is actually a nonstable element, is used to represent the non stability of that which we regard to be stable—namely, the thing as it appears to be now. Stability, to us, is very largely in terms of status. It is what we own —our bank account, our income, the property that we administer. It is something we can reach out and touch. Or, within ourselves, stability is a thing we can call stubbornness—the determination to maintain the status quo. It is our resolute determination to cling to those things that seem to be pleasant, and to build continuing walls against those things which we believe to be unpleasant.

Sand, consequently, becomes the symbol of egoism, as opposed to motion, because actually egoism is as shapeless, and formless, and meaningless as the element of sand. Sand is forever changing, and if we will accept a self of the sand quality, we escape from our dilemma. If we applaud the change in self, rather than the fixedness of self, we then discover that by this definition, the self also becomes a valid symbol. There is nothing wrong with selfness per se. If it were not part of our nature, if it were not part of the intention, we would not have it. The difficulty lies in misinterpreting it, or in assuming that it is something that it is not.

One of the great impediments to progress, in every area that we know, is this reactionary authoritarianism, and this is little more than the continual exertion of the idea that there is a desirable permanence in things. Take, for example, an area like education. With the exception of a few minor details, the educational theory of today is essentially that which was devised during the Renaissance. In other words, our educational theory actually came into existence in the 15th century. We have undoubtedly refined and advanced the subjects taught, but the theory of teaching remains essentially the same. We call this traditional authority. We believe that this fixedness is the desirable thing. Whenever a progressive educator arises who would like to correct some of the old faults, he is regarded as the enemy of

education. It is necessary for the great entrenched pattern of things to rise against him, with all of its authority, and discredit him, because anything which attacks the continuance of the thing as it is, is regarded as an enemy. We do not like to be moved out of patterns or to change our ways. We want to remain in the old comfortable attitudes which have made us miserable for years and will continue to do so. So when someone comes along and suggests that we take a different attitude, we rise in defense of the old—not because it is good, but because it is familiar.

All over the world, therefore, the progress necessary to the solution of human problems has been inhibited by reactionary pressure. This reactionary pressure is that the individual or the group shall hold on to the advantages that it has. The thing itself must be preserved. Zen says—no, the thing itself is not what must be preserved. What must be preserved is motion. Anything that blocks or stops motion, or stops the process of a thing unfolding from within itself, is bad, and is ultimately going to result in tragedy for all concerned. When immovable objects finally heap up into some vast, complicated pattern, then irresistible motion wins. It wins by the very process of disintegrating, or returning into elements of motion that which will not change. And when an adamant idea is gradually disintegrated, pulverized by the immutable processes of Law, it becomes sand. It is broken up from its original structure, and is reduced again to something which can be moved; for motion must go on.

Thus, in our way of thinking, what we think of as our strength is really our weakness, because our so-called strength is merely a clinging to patterns and forms which are themselves changeable. No matter how we cling, the pattern will go; and if we are not able to break it up during a lifetime, then our own life is broken up, so that in the end, the free motion of space is assured. Zen suggests, therefore, that instead of allowing this to happen—instead of going down with the flag nailed to the mast, like some battleship of old—we begin to adapt our problems to the facts, recognizing that when we become one with motion, we obtain a form of immortality, because movement itself is the only thing which can survive all forms, all structures, all patterns set up by man and nature.

This represents a basic change in perspective. While it does not mean a particular change in the things we do—though these may be modified—it means a change in the attitude behind what we do. If we are able to release certain attitudes in ourselves, then we are no longer confronted with the tremendous pressures we build up in the vain defense of that which cannot be defended. There is a story from the Scriptures that has a bearing upon this sand, rock, and wood quality, and that is the parable of the man who built his house. There was a man who built his house upon a rock, and the winds came, and the storms came, and the house stood. And another man built his house upon sand, and the winds came, and the storms came, and the house was destroyed. This concept carries the three elements of the Zen pattern—the rock, the sand, and the wood, the house being equivalent to the Chinese element of wood, which is the third element of our pattern.

In the Zen thinking, then, there is the concept of pure motion, which is life itself—the rock of ages, the inevitable security; for man is secure only to the degree that he moves, just as surely as he lives only to the degree that his heart beats and the blood moves through his arteries. Sand becomes the symbol of the false self—this illusionary thing which seems to be strong, but is not. And to build our house upon ego is to build it upon sand. To build it upon the fixation of our own mind, is to build it upon the most unfortunate and the weakest of all foundations.

In the Oriental thinking, also, we have the element of good, and this, to most Eastern peoples, is one of the most wonderful of all elements. In the Chinese doctrine, there are five elements—earth, fire, air, water, and wood; whereas in Western thinking, we have only four elements. Perhaps the fifth element, wood, corresponds to a degree with the Paracelsian element of ether. It becomes a mysterious symbol of another kind or quality of dimension. Good, to the Eastern mind, has a warmth about it, a livingness in it at all times, and it has been used in practically all of the great arts of Asia. One of the principles of Eastern art is to preserve the wood itself. Instead of painting it and covering it, as we do, the Easterner prefers the grain in the wood, for its very structure contains wonderful patterns built into it

in the very process of its growth. Consequently wood becomes the symbol of growth.

So wood becomes the symbol not only of the unfolding character and life of man, but of an element which he can work, with peculiar skill, into the most marvelous expressions of his own convictions. The primary element which man must mold into the patterns of conviction is his own character. Thus, wood becomes the symbol of this content in man by means of which he achieves all other things. It represents the continual unfoldment of quality, the free unfoldment of energies in space.

This triad, then, constitutes the important basis of a Zen way of life; and I think, based upon this, we can extend the thinking into some of the more practical areas which concern all of us. Wood, as character, becomes the symbol of man. Man is character, and whatever this character is, it is good to the degree that it is in motion, and bad to the degree that it is in fixation. Now, some will say, particularly in the West, that if you have a good character, you had better hold on to it, and not permit it to move away from you. Actually, however, a good character is itself in motion, for it must be continually maintained as good. A man who may say yesterday that he was virtuous cannot say so again today unless he himself has grown during the period of the intervening day.

All good character, therefore, is character moving. The moment it becomes locked, it becomes decadent; and the moment it is locked, the individual stands still. Time moves on, worlds move on, and he gradually comes into poorer and poorer adjustment with society. If this occurs, then actually his character comes into violent relationship with motion. And out of the so-called fixedness of a character that has not moved with life, comes the person who is against life; and finally, this may result in the criminal and the delinquent, for these are persons who are unable to keep up with the motion of growth. Out of their unadjustment, comes the pressure which causes them to turn vengefully upon society, or attempt to sustain themselves without growth at the expense of society.

Zen is a doctrine which begins by accepting all things that are obviously and inevitably true. It does not assume that we can know

with certainty that which is ultimately true. It does not assume, for example, that illumination as a state of consciousness is identical for all persons who experience it. Zen simply takes the attitude that acceptance is this individual coming into a peaceful agreement with a world of change. Now, in terms of practical living, this is tremendously important, because many of our troubles arise from our desperate struggle to avoid change. If, however, we believe simply in a moving universe—if we believe that it is perfectly right and proper that things should change, that our own body should age, that our property should wear out, instead of resenting these things; if we recognize it as inevitable that the things that we possess will gradually disintegrate, then we have release from this desperate effort to attempt to prevent that which we cannot prevent.

Everywhere we look, things gradually disappear, and other things come and take their places. Each year we watch the garden go into its winterness, and sometimes we find it necessary, in some areas certainly, to replant our gardens every year. No matter how beautifully they may bloom in August, we know how they are going to look in December. There is nothing we can do about it. We accept this subconsciously, but we do not apply it to our own code of conduct. We do not release ourselves from this lockedness of affirming that we must defeat the seasons. If we can find some way to make or force this garden to grow, then we are a success; whereas in fact and substance, these principles cannot be defeated, and man destroys himself trying to defeat the principles of life.

So Zen simply relaxes to the whole problem. In Zen, we know that children will grow up and leave home—it is no catastrophe. It is a catastrophe, however, if we insist on remembering these children when they were five years old, and never let them grow up. This is troublesome, and has broken many a heart; yet how can we permit something which is universally true to destroy us? We know all over this world, from the beginning of time, that selfishness has destroyed happiness; yet probably we have never had a more enthusiastic crop of experimenters in this area than we have now. Each individual believes that somehow he is going to be different; his selfishness is going to pay off. Why does he have this feeling? Because of ego. And

why does he have this ego feeling? Because he believes there is a fixed point of value in himself by which he can judge all things. He is living according to this fixed point, and not according to motion. And out of this comes his pain, his disaster, his trouble, his disillusionment, and his despair.

Zen therefore begins by reminding the individual, as strongly as possible, to become observant, to simply accept those things which time and eternity, and the living motions of life, reveal to be true. It is not necessary for us always to believe what we read in books; but we cannot successfully deny what we see unfolding around us in the ritual of nature itself. We cannot deny the story of the morning glory, although it may not be the same kind of story that we find in the book of history. We cannot deny the example and the experience of the bird and the butterfly, the flowering plant, the great tree, the mountain, the rivers. All of these experiences move in upon us, and they become the valid messengers of one fact—namely, that everything in the universe is change. This is the basis of the great Chinese work on divination and magic, The Classic of Changes, held to be, by some at least, the oldest book in the world.

Actually, we have no right to say that change is bad. If change is bad, God is bad; if change is wrong, then the whole universe is wrong, and there is nothing we can do about it. Zen takes the attitude, rather, that from human experience, we find that change is the most blessed of all things. It is, however, a continuance against which man has built one very difficult barrier, and that is the barrier of death. Man assumes that all change leads to death, and that beyond death, there is only uncertainty. Even the most theologically minded person, with a strong moral argument for immortality, still measures, by means of his sensory perception, the duration of things, and marks this duration with death. In Zen thinking, however, all change ends in life, because death is not the end, but a releasing of things from restraint against change; it is freedom, the restoration of motion—the thing again relieved of the temporary barrier of place-ness, to return to the infinite state of space-ness, which is its natural home.

If, therefore, we follow Zen and remove the idea that change ends in death, we will destroy one of the great adversaries to our peace of

mind, and we will have greater courage with which to free life, and to live our own lives without this barrier being forever high before us. Therefore, in Zen, motion becomes the symbol of complete freedom. This motion goes on forever, fulfilling its own purposes, and carrying with it the fulfillment of all creatures; for it is motion that makes growth possible, and it is growth which makes enlightenment inevitable. These factors go on in their endless patterns.

Looking around us in the Zen manner, we no longer perceive a dangerous world, and this is especially important in terms of the pressures of our present generation, where the dangers of war and destruction are ever near to us, and where we begin to doubt whether our own physical survival is assured. It is the conviction of Zen that everything that is real is indestructible, and anything that is destructible, will be destroyed anyway. Anything that will be destroyed by the bomb, would be destroyed inevitably by time itself. That which cannot be destroyed by the bomb, is the only thing that ever had any reality. Therefore, perhaps the entire matter is one in which we are faced with a great lesson to learn, and instead of being so frightened and so worried, perhaps it would be the wiser part for us to contemplate the fact; to contemplate and re-estimate reality; and if we do this within a reasonable length of time, this contemplation in itself could remove the hazard of the bomb. Always, it is this search for the reality in things that must move us on to the Zen attitude of acceptances.

Let us imagine for a moment, then, that we are trying sincerely to get some peace of soul, to get through this block which holds so many. How are we going to bring this doctrine of acceptance into our realization? We know, for example, that if we are brought for the first time into the presence of something we have never seen before, and we look at it and examine it with every faculty that we possess, and come to the conclusion that this thing that we are seeing and touching and thinking about, is factual, it will from that time on never occur to us to deny it. That which is supported and sustained by our senses and our perceptions becomes, to us, true. Five minutes before we saw this object we might have said that it did not exist, but once having seen it, and perhaps only for an instant, we know its

existence. Thus an acceptance comes as a result of a kind of seeing; it comes as the result of an evidence that cannot be denied; it is an experience of consciousness.

Zen therefore takes the attitude that instead of acceptance arising from a vast and tedious procedure, it is merely the individual seeing, or bringing his own faculties to bear upon, the fact. The moment these faculties are informed of the fact, the fact is established, and against this fact the ordinary arguments no longer have any value. We may not know what a certain country looks like, and we may read various accounts that are in conflict about it, but if we go there, and live there, the doubt is solved. And as we can solve problems in this way, so we may assure ourselves that facts are established by insight, and not by long desperate efforts to attain them.

Now, some facts, more abstract or scientific, take a longer time, but the greater facts in man—the universal facts of his own need—are more or less timeless, and it is only necessary for man to attain the attitude necessary to perceive these facts and establish them in his own consciousness. We have all seen the metamorphosis of the butterfly from the caterpillar; we have all seen life come to the nest in the tree; we see around us all the manifestations of universal energy-motion that make up the mystery of nature; but only a few, perhaps, like Thoreau, have ever come to experience these facts in a way that influenced or modified their own lives. Most people do not accept these facts as Scriptures to be meditated upon, as mysterious mandalas to be studied and explored. Yet by a very simple procedure, man can come into the conscious possession of the facts that he needs and these facts become the basis of his own new way of life. Against the facts as they are, will be only man's ignorance of the facts; and ignorance is a complex thing, for it includes innumerable prejudices and intolerances and intemperances of attitude. These all arise either from the absence of the fact, or the unwillingness of consciousness to accept the fact. We can build these barriers to fact—barriers of prejudice, remoteness, tradition, but if we once relax the barriers, the fact has a chance in our lives.

Most persons have created codes or concepts of character and conduct which are inadequate. They have lived by these through many

years, perhaps, and have come only to sorrow, or at least to confusion and uncertainty. This itself is a fact. If the way to live is not making us happy, useful, adjusted persons, then something is wrong. Our fixed ego immediately cries out that this wrongness is due to other people, due to circumstances which we cannot overcome; but actually, this wrongness lies in ourselves, for circumstances are our own relationships to things, and not things of themselves. The universe is not made up of things; it is made up of relationships between phases of motion. Therefore, we are the ones who create the obstacles with which we confront our own endeavors and purposes. With this premise, the acceptances begin.

One of the first acceptances that we have to make is the acceptance of quietude—the acceptance of simple acceptance. This is a good Zen statement, and I am sure you will sense the adequacy of the definition. Yet in these things, what else can you say? The individual who can very quietly sit down and relax and take into himself the quietude of things as they are, has a tremendous experience. We may have to take into this quietude the rumble of traffic, all the concerns of his own daily experience—his debts, his obligations, his responsibilities, his friends and his adversaries. Yet with even this heavy burden, these things are not himself; they belong to this *anata* factor; they are not I. Everything that concerns us, if we analyze it enough, is not I. It has some relationship to things outside of our selves. And these things outside of ourselves have to be either fought or accepted.

There is an interesting story that relates to this point. In one of the old Zen writings. There was once a young man who was brought up in the family of a woodcutter. His parents were peasant people living in the forest, and one day while his father was out cutting wood, some brigands attacked him and left him dying in the forest. The boy found him before he died, and as the boy knelt beside him, he began to take the oath beside his dying father, that he would find and destroy the murderers. He would dedicate his life to avenging his father. The father, though very weak, turned to him and said, "My boy, do not do this. I give you an order, and among our people, the order of a father cannot be broken, and takes precedence over your own oath; and my order is that you shall find these men and forgive

them, and make them your friends." And the man died, and the boy kept his father's order, but it was a very difficult situation because it would not be understood by other people. So in order to keep his father's command, the boy became a *bonz*, or a monk, by which he was released from the requirement of vengeance. He then went forth and became a great student of Zen. After he had studied Zen for many years, he wandered about until he found these brigands. He converted them to Zen, so that they became great followers and abiders of this doctrine. And after they had been so converted, they became his apostles, and later he and these two founded one of the great schools of Zen.

This little story expresses the concept that Zen cannot permit a being to be evil. To Zen, what we call evil is not an evilness of being, but a fixation of wrong attitude. It is something that arises as the result of tradition, association, temptation, and lack of interior integration. Because of this, the Zen sect says, for example, that a criminal can become a Zen. All he has to do is to change his ways, to see more deeply into the mystery of things and to discover his error and correct it. Zen points out that all ignorant people, regardless of how they try to live, are criminals in some degree, because every ignorant person will hurt someone, and this itself is a crime. Every person who is selfish, or who advances his own cause at the harm of another, is a criminal. Everyone who breaks universal Law, is a criminal before the Law. But this does not mean that such individuals are hopeless; it does not mean that they must be punished forever or cast out of society. It means that the vortex of attitudes by means of which the criminal state arises in the self, must be corrected. In Zen, it is inevitable that all creatures, regardless of what they have ever done, must ultimately attain the liberation. There can be no lost souls in this doctrine. There can only be delays due to the mistakes and errors of the human mind.

So through acceptances, the person must gradually become able to take into his own consciousness the lessons of life around him. It was perhaps a little easier for these people because they were great nature lovers. One of the secrets of Oriental philosophy is the almost passionate devotion to nature which marks most Asiatic peoples. Their

arts are the arts of a beautiful nature. To them, there is nothing so marvelous as to sit on the side of a hill and allow the soul to absorb the beauty of a sunset. They love the birds and small creatures of life.

There is a story of one old Zen monk who was placed in a great dilemma because one night he went to sleep with a very rapid-growing vine beside him, and in the morning the vine had grown partly around him. This left a difficult problem—whether he was to remain still and die there, and let the vine go on, or whether he should break the vine. It was a great decision to be made, and so this old monk decided that it was more important for the vine to live than himself, because he was wiser and older, and the vine was not. Now, this is an excessive story—probably a legend, but at the same time, it carries a thought .

The love of nature gives Zen a kinship with pure life; but this is something that is hard for us to understand. Yet even it we cannot live with this nature of things, we must certainly be able to recall out of our own experiences natural things. We can pick up books on nature study and gain some magnificent insight. Anyone who has ever read a thorough book on the life of birds, or on the life of insects, or has considered the stories written by Macterlinck on these little lives, will suddenly find himself coming almost into the universe of Zen. He will discover the universality of intelligence. He will realize that these little creatures, without man's faculties or powers, have a tremendous existence of their own, and that man, by his faculties and powers, has become disorderly, disobedient, and has allowed his ambitions to threaten the survival of his own kind and all other kinds in nature.

So our acceptances are based upon either our contact with nature or our contact with an authentic report of nature, by means of which we become aware of the presence of laws and principles forever operating. These laws are our present help in time of trouble. We live in a universe if Law; we live in a universe in which Law of itself is beautiful. We do not live in a universe of frustrating, inhibiting, tyrannizing laws, but of laws causing motion, causing all things to unfold out of their own needs.

In Zen, also, we have the symbolism of the lotus, and we have described this many times, but there are phases of it in Zen which we have never mentioned in a lecture, and I think one of these phases we should mention now. If you come back day after day to a lotus pond, and watch the lotus grow, you will find that from this mysterious seed that has dropped into the mud at the bottom of the pool, there gradually comes forth this thing we call the lotus, rising through the darkness and the water, and finally lifting its magnificent blossom above the surface of the muddy pool in which it grows. And in this blossom itself there is no touch or hint of the mud; its color is radiant. It is arisen from the earth, and yet it is as pure in its color as though it were really touched by the light of heaven.

This story, to the Zen, is the story of man's peculiarity. In nature, there are infinite forms of life, and each one of these comes to its own blossom. The lotus, unfolding according to its own nature, finally becomes the magnificent blossom, a symbol of man's immortality. But beside the lotus is something else—another little green thing growing; by the side of the road under the stone—a little flower fulfilling its destiny; the great *cryptomeria* trees rising in majesty—they also have their own story. Zen points out that all these different things are little universes of their own, and that each of these forms of life is unfolding from the darkness of a seed, from the darkness of an undeveloped potential, to the final fullness of its Buddhist existence. Consequently, the lotus has its own Buddha—the lotus attains Buddhaship in its own way—and some day there will be the Buddha of the Lotus, just as there is the bodhisattva concept for man.

Therefore, the wonderful radiant images of the Golden Paradise in the Indian pantheon, are man's symbols of man's need—man growing up in space, perfecting himself in space just like the lotus does. The lotus does not depend upon the bird or the sky, or the deer that stands nearby, or the frog that jumps into the pool; it has its own total existence in the process of its own unfoldment. The bird also has its own total existence, in moving toward that state of perfection which is its own illumination. Thus, in the Zen doctrine there is the concept of tens of thousands of million Buddhas everywhere radiant in space, shining from grains of sand, moving upon clouds, chanting

their song from the throats of birds. Everywhere, forms of life are unfolding into their own universality, their own ultimate perfection, their own conscious unity with motion and with the great restoration of all things. So in Zen, this acceptance extends not only into man's life, but into all other forms of life.

This brings to mind another interesting Zen attitude. A man once asked a Zen monk what he thought of all the religions of the world; for after all, even in Buddhism there are many sects, and in other parts of the world, many religions. What did he think about them; did he think they should all be one? The Zen monk simply took the man out into his garden and showed him the flowers and the vegetables and the bushes, and all the growing things, and he said to the man, "Would I want these all to be the same? Would I say to this little bush, 'you are not good because you are not like that little bush?' Religions are like the beautiful flowers in a garden, for to the degree that they are sincere, they are all opening into the infinite illumination."

Now, what would that do with our religious controversies of today? What would it do if we could really understand that man's religions are like flowers in a beautiful garden, holding up their faces to the light of truth? Would not this acceptance of reality end millions of hours of pain, and countless controversies? This could have prevented the Inquisition. This could end the private inquisitions that still burden countless lives with their religious doubts. This would end the competitiveness of creeds, and perhaps allow man's love of truth to rise above his fear of his fellow man.

So in this Zen acceptance, there is simply the gracious willingness to be truthful, to be factual, to lovingly embrace that which is obviously so. Now, in our effort to select those things to be so which are most truly so, and to gain our inspiration and our evidence from those things which are the fullest expressions of the truth as we know it, we can turn to the sky and the mountains and the moving stream. Here there are no doubts—only facts. Men can explain them in a thousand ways, but the facts remain. Zen says, find the facts and live them.

But how are you going to find these facts? The rivers cannot talk to you; the birds cannot tell you anything; and yet, as the Shingon sect, one of the great Buddhist faiths, points out, there is nothing that has existence that does not speak. Trees speak—you can hear their voices when the wind moves through the branches; birds speak with their song. Some things speak in color, and others in motion. The grace of living things speaks in the flutter of wings and little cries in the night. The fish speaks, for you hear the little eddy of water when he swims; he jumps into the air and there is a little splash in the pool—this is the voice of his way of life. Everything has some kind of voice, and the more quiet man is, the more of these voices he can hear.

All of these voices together are forever reminding man that he lives in a universe of facts; that he lives in a universe of things that are just as they are, although he has tried to create out of this a universe of things as he believes them to be. Buddha himself refused to analyze or discuss the great abstractions of theology or philosophy, because he knew this would only lead to the clash of creeds, the endless disturbances and conflicts of opinion. But if you are Zen, you go and sit by the side of the stream and you know the stream. No one can tell you more, or explain it better than you can explain it yourself, if you are still and let the stream move in upon you. The power of the universe to reach you lies in your ability to let it enter through the open doors of your own acceptances. If there are no open doors, truth can never be yours, for truth is not only something that comes from within you; it is something that is awakened by your ability to receive into yourself the infinite testimonies of the Law.

In Zen, therefore, acceptance lies in this ability to be very simple. It is this simplicity that is perhaps the key to Zen acceptances. The complicated person has to be wrong, because although nature is a very wonderful thing, it is never complicated. What we call complication is really the mystery of life which we do not understand; but when we solve it—if we solve it—we shall find it to be infinitely simple. All nature's processes have this tremendous directness, this inevitable simplicity, this continuing purpose that cannot be deflected. So instead of being complicated, Zen takes the attitude of simplicity. We must find the direct ways of doing things.

If, for example, the idea arises in our consciousness, perhaps through contemplation or the quiet observance of things, that there is something about ourselves that needs change—and such a devastating possibility can arise—then the problem comes,—what do we do about it? Actually, the moment we think of anything like this, we think of complications and of expense. We begin to weigh values—what will this cost us; whether we can afford to be honest or kind. Suppose we have to decide whether to be kind to a person who was not kind to us. We proceed to analyze this problem, and we get down to an infinite complexity, and probably end up by deciding that we did not like the person, and we still do not like the person, and that is the way it is going to be. This keeps everything in status quo. In other words, it preserves death; for this hate is a little center of rot in us, and it will ultimately destroy the whole fabric.

Now, in Zen, when we come to the conclusion that not liking somebody is not the best thing to do, we would take that sword of Monju, the deity of wisdom, and cut the situation right there. If not liking is not good, then we refrain from not liking. That is all there is to it. This sounds, again, like a platitude, but it is not. It is an absolutely simple and direct motion if we are able to achieve, at last, this directness. If we are not able to achieve it, it is simply a sign that we are in slavery to our own notions; that the mind has become master of the consciousness; and that old attitudes, with their destructive, dictatorial pressures are preventing us from living now. For now is this mysterious time in motion in which all things are possible. That which is yesterday is no longer changeable; that which is tomorrow is not yet available; but now is available, and in this nowness anything can be accomplished that we are willing to accomplish. So if we decide in this moment a certain course of action, a certain necessary change in conduct, a certain re-establishment of proper relationships with life, we have in that instant the power to do that thing. Zen will not allow a good idea to rest in the mind and merely sort of linger there. If it is important, it is immediately put into action. Any idea which is truly noble, which truly solves or corrects, should not be allowed to be put off to some other time.

In Zen, also, if we were sitting quietly in our bamboo grove, and we were very Zen-like, then we would make another important discovery—namely, that our own faults annoy us. In those quiet moments, we do not wish to be annoyed by our own negative attitudes, for they disturb our peace. The only answer, then, is to correct these attitudes. They should be solved, because when man sits down in quietude, he should have no feeling in his heart except rejoicing, except a quiet acceptance of beauty. And he will gradually discover that as he tries to accept good, his own mistakes will always stand in his way. Therefore, he will not want to continue these attitudes which are not only causing him pain, but probably making life difficult for those around him. He finds that his quietude becomes a censorship over his own conduct.

So in these Zen attitudes, we have a pattern from which we could very well learn something very important. One simple way to approach this is to sometime sit down for a few minutes and experience what we can of true beauty. Take a book of beautiful paintings, listen to good music, enjoy the peace of a beautiful experience. This power to be quiet is a tremendous medicine. It is our strength in time of sorrow or loss. We must have this quietude in ourselves, or we will make more mistakes than we can ever remedy. If we do not find this quietude exhilarating, if it is not happy, if it is not pleasant, then it is because there is too much pressure in our lives. We must begin to reduce that pressure; because after all, what does it benefit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? A man finds his soul in contemplative quietude. He finds it in the acceptance of the marvelous medicine and ministry of life moving in upon him. He accepts it because he knows in his own soul that it is true.

Zen, in its profundities may be a lifelong study; but Zen, in its experience, can come to any individual who at a given moment is able to accept into himself the beauty of the beautiful, the goodness of that which is good, and the kindliness of the Infinite, which is ever present, though obscured by the unkindness of men. To get this feeling moving in ourselves, enables us to take the wood, which is human nature, and mold it into a marvelous form or shape, and to preserve in it, at the same time, this grain of individuality which is

the right of every person. So when the time comes for our peace, for our understanding, it is strangely our own, and yet it is sharing with the universe. In this sharing, we have the tremendous strength of being one with that which alone is strong. And in that, other things become far less important, and our daily burdens are carried with far greater dignity and tranquility.

Chapter III

PERSONAL CULTIVATION OF THE ZEN SPIRIT

Today, we have two great spheres of experience in which the average person finds himself hopelessly involved. One of these is the home, and the other is business or work. These two areas must in some way be enlightened. They must also be touched by the mystery of knowledge. There are so many disturbances in the domestic lives of people, so many challenging, pressureful, destructive forces operating in business and economics, that it is not surprising that the average individual is disconcerted and dismayed and profoundly troubled. In addition to all the personal situations that complicate modern living, there is the tremendous buildup of pressures that we have experienced in the last twenty years. More and more persons are feeling these pressures, and finding it very difficult to maintain a well-organized and pleasant personality.

All these conditions constitute an environment that we cannot simply walk away from; we must solve our problems in the very place we find ourselves. Zen points out that the place we are in and the spot which we now find most difficult, is the one where we must learn to relax. We will have to learn to relax, not in a peaceful world in a quiet bamboo grove, but under the stress and strain of the kind of life that now burdens us. And Zen has a very simple answer to this—namely, that at any given instant man is in two worlds simultaneously: *the world of tension and the world of peace*. They are not separate things. One is no further from the other than an attitude, and the individual must either bridge this interval of quality, or remain in whatever difficulty presently afflicts him. Peace is not something impossible of attainment, something that we can only dream of or envy in others. Peace is the other side of tension. It is the invisible or

hidden face of life. It is the part we do not see, but it is just as real and just as immediate as the tensions that disturb us. Tension represents accumulated pressures, and in order to release this tension, the individual must always fall back into peace, into the quietude that is his natural state. Zen therefore tried to find various ways in which the person could discover the immediate freedom from tension which was always available to him if he knew how to look for it and how to use what he found.

Today the average person is certainly under a considerable amount of neurotic pressure. A great many persons do not become markedly neurotic, but they have a certain nostalgic quality about them which indicates that they are not well adjusted although they are not really in serious trouble. They are living in a shadow. Things may not be too bad, but they are not really right. The person suffers from a loss of the love of life, the loss of the vitality, the inspiration, the courage and the enthusiasm to meet, with a certain amount of internal poise, the changes that the years bring. One of the first things we notice wherever tension begins to creep in on us, is the tendency to irritability. The person becomes touchy. Things that previously did not annoy him very much suddenly seem to get larger. Many individuals feel that problems are getting bigger these days. What seems to be the truth in most cases, however, is that their attitudes toward problems are growing worse; and the worse the attitudes, the bigger the problems seem to be.

Thus we have a deterioration of optimism—this tendency always to look on the dark side, to believe that things are a little worse than they are. Perhaps this is part of our fatigue mechanism, but in any event, we notice that in the early stages of neurosis, the individual becomes hypercritical and less able to accept things graciously. And as graciousness disappears, a series of other virtues begin to fade out. With the loss of graciousness comes the loss of patience. The individual can not wait, he cannot endure the process of allowing anything to ripen. He has to overwork and over-press every situation. He loses the ability to react pleasantly even to good things that happen, feeling that anything good is only another misfortune in disguise, that all pleasure will be unveiled as ultimate misery.

This type of attitude may go on through the years simply causing a person to be crotchety, a little disagreeable. He will begin to lose friends, and this will make him more crotchety, until the course of life and acidosis bring him to the common end. This type of individual may never really feel that he is sick, that there is anything particularly wrong with himself. He may find a certain consolation in his religion, especially if it is the kind of doctrine that tells him that he was born to suffer, and that whatever miseries happen to him here will contribute to his bliss in some other condition. This type of thing may be sufficient to float him through to the end.

Very often, however, the situation does not remain just like this. The individual begins to find new symptoms and difficulties creeping in. There may be, for example, a deepening resentment against larger situations. Gradually the neurosis colors his attitude toward situations so much larger than he is that he really cannot do anything about them any way. Whereas in the beginning he may be irritated at his neighbors or his family, in the second stage he may be irritated at the whole world. He becomes unhappy about every condition that arises in society, and in his tension, he will take violent sides on political questions, on all kinds of issues, disturbing himself profoundly and never pausing to realize that he may know practically nothing about the attitudes that he is clinging to. He will take on situations without any real knowledge of them. He will pass judgment on problems that he is not qualified to judge, and the judgment will always be negative, sad, or critical. He will gradually drift further and further into a condition of perpetual discomfort because he is making it possible for more and more things of larger and larger proportions to move in upon him as negative factors.

By the time he is well along in this type of situation, he begins to notice the effects of these attitudes upon his personal life. The qualities that started out as attitudes begin to move out into conduct. He finds it more difficult to get along with his family. The ordinary problems of his children become much too heavy for him to bear. Everything bothers him, everything hurts him, everything annoys him. Along with this, he may develop all kinds of suspicions and jealousies, and as far as human relations are concerned, downright

hallucinations. In this stage, the individual is sure of so many things that are not so, that he has lost almost all power to regulate his own affairs. Of course, if this continues, he may lose his home or his job or his business. But if these disasters close in upon him, he will not blame his own attitudes; he will blame circumstances, and these disasters which he has caused will seemingly justify his general belief that the whole world is wrong.

Sometimes in this period, also, the individual goes through a heavy struggle. Actually, nature does not want us to be defeated; it does not want us to fall into hallucinations and destroy our own lives. Therefore nature begins to struggle to maintain us. It is as though a person fell into deep water. He is not going to be content to sink to the bottom and drown. He is going to start thrashing around and trying to reach shore. It is instinctive. And so when the problems begin to close in, the individual starts thrashing around. He tries all kinds of remedies. He tries to bury himself in his work. He tries to find new outside interests. He takes courses in success. He reads books on how to make the first million. These things are all defenses against this sense of weakness that is developing in him, which he does not want to acknowledge and cannot afford to acknowledge.

Now, if these various ways of "thrashing around" are not very effective, and it really seems that the individual is beginning to sink again into a situation that he cannot control, then he may turn to sedations, alcohol, and narcotics. The individual, struggling against pressures and feeling himself more and more defeated, may fall into a whole cluster of psychological intemperances. If, however, various pressures that he tries to create to counteract his difficulties are not particularly effective, then he is likely to move into the next level. The individual builds a strong objective defense of some kind. It is much easier to protect the day hours than the night hours, since the day hours represent activity, objective expression, but the night hours represent largely subjective reaction. Little by little, therefore, the day and night become of greater contrast in consciousness, the day remaining comparatively endurable, while the night gradually becomes unendurable.

This then leads into the next dangerous pattern, and that is the beginning of the insomnia cycle. The pressures become so continuous that the individual is unable to take advantage of normal sleep. His internal wheels keep going around—not necessarily with worry, although insomnia is a magnificent invitation to worry. Naturally, as the insomnia becomes more incessant, his own energy and vitality are damaged and he becomes more fatigued. The more fatigued he becomes, the easier it is for him to be negative, and finally the insomnia and its various ramifications may lead to definite psychic illness.

It all gradually progresses, and this procedure has to be stopped somewhere by some kind of a distinct action or determination on the part of the individual himself. If he just allows this thing to drift, he will fall into one emergency after another. The insomnia problem, of course, is becoming quite prominent in our day. The amount of insomnia we would have in this country without the use of barbiturates is probably inconceivable because a very large part of our population is sleeping on sedations. If the dosage becomes Under this condition, all sorts of pseudo-metaphysical phenomena may be introduced into the insomnia cycle. The individual may gradually come to the opinion that he is surrounded by malignant beings invisible to him. Or he will begin to hear voices and see things, and fail to realize that the same is true of the alcoholic under delirium tremens.

In the old days, nobody thought an alcoholic was really psychic because he occasionally saw a green snake. It was acknowledged that his problem was alcoholism. Today there is no such a problem anymore as just plain old-fashioned hallucination. Everything has to be important. The individual feels that all of these things that happen to him have great significance, and that he has a perfect right to be profoundly agitated about them. The sedation adds to the general debility that is commonly noted, cuts into the natural ambitions of the person, causing him finally to wander around in a daze even while awake. There is very little real solution to anything in this particular cycle.

We have never yet, from a medical standpoint, been able to compensate for lack of personal self-discipline. There is just no substitute for it. The individual either has to practice this himself or suffer the

lack of it. No one can do it for him. A parent cannot do it for a child. Husband and wife cannot do it for each other. Each individual must work out his own salvation with diligence, as Buddha stated at the time of the last great sermon.

This personal working out of salvation seems to be where Zen came in. Now, while Zen has many religious overtones, it is not actually a religion, while it has deep philosophical implications, it is not a philosophy, and despite its tremendous scientific factuality, it is not truly a science as we know sciences today. It is really a process of direct experience. It is a direct assailing of the problem on the ground of complete, old fashioned, eternal common sense. And until we begin to recognize the virtue of the common-sense things, we are going to wander around in some highly attenuated, superficial, unreasonable beliefs.

In dealing with the general problem of the life of the individual, Zen will start by bringing this common sense a little more directly into the home. The home is one of the great causes of our common complaints. The deterioration of the home, as Confucius pointed out, threatens the survival of all society and of the individual. The home becomes, in a certain sense, a symbol of the individual's sphere of securities. If these securities disappear, for any cause whatsoever, the psychic integration is seriously damaged. Unless a person has a certain amount of peace in the home, he is never going to be able to face successfully the tensions of the world outside of the home.

Now, most persons really try to make a fairly decent job of their home life. There are some, of course, who are simply temperamentally incapable of creating a reasonable home pattern. Certain perpetual adolescents can never assume the responsibilities of a home. They remain forever unadjusted in any domestic situation. But for the most part, people do try to make a success of it. Therefore, with this simple desire and earnest resolution, something should be possible to help them to handle the ordinary conditions that arise.

We notice, of course, that all of the neurotic tendencies I have mentioned frequently appear in the home when the members are under tension. Here we have all kinds of incompatibility problems, misunderstandings, and the pressures of long-nourished and long-

cherished resentments. Individuals live with each other for a certain length of time, even though they get on each other's nerves, and then there is finally that day when there is just too much of this nerve pressure over too long a time and something goes wrong. They come to what they like to call "the breaking point." They have taken all they could of a difficult situation. From that moment on, an extreme action, often unwise, is likely. The individual, feeling that he has worn his patience to the breaking point, tries to escape in some way from the pressure and dilemma of the situation. Often the precipitating situations themselves are comparatively negligible. They are not really great issues, but small issues we have struggled with too long and have made no really sincere effort to correct or to understand.

Now, Zen tells us, in the first place, that things that cannot be corrected must be understood. Understanding is a wonderful remedy once we are able to discover its power. The old Arhats had their various magical powers by which they could perform miracles. There is no force in life more miraculous than understanding—the ability to see values in things with which we do not always agree. Understanding means to recognize the importance of situations that are difficult. It is the ability to think ahead in our relationships with other people.

We notice, for instance, that in the modern home, thoughtlessness is probably as large a cause of trouble as any so-called real emergency. Thoughtlessness is the inability of one or both major members of a family to give consideration to the real needs of the other. The persons involved cannot understand each other's psychic requirements. They are not sensitive to moods, to the inevitable situations that arise within the consciousness of a marital partner. They assume that the other person should always be a consistent individual. Often the people who assume this are themselves most inconsistent. They always seem to feel that their own moods are understandable, but the moods of others are not worth understanding. This naturally causes a good deal of trouble.

Here Zen comes in with the idea of the cultivation of certain very simple basic principles of human relationships which, if they are built into the character of a person, will give him unusual endurance and

the power to survive without psychic damage through situations that cause others to break and fall apart. Zen tells us that the thoughtless person is already in serious trouble, for understanding must always precede action. The individual must move from what he knows, and not merely from the level of the feelings or moods of the moment. It is a subtle thing, but it is not as difficult as it sounds.

Particularly where two persons affirm affection, and where they regard each other's happiness as important, there should be some way of breaking through into common understanding. This does not mean identity of attitudes. It does not mean that we are going to change other people to suit ourselves, or that others are going to become so sensitive to us that they will give up their own existence to please us. This is not the thinking at all. The point is simply to develop a sincere understanding. In many families today, the members of the family are actually mysteries to each other, and being mysterious, they are dangerous. It is surprising, for example, how many parents are frightened of their own children. They are unable to cope with the mystery locked within the libido of a three year-old. The child becomes an impossible problem, a constant source of disturbance and difficulty. These parents have been outwitted by situations that are in themselves perfectly normal and which our grandparents could have handled quite easily.

One of the reasons we are outwitted, of course, is because we were badly confused before the children came along. We would have been out witted by almost anything, and the child simply becomes the circumstance by means of which our own weaknesses are revealed to ourselves. These weaknesses would have shown up in any personal relationship, but we are particularly unhappy when we discover that we cannot cope with a small child. We feel a helplessness, an inability to hold together our own integration under this challenge. We think we can run a business, manage a family, vote, earn enough money to be rich or at least pay our bills, and in the midst of all this, we cannot cope with a three-year-old child. The tremendous interval between our attitude toward ourselves and the facts that are revealed under pressure, should cause us to give a considerable amount of attention to this.

The Zen point of view in connection with parent-child relationships is a very simple one. We have to learn to grow up with the children. We are no longer in a position to assume that we are mature and they are not. The average family today is immature. The average person's attitudes are confused and distorted. The present generation of parents has grown up in insecurity, with very little strong leadership in the parental home. These people have now come out into the world to raise a family, and they are really quite immature. This is not an evil thing, but it is some thing that must be accepted, known, realized, and worked with. What this really means is that as children come into the home, the parent has to grow with them, because the children are revealing the need of the parent to himself. They are revealing the weaknesses in the parental pattern—weaknesses that should never have existed, and would never have existed, were it not for the strange confusion that has marked this entire generation.

Young parents have come to me and said, "I want to give my children a good religion; I do not want them just to be churchified. What shall I teach them?" What the parents are telling us is that they do not have a good religion themselves. Because they do not know what to tell their children, we must assume that they do not know within themselves. Therefore, the parents and the children must grow religiously together. According to Zen, the moment we reveal to ourselves a certain need, we become responsible for the meeting of that need. When we are not aware of the need, when as far as we know, our lives are sufficient to themselves, perhaps we have no more responsibility than that, because we have no realization of responsibility, but the moment we have the realization, we also have the responsibility, and there is just no way of escaping its implications.

For the atheist to attempt to indoctrinate his children because he feels they need it, is pretty ridiculous, but it is done everyday. People of various degrees of confusion about their own beliefs are trying desperately to give some kind of integration to their children. And this, of course, leads to a rather confused situation. But how is the older person going to meet this predicament with his children? One thing is obvious—it is going to take some effort, time, and thought. Now, we like to assume that these commodities are valuable, rare,

and difficult to attain. They are not. Every day we use effort for less virtuous or purposeful ends. Every day we waste time. The individual who has no time to develop his own nature has plenty of time to chatter on the telephone for an hour at a stretch. It is simply a matter of integrating his resources around a purpose and applying some pressure on his own attitudes from within himself. He has the time, he has the means, he has the thought if he wants to use it, and being born into this century, he has available to him all the information that is necessary if he wants to use it.

Zen would tell the individual frankly that he must begin with himself, and there are certain things that he can do. One thing that everyone needs today in order to withstand the neurotic pressures of life is quietude. Yet this is one thing we are all afraid of. We are afraid that quietude is a symbol of negation, of weakness, when actually it is this constant pressure within us, this endless throbbing of psychic activity within us that will never let us rest, that leaves us weak and exhausted.

So we can begin our Zen experiences by organizing in our life some simple pattern by means of which we have opportunity for communion with ourself. We have the privilege of taking a certain amount of time to sit down and quietly reflect upon the value, the meaning, the purpose, and the significance of our own existence. If we do not get around to it, we are going to be in trouble. Every person is entitled in the course of the day to a certain amount of quietude and aloneness. This is valuable for every member of the family, from the oldest to the youngest. Every child should be taught the importance of being able to be alone for a brief period of time—not aloneness arising from neglect, but aloneness in the sense of the opportunity to reorganize self, for self is best reorganized in quietude. It does not mean that the person should make his mind a vacuum. He can think quietly about the problems that he faces, about his own reactions to things, and about the foolishness of his own conduct under pressure. In this quiet period, the individual re-acquaints himself with the direct stream of life in his own nature, and he learns to cherish and value the moments of peace.

One of the experiences that comes with Zen is the realization of the immediate availability of quiet. We discover that the noise is not there unless we hear it. It is the old story—would there be any sound from an explosion in the desert if there were nobody to hear it? This has been argued and debated for a long time, but the fact remains that at any moment, the individual can quietly retire into a soundlessness if he wants to. He can surround himself with a subtle wall of quietude and peace simply by withdrawing his attention from the causes of discord. He will find that it is entirely possible for him to be in perfect quietude in the most confused place, under the greatest pressure of circumstances. This quietude is attainable, and in this quietude lies the only natural remedy that we have against tension.

Once the person finds this simple procedure in himself, he will experience the fact that he can be at complete peace in the midst of chaos; therefore, chaos ends as far as he is concerned. This does not mean that he is going to live in this peace for the rest of his life, nor that he is going to neglect his work or his family, or run off and escape into some monastic existence. It means that from the moment of the discovery, he knows that he can control his relationship with existence. He knows that he can, when need arises, establish quietude, and think and act from it instead of from tension. He knows that he can relax instantaneously, and in this way achieve, perhaps for the first time in many years, the simple state of personal honesty. Under tension, honesty is impossible, for the tension forces the gratification of its own intensities, thereby causing new tensions. But from the core of quietude, the individual is able to act outwardly into all areas of his existence and get behind the tension. He then discovers the Buddhist sense of the illusion of the tension.

Having come this far, the individual suddenly discovers it to be an actual fact that the universe exists for him only according to his own reactions to it, and that he can react constructively at any time under any condition, whether the environmental factor is physically favorable or not. It does not mean that he can be at peace only when all the difficulties of the day have been solved. The difficulties of the day are part of the complex function of mind itself, and when the

mind is disciplined and quieted, then and then only can it function properly.

This quietude problem, as represented in Zen, is simply the individual finding center wherever he is, and finding in this center of himself the end of all the confusion that results from trying to turn like a pinwheel upon the pressures of the day. The importance of this to even the small child is quite real. Any child who is old enough to begin to think, and to wonder, and ask questions, is already old enough to have a quiet talk with himself. Perhaps in the beginning, these quiet periods of valuation can be partly directed by the parent. Instead of trying to answer some impossible question that the child asks, the parent can simply explain to the child the importance of becoming quiet and asking himself the question, and finding out, in quietude, what the answer is for him, in his own way, according to his own means. Perhaps he is only a four- or five year-old child, but the mind that can ask the question already has within itself the capacity to answer the question. For we also have the great experience of the past, of perhaps many lives, available to us within ourselves, even when we are too young to really understand this world. In the deepest strata of our own natures, are the answers to nearly all the questions that we bat around in this material, external world.

It has been shown again and again that when the members of a family have lost the power to be alone, when they have to cling desperately to each other like drowning people, they are clinging to a symbolism that is negative and wrong. Just as surely as we may want to sit down quietly for a few minutes and put our lives back in shape again, so we should give this right to every other member of the family. Every member of the family should have his quiet time—maybe five, ten, fifteen minutes—in which he can be alone and have conscious contact with his own nature. It should not be a time devoted to reading, nor to some aggressive prayer for something, or a time set aside to concentrate on the fulfillment of something we want. It should be a quiet period in which we come face to face with ourselves and know our real self for a moment—when we get down under the surface of our wants and discover what constitutes the essence of our own existence.

Zen says that this is not only important, but attainable, and it is attainable on every level of human consciousness. It is attainable at any time by anyone who has the sincere determination to experience the facts of his own existence. And the instruction or insight that comes through to the individual at these times, will be in terms of the needs of that person and in the language of that person. The essential fact is that whatever is next for us will come out through us and into our objective consciousness if we give it the chance; but if we block it constantly with our own preconceptions and determinations and self-conscious decisions, we have very little hope of really meeting ourselves. We must use this quietude period, therefore, to establish certain values.

Now, actually, the Zen experience of value cannot be defined in words. There is no use trying. We can talk around it, but we cannot say exactly what it means. The only way we can approach it is to say that it consists of a series of inevitable answers to innumerable and eternal questions. The answer, the thing that occurs, is the full statement of that which is necessary. The individual actually experiences that which is needed in order to properly comprehend the situation that confronts him. By this experience, he will have all that is necessary to make the right decision, achieve the correct end, and answer the question that is disturbing his own consciousness.

Families that have had pressures and difficulties should therefore sincerely seek to achieve greater quietude of relations. Zen points out that this quietude permits a strange sense of psychic sympathy between persons. Quietude penetrates into the core of things to give answers and insights, and it is one of the few ways in which we can actually neutralize conflict. The individual who is quiet, who gradually experiences value, can, by means of this type of experience, become more sensitive in his relationships to other people. And by being more sensitive and more thoughtful, he can contribute something to the integration of those around him. Thus, quietude, strengthening the leaders of a family, will help them to guide the other members more correctly, more honestly, less selfishly.

One of the problems that confronts us in both business and the home is lack of insight into the reasons for things that happen. As

long as life seems to be a tragic sequence of unreasonable events, we are defeated. The individual who finds in his job only a way to make a living, is actually defeated in his work. There seems to be a growing resentment against the monotonies of labor, a feeling that the job is only a chore, a heavy burden upon the individual. Not too long ago, most people took a certain pride in their work, and we still hear occasionally of an individual who simply loves his job, but to the average individual, work is no longer a pleasure. He does it grudgingly. He has looked at so many motion pictures and television programs emphasizing leisure and luxury, that he really thinks he is underprivileged if he cannot have everything and do nothing. He has lost the sense of the pride of labor. The tremendous development of industries, with the individual becoming only a number in some vast pattern of things, has had its unfortunate consequences. In too many instances, the person has no sense of participation or fulfillment of his efforts. He is simply an expendable factor to be worn out and then replaced. This type of thinking is perhaps inevitable in our time, but it is not good thinking just the same, and the individual who thinks this long enough will be replaced before the end of his normal span of usefulness if he is not careful.

Our next problem, therefore, is to find the reasons in things. We have to live a life that is within a concept of purpose, and this purpose can not be entirely personal because this would be completely frustrated by retirement, old age, and death. There is no way we can really completely fulfill our psychic need in relation either to home or to work unless we have some basic philosophy to build on, and the great philosophy that has come through from this great silence which is the mother of all wisdom, is this idea that everything that happens has a meaning, and that everything we experience is important to us in some way. Thus what appears to be a series of heavy responsibilities really represents a series of strangely concealed opportunities. What we term routine, uninteresting jobs, and perhaps constant disillusionment in relation to our employment, the constant revolution and rebellion in ourselves—these attitudes have to be organized into some kind of a pattern, or ultimately we will have a nervous breakdown. We cannot accept frustration constantly and eternally through the years without finally being hurt.

Out of quietude also comes the realization that everything that happens in this world is a form of self-discipline. And self-discipline comes to us in two ways -- either it is imposed upon us by the consciousness in our own nature, or it is imposed upon us by universal consciousness. We are here to control our own thoughts, to direct our own understanding and insight. We are not here primarily to be rich, we are here primarily to become wiser and more virtuous everyday. Nature will reward growth with security, but it will impoverish any activity that is not productive of final good in terms of consciousness.

What, then, is the pattern that presents itself in this problem of work? We realize that most people work for only one reason, and that is to make money. Some work for a sense of great good, some are completely unselfish, some are great philanthropists, but the majority work because they have to pay their bills or make new bills. They work to meet some kind of economic responsibility. This seems like a terrible tedium, and the way things are going now it is a very heavy responsibility on people. It is very difficult for the individual to go on year after year trying to maintain himself in this kind of an economic system, without very much confidence in the system, and without very much happiness arising from his effort in terms of a contented family or well-adjusted children. He sees the constant mounting of expenses, pressures, and problems, but he does not see any great good coming out of it.

Thus, the individual has to begin to use his own quietude to find out what that good is. If he thinks of himself simply as living for seventy or eighty years, and that is the end of it, then he will never get an answer. Therefore, the materialist, by blocking his own insight, is doomed inevitably to the wrong answer. We cannot help himself. The only way he can break through this materialism is, as one or two of the old Arhats did, simply by being still enough to get behind his own materialism and find out how impossible it is. He has to allow consciousness to rescue him from the sophistications of his own thinking. This is not easy, but it can be done.

For the average person, the great dilemma is to find out what good it does to work for forty years with only the faint hope of a retire-

ment pension which he may not live long enough to collect. To solve this, we have to realize that the whole point is not the job itself, or the money that we earn, or the satisfaction of promotion; it is not the improved standard of living or luxury that we gain if we get a little further ahead. The whole situation turns around one tremendous pressure that nature asserts and forces us to recognize, namely, that all labor is a form of self integration. The real reason for work is that we have to develop habits, patterns of industry and effort. We have to escape from the impulse to do as we please, and gradually assume the pattern of doing what we must. Nature has a still higher step for us in this, but we are not quite there yet, and that is to discover that what we must do and what we want to do are finally the same thing. Thus insight must help us to understand that through work, we are gradually building within ourselves the power to resist our own impulses. We are gaining the power to accept responsibility.

In family living, also, we are dealing with larger qualities. Perhaps what we are trying to do when we raise two or three children is to lay the groundwork for the same sort of consciousness experience that the Buddhist associates with the mystery of the Kuan Yin, or the spirit of universal compassion. From sincerely striving to do well for the family that is ours, we are beginning to experience the sense of cosmic responsibility for life, for all existence. We move from the few children that are our own to the whole world itself by a series of unfoldments within our own nature. Instead of working for a family, or working for our own ultimate success, we are gradually becoming aware of labor as the universal prayer and the universal obligation between creation and Creator.

All things must engage in enterprise leading to growth. The challenge of a business may cause us to go back to school and study. The desire to make a living keeps us in college longer. The desire to go on with what we are doing causes us to be patient with obstacles that otherwise we would not stand for one moment. And little by little, we gain the ability to do things with continuity of effort. By advancing in a business, we slowly learn to accept more responsibility. We learn to think more deeply. Perhaps the business is not very important, it probably is not, perhaps it will not last until we get

home; but it is an experience we have to have within ourselves. This is hard to explain, but it is part of the Zen point of view, that no effort resulting in self-control is wasted; that it is all part of a larger consciousness of things.

Business and the home represent two very powerful challenges: home, largely to our emotional integration; and business, to our mental integration. In both of these areas we are not strong. The average person who achieves one, sacrifices the other. Thus we have now another challenge that we must take into the quietude of our inner life -- the challenge of moderation, of constantly maintaining an equilibrium. On the one side, our emotions, becoming obsessed and pressure-ridden, become overwhelming. Our feelings take over completely, and we lose all sense of rationality. Pressed on by impulses, we do most unreasonable things. On the opposite side, we become perhaps so intellectually bound within patterns that we lose all spontaneity of attitude; we lose all fineness of feeling. To one individual, freedom means the tremendous expression of his emotional purposes. To another, freedom means moving up the ladder of success until he has a million dollars' worth of property.

Each individual is struggling desperately, but whether he is seeking love, power, or wealth, he is seeking something to take the place of the mysterious emptiness that does not permit him to be peaceful. He is seeking something that is some kind of a sedation to the gnawing realization of his own inadequacy. And unless he turns to some form of internal discipline, he will find that every other solution becomes only a habit forming sedation or stimulant. Wealth and the activities with which we associate fulfillment of desire, these are for the most part only habit forming mechanisms. They do not touch the facts of the matter.

Through the study of these problems, we come back to the Zen Buddhist point of view. In the Zen doctrine (which is essentially Buddhist, although it breaks away from a number of the orthodox canons of earlier Buddhism), we still have the basic factor that the mind, as a faculty, or as a power in itself, is constantly evoking phantoms out of the mystery of existence. These phantoms haunt the individual, and gradually become the apparent realities. The individual

lives in a universe of mental phantoms, and his own relationship to this universe is part of this fantasy. He is in a fantastic relationship with the unknown, and as long as he builds his relationships upon fantasy, he is in trouble.

A good example of this difficulty is coming out now in connection with the verdict of the Supreme Court on religion. The effort to remove prayers from the public schools has backfired rather seriously. It is no longer a matter of the decision that was made by the Supreme Court, the problem is that this has become a sentimental or emotional situation that is gradually developing far beyond the original intention, and is producing one of the greatest floods of intolerance we ever hope to see. Everybody now is going to try to prevent everybody else from having any form of public recognition of worship. Every sect is likely to finally end at loggerheads with every other. It is a desperate example of how rapidly prejudice, intemperances, and the present neurotic pressures would lead us into all kinds of fantastic relationships with life. The whole thing is a fantasy from beginning to end. It represents a tremendous agitation over something for which no agitation was ever needed, nor would ever do any good. Yet because of the fact that we are under pressure from many other things, we have picked up this and added it to a dozen other pressures to make more trouble for all concerned.

If we were quiet, relaxed people, we would have none of these troubles, but we are under such tension that the troubles magnify themselves to unreasonable, fantastic proportions. It happens the same way in a family quarrel, or in a worry over some business arrangement. These things suddenly distort themselves because we are tired, because we are uncertain and insecure in ourselves. Because we have very little happiness and very little peace, we have gradually become so irritable that we now consider irritability to be a sign of vitality when it is really a sign of being sick.

We just do not know how to relax. If we could quietly experience, even for a few moments, the possibility of being in a non-competitive, non-combative relationship with life—not primarily with people, but first of all with life itself—we would discover that underneath all conflict there is peace. Although the surface of the waters is

disturbed by the winds, the depths are always quiet; and beneath the surface of our civilization—our culture, our international situation, involving every thing from common markets to nitrogen bombs—if we go deeper, beneath all the sound and the fury is the thing that has been there from the beginning: silence.

Yet that silence is pregnant with life. It is not an empty silence; it is a silence that contains all sound. It is a silence from which all things come, and to which they must return again. This strange silence is an absolute symbol of peace, truth, wisdom, and faith. It is a silence that is quiet because there is no conflict in it, not because there is no life in it. It is silence because there is no competition in it. The great noise of our world is the noise of barter and exchange. It is the noise of selling and stealing—or whatever we wish to call modern procedure—but beneath all of these false pressures, the great values of life move inevitably and quietly, and we move with them. We move into life because of them; we move out of life because of them; and during this short span of which we can measure our own years, everything that is essential, everything that is real comes from this source.

It is because of this source, this infinite quietude of absolute nutrition, that we live and breathe and think and feel. It is the basis of all energy in the mental and emotional world. It is the beginning, the mainspring, of all arts and all cultures. It is the source of all sciences and all philosophies. All of these things are part of this great basic value, and it is absolutely essential that, whether we fully understand this value or not, we become aware of it.

The only way we can become truly aware of this value is through the experience of attempting to reach it in and through our own lives, particularly by an internal motion. The great experience that this internal motion reveals to us is that the deeper we go into ourselves, the less conflict there is. There seems to be a little shadowy zone, which might be regarded as the subconscious mind, in which all these problems tumble about in a wild confusion. We have assumed that this is the core. We have always assumed that if we went inside, we would find confusion, or something like the fiery internal of a volcano; or at least go into an area of sickness. This is not really true, however. Actually, it is just as was taught in the old Mystery

systems. We have to go through a kind of area of illusion—the subjective area which is the basis of our objective pressure—and psychologically, we assume that this subjective area of pressure is a kind of inferno. But we have also assumed that we could not go any further. Therefore, to go in was to go into this subjective, become hopelessly neurotic, and drown there.

Actually, Zen has proved to many of its students and scholars that this is not true. You do pass at first, like the dreamer perhaps, into a kind of nightmare. You do find, in trying to be quiet, that the first things that will come to mind are the old fears. So in quiet, as in sleep, you may have at first your dreams and nightmares, but in a very short time, if you do not give in to this, if you do not become frightened away by your own first superficial contact with your own subjective, you will then be able to go through it, pass through it as Parsifal passed through the enchanted garden of Klingsor, and having passed through it, you discover that you are entering into a very pleasant country. You are entering into the great reality sphere in which there are no longer the appearances of things, but the substances of them.

Now, as this happens, a series of experiences takes over: the experience of the identity of life, the experience of the eternity of value the experience of the omniscience and omnipresence of Deity, of a principle, a being, a substance, or an essence that is infinite, the experience of the eternal continuity of immutable law; the experience of the inevitable fact that no matter though man die a thousand times, man cannot die, for life and death are part of the fantasy, that underneath all of these things are the eternities that can never change, because they have the endorsement or the seal or the eternal approval of Infinite Existence itself.

Now, how does this mortal life seem to bear upon this? I think perhaps the answer lies in that nature itself is forever seeking these adjustments. Nature is forever guarding the balances of powers. The unbalancing of nature is the great disaster, and the unbalancing of human nature has been our great disaster. But would we ever turn inward, would we ever move from the superficial to the superstratum, if the superficial were adequate? If the individual had a perfect

marriage, absolutely happy children, the job he loved more than anything else in the world, and were getting rich faster than he could spend the money, what would prevent him from remaining stupid forever? And he would not even know he was stupid. He would tell you very frankly that no man with two Cadillacs is stupid. You could not possibly tell him he is. But if we take a good look at this world that we are in, with the hydrogen bomb hanging in the atmosphere, with agitation constantly going, with the stock market acting as though it were having a coronary, with our security shaken in every direction, we suddenly become aware of the old saying that the Great Mother, the universe, has shaken better civilizations than ours from her back. And we suddenly feel very insecure. To us this insecurity is horrible, but how else can nature break complacency? How else can we ever escape from this tyranny of a little mind that cannot see further than a bank account? How are we ever going to break the complacency of this situation in which the individual never finds he is wrong until he is dead?

Nature cannot and will not permit this. If man had been able to establish civilization with a way of life that is compatible with universal purpose, the problem might not exist. But he has not. So all this confusion, these neurotic pressures, these awful tragedies and eternal disasters, these miserable relationships, misunderstanding people, these are the things that cause us to try to be better. And nature will be very kind to us and continue to confront us with these misfortunes until we do improve ourselves. Nature knows it cannot afford to let up, because the moment man is comfortable, he passes into a coma. Man has to learn. In success, we have fifty philosophies that work because nobody has to use them. In failure, we have five hundred that do not work because no one ever thought them through. We have to learn.

The whole purpose of life, therefore, is to bring us quietly and inevitably to the state of self-analysis, to the establishment within our own nature of a determination to find out why we are here and where we are going. This has been the source of all the great systems of salvation and idealism that have come to the world. Unless man had experienced this need, there would have been no Messiahs; and

if he had not in some way recognized this need, he would never have recognized the Messiahs.

So beneath this whole troubled situation that confronts us, including all the neurotic pressures that we suffer, there is a purpose, and this purpose is that the individual must gradually find the way to his own enlightenment. And instead of setting up five hundred discordant churches to handle the problem, or bringing the individual into the presence of fifty unrelated and unreconciled philosophical systems, all of them equally brilliant, Zen takes the same attitude that Buddha took, that the individual finds the solution not by association with various groups and beliefs, but by entering into a quiet rapport with existence itself. Man is a living creature, existing within a living essence, a living substance; therefore, he is capable of achieving a realization of his relationship with this life which is himself. He is part of one life, he is therefore capable of understanding that life, of experiencing it. He is capable of coming into a conscious relationship with it. The only way he can do this, however, is to follow the ancient conviction that man can find this eternal reality only when he wants it more than anything else in the world. Man will not give up himself until his own personal ego has failed him completely. Until then, he will keep on putting patches on it in any conceivable way. He will not give up his ambitions until his principles will no longer permit him to continue with them.

By this strange emergency called life, therefore, man is forced to the final problem, which is, of course, the idea of the narrow path, the middle road that leads to reality. Each individual, coming to the point where he can no longer endure the consequences of his own ignorance, must finally, where he is and as he is, make his claim to truth. And if he will make this claim honestly and completely, he will never be turned down. But he must honestly submit himself to the great laws of the universe; these laws he must obey. The commandment that probably comes the nearest to the perfect instruction for man is the simple thought in the Bible which tells us that we shall love our God, and the spiritual eternal principle, with all our hearts and all our minds and all our souls, and our neighbors as ourselves. When we have this simple thing as an experience of consciousness,

we can quietly go on to the participation in the wonder of reality. We can have this quiet Zen detachment, which is nothing but detachment from that which is nothing, and a greater and closer relationship with that which has always been and always will be, but which remains a strange, mysterious ocean until man himself mingles his own nature with it. And I think if we can understand these principles with some degree of insight, it will show at least a direction in which thoughtful persons who are really conscientious and really ready to try, can do something to make universal principles operate in their own lives.

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ISBN-10: 0-89314-871-5
ISBN-13: 978-0-89314-871-3