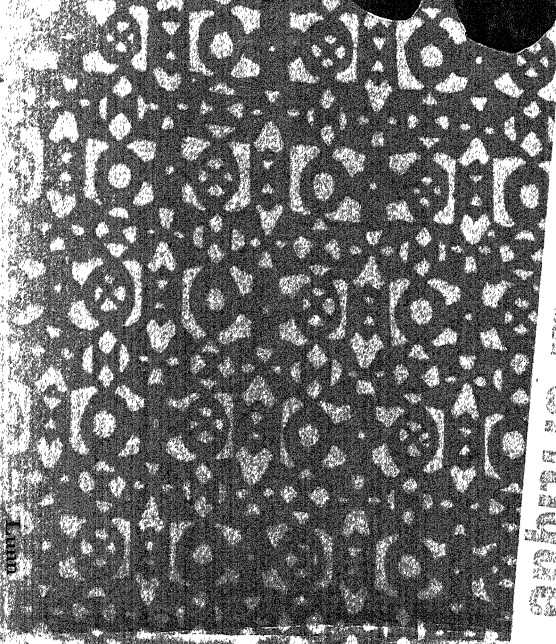


ZEN!



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ZEN
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Luna

ZEN:

a rational critique

By

ERNEST BECKER, Ph.D.

The appeal of Zen to a variety of Westerners — both dilettantes and professionals — has been increasingly evident and, to some, has become a matter of concern. Zen typifies an Eastern approach to problem-solving that is at the opposite pole from Western ideals: the human being, puppetlike, manipulates himself in the hope of coercing his environment. Steeped in a tradition of magical omnipotence, the Zennist seeks to bring other-worldly power to bear on this-worldly problems.

To the question "Does Zen hold forth something of value to the West?" this book makes an unremittingly negative answer. Zen, Dr. Becker remarks, has thus far escaped unscathed from traditional Western skepticism about irrational and antirational approaches to human understanding. In this book, he provides a much needed clarification of perspective. He gives a fresh view of Zen's origins

(Continued on back flap)



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Zen: A Rational Critique

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To Douglas G. Haring

“ . . . the teacher imparts the spirit.”

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"The state of mind, the state of society is of a piece. . . . A society holds together by the respect which man gives to man; it fails in fact, it falls apart into groups of fear and power, when its concept of man is false."

J. BRONOWSKI

"The danger to society is not merely that it should believe wrong things, though that is great enough; but that it should become credulous."

W. K. CLIFFORD

Zen:

A Rational Critique

INTRODUCTION

The Appeal of Zen to the West

*A living man who sits and does not lie down;
A dead man who lies down and does not sit!
After all these are just dirty skeletons.*

The Westerner who finds some charm in Zen is often hard put to reconcile the antinomy, so foreign to his own traditions, between its poignantly esthetic musings about man and nature and its blatant denial of life. The purpose of this book is not to effect reconciliation, but rather to show that Zen really is a denial of life, a negation of the Western ethic of individuation and autonomy which was so laboriously fashioned by Mediterranean civilization and is still too precariously grasped. It is a trite observation that knowledge accumulates so quickly and voluminously that we are constantly forced to rediscover something long known which has been quietly buried under the silt of more up-to-date thought or more pressing research. Yet this is what seems to have happened to Zen. The credulous new generations have to start again at the beginning and learn things all over; and with an ever new spirit animating their strivings, it is inevitable that they should choose to delight themselves with the wrong things.

Of course "wrong things" is a highly relative phrase; right and wrong depend on social traditions. Curiously, this is the one area in which proponents of Zen to the West have been most remiss: they have without exception claimed that Zen is not only in harmony with Western tradition, but is in fact in essence more Western than the Western Greek and Christian-Judaic traditions themselves. This would be amusing if it were accepted only among a handful of gullible poets harmlessly dispersed in espresso shops. But the idea has infected some unimpeachable Western professionals, and among them psychotherapists who possess a good deal of power over individuals. My purpose here is neither to make light of Oriental esthetics, nor to quench any possible proselytizing by the Buddhist religion, but simply to look at Zen "in the round" in the hope that if we can be purged of childish dependence upon magical omnipotence, we might view our imperfect achievements and impossible problems with a self-reliant adult realism. Those who turn to Zen expect it to grant the most impossible of all the things that life cannot give: a ready solution to the ponderous task of personal and social adjustment—and this without the exercise of reason!

✓ The denial of mind is as old as Buddhism; at least as old is Buddhism's impotence to do something tangible to aid suffering humanity—judging by the cities and slums and rural misery of Asia. It has become so important for everyone to have a "personal belief" in our society, which is so mistrustful of "bad intentions," that we seem to question content only in the case of Marxism. And even the idea that Marxism can actu-

ally be accepted as a religion in the underdeveloped countries absolves it of some evil. I do not at all mean to imply that one religion is better than any other, but simply that all religions do have a conceptual content; and the nonbeliever interested in certain facets of a religion for esthetic or artistically creative ends needs also to know the premises for its eschatology of salvation. Western psychotherapists however their professional understanding of the Zen negation of reason and logic is perverted, at least do understand it.

In Buddhist thought, the world is a terrible place into which one is reincarnated again and again through aeons of time, to form attachments to things and loved ones and be separated remorselessly from them by an impersonal fate. The Buddhist protest is not fundamentally against life. Life is not bad; it is the eternal painful separation from desired objects that is the monstrous hoax. One can only see through it by realizing that the universe is an entirely impersonal flux in which nothing really "exists" except attachment and desire. The Buddhist salvation is freedom from desire and hence from rebirth. (The Zen doctrine is that instantaneous freedom is achieved by uniting oneself with the eternal essence; liberation from the fetters of existence is possible in the here and now, not merely at death or in some life to come. Nothing is important in Zen except this teaching, and everything is expendable to this end. Most expendable of all—the one thing, in fact, which must be effaced in order for the Zen liberation to take place—is the attachment of mind to thought, of thinking to logic and reason. This attachment beclouds and prevents the inner spirit from

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the very possibility of union with the cosmic. We shall examine later the magical and historical roots of this idea.

The negation of mind in Buddhist thought is rather generally known, and undoubtedly many Westerners find Zen attractive because of it. Many in the West revolt both against reason's obviously majestic creations for the good life, as well as its utter failure to solve problems of personal contentment and creativity. But less well known than the negation of mind, and fundamental to any appraisal of it, is the method Zen uses to proselytize. Zen is basically a technique by which to achieve a mental breakdown of people so that they can be made to accept a new ideology. Its resemblance here to Chinese thought reform can be conclusively demonstrated. Also not widely enough recognized is that Zen's propensities for ideological conversion and reform are also inherent in many forms of psychotherapy practiced in the West. There is a basic identity in the coercive and regressive processes which Zen, thought reform, and various Western psychotherapies use to achieve reform or conversion goals.

A "scientific" dissection of a system of belief may be offensive to some, but the Zennists themselves will be the most tranquil in a reappraisal of facts which have slipped from view, or remained in the special province of ivy-overgrown inaccessibility. They will relay the burden of critical defense back to the source of attack, by branding this "conscious," "fragmented," and hopelessly "unspontaneous" treatment—because its symbolism is "learned"—as a typical example of the "error" of attachment they seek to eliminate. But

the examination of facts does not permit reduction to the same innocuous relativity as the assumption of emotionally validated beliefs. If it did, we could substitute firecracker-propelled garbage cans for space rockets, and effect a considerable saving in the national budget. No purposeful argument can be held with the mystic, because in ultimate defense against a logically untenable premise, he invokes the bankruptcy of thought process to arrive at what he "really means."

Besides, the mystical position has been bolstered by the recruitment of many intellectuals here in the West: Jung is one of the foremost to have answered the revivalist "Who'll step out and declare" cry against logic and rational analysis. To judge by his writings, the "universal unconscious" is a vast repository of healing symbols, a psychic bank which has been accumulated through untold generations of evolution, and which lies at the disposal of mankind for healing purposes. Appropriately, the symbolic plasma of this bank seems to have been largely contributed by the East, in the form of tranquilizing mandalas—religious representations of universal harmony which have only to be seen or imagined in order for a mental reintegration to take place. One is hard-pressed to imagine a universal hereditary unconscious; and serious scholars have long since turned to more profitable preoccupations—ever since the abandonment of the doctrine that characteristics acquired by the individual in his lifetime can be passed on to his progeny. Freud observed in the early part of this century that psychoanalytic theoreticians who form their own school bring their personal faiths with them—Jung is religious, Adler was

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a socialist. More recently, Erich Fromm's gratitude for the precious Zen gift from the East (these are his words) is directly traceable, as we shall see, to his conviction of the need for a greater spontaneity, a more total expression of the inner man than a culture animated by markets and Madison Avenue can give. The whole man to Fromm represents an original total potential which has been warped and channelized by the functional needs of a buying-and-selling society.

Of course Zen is not limited in its appeal to those who deny the value of reason, or to apocalyptic psychotherapists. Zen answers the esthetic and reflective needs of a variety of temperaments without subjecting them to complete conversion by means of its rebirth method, and without subverting clarity of thinking. Zen enjoys favor in the West on many different levels, and its appeal defies ready explanation. To the philosophically minded, the Buddhist metaphysics of universal becoming has long provided rich conceptual fare; but this is not a new attraction, and Zen is only one of many speculative schools. In the more modern spirit of East-West synthesis—one is tempted to use the epigram "pooled ignorance" but it is perhaps unfair—Zen avows itself philosophically protean: in Japan Zen has been incorporated into Hegel, and in the West it has been equated with Kierkegaard, Existentialism, Faust, and Pragmatism. This is in the same spirit as Sri Aurobindo's reconciliation of Indian spiritualism and European materialism. Akin to the appeal of a philosophical esoterics is the obvious delight of the religious, mystical temperament in the submersion of telluric values, and even the conceptual ablation of a

universe of mind and matter. It is possible too to understand the creative becoming of Zen cosmology in a purely humanist sense; but this requires overlooking the core idea of Buddhist negation of life, and the sustained affirmation of individuation which Western humanism upholds. As for Zen's reputed manifestations in the arts, it is not enough realized that its influence on garden art, painting and poetry is more a *post facto* rationalization on the part of Zen adherents than something historically real. In Japan, Shinto is the mother of the arts. Besides, the aesthetic response to creative forms need owe nothing to an understanding of Zen thought itself; anyone can appreciate:

A fallen flower
Returning to the branch?
It was a butterfly.

One can be an excellent rock gardener and a Shintoist as well.

But again, one does not begrudge Zen a historical connection with the arts in Japan—these arts may well turn out to be a lasting contribution to an asphalt-harried eye's need for a restful line and a rapport with nature, and there is no need to cavil at their provenience. The most unwarranted aspect of Zen's appeal to the West is the one which highlights the West's own critical bankruptcy. There are those who continue to impute to the East the ability to offer ready answers to the dilemma of man's existence, long after the East itself has turned to the West for more practically oriented approaches. Romain Rolland's post-World War I poetic plaint is still typical:

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Who, amid the disorder in which the chaotic conscience of the West is struggling, has sought whether the forty-century-old civilizations of India and China had not answers to offer to our griefs, models, it may be, for our aspirations?¹

The unveiling of the Oriental mind initiated by excited nineteenth-century scholars is still not over; public translations of esoteric texts have been given a new impetus by the paperbacks. A new generation of readers matter-of-factly shelves *The Way and Its Power* next to Joyce's *Ulysses*: the power to manipulate life magically resides in the vague, the mysterious, or simply in the uncomprehensible. Zen is unusually attractive because it purports to explain everything by saying nothing; or, when pressed, it offers in ultimate undescension an enigmatic *koan*:

A monk asked, "All things are said to be reducible to the One, but where is the One to be reduced?" Chao-chou answered, "When I was in the district of Ch'ing I had a robe made that weighed seven *chin*."

In one's late teens the felt profundity strikes more directly home than the nonaspiring fact. Besides, the accumulation of punctilious knowledge by one's elders seems stiff or irrelevant. The *koan* is really an aggressive, violent revolt against intellect. E. E. Cummings, so much in favor with college youth, has a poem which reveals that "feeling is first," and that he who inquires after the nature of things "will never wholly kiss you." Psychoanalysis has validated the poet's insight: in an activity like kissing, regressive suspension of analytic

¹ In a preface to A. K. Coomaraswamy's *The Dance of Siva*, 1924.

self-consciousness is in the service of ego-strong performance. But all of life is not a kiss. Is it an oedipally-infused blow that one strikes from his poetic retreat? "That's something you can't understand" is a defense against an overly-responsible world.

When a sullen, young Zen-inspired poet who made known his unusually thorough steeping in Zen profundity, was urged by his admiring agemates to divulge the "meaning of Zen," he invariably deepened his reputation for profundity by responding with a painted smile—an alternative to presenting a *koan*. Zen provides the ultimate in lightly-resting armor: for the price of maintaining a silence infused with intensity, one avoids having to expose his intellect to threatening critical scrutiny. The Zen smile has many uses, not the least of which is to mask a shallow understanding. As a partial explanation for the quick sympathy for Zen meaninglessness, the idea has occurred to me that the word "Zen" itself is responsible for some of this attraction. To an animal jerked by invisible threads of symbolism and sound (one is inevitably reminded of Helen Keller's sensuous frolic with the newly-discovered word "water") the "What's in a name?" precept is overly general. To ears accustomed to English, "Zen" is a lovely word—crisp yet musical. One wonders how appealing Zen would be to the young artist or poet if this badge of erudition bore, say, the Mahayana word, "Kalacakra."

But Zen is not merely a lovely sound, or a harmless plaything for poets: it is a serious reform method with an uncompromising belief in the ultimate good of its world view. For an understanding of the workings of

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this method, we can profitably re-examine the more subtle psychological processes of the psychotherapeutic personality change, and the kinship of both these systems to the outrightly coercive thought reform rebirth. The West has given us psychotherapy; the East, Zen and thought reform. The urge for a world-wide approach to problem solving makes it all the more imperative to assess these three approaches in one work.

1 The Psychotherapeutic Personality Change

POPULAR suspicion about "being hooked by a therapist" has its foundation in the workings of the psychotherapeutic process itself; this is no ordinary medical cure. But therapeutic inter-individual stimulation is probably as old as man himself, and the periodic rediscovery of quite sophisticated historical and "primitive" types of mind therapy attests to its usefulness. There is extreme diversity in psychotherapeutic technique, so much so that it is lax to subsume psychoanalysis and, say, supportive psychotherapy under the same rubric. Help, cure, and the kind of person who emerges from treatment differ qualitatively and sometimes radically between the various techniques. "What kind of a person does a particular psychotherapy turn out, and how?" is no simple question; and if all the methods did not share certain techniques as well as differ in emphasis, it would be an impossible question to answer.

Psychoanalysis, Freud's own magnificent creation, was defined by him as, simply, a sort of "after-education of the neurotic" which corrected educational blunders he suffered at the hands of his parents (1).

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But all therapies are basically such a re-education—an unlearning of old responses, of unconsciously automatic reactions that constrict the range of choice. In therapy one is essentially deconditioned and reconditioned, to the accompaniment of a good deal of emotional working over which acts as a purge. A cursory glance at the professional psychiatric journals reveals a persistent preoccupation with the basics of this educative process: it has, in short, not yet been adequately defined.

One phenomenon which is constantly reviewed, refined, summarized, or expanded is the “transference”—the esoteric conceptual possession of a handful of students of man, and the intuitive property of leaders of men. The ability to manipulate people by means of transference is at the basis of leadership, and most of the rest of human interaction. Popular appreciation of the pervasive power of this phenomenon would change society—or at least would hopefully have a serious effect on juke-box selections away from a masochistic preference for howling, dependently whining love ballads. In the transference relationship, the patient is disposed emotionally to relate to the therapist and others in a manner characteristic of his relationship to the first significant people in his life. In a sense, it is a normal phenomenon, or an inevitable one. We can only relate to others in the style in which we have already learned to relate. But gradually this style changes; with each new meeting or friendship, new identifications are formed, there is a new testing of the old mode of harmonizing, and one’s peculiarly personal identity grows.

But the continual, unconscious reference of each new relationship to previous identifications does not tend only in the direction of growth. Constantly bringing the past to bear upon new experience affects the quality of the experience, and its range. In the face of the new, in other words, one is bound by his past learning; and the primitive, earliest components of transference represent the need to identify and fuse with another living creature. We see this in the transference of pets to masters. Thus, transference comes afoul of the well-known reality principle, the need to re-evaluate each situation anew, to devise a peculiar, apposite solution as independently as possible of one's own needs or distortions. But transference relatedness is inherently antithetical to reality testing.

In psychotherapy, this situation is aggravated. Normally, we use an authoritative person—teacher, minister, doctor—as a trial or substitute object. In the transference quality of our relationship to them, we are actually rereacting to the significant figures in our own past, attempting to win them over with proofs of devotion and personal competence. Here the ego is in charge, growing as it learns and manipulates. But the fundamental rule for the patient undertaking analysis is that he voluntarily suspend the function of his ego. The analytic transference is given free rein without any central control. Normal transference is no longer possible; therapeutic transference is characterized by a deeper regression, a less controllable, more irresponsible dependence of the patient on a figure from his past—transferred onto the analyst.

This is complicated by the fact that the emotional

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rapprochement between analyst and patient, so necessary to cure, depends on the dominant personality of the analyst as well as on the patient's submissive predisposition to be manipulated by a powerful figure.¹ The therapeutic transference is induced in a manner comparable to hypnosis, and depends on the patient's inherent readiness to be hypnotized. But instead of instant submission, the transference creates a gradual submission. In fact, the orthodox Freudian approach to the creation and utilization of transference has come under criticism because it is essentially authoritarian in the tradition of hypnosis.

Freud's discovery was that of a technique where submission could be induced without hypnosis, and in which the patient remained conscious. Regression to transference submission as the basis for the technique is well symbolized in the analytic couch. But one does not become a child merely by lying down, even in the presence of an authoritarian figure. The creation of a total infantile setting is necessary. There are many well-known techniques for bringing this about. The object world has to be curtailed to a minimum. To reduce external stimuli, Freud at first requested his patients to keep their eyes shut. Reclining on the couch also contributes to the reduction of inner stimuli. Also, the analyst sits where the patient cannot see his reactions; he keeps the patient in the dark about the kind of person he is—in short, he partially excludes himself from the object world.

Another factor, one which stimulates fantasy be-

¹ Types of client-centered therapy, where the therapist echews any firm guidance of the process, are naturally excepted.

cause ego-alertness is not necessary, is the constancy of the therapeutic environment—the patient finds himself in a sustaining, unfluctuating infantile milieu. The routine of the analytic situation to which the patient has to conform is reminiscent of a strict infantile routine. The patient is quite unprepared for this setting. In the quiet, sustaining constancy, past and present become mingled. The diminished sense of personal responsibility is fed by the analyst's interpretations on an infantile level; or, in place of replying to the patient's cries for answers, help, encouragement, or criticism, the analyst offers a *koan*-like silence.¹

After all, the patient approaches the analyst in the first place in a help-seeking state of dependency, much in the same way as a patient with an organic disease consults his physician. Any potential helper is a transference figure; consequently the relationship must contain a strong infantile element, a magic expectation and trusting dependence. But the crux of the matter is that while the analytic situation creates this infantile role for the patient, the help he expects is not forthcoming: the analyst remains objectively impersonal, emotionally aloof. The patient is exposed to an infantile setting which he is led to believe holds the perfect freedom, love, and the help he expects. He meets instead a constant, passive, immutable environment. There is only one solution remaining to him; he must adapt by regression to infantile levels of coping.

¹ With the extensive use of silence as a technical aid, the patient is enabled to hear his own "superficial verbalization," which serves as a "powerful means" of precipitating him into a deeper level of transference (2).

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At this point, the purpose of the analytic technique has been achieved: the patient adapts to the infantile setting into which he has been placed by regressing; the analyst, on the other hand, remains outside the play which the patient is enacting—he observes the patient's reactions and attitudes in isolation. A unique instrument of investigation has thereby been created, an instrument considered the most important stroke of Freud's scientific genius. The patient, in effect, re-enacts his life drama; the film is played backward under critical analytic scrutiny. In his infantile reactions the patient represents himself at various levels of development. As the regression becomes well-established under the constant pressure of analytic frustration, the patient withdraws to earlier and progressively more tested patterns of behavior. Sooner or later, as he retraces his whole mental development, his conflict is reached.

This is one version of psychoanalysis; other therapeutic techniques dispense with its induced regression. The original uniqueness of psychoanalysis as a technique lies in the analyst's neutrality and aloofness—he is a spectator and not a co-actor. Zen and thought reform, as we shall see, also exploit a regressive infantile situation which they themselves create; differently.

In psychoanalysis, the central therapeutic issue is but in them the "therapist" handles himself quite *unrepression*. Inadmissible thoughts and behavior are banished from consciousness as the infant and child imitatively patterns himself into a figure which will meet parental approval. But the exile to the uncon-

scious of the inadmissible in his character continues to trouble him in various ways, and to determine his behavior: he is victimized by the repressed contents of his own unconscious. The function of transference in unrepression is simply that the patient relives his original conflicts—the cause of the repressions in the first place—in the analytic situation. The analyst, a benign authority figure and neutral spectator, guides the patient into an examination of the behavior he is enacting in the transference. Neurotic reactions are simply old reactions, corresponding to now outmoded patterns; they not only do not fit but actually hinder adaptation to new situations. One cannot relate in the role of a husband to one's wife if he continues to relate as if he were a son and the wife a mother. In his inept struggles, the patient engages in a kind of shadow-boxing: the therapist is a new and different authority figure who allows the patient to face situations he once faced in the past, but this time deal with them in a different manner. He feels, as well as learns intellectually, the irrationality of his outmoded patterns; this is not a detached, cold self-criticism, but a really painful, humiliating emotional drama.

This agonizing emotional catharsis, or *abreaction*, is so central to the therapeutic cure that one can well understand the Western analyst's acceptance of the *koan*-tormented Zen disciple. Ideally, abreaction is accompanied by insight, and it is theoretically important for the patient to understand what is going on. But curiously, one of the most difficult problems in the theory of psychoanalytic treatment is how to evaluate the role of the patient's intellectual insight. It is pos-

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sible to procure a lasting therapeutic effect with the corrective emotional experience alone. Analysis, like Zen Buddhism, can dispense with ratiocination. And like the Zennist, the analyst bears witness to the mis-carried personal and emotional lives of some outstanding intellects; for intellectual probing as a substitute for feeling is a principal defense of the compulsive personality.

Further Deviations from the Ideal

Responsible maturation is ideally achieved only by a re-educative technique that also succeeds in imparting self-understanding and rational self-responsibility. But this clean picture is obscured when therapy becomes responsive to the needs of individual cases. Sometimes in psychotherapy the exact opposite of un-repression is called for: in certain cases the lifting of repressions gives way to the creation of repressions, this became apparent particularly in dealing with psychotics.

Historically, psychotics were a nuisance to psychoanalysis because it was thought that no transference could be established, and the analytic technique could not be employed. According to the theoretical structural divisions of the psyche, the neurotic and the psychotic differ in this: the neurotic solves his conflict by severing the relationship with the instinctual unconscious, but the reality relationship is preserved. The psychotic, on the other hand, solves the conflict between the ego and the unconscious by severing the relationship to reality and yielding to his unconscious. Both the techniques and the goals of psychoanalytic

practice must be radically revised in attempting to treat psychotics. In the first place, the psychotic, unable to cope with reality, cannot cope with the half-reality of the transference—he confuses it with reality. In structural terms, the psychotic's ego has been completely swamped by the contents of his unconscious—there is too much unconscious material already brought up to consciousness, and his ego is simply not strong enough to keep it in hand. The analytic technique of free association becomes positively dangerous, since unconscious contents are not wanted. The goal of analysis becomes the antithesis of Freud's well-known motto: "Where there is id let there be ego." The problem with psychotics is rather to return to the id what has become the province of the ego.

Naturally, when this kind of re-repression is the aim of therapy, there is no longer any question of a cure. If everything that is connected with the cause of the patient's troubles has to be banished from awareness, "cure," in the psychoanalytic sense of responsible self-aware maturation, cannot take place. To treat the psychotic, the therapist must become a helper akin to other helpers in society—priests, counsellors, guidance people. This kind of helper is not outside the helping process: he is involved in it, responsible for *forestalling* certain awarenesses on the part of the patient. In the interests of building up the psychotic's weak ego, the transference becomes primarily a manipulative device; it becomes necessary to work with the patient's total reality, and not simply his repressions. This is called support therapy, and subsumes a host of special approaches with hypostatized marionette-like terms: "ego

transfusions," "co-operative reality-testing," and the like.

Superego and Ego

Psychoanalytic structural terminology is far from immutable, and new terms as well as new arrangements of these terms are periodically advanced. There may even, it seems, be more than one ego; a central ego and several subsidiary egos may exist, some conscious, others unconscious. The layman is justifiably confused, and I do not intend here to detail a theory which itself is imperfect. On the other hand, the super-ego-ego antithesis is still the best shorthand explanation of how an individual manipulates himself, and how he can be manipulated by others. The imposition of shame and guilt over failure to meet standards set by others for our conduct is the basic social measure by which man is kept from running wild. The "thou shalt not" precepts instilled by society through parents into the child become the puppet strings by which he animates himself, and against which animation he guiltily struggles. Thus, the life drama is basically played in terms of what one does with, for, or against his superego. Most aptly, this process has been called an internalized transference.

Therapy, from one point of view, centers solely around the superego. The unrepression of the psychoanalytically-treated patient simply means that the overly-restrictive aspects of his superego are loosened or weakened. On the other hand, re-repression is that process by which the ego is strengthened; this is effected by creating or introjecting a new superego in the place

of an overbearing hostile one which crushed the old ego. The superego, in this view, is the prime manipulator of man; it therefore becomes important to realize that therapy uses precisely this manipulation. There is no question but that the analyst is an auxiliary superego; he contrives to have himself introjected by the patient as a new superego. This introjection is justifiable on the grounds that it is the old superego which is causing the patient to employ outmoded forms of coping, and which is restricting his reality testing and ability to freely devise new solutions to new problems. In the therapeutic shadow-boxing, the analyst represents the new authority that the patient must introject, but that contrasts all the same very markedly with the archaic superego the patient originally came to the analysis with. The final stage of the psychoanalytic cure is not an easy one. The patient has been freed from the tyranny of an archaic superego, but he must now be weaned from the superego of the analyst. He must trace his way out of childhood by gradually learning to respond to the analyst as a real person, and not as a new authority figure. Psychoanalysis insists on weaning the patient in the final stage from the new therapist introjection he has formed. This is one reason psychoanalytic therapy takes so long.

There are many approaches to the superego conflict, depending on the nature of the restraints it imposes on the patient. If the patient's conflict is old and deep and centers around the parent figure, the analyst must be able to represent that figure at least provisionally, in order for the emotional drama to begin. On the other hand, early loss or failure of the parent to pro-

vide a proper framework upon which the child could model his character means that the therapist must himself supply this pattern, and help the patient set up standards of conduct he normally would have had. Thus, even in the most rational psychotherapy, the aim is actually a modification of the values under which the patient had been performing prior to therapy. It is almost impossible, in effecting a re-orientation of the patient to his conscience, not to tamper—at least provisionally—with the patient's values.

But it needs repeating that this situation is ideal. A semblance of a cure, a better functioning individual, can be effected without meeting the absolute standard. Ego strengths and weaknesses are, after all, relative and not absolute. The ego can appear stronger simply by bringing the claims of the superego into line with it. This is the rationale for supportive therapy. The suppression of conflicts is tantamount to a cure, as long as the ego functions without crippling restrictions. Again, in structural terms, a fundamental personality change can be effected by changing "the stance of the ego" toward the demands of the superego, the id, and external reality. Any therapeutic system can effect this even in the complete absence of any cognitive participation by the individual.

When he manipulates the patient's superego without the rational participation of the patient, the therapist changes his role considerably. He becomes a protective but authoritarian figure; he may alleviate the patient's guilt either by simple reassurance, or by prohibitions and restrictions. The patient must accept these restrictions as necessary disciplines, and in his struggle with

the therapist, the neurosis "seems to break down" as the new superego is introjected. Support therapists call this a "catalyzation," or a "breaking down" of the neurosis; but there is no question about who comes out on top. The tension, hostility, and frustration which the patient experiences in this kind of give-and-take may actually be intense enough to break through the new repressions and destroy the therapeutic relationship. The therapist can counter this destruction by prescribing physical culture, hobbies, occupational therapies, and so on; but the real dynamics are not thereby obscured: re-repression is simply successful repression undertaken by a stronger, therapist-supported ego which has accepted the therapist's superego sanctions as new authority upon which to pattern conduct. The patient willingly accepts the new and more clearly defined superego as a framework in which to act. Re-repression thus enjoys the illusory freedom of lack of ambiguity.

It is not unfair to say that some therapists are predisposed by their own personality structures and value systems to the use of supportive therapy; indeed, psychoanalytic theory itself insists that a man chooses his profession to suit the rationalization of his unconscious urges. A surgeon has simply sublimated his desire to dismember bodies more than has a butcher. Those therapists who use supportive methods are often ingenious in legitimizing descriptions of the mechanics and efficacy of re-repression; and for our purposes it is instructive to take a closer look at how power over others is rationalized in the name of science. These therapists refer almost proudly to the fact that after

therapy has ended, supportively-cured patients often say that for some time they carry the therapist around with them as part of their social relationships (3).

Some support therapists claim that there is a difference between the introjection of the parent and the later introjection of the therapist, the first being on a childhood and the second on an adolescent level. The superego represented by the therapist thus has an ideal quality, free from the initial restraints of the archaic superego. But this can hardly be used to justify the patient's assuming the conscience of the therapist and using it as a guide in his mature interrelationships. Of course, in adolescence there is a new striving for ego identity which unleashes a potential for new allegiances to replace those to the parents. The provision of a new superego at this stage serves both to replace the restrictive parental one, and also to provide the goal-directed framework within which a new identity can be affirmed. In support therapy, when the therapist's superego joins the newly awakening ego strength of the patient, a productive combination is formed. But still—prohibited conduct has to be re-repressed, and the therapist's superego has all the attributes of an infallibility to which one must give unquestioning allegiance. In the same way that the Zennist joins himself to the fount of power of the "Great Doctrine," the supportively-cured patient exercises a new-found omnipotence. But it is not his own, nor is it formed by self-awareness or self-knowledge.

The creation of unquestioning quiet fanatics is not the ideal aim of psychotherapy. When self-knowledge is sacrificed to a more ego-strong performance by mag-

ically imbibing in another's omnipotence, the utter dependency of the patient is real if not apparent. Deep neurotics and borderline psychotics exhibit a life-long dependency on the attention and protective efforts of the analyst; for when a patient accepts the therapist as guiding authority with whom he must conform, the termination of the treatment may present great difficulties, since the therapist remains a necessary factor in the patient's continuing adjustment. With psychotics, the transference can last throughout life; the supportively-cured patient may not be so overtly dependent, but his ego-strong performance, while more symbolically and less personally animated, still reflects his induction into the therapist's value system.

Manipulation in Group Therapy and in Mental Hospitals

The therapeutic aim—self-confident, socially-adjusted performance—finds its best expression in group psychotherapy. The values here are frankly on the side of social adjustment, and there is little attempt to seek access to the personality in depth. But the techniques are similar to those employed in personal psychotherapy. The patient's initial desire for quick help and his transference dependence meet the same frustrations characteristic of individual therapy. As in supportive psychotherapy, the absence of any real self-knowledge or insight means that the patient must adapt by introjecting new standards of conduct—in this technique those of the group into which he has come for treatment. This is perhaps a good point at which to indicate the incongruity between what the patient wants and what he actually will get is one of

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which he is not aware when he enters therapy. He has no idea of the profound change which will be demanded of him after he enters the group. This refusal by the therapist to allow a peek inside the tent until the patient has bought his ticket is characteristic of most therapies. The requirements for change are revealed by the therapist only gradually, so that the patient cannot mobilize his defenses and reject the process. Once caught up in transference, infantilization, and the promise of help, the patient has recourse only to the familiar, occasional "flight into health"—a pretense of cure assumed for the purpose of escaping further therapeutic probings or any deep-seated personality change. (Anyone who has not undergone therapy can have no idea of the emotional investment that the truly neurotic individual has in his defenses, in his refusal to face painful materials from the unconscious.)

The group therapy leader is intentionally brief, gradual, and unthreatening in his explanations of the requirements which the patient must meet. Gradually, then, he speeds up his insistence on compliance, fitting his demands to the tolerance of the individual patients; by skillful use of this gradient approach, the group is relentlessly pushed in the direction of new norms and values.¹ Unlike individual therapy, the group leader's

¹ A particularly good example of the Zen master's adeptness at the use of the gradient approach is found in Herrigel's account, to be examined in our discussion of Zen. For the Zen disciple, this adeptness appears as a peculiar wisdom on the part of the master; it is interpreted as a reflection of his "perfect understanding" of the "true nature" of his disciples, as well as of all other things in the universe. Statements like these are obviously transference inspired.

personality is less responsible for personality change than the group itself. Plunged into an alien group under constant pressure to adjust to its standards, the patient is hard pressed to hasten his espousal of the new norms. His own values do not apply; and his consequent sense of personal deflation combines with his inner tension and anxiety to drive him to the desire to be accepted. Nor can he test these new standards to which he is opposed, or discuss or reflect upon them with someone of differing persuasion; he is alone in the hostile group, which will only give him its support when it observes changes in him and his behavior. Insistence on his personal values only brings condemnation from the group, so the patient's main concern becomes one of avoiding anticipated retaliation. He tries to make himself less vulnerable by divining what the group expects of him. Under these pressures he comes to understand that only those acts are "good" which aim toward the goal of mental health; any activity resisting this aim is "bad." The new superego is unambiguous.

But the patient has learned a skill—an increased capacity to relate to others—which is probably the reason he enrolled in the group in the first place. The therapy has been effected, despite the unquestionably coercive means. All personality reintegration depends on isolating the individual in an artificial therapeutic setting, whether it be the analyst's private office, or a therapeutic group with norms and values quite different from those of outer society. The new reference group lays claim to the patient's loyalty; and not all therapies seek to effect the psychoanalytic weaning.

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Naturally, the more totally controllable and manipulatable the milieu into which the patient is set, the better the chances of success in personality change. This is nowhere better illustrated than in the mental hospital. Any institution, in fact, in which one lives full time, and which is dedicated to effecting some kind of change in those who come within its boundaries, possesses unlimited coercive power. In this sense, the mental hospital is akin to a jail, a monastery, or a concentration camp: it exists for the purpose of inculcating its own world view—and this view often runs quite counter to the perspective existing outside. Army barracks and ships share this quality; they relentlessly mold the individual into a new morality, a different allegiance, a new view of himself in relation to the world, described even in a new lingo. In some mental hospitals occur the initiation and disfiguring processes characteristic of other total institutions—jails, monasteries, barracks. Objects to which the patient may attach a great value, which represent his identifications with his former life, are taken away, and new, often lackluster things are issued in their place. He may have his head shaved; his self-esteem and personal image may be degraded in any number of ways. In our culture, a man may not be accustomed to taking showers and going to the toilet in front of others. Nor are many used to being assigned tasks and given orders. The patient finds himself being treated like an infant again, with orders of “Do this, do that, go here, go there, why did you do this?” and so on. In the process of infantilization so familiar in most therapeutic techniques, his entire sense of competence is discredited. His con-

tinued queries, "Why can't I go out?" "Why can't I get this?" are met by unequivocal answers: "You are not ready for it," "You are not capable of it" (4).

Anxiety and isolation in the face of these stresses is the expected and therapeutically desired result. Relief can only be bought at the price of learning to operate in the new value system. This is the indispensable condition for discharge. The patient has to learn to give proper responses, reflecting a more or less objective appraisal of himself: neither too negative—"I am the world's worst person," nor too positive—"I am not sick and don't belong here." To cap the entire learning process, these self-evaluations must be phrased in the terminology of that particular mental institution. Thus, in order to relieve the stresses of a thoroughly controlled milieu, to adapt to the alienation and mortification of the mental hospital, the patient converts himself by introjecting a superego. This new conscience is very often a strong immersion in psychiatric perspective. "Good" and "evil" are referred to psychiatric textbook rubrics.

The Superego in Religious and Ideological Conversion

From one point of view, the religious conversion too hinges upon superego functions. The propelling personal need which eventuates in the conversion may be based upon an inner conflict and an unsupportable feeling of guilt. This guilt may be due to a sense of failure to live up to one's standards (*i.e.*, standards of the inculcated archaic superego, the internal transference); the severity of the superego causes a continuous and mounting anxiety. The glimpse of a new

faith, and the espousal of a new religious consciousness offer the possibility of relief from this stress. It is characteristic of the religious identification that parental attachments are left behind, and that the continually obtruding parental image from the past is replaced with a new, more permissive superego.

Identification with a cause, with mankind at large, or with nature, refocuses strivings on a more symbolic level than was previously possible. In alliance with a more creative fount of power, the ego expands into a stronger, more unified self-domination. It seems characteristic of personality development that once action is frustrated and baffled by internal or outer constraints, the individual bogs down into a fragmented ineffectuality. "Ego," "self," "personality" are far from satisfactory terms. At best they refer to some type of integral action-orientation by an identifiable entity, but they are very imprecise terms. The most that can be said is that for energy-converting organisms, conduct must continue to go forward. Restraints in the form of constricting allegiances or impossible standards create an insurmountable tension. The most powerful resynthesizer in the service of a symbolically manipulatable animal are symbols themselves; as a perfectly executed mathematical equation brings relaxation and peace, so does the patterning of action within a new idea framework release a new rhythm of action. The superego is, after all, the assumption of an interpersonal rhythm, the forming of a peculiar style of relating—physically, verbally, and mentally—to others. If it becomes constrictive, new identifications and the language of a different concept permit a new expansiveness.

2 The Zen Buddhist Conversion

ZEN is either "learned" in the discipline and training of a monastery or *Zendo*, or it is approached through the inculcation of Zen skills—archery, swordsmanship, and flower arrangement. These skills have been translated in poetic works of the West, and one is sometimes left with the impression that most of Japan practices and "understands" the meaning of Zen. But Zen is not a mass religion, and neither is it consistently esoteric. Zen priests, like those of other sects, keep their members in the populace at large by holding memorial services, attending funerals, saying prayers to cure sickness, and preaching. Furthermore, compared to the over sixteen million adherents of Nembutsu, Zen's three million are hardly competitive. There are two main schools of Zen in Japan, but although one, the Soto, has more than twice the number of teachers and temples than the other, it is the Rinzai which has been chiefly emphasized in presentation to the West. The more numerous Soto sect lays greater stress on good conduct and morality; the Rinzai emphasizes "sudden enlightenment," and employs the famous *koan* to achieve it. The preferences of Zen's exponents to the

West are clearly for the Rinzai; and its most distinguished promoter, Dr. D. T. Suzuki, seems frankly prejudiced against the meditative, monastically inactive Soto.

What is Zen? First and foremost it is a method, and there has never been any attempt to disguise the methodical nature of the Zen discipline. Zen experience can only be realized by going through a definite training. The *koan* exercise is a system set up with a definite object in view. The uniqueness of Zen lies in its methodical preparation of the mind for *satori*—the “sudden enlightenment” in which all secrets are revealed. The advocates of Zen do not hedge on the aim of the method: it seeks to place the disciple in a dilemma, out of which he must contrive to escape. The one function of the *koan* is to be instrumental in posing this dilemma. The *koan* presents a mysterious question and answer, entirely alogical, supposedly with some profound significance. In order to solve the *koan*, Zennists claim that one cannot use his own mind, or accustomed logic; instead, he must pass beyond logic, to a mind of a higher order.

The *koan* is simply a dialogue between a master and a monk, or a statement or question proffered by a master. It appears illogical not only to the Western, but also to the Japanese, mind. *Mondo* means, literally, an “asking and answering”—questions and answers between masters and pupils; it is the description of the master-pupil interaction which leads to *satori*. *Satori*, the aim of the Zen method, is another term for enlightenment, the state of intuitive looking-into, in contradistinction to intellectual or logical understanding.

No doubt there is something basically appealing in the nonlogic of the *koan*. Western adherents of Zen betray a restrained gleefulness in talking about the *koan*—akin to the inward, chuckling delight of the possessor of a choice riddle. The *koan* is the sincere, but impatient, intellectual's last laugh at himself.

In answer to the question "Who or what is the Buddha?" *koan* answers are consistently nonsequiturs: "Your name is Yecho"; "See the eastern mountains moving over the waves"; "No nonsense here"; "Three pounds of flax."

Joshu's "Mu" is a famous *koan*. In answer to the question, "Is there Buddha nature in a dog?" the master said, "Mu." "Mu" means "no" or "none"; but in this answer, "Mu" is considered quite divorced from the context—a "no" or "none" to be considered by itself. Since to the Buddhist Buddha nature exists a priori in *all* things, this "no" simply cannot be interpreted as referring to the question. Another perplexing *koan* is the question, "What is the sound of one hand clapping?"

The *koan* that does not discredit the most commonplace logical correlation, or deliberately poke fun at the intimate and sacred, may be a series of thoroughly nonsense repetitions or exclamations. The *koan* is used for deliberate reality confusion; the non sequitur is accepted precisely for the sake of the confusion it engenders. The Zen pupil is freed from the fetters of logical ratiocination by being presented with an insoluble dilemma. When a *koan* is given to a novice, the avowed intention is to awaken him to the fact that his former way of looking at things, the truths and values

which he has always accepted, are not necessarily true or helpful as an approach to Zen. The *koan* is not a riddle to be puzzled over, nor a comical remark; it has the definite objective of raising doubt and pushing it to the limit. The disciple is edged toward a mental precipice and told to leap; but logic is no aid in the leap. How does one break the *koan* impasse? Prolonged attempts to solve it only result in hesitation, doubt, and frustration. Thus, the *koan* serves to provide the impetus for regression which is necessary to personality change—it holds out the promise and the refusal of help at one and the same time.

Zennists have enumerated the methods of reality frustration to which a disciple may be exposed. First there is the *paradoxical assertion*: "If you have a staff . . . I will give you one; if you have not, I will take it away from you." Next, the *contradiction*: the negation of what one has said oneself, or what another master had previously stated; or a "no" or "yes" answer, interchangeably, to the same question; or, finally, a strong negation of an obvious truth, such as, "My master never said this" in response to a famous saying of his.

Affirmation is a concrete assertion in answer to a question which is an obvious non sequitur: When Kwazan was asked what the Buddha was, he said, "I know how to play the drum, rub-a-dub, rub-a-dub!" Or, when Baso Doichi was sick, one of his disciples came and inquired about his condition, "How do you feel today?" The reply was "Sun-faced Buddha, moon-faced Buddha!"

Some pause is necessary in order to grasp the extremely stressful nature of these ostensibly lighthearted

replies. As we shall see, the master-disciple relationship is an extremely authoritarian one, and carries with it a degree of respectful submissiveness and awesome worship on the part of the disciple that one has difficulty imagining in the comparatively individuated West. One fit parallel for a university-going Western intellectual would be a university chancellor, who, when sincerely and ceremoniously approached about the aims of education, responded: "I know how to play the drum, rub-a-dub, rub-a-dub!" And this cannot convey the full intensity of the resulting stress. The disciple's earnest concern over his master's illness—an anxiety perhaps exceeding that which he would feel about the illness of his own father—is mocked by the nonsense reply, "Sun-faced Buddha." The Alice-in-Wonderland atmosphere is unmistakably overpowering.

Take the technique of repetition: to the question, "What is the Buddha?" the answer may be "The Buddha," or, interchangeably, "Tao," or the "Dharma." The point is that Buddha, Tao, and Dharma are far from trifling things to an earnestly seeking, religious disciple; nor are they rendered trifling by the repetitious answers, "The Buddha," "Tao," and "Dharma." This kind of answer produces extreme confusion on the part of the disciple—first, "What does this mean?" Then, "What is wrong with my question?" and ultimately, "What is wrong with me?"

The *exclamatory utterance* is attributed to the master Baso. Baso uttered "Kwats!" when Hyakujo his disciple came up to the master for a second time to be instructed in Zen. This "Kwats" is said to have

deafened Hyakujo's ear for three days. "Kwats" is a nonsense cry—it has no real meaning. The disciple's coming to the master a second time for instruction in Zen means that he has already been rebuffed once by some reality-confounding device; now he is met by a totally incomprehensible, and deafening, "Kwats." Apparently, he will, or can, get this response again and again. Or, he may have his question answered by a counter question that is again a non sequitur: "Who is the master of the triple world?" To which he may be answered: "Do you understand how to eat rice?"

To the Westerners who expound Zen to the West, this is all fair sport: ultimately the disciple sees the error of his attempts to pose logical questions and understands that the truth is not to be grasped by the mind, but has rather to be intuited by the "inner self" and lived unstintingly, without the hesitations and compromises of associative cerebration. But this superficial and wishful explanation glosses over the essence of what actually takes place: the disciple is subjected to an extremely stressful distortion of meaning as he has been trained to conventionally understand it. This distortion occurs in a controlled environment which does not offer him consensual validation. The one doing the distortion—the master—is a highly respected figure to whom the disciple has addressed himself *for clarification* of precisely those questions which now seem to be wrong or stupid.

Cognitive reality confusion is not the only problem; for along with the discrediting of his accustomed reality orientation, the disciple receives deliberate physical

punishment in many forms—blows, nose twistings, being pushed to the ground, and the like. For example:

Hyakujo went out one day attending his master Baso when they saw a flock of wild geese flying. Baso asked. "What are they?"

"They are wild geese, sir."

"Whither are they flying?"

"They have flown away."

Baso, abruptly, taking hold of Hyakujo's nose gave it a twist. Overcome with pain, Hyakujo cried out, "Oh! Oh!"

Said Baso, "You say they have flown away, but all the same they have been here from the very first."

This made Hyakujo's back wet with perspiration.

Or, again:

The master gave him a slap in the face, whereupon the disciple said, "How rude you are!"

"Do you know where you are?" exclaimed the master. "Here I have no time to consider for your sake what rudeness or politeness means." With this another slap was given.

Thirty blows seems to be a standard number: at the end of one exchange of non sequiturs, Ummon suddenly raised his voice and said, "I spare you thirty blows. You may now retire." Tokusan used to swing his big stick whenever he came out to preach in the hall, saying, "If you utter a word I will give you thirty blows; if you utter not a word, just the same, thirty blows on your head." This was all he would say.

In China, Zen was known as Ch'an; in former times the physical coercions employed were extreme. The discipline was characterized by slaps in the face, blows

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with the fists under the ribs, and harnessing novices with a heavy wooden neck collar and iron lock. It is typical of Zen "straightforwardness" that although its proponents do not insist on the more severe historical forms of physical force, they make no attempt to disguise the extreme coercions to which the disciples may be subject.

The Zendo

In the Zendo (monastery), the frustration of meaning via the *koan* combines with a quality of total institutional reform to produce a maximally coercive intensity. In the monastic spiritual exercises, the master deals with disciples in several ways: he can strike them, slap them, kick them to the ground, laugh at them, make scornful and even abusive remarks. A disciple in the act of making a bow would be kicked to the ground, or given a deafening "Kwats!" followed immediately by a blow. The Zen literature not only contains these reports, but records the rules governing monastic life. Rule No. 4 states:

. . . the *keisaku* [warning stick] is to be used with discrimination on the monks, whether they are dozing or not. When submitting to the warning stick, courteously fold your hands and bow; do not permit any egoistic thoughts to assert themselves. . . .

Or, Rule No. 11:

At the time of the morning service, the dozing ones are to be severely dealt with the *keisaku*. . . .

The Zennists call this meditation, though they admit that by this term they do not mean the mental train-

ing called meditation in the West. While the *zazen* (meditation) is going on, a monk with a *keisaku* polices each end of the raised meditation platform, keeping a close watch on the monks.

The *Zendo*, after all, is a reform institution, with a program and a task to fulfill. New arrivals are usually eager and enthusiastic, seeking to effect a change in themselves—to become different as a result of what they will learn within the *Zendo*. And, as in any therapeutic reform process, the method is to reveal gradually an expected achievement that far outstrips what the seeker had anticipated as the changes necessary to effect within himself.

The admission to the *Zendo* is in effect a selective initiation. The extremely high degree of motivation on the part of novices seeking admission is attested to by the “proofs of sincerity” which, historically, they are said to have demonstrated. In his application to a particular master or monastery, the novice is expected to show zeal: Hui k’o, the second patriarch of Chinese Zen, reputedly cut off his left arm as a demonstration of his earnestness.

Self-selection for the training through high motivation is to be expected in the accounts of novices seeking monastery admission, since cultural norms dictated Buddhist revelations as the highest wisdom. The novice’s expectations of the master coincide with a modern patient’s expectations of a physician or therapist: the master has the presumed power to relieve suffering, and a magical omnipotence derived from the knowledge he possesses and his own personal degree of spiritual perfection. After all, the Buddhist

secret is one that relieves human suffering by pointing to a way out; detachment from the fetters of painful human experience can be achieved by learning the Buddhist way. Thus, the novice's expectations may in a very real sense be concerned with a healing process to be effected by the master.¹

The novice must prove his zeal before being admitted, and all applicants are met with perfunctory rejections: they are told that there is no more room in the *Zendo* at present, that the *Zendo* is poor, and so forth. The zealous novice is not put off by such tactics, and the usual procedure is to let him sit outside over his baggage for at least two or three days before formally admitting him. He is, however, admitted into the *Zendo* at night during this period, and his meals are supplied at proper hours. Today this formal initiation is milder than it was when hard treatments were mercilessly dealt out.

Once inside the *Zendo*, the novice is subject to a routine regulated with military severity and precision. The total manipulation of a stressful environment may begin with the novice's first interview with his master—in ancient times the confrontation with reality distortion began with this interview. Now, however, the practice is to engage in an amiable tea drinking, and desultory informational conversation about the novice's age, origins, and so on. Everyone in authority in

¹ There is every reason to believe that, historically, the novice sought also the pure magical power of the master. This explains such demonstrations of earnestness as self-mutilations and amputations. They would be a small price to pay in order to learn the secrets of power. See Chapter 4.

the *Zendo*, and especially the master upon whom the novice is dependent, will insist on seeing reality in a totally different way. The novice's anxiety begins with his real undertaking of the discipline; he is given his *koan*—the most important feature in the *Zendo* life, in the Zen view.

The physical discomfort of the *Zendo* is not unusual by, say, Trappist standards, but it undoubtedly contributes its part to the stress of the milieu. There is a shortage of clothing, of food, and of time in which to sleep, plus an extremely full schedule. In this atmosphere of physical deprivation and strict routine, punctuated by a "discriminating" use of the *keisaku*, the monk alternates between doing menial labor and *zazen*—meditation on his *koan* performed on his tatami mat on the *tan*, the raised floor of the *Zendo*.

Manual labor is set aside during several periods of the year, for a stepped-up, exclusively mental discipline, the *sesshin*, which occurs a few times in summer and winter seasons, and lasts about a week each time. *Sesshin* means literally "thought collecting"; the *sesshin* themselves seem to vary in intensity. There is an extra severe "*Rohatsu sesshin*," in memory of Sakya Buddha's enlightenment. During the *sesshin*, the novice undergoes a feverish round of meditations and consultations with the master. Besides "lectures"—remember Tokusan's "thirty blows" lecture technique—there is the visit to the master for the presentation of the disciple's views on his *koan*, called the *sanzen*. This *sanzen* normally occurs twice a day, but during the period of thought collecting it takes place four and even five times.

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Sanzen is quite in keeping with the coercive discipline. The monk must go to the master's room for a very formal and solemn interview—all the more solemn because he has no idea at all of what is expected of him under the strange new reality system. Anything he says in explanation of the *koan* may be discredited, and he is given no hint about the right thing to say. It is understandable, under these conditions, that the monk does not want to see the master. Normally, during the *Zendo* year, if a monk has no special views to present to the master, he does not have to do *sanzen*. But, during the *sesshin*, there is the *sosan*, or general *sanzen* which is enforced three times: the monk must see the master at these times whether he has views or not. The extreme physical and psychological coercion of the enforced *sanzen* is more like bullying than it is like an interview. In the Zennist's own words, the master "sits quietly like a crouching lion" awaiting the novice. Nor does the lion hesitate to pounce: he may strike the monk violently, and chase him back out of the room.

Hakuin, on presenting his views to his master, was met with the reply "Stuff and nonsense." Hakuin repeated this remark, and was given a box on the ear, and thrown with the motion of the blow from the veranda into the mud and water. Whereupon the master offered the additional comment of, "O you denizen of the dark cavern." Another day, after an exhaustive contest with the master in *sanzen*, the master, furious, gave him several slaps, pushed him off the porch—a fall of several feet knocked him senseless

—and he was again told, “O you denizen of the dark cavern.”

The presentation of views is clearly not an intellectual affair. The novice's forcible ejection from the master's room puts the monks who are waiting for their *sanzen* into an understandable state of apprehension and confusion. Besides, they are already extremely reluctant to see the master: many of them have been staying away from *sanzen* because they naturally do not have any satisfactory solution to their *koan* dilemma. Exhausted by the endeavor to unravel the *koan* mystery, and forced to face an obviously violent master, the novice is in a critical impasse. What happens at this time in the *Zendo* resembles the activity in the padded cell wing of a backward psychiatric hospital: the senior monks use physical force to pull the novice down from the *tan*, or to tear him away from the post or the door to which he clings with fearful trembling. The usually quiet solemn meditation hall is a scene of wrestling matches.

The Zennist does not have, until final breakdown, any idea of what is expected of him in resolution of the *koan*. He does not realize that logic is of no use in solving it; and the Japanese, like everyone else, can be ingenious in their logical contortions.¹

It is perhaps for this reason that the situation of the sensitive monk as conveyed in the literature is as hopeless as his anxiety is overwhelming. Some monks try to communicate in what they believe may be the expected manner—returning a slap, using *koan* tech-

¹ See, for example, Mishima's novel about Zen monks, *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*, 1959.

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niques in their own answers to the master, and so forth. However, this is almost always discouraged. Hakuin was given a box on the ear after he had repeated his master's "stuff and nonsense," and the literature is full of examples of this kind of discouragement, for reasons which will be explained in our discussion of therapeutic aspects of Zen.

Satori: The Rebirth

The monk must undergo an average of fourteen years of this kind of unrelenting discipline before he is qualified to be a master. Undoubtedly, the process would be considerably shorter if the disciple had an inkling of what was expected of him. The effort spent during fourteen years of unceasing stress has but one aim: *satori*—the enlightenment or rebirth—the passing away of the old, deluded mind, and the emergence of the new, unambiguously clear thinker and doer.

Most accounts of the attainment of *satori* begin with the statement: "He had spent many years trying to uncover Zen's secrets, and was very discouraged." It is highly likely that total mental breakdown during the long period of continued stress is avoided only by the insistence on work and activity. The Zennists, expectedly, have their own rationale for the work discipline of the *Zendo*: they proclaim the need for muscular activity as a remedy for the dullness of mind that may arise from the habit of meditating, and avow that this dullness of mind is very apt to result from the Zen training.

Satori is the final critical collapse under the accumulative pressures of stress. The Zennists understand it

as a mental catastrophe, but only in the sense that a piling up of intellectual frustration leads to the crumbling of the edifice of logical thought. *Satori* is the new vista that one sees with his whole being after having exhausted all attempts to master the *koan*. The acquiring of a new viewpoint is actually a new religious birth. Severance from the old reality framework must be complete. The Zennists recognize that there can be either "too much" or "not enough" *satori*, which seems to testify to the fact that a lukewarm reform is as undesirable as total mental collapse. The mental upheaval must be complete, but it must be a new birth and not a disintegration.

The descriptions of pre-*satori* and *satori* states by the masters themselves show the psychotic states and sensations into which the novice is plunged by his *koan* dilemma, the physical tortures, and the deprivations. There is only one way to relieve such stress: when it becomes intolerable, the ego must yield. The adaptation is in essence a resynthesis: the disciple effects his own conversion by adopting the symbolic framework of the master. Giving up the struggle brings the first taste of peace and harmony to the tortured novice.

Koho gives an account of his mental strain in wrestling with this question posed by his master Setsugan: "All things return to the One, but where does this One return?"

My attention was so rigidly fixed on that that I neglected sleeping, forgot to eat, and did not distinguish east from west, nor morning from night . . . whether I talked or kept silent, my whole existence was wrapt up

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with the question "Where does this One return?" . . . It was like being screwed up or glued. . . . Though I was in the midst of a crowd or congregation I felt as if I were all by myself. . . . Like an idiot, like an imbecile, six days and nights thus elapsed when I entered the Shrine with the rest, reciting the Sutras, and happened to raise my head and looked at the verse by Goso. ["One hundred years—thirty-six thousand morns, this same old fellow moveth on for ever!"] This made me all of a sudden awake from the spell, and the meaning of, 'Who carries this lifeless corpse of yours?' burst upon me. . . . I felt as if this boundless space were broken up into pieces, and the great earth were altogether levelled away. I forgot myself, I forgot the world, it was like one mirror reflecting another. I tried several *koan* in my mind and found them so transparently clear.¹

Hakuin, the Japanese master, recounts his struggle with the famous Joshu's "Mu" *koan*:

I did not sleep days and nights, forgot both eating and lying down, when quite abruptly a great mental fixation took place.² . . . There was no going forward, no slipping backward; I was like an idiot, like an imbecile, and there was nothing but "Joshu's Mu." Though I attended the lectures by the master, they sounded like a discussion going on somewhere in a dis-

¹ Why does the insurmountably puzzling *koan* suddenly become clear? Probably because the attempt at logical solution is abandoned. Viewed from the standpoint of transcendental Universal Becoming, the questions posed by the various *koan* reflect a petty daily care—a preoccupation limited to one life, to one moment in eons of time. Having accepted and understood the new metaphysical values, the disciple no longer deems the *koan* worthy of preoccupation. See discussion of Zen cosmology in Chapter Six.

² Notice the additional food and sleep deprivation stresses prior to *satori* in these two accounts. This "great mental fixation" or *tai-i* is a state in which concentration is brought to the highest pitch.

tant hall, many yards away. Sometimes my sensation was that of one flying in the air. Several days passed in this state, when one evening a temple-bell struck which upset the whole thing. It was like . . . pulling down a house made of jade . . . I called out loudly, "How wondrous! How wondrous!" There is no birth-and-death from which one has to escape, nor is there any supreme knowledge [*Bodhi*] after which one has to strive.

It is even more wondrous that these psychotic episodes find such ready rationalization in the *satori*.

Satori Without the Koan: Rebirth Through the Disciplines of Archery and Swordsmanship

The *Zendo* is a forcing house of extreme persuasion: even Zen's promoters in the West have difficulty describing these coercive goings on in romantic terms. This is less so with the reputedly "artistic" disciplines of archery, swordsmanship, and flower arrangement, which are considered to reflect the ultimate in the Oriental sense of tranquil self-cultivation. The harried Westerner is offered these disciplines as models for self-domination, for withdrawal from ulcerating mundane preoccupations, and perhaps even for contact with an undreamed-of source of spiritual strength and beauty. In these disciplines there is no *koan*, no sustained milieu control or physical coercion. Ostensibly, the disciple practices an art form under the tutelage of a disinterested master; and by mastering the technique—admittedly arduous—he emerges with the incommunicable secret of the ages. What is less apparent and needs closer examination is that these studies are not primarily vehicles for mystical contact with cosmic essence, but rather two-person dominance-submission

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dramas, played out in terms of the most outrageously proselytizing authoritarian therapy.

Eugen Herrigel's extremely sensitive and honest account of his six-year training in Zen archery (1) has done a good deal to distort critical perspective, basically because of its poetic and mysterious qualities. It also unwittingly provides a very good description of the technique and psychological undertones of a dominance-submission conversion—a technique at which the Zen master is easily the equal of any scientifically-trained support therapist.

Herrigel was idealistically eager to learn Zen, and his readiness to be impressed with the authoritarian figure of the master paralleled that of the Japanese novice. The Japanese tradition is to hold the master in higher respect than one's own father, and accord him unquestioning obedience. Confucius has a saying that a student faced with the choice of saving his teacher or his father from a burning house must choose the teacher. In Confucian tradition, the father was considered to have sired a man's body; but only the teacher could impart his spirit. Once apprenticed to a master, the novice expects that the highest good will accrue to him. For the Japanese, failure to progress in learning the Zen skill has an additional guilt factor. A particularly sacred relationship is felt to exist between master and pupil, because the master becomes responsible for the *karma* (the Buddhist "error," "illusion," "appetite," "attachment") of the pupil. The pupil's blunders, and his failure to learn, therefore literally load the master with spiritual demerits which he will have to work out as *karma* during this life and subsequent reincarnations—one is reincarnated because

there is still bad *karma* to be worked out. (This is not unlike the parent's accepting the sins of the child in Judaism, before ritual assumption of adulthood at thirteen.) The peculiar intensity of the pupil's anxiety as he fails to make progress is thus explained: he is affecting the master adversely. It is small wonder that with this ideal indigenous dominance-submission definition of roles, the master did not at first want to take Herrigel—a European—as a pupil.

Herrigel gives as his explanation for wanting to learn Zen archery the fact that even as a student he had been preoccupied with mysticism, and longed to learn its secrets. He felt ready "to go to any length if only there were some hope of . . . getting a bit nearer to Zen," and he "begged" a colleague to enter his name with the colleague's former teacher, the celebrated master Kenzo Awa.

Herrigel's high motivation was tested in a technique reminiscent of *Zendo* testing of a novice's zealotry to undertake training: the master at first refused his request, and accepted ultimately only when he was convinced of Herrigel's genuine desire.

The stress begins at the very start of the discipline: the usual method of holding and pulling the bow

. . . caused my hands to start trembling after a few moments, and my breathing became more and more laboured. Nor did this get any better during the weeks that followed.

Herrigel's difficulty in drawing the bow was attributed by the master, after some weeks, to improper breathing:

I cannot think back to those days without recalling, over and over again, how difficult I found it, in the

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beginning, to get my breathing to work out right. Though I breathed in technically the right way, whenever I tried to keep my arm and shoulder muscles relaxed while drawing the bow the muscles of my legs stiffened all the more violently.

Occasionally, psychological stress was reinforced by physical pain:

Often the Master had no alternative but to pounce quick as lightning on one of my leg muscles and press it in a particularly sensitive spot.

Eventually, Herrigel's breathing improved:

I learned to lose myself so effortlessly in the breathing that I sometimes had the feeling that I myself was not breathing but . . . being breathed.

Herrigel himself was curious as to why the master had looked "on so long at my futile efforts to draw the bow 'spiritually' " and had not insisted on the correct breathing right at the start. The answer came from his colleague, and reflects the formation of the dominance-submission pattern—the master alone had the secret of proper performance and success:

"You had to suffer shipwreck through your own efforts before you were ready to seize the lifebelt he threw you."

Thus, effortless drawing of the bow took a full year.¹

¹ The question will occur to the reader as to what would happen if a crack archer were to undertake the discipline—he would obviously have no difficulty in drawing the bow and hitting the target. Perhaps not; but he would not get a chance to hit the target. At the

The loosing of the arrow in the proper manner was the next step. This was the greatest, most anxiety-producing hurdle that Herrigel encountered:

I noticed that I could not open the right hand, and particularly the finger gripping the thumb, without exertion. The result was a jerk at the moment of release, so that the arrow wobbled. Still less was I capable of cushioning the suddenly freed hand. The Master continued undeterred to demonstrate the correct loose; undeterred I sought to do like him—with the sole result that I grew more uncertain than ever.

Much to Herrigel's surprise, the master appeared less "horrified" by his failure than he was himself. He was simply counseled not to open his hand "on purpose," to let the shot go off by itself.

There followed weeks and months of fruitless practice. I could take my standard again and again from the way the Master shot, see with my own eyes the nature of the correct loose; but not a single one succeeded. If, waiting in vain for the shot, I gave way to the tension because it began to be unendurable, then my hands were slowly pulled together, and the shot came to nothing. If I grimly resisted the tension till I was gasping for breath, I could only do so by calling on the arm and shoulder muscles for aid. I then stood there immobilized

beginning of the training there is no target, and no aiming, only an insistence upon proper drawing of the bow—the correctness of which only the master can judge. Thus, in Herrigel's own words, the bow and arrow are not the goal—they are only pretexts for attaining the goal, much as resolution of the *koan* is only a vehicle, and not an end in itself. Hitting the target without undergoing the methodical master-discipline interaction would only be the work of a "trickster," and not a Zen archer—for the primacy of the method as a means to an end other than skill in archery is constantly insisted upon.

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—like a statue, mocked the Master—but tense, and my relaxedness was gone.¹

Thus, an apparently simple process—really ridiculously simple on appearance—becomes an insurmountable obstacle that requires months and years of repetitive practice. The consequent infantilization is quite natural.

Herrigel once in a session with the master sought an explanation of his difficulties. The master insisted on the purposelessness of the process, the need for a complete unself-consciousness:

“The right art,” cried the Master, “is purposeless, aimless! . . . What stands in your way is that you have a much too wilful will.”²

Herrigel betrays his emotional investment in the training:

But you yourself have told me often enough that archery is not a pastime, not a purposeless game, but a matter of life and death!

To which the master replies, mysteriously:

“I stand by that. We master archers say: ‘One shot—one life.’ What this means, you cannot yet understand.”

“So I must become purposeless—on purpose?” I heard myself say.

“No pupil has ever asked me that, so I don’t know the right answer.”

This conversation was the first intimate talk Herri-

¹ Notice Herrigel’s choice for the parent figure’s verb.

² Compare the thought reform technique: the emphasis shifts from the intellectual grasp of objective fact to the need for an *emotional* reorientation of the individual himself.

gel had had since commencing his training, and he remarks that it puzzled him exceedingly. Precisely. The *koan*-like quality of the above excerpts shows that the conversation was intended to puzzle, and not to clarify. But this does not imply any intentional duplicity on the part of the master—It merely means that he believed that in that stage of his pupil's training, he was still too "unenlightened" to cope with the new world gradually being revealed to him, and that it was for him best to remain in a stage of puzzlement so that he could see the futility and inapplicability of his present frame of reference for dealing with the new world.

The group as a whole was ahead of Herrigel in training, and set a standard which contributed to his feeling of backwardness and aloneness:

How often I had silently envied all those pupils of the Master who, like children, let him take them by the hand and lead them.

To Herrigel's disappointment, the training continued, and there was no change in emphasis after his consultation with the master:

. . . despite all my efforts every shot miscarried . . . botched, wobbling.

As continued inability to make headway with the *koan* leads to ceaseless preoccupation with it, so Herrigel's inability to loose a smooth shot plunged him deeper into an obsession with archery. The master responded appropriately:

"When you come to the lessons in the future," he warned us, "you must collect yourselves on your way here. . . . Walk past everything without noticing it, as

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if there were only one thing in the world that is important and real, and that is archery!"

The passage of time and Herrigel's continued failures, as contrasted with the master's ever effortless demonstrations, plus the advanced showing of the majority of the group, gradually brought the expected result. To explain this contrast, and to explain also his own initial success—after much effort—Herrigel had to adopt the master's frame of reference. When one's traditional reality framework no longer explains what one is experiencing, the only alternative is to adopt a new mode that seems to fit. One verifies the correctness of this new mode by the progress one makes as an archer; the explanations offered by the master for one's successes must be the real basis for that success. There is no attempt made to find a more empirical explanation for one's increasing adeptness—the mystical framework is uncritically accepted. (All the more so—as we shall see in the discussion of the trance—because one actually seems to be experiencing "selflessness" and mystic "unity" as adeptness at the self-induced trance increases.) Approval by the master means success, and success confirms the rightness of the master's knowledge:

For the performance of these exercises it is sufficient that the pupil should . . . in some cases merely guess, what is demanded of him. Hence there is no need to conceptualize the distinctions which are traditionally expressed in images.¹

¹ An acute sensitivity to interpersonal—rather than external—reality is cultivated; one regresses to infantile empathetic identifications with the parent figure. One intuits what his conduct should be before the parental response, so that condemnatory reactions are minimized.

The images, uniformly, are phrasings of mystic unity: "The bow when drawn contains the All"; "The top of the bow touches heaven and the bottom, earth"; "If it is not released smoothly the continuity is broken," and so forth.

If the shot is to be loosed right, the physical loosening must now be continual in a mental and spiritual loosening.

Successful execution of the discipline is the road to enlightenment; one becomes "like an Awakened One who lives and works in the primordial state."

This frame of reference is adopted as a relief from the stress of subjection to an alien world of meaning. It is the only frame of reference which had meaning for Herrigel as an explanation of the activity he was engaged in. Since it was adopted from the master, Herrigel had to get away from the domination of the master's reality—he had to disengage from the activity both as action and as value commitment, in order to be able to consider the applicability of another set of descriptive ideas.

Indeed, the master dominates the scene:

Steep is the way to mastery. Often nothing keeps the pupil on the move but his faith in his teacher, whose mastery is now beginning to dawn on him . . . he [the master] convinces by his mere presence.

Thus, the identification becomes progressively more complete—the master possesses all the secrets, and there is no turning back into the old value system.

The identification with the master is the beginning of the conversion, the rebirth; one actually becomes a

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devotee in a cause, using the introject of the master as an embodiment of the value system to be emulated.

Wherever his way may take him, the pupil, though he may lose sight of his teacher, can never forget him. With a gratitude as great as the uncritical veneration of the beginner, as strong as the saving faith of the artist, he now takes his Master's place, ready for any sacrifice.

The gratitude of personal devotion may outweigh the more philosophical aspects of the crusade, for it is a crusade: the service of Enlightenment, the opening of Buddha Nature to the beclouded, overly-cerebrated, and over-individuated world.

The discipline continued as before. The shot did not yet "fall" of its own accord, Herrigel still had to loose it on purpose:

All this obstinate failure depressed me all the more since I had already passed my third year of instruction. I will not deny that I spent many gloomy hours wondering whether I could justify this waste of time, which seemed to bear no conceivable relationship to anything I had learned and experienced so far.

The "former self" was not yet dead: Herrigel was still making critical comparisons with his former modes of experience. But the obsession deepened; day in and day out, he concentrated on loosing the shot. This, again, shows that the *koan* is not necessary for a *koan*-like result to be attained.

Continued frustration despite the most intense of efforts leads to mounting anxiety, and the failure became obsessive—so obsessive, in fact, that at this juncture Herrigel tried a trick—a purposeful loosing of the shot by consciously easing the pressure of the

fingers on the thumb. The master, watching, was not taken in by this "purposeful effortlessness," and the result was that Herrigel was dismissed as a pupil. Only after considerable pleading, done with Herrigel's friend Komachiya as intermediary, did the master consent to continue the lessons. Herrigel's comment is revealing:

If profound shame had not cured me, the Master's behavior would certainly have done so. He did not mention the incident by so much as a word.¹

His pleading for re-admission and his frank expression of shame attest to the beginning of his final submission. His own account bears this out: the passage of weeks with still no advance no longer troubled him:

I discovered that this did not disturb me in the least. . . . Whether I learned the art or not, whether I experienced what the Master meant by "It" or not, whether I found the way to Zen or not—all this suddenly seemed to have become so remote, so indifferent, that it no longer troubled me.

Herrigel thus arrived at the stage of total, carefree dependence. He now wanted to confide in the master:

Several times I made up my mind to confide in the Master, but when I stood before him I lost courage: I was convinced that I should never hear anything but the monotonous answer: "Don't ask, practice!"²

¹ Shame and guilt are felt toward the parental figure.

² As in all subjection to a new value system, internalization of the new norms is part of a process that aims toward a minimization of condemnatory responses—the "trainee" tries to make himself less vulnerable to anticipated retaliation. Herrigel seems to have submitted, and in part to have internalized the new norms, but he was not yet confident of his performance, since the master had not given him final approval.

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So, the pupil stopped asking, and would have liked to stop practicing too, except for the fact that, as Herrigel candidly admits: “. . . the Master held me inexorably in his grip.”

The submission approached completeness:

I lived from one day to the next, did my professional work as best I might, and in the end ceased to bemoan the fact that all my efforts of the last few years had become meaningless.

And, as expected, submission to the authority figure and the new reality system brings the first sign of rebirth:

Then, one day, after a shot, the Master made a deep bow and broke off the lesson, “Just then It shot!” he cried, as I stared at him bewildered. And when I at last understood what he meant I couldn’t suppress a sudden whoop of delight.

Here was Herrigel’s first brief *satori*, and one might expect that he should have been aware of it, since ostensibly, a remarkable insight into the nature of things is the goal of all Zen training. But in fact, the *satori* rebirth is not a new insight, or any immediate change in functioning. Rather, it is the moment of conversion, the culminating point in the internalization of a new value system. Given a reasonably submissive conduct on the part of the pupil, a cessation of struggle against the master and his beliefs, the master could probably use any moment he chose as a signal of *satori*. This is strikingly illustrated by the Japanese master Hakuin’s account of his own *satori*.

After Hakuin had been soundly roughed up in two successive *sanzen*, he grew desperate and thought of leaving the master altogether. Then, he saw something in town which opened his eyes to Zen truth. The master spotted his joy upon entering the gate, recognized that something had happened, and called to Hakuin:

“What good news have you brought home today? Come right in, be quick, quick!” Hakuin then told him all about what he had gone through during the day. The master tenderly stroked him on the back and said, “You have it now, you have it at last!”

The extreme and apparently simple submissiveness of the disciple, and the patent paternalism of the master are striking in this account. There is no other way to interpret the master’s communication to his pupil to the effect that he has *satori* except as a response to an evidently total submissiveness. Of course, it is possible too that the need for tenderness, after Hakuin’s previous treatment, was obvious to the master—an encouragement necessary to continue his hold on the pupil.

Also, Herrigel’s failure to suspect his own *satori* follows from the loosing of the arrow—a smooth shot had to go off. His complete obliviousness to this after over three years of unrelenting, anxiety-producing effort aimed at precisely this limited goal suggests that he was in a state of limited sensory awareness consequent upon some kind of self-induced trance. By dimming his own purposeful striving, the pupil effects a shot in perfect, unconscious form. Herrigel himself was ap-

propriately oblivious to the possible causal factors at work:

. . . how it came about that my tightly closed right hand suddenly flew back wide open, I could not explain then and I can not explain to-day.

The occurrence of *satori*, then, is a combination of two interdependent factors: termination of the struggle against the new reality framework; and enough adeptness at a self-induced trance to permit effortless and unself-conscious manipulation of the particular Zen skill being learned.

Success in loosing the arrow led to the next step in training, introduced for the first time into the process: the attempt to hit a target. Explanations of Herrigel's failure to get the arrows up to the target are given by the master, as usual, in mystical, spiritual terms: "Your arrows do not carry . . . because they do not reach far enough spiritually."

The new obstacle, for the pupil, was his attempt to understand—and failure to do so—how, without really aiming, and with half-closed eyes, the master succeeds in hitting the target:

I think I understand what you mean by the real, inner goal which ought to be hit. But how it happens that the outer goal, the disc of paper, is hit without the archer's taking aim, and that the hits are only outward confirmations of inner events—that correspondence is beyond me.

To the master, Herrigel's attempts at causal understanding, like logical attempts to unravel the *koan*, do

not fit a framework which depends on belief and inference, imagery and analogy:

"You are under an illusion," said the Master after a while [evidently Herrigel was given time within which to hear the echo of his own "superficial verbalization"], "if you imagine that even a rough understanding of these dark connections would help you. These are processes which are beyond the reach of understanding."

And again, like a *koan*, the master's explanations do not admit of logical comprehension:

Much as this . . . occupied my thoughts . . . I could not of course think it to a satisfactory conclusion.

The sequence leading to Herrigel's ultimate and total *satori* follows this preoccupation. This culmination of the mechanics of a total conversion came after five years of continuous effort, frustration, and anxiety. The final conversion began with a conversation with the master, wherein Herrigel recounted what proved to be, subsequently, his final reservation:

Is it not at least conceivable that after all your years of practice you involuntarily raise the bow and arrow with the certainty of a sleepwalker, so that, although you do not consciously take aim when drawing it, you must hit the target—simply cannot fail to hit it?

To which the master, "long accustomed," as Herrigel puts it, to his "tiresome questions," answers (again, after a short silence):

"I do not deny . . . that there may be something in what you say. I do stand facing the goal in such a way

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that I am bound to see it, even if I do not intentionally turn my gaze in that direction. On the other hand, I know that this seeing is not enough, decides nothing, explains nothing, for I see the goal as though I did not see it."

"Then you ought to be able to hit it blindfolded," I jerked out.

The master turned on me a glance which made me fear that I had insulted him and then said: "Come to see me this evening."

That evening, at the master's home, they drank tea in total silence; then followed a ceremonious demonstration by the master in the practice hall. The position of the target was roughly marked at the master's request with only one thin taper:

It was so dark that I could not even see its [the target's] outlines, and if the tiny flame of the taper had not been there, I might perhaps have guessed the position of the target, though I could not have made it out with any precision.

The master, in perfect form, loosed two arrows from the bright side of the practice hall in the direction of the dimly lit target. Herrigel was told to fetch the arrows, both of which sounded like hits, only to discover, to his amazement:

... that the first arrow was lodged full in the middle of the black, while the second arrow had splintered the butt of the first and ploughed through the shaft before embedding itself beside it. I did not dare pull the arrows out separately, but carried them back together with the target.

For the master, the demonstration could not have been more natural. He surveyed the arrows critically:

"The first shot," he then said, "was no great feat, you will think, because after all these years I am so familiar with my target-stand that I must know even in pitch darkness where the target is. That may be, and I won't try to pretend otherwise. But the second arrow which hit the first—what do you make of that? I at any rate know that it is not 'I' who must be given credit for this shot. 'It' shot and 'It' made the hit."

The convincing power of this demonstration had the expected effect on the pupil; Herrigel was plunged, once and for all, into total, uncritical acceptance of the new reality framework:

The Master had evidently hit me too, with both arrows: as though transformed over night, I no longer succumbed to the temptation of worrying about my arrows and what happened to them.

Indeed, the demonstration so convincingly follows from the master's habitual verbalizations that the only logical explanation seems in fact to be the spiritual, mystical one.

I think, however, that we may be permitted a more rational interpretation of this seemingly astounding proof of the co-operation of a spiritual power in an archery exercise. The sequence begins with the Herrigel statement, "Then you ought to be able to hit it blind-folded," which he admits he "jerked out." In other words, it was said with a certain awesome, hopeful enthusiasm about the master's potential power. The quick glance which the master turned on him demon-

strates how competent a Zen master he was, ever alert for the slightest clue about the most decisive way to wean the disciple from his last doubts about the new value system. This need not imply any "cunning" on the part of the master—but simply a belief that any demonstration that, by addressing itself to Herrigel's particular susceptibility would overcome his last doubt, would serve, in Buddhist terminology, the interest of "all-encompassing Truth" over fragmented consciousness. Herrigel interpreted the master's glance as a possible expression of affront at his comment, which is indicative both of the pupil's extreme susceptibility to the master's authoritarian disapproval, and of the ever present Occidental inability to "read" the Oriental face. The quick glance very likely betrayed the quick idea which crossed the master's mind.

On the part of the master, there must have been a certain premeditation combined with trust. He could not possibly have foreseen the two arrows merging on target. But he already knew that Herrigel would be impressed by his hitting the target at all, "blindfolded." For Herrigel, the fact that the master was not blindfolded seems to have been compensated for by the single taper in the magical dark hall. The master had only, really, to put two shots in the black, which he had already admitted he could do, to make a deep impression on Herrigel—an impression which, if it did not produce final *satori*, would at least have been another sound step in that direction. The master might then have said something like, "You see, they are both in the black, but my long experience still does not explain it"; or, he could use the same kind of "on the

other hand" statement that he made when Herrigel first broached the subject.

But, his premeditations must have been combined with trust—he must have trusted that something significant would happen that would provide an unusually convincing demonstration. As a practicing Zennist master, he believed that "It" shoots, and "It" hits—and, if he himself were properly spiritual, the perfect shots would be shot by "It." Undoubtedly, however, he was prepared, in the event that he himself (and not "It") failed: a less spectacular demonstration by "It" would simply necessitate a less spectacular explanation by him. The demonstration had to be staged because of Herrigel's particular "jerked out" enthusiasm; it was tailored to the stage of his "mind's maturity"—that is, Herrigel's readiness to "drop like a ripe fruit" if he was faced with a final convincing demonstration of the new value system in action.

Finally, why did both arrows lodge in the black, one hitting the butt of the other? The master himself did not pretend that, after his years of practice, one arrow in the black represented any special feat of skill—and so there is no special reason to attribute any super-human guidance to two arrows, unless one chooses to do so.

Herrigel's "transformation" meant that he no longer worried about his arrows hitting the target; he was content to perform with complete trust in the master. Just as, in practicing breathing, he had ceased worrying about loosing the shot, now he paid no attention to where his arrows went.

Aided by a practiced detachment achieved by breath-

ing and concentration, *satori* is really an acceptance rather than an experience. It is at this point that the master-disciple relationship takes on a marked new quality: conversation and explanation take place entirely in the terms of the new communication system. There is no longer any reservation about the disciple's ability to understand "dark connections"—he has been reborn into the new world view, and perfect understanding is now his. Thus, the training is now carried on in terms of "immediate communication," *i.e.*, transference of the spirit of the art from the master directly to his pupils:

There was another form of help which the Master communicated to us at that time, and which he likewise spoke of as immediate transference of the spirit. If I had been continually shooting badly, the Master gave a few shots with my bow. The improvement was startling: it was as if the bow let itself be drawn differently, more willingly, more understandingly.

More can be revealed to the initiate; the master can now speak more directly about the esoterics of spirituality and mystic oneness.

But Herrigel's training was not quite over; there remained one important hurdle. Approved performance in the new value system carries with it the danger of self-assertion; the new-found ego strength must be free of self-satisfied smugness so that the individual functions as part of a value system, and not as a liberated but autonomous agent. Zennists place special emphasis on this crucial point in the training, and Herrigel's account indicates it was a particularly trying

time. Any demonstration by Herrigel of satisfaction in his hard won skill and correct performance was fiercely censured by the master:

. . . if ever the least flicker of satisfaction showed in my face the Master turned on me with unwonted fierceness. "What are you thinking of?" he would cry. "You know already that you should not grieve over bad shots; learn now not to rejoice over the good ones. . . . This, too, you must practice unceasingly—you cannot conceive how important it is."

Thus, the attainments of the self are absorbed into the values of the new belief: the strength of ego accepts the demands of superego. This is the crucial result of any reform or therapy.

One day, after a particularly good shot, the master asked his pupil if he now understood what was meant by "It shoots," and "It hits." Herrigel's reply is informative—less as a description of his understanding, than as a profession of faith demonstrating full command of the symbolism of the new value system:

I'm afraid I don't understand anything more at all, . . . even the simplest things have got in a muddle. Is it "I" who draws the bow, or is it the bow that draws me into the state of highest tension? Do "I" hit the goal, or does the goal hit me? . . . Bow, arrow, goal, and ego, all melt into one another, so that I can no longer separate them. And even the need to separate has gone. For as soon as I take the bow and shoot, everything becomes so clear and straightforward and so ridiculously simple.

The master has fashioned not only a convert but also a peer: "Now at last," the master broke in, "the bow-string has cut right through you."

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Herrigel's training ended with the passing of a public test and the awarding of a diploma. By his own admission, communication was now on a full peer basis:

From then on the lessons assumed a new face. Contenting himself with a few practice shots, the Master went on to expound the "Great Doctrine" in relation to the art of archery, and to adapt it to the stage we had reached. Although he dealt in mysterious images and dark comparisons, the meagrest hints were sufficient for us to understand what it was about.¹

But the esoteric view of reality so painfully acquired in the master-disciple relationship is the property only of initiates. The rebirth has been into a special value system, and not into the one of the world at large. At the end of the training, Herrigel is cautioned by the master that his view of reality, his conversion, will now set him off from others:

I must only warn you of one thing. You have become a different person in the course of these years . . . you will feel it very strongly when you meet your friends and acquaintances again in your own country: things will no longer harmonize as before. You will see with other eyes and measure with other measures. It has happened to us too, and it happens to all who are touched by the spirit of this art.

In sum, the entire society has not been reformed. Swordsmanship is identical in essentials with arch-

¹ This communication via the merest hints testifies to the long-continued closeness and intense emotional ties of the master-disciple experience. Commonly experienced contexts of meaning in secretive and close ingroups gives rise not only to extreme sensitivity to communicated meanings, but even to new sublanguages and argots.

ery. The beginner must also be made self-conscious, and he must lose his self-confidence as soon as he starts the lessons. Again, the methodical technique of instilling self-consciousness replaces the function of the *koan* as a challenge to the novice's composure. The beginner, using the sword quite naturally, simply parries when his opponent thrusts. In Zen terms, he is free of the "stopping" attitude of mind—the tendency to arrest his attention at some particular point in the sword play. But the disciple does not long remain free of this "stopping" attitude. One of the first steps in the discipline is to inculcate it, so the pupil loses his self-confidence. This is the equivalent in archery of not allowing the beginner to shoot at any target, but making him "stop" at drawing the bow. He is made self-conscious about it. The function of the *koan* is fulfilled at this point. After losing his confidence, the disciple is worse off than before; and instead of gaining any naturalness initially, he loses whatever ease of performance he had to begin with. After many years of practice he eventually regains the confidence and naturalness appropriate to proper performance. But the return to his former self-confidence is bought at a price: submission to the master's psychological dominance, and the acceptance of his value system in order to explain the frustrations which the master himself brings about. The cure is supplied with the disease.

Flower Arrangement: Variations on the Same Theme

"Flower arrangement" releases such a flood of sweet, innocuous sentiment that it would seem churlish to bring this esthetic Zen technique up for review; but

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there is little in it that is different from the basic dominance-submission theme of archery. Herrigel's wife, Gusty, wrote an account of her training that again demonstrates the Zen process (2): it is not what the pupil does to the flowers that counts, but what the master-pupil relationship does to the pupil. As in archery and swordsmanship, the secondary nature of the skill is apparent throughout. The process aims to change the individual, rather than to delight him with a heart-catching arrangement of flowers.

Here, too, the achievement of self-abnegation precedes the adoption of the new value system. The use of silence—that important technical aid in inducing regression—begins with the very first lesson. The patient is allowed to hear her own superficial verbalizations, and is denied answers to precisely those questions she seeks to clarify: the entire lesson passes with hardly the use of a word; the master seems not to hear her questions, and instead, she is given certain “instructions” on which to meditate. As in archery, everything the master demonstrates seems so ridiculously simple. Mrs. Herrigel had already practiced flower arrangement, and looked forward to learning the skill in just a few lessons; but, as in every Zen skill, the initial aim of her master was to do away with his pupil's composure and self-confidence. Her first and most simple floral attempt was thoroughly unsatisfactory. When the moment came for the master to examine her work, he considered it attentively, and inscrutably; then, without saying a word, he took the branches from the vase.

This direct and thorough initial disapproval had its

desired effect. The pupil comments on her feeling of estrangement in an interesting revelation of her chagrin at not being treated in an adult manner.

At first I was dumbfounded in the face of these strange proceedings. But, as my intention was to attain the deepest understanding I simply nodded my head in silence. Nevertheless, this way of acting, without giving any explanation seemed to contradict the marked politeness of the Master.

Because she had uncritically accepted the master's "deepest understanding," the apparent contradiction between his actions and his polite manner could mean only one thing: she herself was gravely at fault. Not only was her first composition totally unsatisfactory, but the master didn't even tell her what he expected of her. Again there is the gradient nature of therapy, the gradual revelation of an entirely unconventional ethic to which the student must conform.

To avoid a duplication of this sharp disapproval, Mrs. Herrigel applied herself in anticipation of the next lesson. But through several lessons her work was still not really appreciated; and in the face of the master's assurance and superiority, she came more and more to doubt the value of her actions. In her own words, she felt it was necessary to render herself as small as possible, to reduce herself to zero.

The pupil then decided to observe as attentively as possible the secret of a successful arrangement, but the lesson ended before she realized it. (The lessons were of variable length at the master's discretion, a perfect device for manipulating the pupil.) The abrupt

termination had the same effect as the pupil's ejection from the master's room during the monastic *sanzen*: not only has he obviously done wrong in his views on the *koan*, but he is left in anxiety because he has no clue as to why. Furthermore, the abrupt ending left Mrs. Herrigel no chance to set the situation aright, or to try again. She had to retire and carry with her the master's disapproval until the next lesson.

In flower arranging, the master has sole power of approval or disapproval of the pupil's arrangement, according to standards of which the disciple is totally ignorant. When the pupil considers her arrangement finished, she presents her work to the master. There is no question about who is the parent and who is the approval-seeking child. The master examines the work brought to him, more often than not without saying a word. He may make a gesture of disapproval, shift a stem, or otherwise correct a detail; or he may arrange the whole composition all over again. Whatever his judgment of the work, petulant or noncommittal, the pupil thanks him, bowing, and goes back to her place. It remains for the pupil to decode this nonverbal communication, in the same way that the dependent child must attune—in order to minimize condemnatory responses and gain approval and even survival—to the merest hint of the mood of his erratic, censorious parent. Since the master alone possesses the criteria, which are never revealed to the student, the latter's study of the arrangement will never reveal the error. The master's explanations of arranging are never in terms of the physical arrangement of the flowers, but always in mystical, spiritual terms. The student must

depend entirely upon the master's judgment, which is why the apprenticeship in this art is never over, even after years of exercise.

When the pupil does get approval of a design, the reason for its success is of course explained in terms of the new reality framework: one has "become selfless and allowed the inner self to find expression"; by the "proper use of visible form, one has penetrated to its invisible essence," and so on. Approval can come only after years of exercise, when the pupil has acquired the correct "mental disposition." When this condition has been met, then even the most simple realizations are approved by the master.

The master is indeed infallible, omnipotent:

What an impression of beauty is conveyed by the calm and ease of the Master's movements, when a new composition is born within his hands.

"The Master sees all." "Nothing escapes him." He is the "paternal friend as well as the counsellor in whom one has entire confidence." The master's power derives from his possession of the "ultimate knowledge," and the pupil who wishes initiation into this secret world of power must accept his conditions. There is nothing equivocal in Gusty Herrigel's understanding of the *quid pro quo*: the pupil consents to "begin like an infant and recognize that all ambition, all personal initiative is an obstacle that forbids entry. . . . One must decide to make himself very small and modest, to renounce his Self."

If this condition of total submission is not met, everything the pupil undertakes is wrong in the mas-

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ter's eyes. Only if the pupil accepts this necessary submission can he enter "creatively" into the discipline.

The Zen technique or skill is only subsidiary to a rebirth into a new view of reality. The Zennists make a distinction between mere "manual adeptness" at an art, and the "artistic intuition" which results from the Zen training alone. And this "intuition" can only be achieved by total submission to the master; without it even the manually adept remain "ignorant." Thus, not only is the Zen skill seemingly unimportant in itself, but one may justifiably wonder whether a samurai Zen swordsman was actually superior to a non-Zen trained swordsman—or if, indeed, his only superiority consisted in his greater detachment and willingness to die in the service of authority.

As with her husband, Mrs. Herrigel's acceptance of the master's reality framework led to adeptness at explanations in his vocabulary. In uniting "with the heart of the flowers" one unites with "the heart of the All." The proper spiritual attitude brings spontaneous, unconscious, and masterful action in flower arrangement. As in archery, the pupil must not be troubled by the slightest intention to perform well. Ego-striving and self-consciousness are effaced in a trusting submission to the magical omnipotence of the master. His criteria for performance as well as his symbolic vocabulary are unquestioningly accepted, and the rebirth is complete. In method and result, archery, swordsmanship, and flower arrangement are interchangeable.

3 The Zen Discipline as a Psychotherapeutic Process

THE fatal surrender of individuality is so patent in Zen that there should be little reason to have to dwell on the matter. However, some Western professionals, intent on bolstering favored therapeutic orientations or deeply held personal values, have seized upon certain Zen features and equated them with therapeutically authenticated phenomena like psychoanalytic "spontaneity," or with less empirically based ideas like existential *dasein*. Zen has acquired a good deal of respectability from having been equated with techniques derived from Western scientific rationalism. The question is, simply, are these comparisons valid?

It is worth examining the similarity between the Zen method and certain important psychoanalytic techniques and aims. In this chapter we will discuss Zen in terms of these analytic ideas: the frustration in the patient-therapist relationship, necessary to regression and ultimate cure; the resolution of ambivalence to persons in authority; the objectivity of the analyst,

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and the weaning of the patient from any taint of the analyst's influence or values; and the final freedom of the patient from a constricting life style, and from a distorted way of viewing life.

How do psychoanalysis and Zen treat these salient features of the therapeutic problem? There can be no doubt that Zen qualifies as a supportive psychotherapy; but it falls far short of meeting the value neutral standards of psychoanalysis.

In the first place, the basis for any therapy is a two-person relationship, in which a delicate balance must be maintained which will encourage the patient's participation, as well as to keep up the tempo of frustration required for continual self-examination. Thus, the psychoanalyst sees in the *koan* exercise a perfect analytic device: the pupil cannot tear himself away from it, even though it makes him increasingly bewildered and frustrated. As we saw, the therapeutic rationale behind this is that it creates regression in the face of stress. The individual tries to adapt to the new authority figure as he did to the parent, by trying to find out what he wants. Attempting to win him over in the face of insuperable frustration, the patient (disciple) runs through his gamut of time-tested reactions, patterns which were successful in the past. Even a trick will do, if only the forbidding figure can somehow be pleased. Herrigel, for instance, tried a trick release of the bow, which was, however, meant to please the master and not really to trick him.

In psychoanalysis, the patient soon finds that he in effect is not dealing with his parent, but with a new figure, and that this new authoritarian person has his

own set of demands and expectations. The patient finds that his old patterns do not work, and he is helped by the therapist to develop a new, more mature relatedness. The origin of his neurotic, constricting behavior is dug up from the past, and by free association the analyst helps the patient analyze the tyranny of his unconscious. It is immediately obvious that the *koan* cannot be used in this way. It may create the frustration necessary for regression; but the one thing that master and disciple do *not* do in Zen is communicate on the basis of symbols. The *koan*, in fact, acts to frustrate the very possibility of communication. Regression is thereby unrestrained, and the submission is complete as all defenses are abandoned. The psychotic flavor of reports of *satori* attests to a complete abandonment of ego integrity. It is obvious, therefore, that any similarity between psychoanalytic and *koan* frustration is entirely superficial.

But the implied similarities do not end here. In Zen's *mondos*, persons who have achieved *satori* are described, and their conduct is often alarmingly arbitrary and irresponsible. In some of these accounts the novice, with impunity, mocks or even hits the master. The psychoanalytically-trained eye sees in this change of functioning and new conduct the achievement of one of the goals of psychoanalytic therapy: a resolution of the patient's ambivalence.

Ambivalence is, of course, a fundamental phenomenon of human existence. The newborn infant is totally helpless and dependent for survival on an outside source of security and sustenance. It is imperative, if he is to survive, that he devise some means of ma-

nipulating this authority so it will cater to his needs. There is a precariousness in his utter dependence that the adult can only recapture in occasional moments of extreme despair. The infant identifies with the suckling figure, and develops ingratiating techniques aimed at keeping the mood of pleasurable sustenance and carefree safety as constant as possible. Any anger or abandon evidenced by the authoritarian figure is a threat of failure and death. But dependence for survival also carries with it a certain chagrin at any curb on freedom, individuation, or felt omnipotence. The infant is immersed in a controllable universe, and he wants to summon the moon by crooking his finger. Thus, ingratiation alternates with a certain hostility, which cannot be long-lived and must give way to attempts at conciliation. The cycle tends to perpetuate itself: the basic rhythm of the infantile ambivalence toward authority often still constricts the adult. An adult so bound will find his mature relationships still depend on the old unconscious habits; the infantile instantaneous probing for ingratiation, the assumption of a winning manner, the adjustment to the other person's rhythm stifle his spontaneity. He feels less than himself somehow, and a sense of childish impotence is accentuated by outbursts of hostility and aggression that he cannot control. The cycle between unconscious ingratiation and protest against dependence upon others for full realization of self is inexorable. Only by resolving it can he attain any degree of spontaneous action, so that the possibly destructive attitudes of others no longer pattern his own conduct. This freedom to relate to each person anew is the goal

of the psychoanalytic resolution of ambivalence, and it is perhaps natural that some psychotherapists should see in Zen irresponsibility the achievement of this goal.

In some *mondo* accounts the student slaps the master, and both laugh naturally and easily. One *mondo* which is held to reflect a perfect resolution of ambivalence is the following: the master holds a stick over the pupil's head and says, "If you say this stick is real, I will strike you with it. If you say this stick is not real, I will strike you with it. If you don't say anything I will strike you with it." To resolve this crushing frustration, the disciple can very easily seize the stick—a response which the Zen master might accept. The ambivalence would thus be resolved with a spontaneously shocking solution.

The necessity of shock in effecting personality change is generally recognized; psychoanalysis itself is a kind of shock treatment. (1) In revolt against superego restraints, and secure with his analyst, the entire past becomes a target for the patient, and all of its sacred symbols with it. In purging himself, the patient often utters lewd and sometimes blasphemous ideas. The utterance of shocking and blasphemous ideas in the Zen training convinces some psychoanalysts that a similar psychological process is at work.

Obviously, the new materials which previously were "shocking" that the ego can incorporate are culturally defined. In Freud's culture, when oedipal feelings and latent homosexuality were confronted and admitted, the individual achieved a sense of self-mastery. For the Oriental, burning a statue of the Buddha, or a *koan* reply that the Buddha is only "three pounds of flax"

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are conceivably equally contrary to childhood ideals. The ability to incorporate this blasphemy into the ego is a signal of adult maturity and freedom—a relief of previous superego restraints. (In fact, historically, Zen was condemned by other sects as dangerous to Japanese culture just because of its iconoclastic teachings.) Also, as was mentioned earlier, religious conversion as a psychological process is characterized by a new, more broadly permissive superego, as well as freedom to refocus strivings on a wider horizon than the one imparted by the parents.

Does this psychological shock treatment resolve ambivalence in Zen as it does in psychoanalysis? The question cannot be considered alone. In therapy the real problem is whether the aggressive revolt of the patient against symbols of authority means that he is also free of the authority of the analyst himself. One of the chief problems of therapy is the resolution of the transference artificially created in the analysis, and a clear-cut ending, especially in psychoanalysis, marks a successful cure. But there are many other ways in which the analysis can terminate. It can either be broken off violently, with the patient turning aggressively against the analyst. Or, it may simply “drag on,” with the patient’s dependence on the therapist continuing indefinitely. We would expect that the extremely authoritarian aspect of the Zen master, and the apparently deep transference would make for marked difficulties ending the novice’s dependence. And indeed this seems to be the case.

Some disciples never reach *satori*. It is one of the axioms of Zen that only an elite few attain *satori*; the

rest, most of the novices and trainees in the skills of Zen, are condemned to a continued dependency relationship that may extend over a lifetime. One is never perfect; perfectibility is a process of constant application under the master or under his symbol. Herrigel, for example, was very anxious about how he would get on without the master when he returned to Europe. The master, in releasing Herrigel from his personal hold, created a strong symbolic tie:

In farewell, and yet not in farewell, the Master handed me his best bow. "When you shoot with this bow you will feel the spirit of the Master near you. Give it not into the hands of the curious! And when you have passed beyond it, do not lay it up in remembrance! Destroy it, so that nothing remains but a heap of ashes."

The bow represents the master's continued presence: "Even if broad seas lie between us, I shall always be with you when you practice what you have learned." Thus there is no real weaning of the pupil; his dependence is sustained. Obviously, the gift of the bow in itself need not have undue binding force, any more than any other gift from a dear friend, for example. But this bow is personal, mysterious. One of the surest means of inducing regression, or of maintaining a level of childish relatedness, is to create a sense of awe by unusually striking stimuli; and the gift of the special, magical bow is all of a piece with the master-disciple manipulation, a fit gift to cap a conversion rebirth.

Furthermore, there is absolutely no indication in Zen of any equalitarian camaraderie between the pupil and the master after attainment of *satori*. Neither is

there any indication that the master will accept any aggressive disobedience on the part of the pupil. With both the Herrigels, the ending of their training was very formal; they had to pass a test in public, and they were awarded a diploma testifying to their skill. The masters themselves decided at which point their disciples were ready to receive their socially recognized *bona fides*.

There is nothing to indicate that the disciple by his own mature decision frees himself from the master. The master *might* permit the disciple's seizing of the stick to stand as a resolution of a thoroughly insupportable frustration. On the other hand, he might well respond by kicking him to the ground. His choice of what to do would undoubtedly depend on whether the disciple understood what was implied in his gesture of seizing: the futility of logical analysis, plus full acceptance of the master's Zen values.

Again, the psychoanalyst is justified in seeing in Zen a problem which he faces in analysis. The patient must not be allowed to interpret bits of acting out as real resolutions of his problems. When the disciple seizes the stick with which he is threatened, or when he slaps the master in answer to a question, it is evidently up to the master to determine whether this represents a true grasp of the new value system—that is, direct, uninhibited action in place of cerebration—or whether, on the other hand, it represents an aggressive acting out, an exercise of released impulses quite independent of any understanding of what they mean or should mean. But the important difference between Zen and psychoanalysis lies not in the patient's or disciple's

understanding of the new viewpoint, but rather, what the disciple's relationship is going to be to the proponent of that viewpoint even after he has correctly understood and related himself to it. This is crucial. In Zen, the acceptance of the slap, or of the aggressive act of the disciple does not mean the end of the master's authority, any more than the termination of Herrigel's training meant the end. Zen vaunts itself on the straightforward spontaneity that results from its training. But at best, resolution of the ambivalence to authority is bought at the price of introjecting the superego of that authority. One may be free from the domination of a particular mortal person—the master—but one has nonetheless become a convert to his value system. Again, in terms of a religious conversion, one simply replaces a more personally constraining superego by a more permissive, more symbolic one.

As we shall see more vividly later on, Zen is much less concerned with the individual than it is with fitting him neatly into society. The social benefits of reform therapy were made evident in the fearless performance and warrior ethics of the samurai class. They are even more evident in the present-day practice of flower arrangement. There is no danger of social isolation when one learns this skill. In Gusty Herrigel's group, there was an obvious emphasis on social morality. Pupils were enjoined to adapt voluntarily to daily existence. Once an art of the samurai, flower arrangement is today an art for women. Corporations, banks, industries make flower arrangement training available to their employees. This does not mean that flower arrangement has deteriorated from its stature as a once

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noble art of the virile yet somehow esthetic samurai. It simply means that its dominance-submission function is just as socially valuable today in taming the individual as it was in traditional Japan. One of the precepts of Mrs. Herrigel's master was: "Be submissive to authority and to parents."

The psychoanalyst should probably be the last to equate Zen and his own therapy, chiefly because in psychoanalysis it is to the individual himself that analysis is responsible, and not society. The psychoanalytic cure often leads the individual to forsake all the formerly significant figures in his social world: employer, friends, even parents.

Zen is, finally, credited with therapeutic achievements less psychoanalytically ambitious than the resolution of ambivalence. One of the most attractive features of Zen for the West is its reputed ability to rid the individual of excessive self-preoccupation. In the timelessness of the moment, in the simple buzzing of a fly's wings, the individual seizes the pulse of eternity. The achievement of the ability to forget oneself, the removal of the constant intrusion of the self in every perception, in even the most simple tasks, is one of Zen's claims. Zen insists on its pure perception of the beautifully bare moment:

How wondrously supernatural,
and how miraculous, this!
I draw water, and I carry fuel!

In psychoanalytic terms, the constant intrusion of the self is "narcissism," and its ablation is certainly a valid therapeutic aim. Curiously, one question that

never seems to be asked is whether the Zen pupil had an abnormal degree of narcissism in the first place. Unless one applies the Buddhist criterion that total negation of the self is a worthwhile life goal, a normal degree of self-esteem is desirable; in fact, it is necessary. The *koan* discipline seems to eliminate all traces of narcissistic identity, so that there may be a pathological breakdown of the self and of normal ego boundaries.

Zen feels justified in effecting this negation because, in Buddhist thinking, the self and the real world are only separable in imagination, or rather in the illusion of thought. The universe, in fact, is basically an illusion, obscuring the nature of the real. Some psychoanalysts think that the basic aim of the Zen training—to banish such illusion—is similar to the aim of psychoanalysis—to correct parataxic distortions of reality. Because he uses outmoded patterns of behavior from the past, the individual is prevented from judging each situation anew, and instead distorts it to conform to his own past, defensive understanding.

The best way to appraise the compatibility of the aims of Zen and psychoanalysis in relation to illusion and distortion is to take a closer look at the appeal of Zen to one Western analyst—Erich Fromm. Fromm's flirtation with Zen seems serious; but he has quite failed to understand the essential dominance-submission nature of the master-disciple relationship, and seems to believe that the disciple is free to leave training at any time—that the master really wants no hold on the novice. He believes that, like the analyst, the master has no personal axe to grind, and refrains from any interference in the life, ideas, or aims of the

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pupil. Neither of these observations has any basis in reality. The gradient nature of Zen—like that of any therapy—is in itself a firm hold. And at the conclusion of his Zen therapy, Herrigel, the liberated disciple, says:

With a gratitude as great as the uncritical veneration of the beginner . . . he now takes his Master's place, ready for any sacrifice.

The sacrifice is, of course, for the values that the master has inculcated.

For Fromm these objections, even though true, might be trifling. Even the subversion of logical thought by means of the *koan* he considers not a departure from psychoanalytic practice (2). He maintains, in fact, that as psychoanalysis itself developed, analysts discovered that effective insight was an experience of something new, rather than merely *thinking* something new. The psychoanalytic insight, in other words, cannot be formulated in words, even though it produces a changed person. Therefore, psychoanalysis and Zen are one in their basic indifference to conscious thought.

This equation comes easily to the psychoanalyst, because there is general recognition that the emotional catharsis in analysis has primacy over any "intellectual" understanding by the patient. But Fromm seems to disregard a vital distinction. Granted the primacy of the emotional catharsis in any effective therapeutic unrepression, the mind is still used in the accustomed logical, causal thinking way, to re-orient to that part of oneself which is functioning illogically. The catharsis is reinforced by self-understanding and self-aware-

ness. The dispelling of rationalizations about oneself is not the same as using the *koan* to abolish a way of relating to the entire world of external reality. A belief is inculcated in Zen by use of authoritarian, supportive methods; the novice is not simply trying to clarify his own functioning.¹

The psychoanalytic reorientation is a new orientation to one's own superego, effected, optimally, by understanding one's repressions and self-constraints. Repression is lifted and self-understanding created by examining unconscious materials, not by reorienting oneself to a new view of external reality. In psychoanalysis, the working through is rendered profitable because it is punctuated with insights that are purely cognitive—that appeal to the patient's *logic* as his defenses crumble: "You are acting this way because you think I am your father." The analyst appeals to the logic already possessed by the healthy part of the patient; and the individual is being communicated with, in part at least, in terms which he can understand. He has only to unlearn the distorted part of his reality apprehension.² In Zen too, an alternative reality

¹ This point will become clearer in the discussion of the central role of the trance in Zen (see Chapter 5). The sensations of the trance become points of orientation in the new view of reality. Herrigel was enjoined to re-enact the meditation and the bow-pulling daily, so as not to lose what he had learned, for external reality would be a constant threat to the special view he had adopted.

² Now, it can well be argued that the psychoanalyst sees parataxic distortion where the Zennist sees illusion; and one can take his choice. In other words, what reality is one obscuring with what distortion? After all, a logical, causal view of reality is not absolute. There is also a *paleologic*—a logic that insists on the equation of predicates rather than of subject, in order to establish an identity

is offered to explain the novice's emotional frustrations: "You cannot get off a good shot because you have too much will." But the difference is obvious and vital: Zen imposes a view of reality which for the individual to accept requires a total change in his logical, causal apprehension of the world. The stubbornness to change is "will," in the Buddhist sense of attachment to reality.

More aware than most of what is hidden behind the façade that is presented to the world, the psychoanalyst has reason to question the high-g geared intellectualism of the compulsive personality. Insisting on the priority of "total experience" over "'intellectual' insight," Fromm points out that Freud first believed that giving the patient the proper information was enough to cure him; and Fromm bemoans the fact that some analysts still have not abandoned this concept of intellection. Freud, it seems, never expressed himself with full clarity on the difference between intellectual insight and the total experience which occurs in working through. But the goal of psychoanalysis is just this total experience, claims Fromm, and not intellectual insight.

Freud's aim, apparently, was not ambitious enough. In his analytic process of replacing id by ego, the sector of the unconscious to be uncovered is only a small

(3). Here, the qualities of the shared property become important, rather than the discrimination between possessors of that property. "The Virgin Mary was a virgin; I am a virgin: therefore I am the Virgin Mary" is paleologic, the equation of predicates. This is fundamentally the logic of emotionally determined premises, the logic of self-directed necessity. The function of emotionally determined premises is to provide relief from stress—they are not the best means for gaining knowledge.

proportion of the total personality, determined by the therapeutic need to cure a particular symptom. Fromm would replace this limited goal by a sort of complete recovery of the unconscious. The immediate task of curing a specific illness would give way to an analysis aimed at awakening the total experience of the total man. This is indeed a challenging program; but unfortunately Fromm gives no indication of exactly how it is to be done. How does one, in effect, make the entire unconscious conscious? Logically, there is no way of releasing something that is not repressed—one is obliged to work on the repressions that are causing trouble. Growing into adulthood in any society means a good deal of repression—values are formed by repression. Of course, some societies repress more than others, and each society banishes from awareness different facets of human experience. If, according to one's own values, the society in which one lives is repressing the "wrong things"—mature sex, willing co-operation with one's fellows, a fearless, suspicionless attitude toward experience—then, understandably, there is room for protest and a possible program for reform.

It is just such a protest that has led some sincere Western humanists to champion Zen—a radical, all-embracing approach to personality change. Fromm has simply gone abroad to reinforce with Oriental wisdom his own platform of reform through "humanistic psychoanalysis." The name is new, but the vision is not.

4 The Historical Background of Zen: An Anthropological View

TO GAIN a proper perspective on Zen, we must fully understand its tradition and background. The presentation of Zen to the West has been undertaken by those intent on a philosophical or religious promotion of Zen cosmology. The less appealing aspects of Zen's ancestry—the purely magical backgrounds of Buddhism, the gross superstition, and the mundane preoccupations—tend to be glossed over, and unglamorous facts are kept from public view.

Ancient religion in the Orient, as well as in India and Polynesia, was centered on the belief of divine kingship, on the derivation of the king's powers from Heaven. (In 1941 America was abruptly jolted by the durability of this belief held by the infallible descendants of the Sun Goddess.) So long as the king could claim divine ancestry, as in Japan, or secure possession of the divine mandate, as in China, or achieve proper ritual rebirth into divinity, as in India, the fortunes of the kingdom were secure. This security was no simple

trust in symbolic bona fides, nor yet a scientific smugness over a properly manipulated eugenics: the king's power was real. It derived from his knowledge and proper manipulation of the royal ritual, and from his helpers in the other world.

Otherworldliness was as tangible as this-worldiness, and was based on the idea that living beings were transmuted into dead spirits. When an individual died, his soul assumed a new life in the other world, usually a more powerful life: powerful individuals in this world became more powerful in the spirit world; mean, spiteful creatures could become even meaner; and there was no guarantee that the meekest of the living would not profit by promotion to the rank of spirit, and assume an unwonted bravado. The spirits were all about, and had to be placated by incalculable numbers of special observances, offerings, formulas, and other attentions.

Their unusual power was not used chiefly to harass the living, but to help them. The world was a two-part creation: the otherworldly beings watched over the fortunes of men in this world, and sent them healthy offspring, and bountiful harvests, and protection from evil. Powerful good spirits in the other world protected the living in this one by vanquishing powerful evil spirits; they policed the other world on behalf of the living. In this familiar religion of ancestor worship, the living did their part by continuing the ancestral line, by bringing glory to the ancestral name, by making symbolic offerings of food, and by carrying out the proper ceremonies of commemoration and honor at the ancestral shrines.

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Individuals possessing unusual gifts and great personal power were transmuted at death into awesome spirits; they were almost immediately worshipped for these newer, even more terrible abilities. Their direct descendants inherited not only their worldly fortunes, but also the mandate of their newfound power as spirits in the other half of the universe. Royal lineages could be based on extraordinary worldly achievements translated into eternal otherworldly power.

Thus, the emperor could draw on sources not available to those with less puissant ancestors. But this eminence was not without its weighty responsibilities. Since he possessed more power in an interdependent universe of living beings and dead spirits, the emperor had to use it for the benefit of the living. The royal ritual generated power into the other world: it also provided the living with a way to control the spirits, and bring their powers directly to bear on the everyday affairs of the world. Proper ritual observance at any level of society was capable of generating power for use in the spirit world; but naturally, the royal ritual, which provided unusual control over already supremely powerful divine spirits, was held responsible for regulating the universe and insuring the welfare of the kingdom.

This is the familiar system of "cosmic government." The Chinese emperor, by proper observance of ritual, manifested divine powers. He regulated the dualities of light and darkness, *Yang* and *Yin*, which are locked in eternal struggle. By swaying the balance between them, he effected the alternation of the seasons. His power was so great that he even promoted and de-

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moted gods according to whether they had given ear or been deaf to petitions.

In this system, no man is exempt from obligations. Failure in daily moral and ethical duties to one's family, outrages to community propriety, any departure from rigid standards of moral excellence were offenses against the dead. And to offend the dead meant to incur their wrath, and thus provoke the unleashing of countryside disasters. The family home was, in fact, a temple; and the daily duties of individuals were basically religious in nature. The dead spirits occupied a prominent place in every hope and in every fear.

The common belief was that there existed one moral order, which included everything. The dead controlled the material prosperity of the living, and the living adhered to strict codes of conduct in order not to weaken that control. Men believed they could control nature by obeying a moral code. If the moral code were flouted, the proper balance of the universe would be upset, and the disastrous result could be floods, plague, or famine.

Modern Westerners have difficulty comprehending this fusion of moral and material, largely because in the West the historical trend has been to deny the connection. Living in urban conditions, away from the deadweight of village constraint and the constrictions of a thatched-roof world view, the individual may find it possible, say, to commit adultery not only without personal misgivings, but also without suffering any adverse effects in his worldly fortunes. Basing action on the empirical determination of cause and effect provides a toughness and bravado that no powerful

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otherworldly ancestor could ever impart—plus the added liberation from the constraint of silent burial urns.

In China, the magical system par excellence was Taoism. The Taoists were Quietist mystics, who saw an unchanging unity—the Tao—underlying all phenomena. It was this timeless unity that was all-important, and not its temporary manifestations in the world of reality. The Taoists believed the unity could be influenced by proper magical manipulation; in other words, they were actually an organization of magicians.

Mahayana Buddhism was no exception to these prevailing magical concepts. After this form of Indian Buddhism had been introduced into China, it underwent extensive changes. During its flowering in the sixth to the eighth centuries, Mahayana offered a supernatural package to the Chinese which bears no resemblance to the highly digested philosophical Zen morsels offered to the modern Western reader. Mahayana had gods, and magic, a pantheon, heavens and hells, and gorgeously appareled priests, monks, and nuns, all of whom wielded power over souls in the other world. The self-realized Mahayana saint possessed superhuman powers and magic. The Mahayana that developed in the north was a religion of idolatry and coarse magic, that made the world into a huge magical garden. In its monastic form, Mahayana was merely an organization of magic-practicing monks (*bonzes*), who catered to the Chinese faith in the supernatural.

Nonmagical Confucianism was a secular, rational philosophy, but even with this different orientation it

could not escape from the ethos of a cosmic government. Confucianism had its own magic in the idea that virtue had power. If a man lived a classical life, he need not fear the spirits—for only lack of virtue gave the spirits power over him. But let us not be mistaken about Confucian “virtue”; this was not virtue as we understand the word today, and it did not mean an abandonment of the belief in magic manipulation. To the Confucian, “virtue” simply meant mastery and correct observance of three hundred major rules of ritual and three thousand minor ones. Propriety was synonymous with ritual observance, the mark of a true gentleman. To live correctly in an interdependent moral and material universe of living and dead was decisive for man’s fate.

This, in brief, was the historical background out of which Zen emerged. Promoters of Zen to the West record its ancestry, and recognize that Zen grew out of a combination of Taoism and Indian Mahayana Buddhism. But the “marvelous person” that is supposed to result from Zen exhibits more Chinese practicality than Indian speculation—he possesses magical powers, and can use them to order nature and to redeem souls. Proponents of Zen to the West emphasize disproportionately the amount of Mahayana Buddhism in Zen, probably in order to dignify the indisputably magical Taoist ideas with more respectable Buddhist metaphysic. But in the Chinese mind, there was little difference between the two—the *bonzes* were no more metaphysical than a magician has to be.

Actually, Zen owes more to Chinese Quietism than it does to Mahayana Buddhism. The Ch’an (Zen) sect

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may have derived its metaphysic from Mahayana, but its psychology was pure early Taoist. This is well evidenced by the Quietist doctrines carried over in Zen: the idea of the inward turning of thought, the enjoinder to put aside desires and perturbations so that a return to purity, peace, and stillness—a union with the Infinite, with the Tao—could be effected. In fact, the antipathy to outward ceremonies hailed by modern exponents as so uniquely characteristic of the “direct thinking” Zennist was a feature of Taoism. So, too, was the insistence on the relativity of the external world, and the ideas that language and things perceived by consciousness were poor substitutes indeed for immediate perception by pure, indwelling spirit: the opposition of pure consciousness to ratiocinating consciousness.

Zen maintains that cognitive things are only the surface of experience. One of its features attractive to the West is its irreverence for tradition and dogma and for sacred texts. One patriarch is supposed to have relegated sacred scriptures for use in an outhouse. But this is not the spirit of self-reliant freedom of action for which the Westerner mistakes it. It is simply that in Taoist tradition—as in all good mysticisms—books, words, or any other manifestations that belong to the normal state of consciousness are considered only the surface of experience. The truth—the Eternal Truth—is not transmittable by words. Reality is considered not only irrelevant to the acquisition of higher knowledge, but a positive handicap. The technique of reality confusion—the use of paradox and riddles to shake the mind’s grip on reality—originated with fourth and

third century B.C. Chinese Quietism: the *koan* is not basically a new device.

It is important for an understanding of Zen to realize that the esoteric preoccupations of the select few cannot be the doctrine of the common man. In the supernatural atmosphere of cosmic government, only the ruling elite was ever concerned with a kingdom-wide ordering of nature: popular religion aimed at more personal benefits from magical powers. And this is only natural—witness the haste with which modern man gobbles the latest “wonder drug.” Early Chinese anchoritism was theoretically aimed at a mystic pantheist union with the divine, personal salvation being achieved when the mystical recluse united with divine essence. But this esoteric doctrine was lost in the shuffle to acquire special powers. The anchorite strove, in fact, to magically influence the world of spirits in the same way that the divine emperor manifested his power. Thus, the Mahayana metaphysic of mystical union for salvation was distilled down to a bare self-seeking, and for this reason, the mystic in Asia did not long remain in isolated contemplation. As the Zen literature reveals, as soon as an early Zen master attained fame in seclusion, he was called out into the world to exercise his powers. The early anchorite masters attracted disciples because of their presumed ability to perform miracles.

Exponents of Zen often insist that very early Zen doctrine opposed the rampant supernaturalism of China, and proposed instead a more mature, less credulous view of the universe. In support of this, stories from the early literature are cited to show that Zen

attacks the idea of supernatural power. But actually these accounts reveal the supernatural powers that the masters were in fact supposed to possess, as well as the extreme degree of popular credulity:

Hwang Pah (O baku), one day going up Mount Tien Tai . . . which was believed to have been inhabited by Arhats with supernatural powers, met with a monk whose eyes emitted strange light. They went along the pass talking with each other for a short while until they came to a river roaring with torrent. There being no bridge, the master had to stop at the shore; but his companion crossed the river walking on the water and beckoned to Hwang Pah to follow him. Thereupon Hwang Pah said: "If I knew thou art an Arhat, I would have doubled you up before thou got over there!" The monk then understood the spiritual attainment of Hwang Pah, and praised him as a true Mahayanist. (1)

A second tale shows still more clearly the kind of powers a truly spiritual monk could possess:

On one occasion Yang Shan (Kyo-zan) saw a stranger monk flying through the air. When that monk came down and approached him with a respectful salutation, he asked: "Where art thou from?" "Early this morning," replied the other, "I set out from India." "Why," said the teacher, "art thou so late?" "I stopped," responded the man, "several times to look at beautiful sceneries." "Thou mayst have supernatural powers," exclaimed Yang Shan, "yet thou must give back the Spirit of Buddha to me." Then the monk praised Yang Shan saying: "I have come over to China in order to worship Manjucris, and met unexpectedly with Minor Shakya," and after giving the master some palm leaves he brought from India, went back through the air. (2)

In the popular Chinese mind, Ch'an (Zen) was no exception to the ideas of coarse magic that dominated.

A closer look at modern Zen reveals many magical carryovers that are still part of popular Zen attitudes. To the Zen monk the universe is still populated with "spiritual beings" who have to be appeased. Part of the mealtime ritual in the Zendo consists in offerings of rice to the "spiritual beings." Modern Zen presentation to the West insists on the anti-authoritarian, highly pragmatic nature of the Zen belief—scriptures are burned to make fire, action is based on direct self-confidence, and so on. This picture of extreme self-reliant individuation is difficult to reconcile with such Zendo formulas as:

O you, demons and other spiritual beings, I now offer this to you, and may this food fill up the ten quarters of the world and all the demons and other spiritual beings be fed therewith. (3)

But this revelation is not embarrassing to the Zenist. For him, Zen has two forms: a "pure form" and an "affirmative" form. The affirmative form is that part of Zen which simply accepts everything that goes on in this world. This is the world of "multiplicities"—for the Zennist, a false world, a world of appearances, an inconsequential apparition. It is easy therefore, and quite harmless, to accept the idea of polytheistic gods, spirits, the idea of a spirit otherworld, ancestor worship, prayers for prosperity, and all kinds of rituals and forms of exorcism. What the Zennist does not say is that for the average Zennist, this is Zen.

The magical inheritance from Taoism and Maha-

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yanism remains unbroken. The idea of special magical powers is an integral part of modern Zen, and is best attested, perhaps, by the famous "Ten Cow-Herding Pictures," which show the ten stages of a monk's "spiritual" progress. They leave little doubt about the aim of Zen monastic training. The tenth picture, showing a monk in the final stage, after *satori*, is entitled "Entering the City with Bliss-Bestowing Hands." The caption reads:

He is found in company with wine-bibbers and butchers,
he and they are all converted into Buddhas.

Bare-chested and bare-footed, he comes out into market-
place; . . .

There is no need for the miraculous power of the gods,
For he touches, and lo! The dead trees come into full
bloom. (4)

Thus, the idea of direct transmission of supernatural powers has never disappeared from Zen. Their contact with the enlightened monk converts the wine-bibber and the butcher into Buddhas. Magical redemption is a part of modern Zen thought.

The Appeal of Zen to the Samurai

The relationship between China and Japan was initially like the one between a parent and child. Japanese delight over the artistic and cultural ideas imported from China was natural; but the true glory of China, to Japan's eyes was the magical power of Chinese texts, Chinese ritual, and Chinese ceremony. Cosmic government, government by the exercise of ritual power, was particularly welcome, for the concept of

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special magic appeared in the Japanese culture as the idea of *kami* or *mana*. The infusion of Chinese rites and formulas was accomplished by a number of famous mystagogues who came to Japan from the mainland, among them masters of Zen.

One of the knottiest problems in Japanese historical scholarship is why the samurai in twelfth-century Japan found Zen so immensely attractive. Their quick acceptance of this creed has always been a puzzle to many students of Buddhism. The explanations that have been offered are almost always in terms of Zen's uniqueness—a sort of special qualitative something that only Zen has. Zen's insistence on simplicity, discipline, and concentration are thought to have some connection with samurai ideals. Zen has been called a "doctrine of chivalry in a certain sense," as well as a "spiritual exercise." It is considered to impart a "broad vision" to "the mental life," as well as being a set of ideals to guide "the better class of warrior." Some have noted that its mystical idea of being above life or death might have taken some of the sting out of real death in battle, and thus have made Zen attractive to a samurai warrior.

But these observations, while each undoubtedly contains some truth, are wide of the mark. They are especially difficult to reconcile with the quality of the samurai mind. The fulfillment of samurai duties required neither special esthetic sensitivity nor subtle intellect, qualities to which modern Zen appeals. Oriental Zennists understand the attractiveness of Zen for the samurai better than Zen's Western proponents. Suzuki, for instance, states that the samurai's task was

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merely one of going straight forward to crush the enemy, and to do this he could not be encumbered in any possible way, physical, emotional, or intellectual. His readiness to face death meant he had to master death; and this was best achieved by an unquestioning devotion to a cause, a readiness to make any sacrifice. And Zen's so-called "spiritual training" meant submission to the master's dominance, joining in his elite crusade by undergoing training in a Zen skill.

The twelfth-century samurai was a poor candidate for esoterics. He was, in fact, illiterate, uncultured, and profoundly superstitious. The real basis of Zen's ability to handle the problem of death for the samurai, without appeal either to learning or to moral training, lay neither in achieving a mystical frame of mind nor in a Spartan ethic of simplicity and self-discipline. Rather, it resided in the fact that in Zen spiritual power can be derived by direct contact in a person-to-person relationship. Even the imagery in the modern master-disciple relationship is, as we saw in Herrigel, replete with the idea of the direct transference of spiritual powers. Remember that:

There was another form of help which the Master communicated to us at that time, and which he likewise spoke of as immediate transference of the spirit. If I had been continually shooting badly, the Master gave a few shots with my bow. The improvement was startling. . . . (5)

There can be little doubt of the appeal of the idea of immediate communication of powers to the illiterate and superstitious samurai, if it was so obviously

real to Herrigel, especially when one considers the historic aim of education widespread among the warrior classes. It sought to awaken charisma—special heroic qualities or magical gifts. The great warrior was one who possessed divine power against which no enemy could stand. In hero trials and ancient magical asceticism, the awakening of charisma was simply an effort by sorcerers and warrior heroes to aid the novice to acquire, literally, a new soul—to be reborn into special powers. It was characteristic of these special powers that they could not be taught or acquired by training. Either they existed as a purely personal gift of grace, or they were awakened through a miraculous rebirth.

In essence, this is the *satori* of Zen: the awakening of miraculous gifts that are either already present but dormant, or are attainable through a magical rebirth. Zen effects the rebirth by cutting the fetters which hold mind and thought to the illusory world of external appearances. The master has been compared to the psychoanalyst specifically on the count of his non-meddlesome objectivity; but actually he may very well leave the student on his own for the simple reason that magical power cannot be imparted, but must be awakened. This is, of course, a more esoteric understanding of Zen than the popular idea of the direct transmission of magical powers. There is no question about the elite nature of the *satori* experience: it is not reserved for everyone. In the Zennist's own words, it is meant for "specially gifted minds, and not for the masses" (6).

The perfectly selfless soul who realizes *satori* becomes a vehicle for the expression of what modern Zen

calls the "nameless power." Herrigel's account makes this unmistakably clear. The Master's first act on Herrigel's initial achievement of *satori* was to bow before the target: "Just then 'It' shot!" he cried." Or again, on Herrigel's first hit on target: "It is there! Bow down to the goal!"

To the Zennist, Zen archery is less an art than a ceremony. The samurai must also have viewed it in this light. The awakening of special powers would be a fit aim for a samurai, since it is one of the historical aims of education widespread among warrior classes; and Zen offered a unique method for unleashing such powers.

The ancient idea of magic was not, after all, confined to the individual; it extended also to the special objects he employed. In the interdependent world of striving humans and divine spirits, all the early crafts—any activity upon which survival in a hostile world depended—were immersed in supernaturalism. The intercession of a divine patron guaranteed success for a project, whether it was building a house, forging a sword, or brewing liquor. Man's control of nature via prosthetic devices was, initially, inseparable from magical and religious support. The self-reliance represented by a return to the drawing board, after the test-run crash of a new model jet, is quite a new phenomenon, historically; and the presence of St. Christopher statues atop the dashboards of modern chariots attests to a lingering lack of faith in the purely mechanical powers of fashioned materials.

In the magical world of cosmic government, the draftsman's success—whether he was carpenter,

butcher, archer, or swimmer—was assured by ceremoniously uniting his “inner essence” with the “inner essence” of the medium in which he worked. Remember that Gusty Herrigel could only attain perfect flower arrangements by uniting herself with the “heart of the flowers” and thence with the “heart of the All.” In the ancient crafts, correct prayers, songs, and ceremonies had to be employed, so that a man who was especially skilled in such formulas was not merely the head of his guild, but was also a priest engaged in the sacramental act. The tools of modern Zen express in the manufactured object the “nameless power” that comes with perfect unity of maker and divine. In samurai days, the sword was endowed with spirit power, as is the bow with which Zen archers practice today. Herrigel remarks on the sound of the bowstring, which the master demonstrates at the very first lesson: it is a “sharp crack mingled with a deep thrumming,”

. . . which one never afterwards forgets when one has heard it only a few times: so strange is it, so thrillingly does it grip the heart. From ancient times it has been credited with the secret power of banishing evil spirits, and I can well believe that this interpretation has struck root in the whole Japanese people. (7)

Thus, modern Zen archery, like ancient samurai swordsmanship, is bathed in an aura of awesomeness and supernatural power.

The appeal of Zen to the samurai involved: *kami*-charged magic weapons, power-charged Zen monks imported from the Middle Kingdom, and a unique method of achieving rebirth, a method very apt to

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awaken a warrior's ultimate power and enable him to show maximum heroism. The appeal of Zen to the twentieth-century practitioner still involves this same flavor of omnipotence, of trusting, child-like dependence on an outside source of protection and sustenance. The achievement of an adult self-reliance is not guaranteed by historical distance: each individual must win it for himself anew. But this quiet heroism is unadvertised: it occurs neither on a warrior's nor on a submissive Zennist's field of battle.

5 The Central Psychological Role of the Trance in Zen

ZEN'S unmistakable magical origins give insight not only into its historical appeal, but also into the mechanics of the *satori* rebirth. The many supernatural aspects in *Zendo* observances, and Zen's frankly superstitious appeal may be sobering; but they are of less significance than the archaic but still contemporary method of self-hypnotic transport, which is fundamental to the Zen rebirth into a new world view. Trance induction has always been important to Buddhist contemplation generally, and no one has ever attempted to disguise the fact that the trance is part of the Zen training. But there has never been any appreciation of the crucial role that the trance plays in Zen; it is the basic psychological focus of the conversion, to which the *koan* discipline is only contributory. The Zen rebirth method combines milieu control, an authoritarian master, reality confusion, and a self-induced trance into a system, the integrated parts of which function in perfect complementarity to secure

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the desired conversion. The trance, in effect, serves to provide experiences of reality distortion and withdrawal of the self, which are used as experiential confirmation of the symbolism of the new value system propounded by the master.

There has long been general recognition of the presence of a trance in Buddhism. The psychoanalytic view of a trance is that it induces an extreme state of regression in which the momentum of individuation turns to a womblike state. Mystical unity is a kind of narcissism. Through self-absorption, via meditation, the individual may attain a sense of boundlessness; the ego expands to include its surroundings, and the self fuses with the world.

Many of the experiences of psychotic states parallel those of the meditative trance. In depersonalization, for example, the individual may feel that much of his behavior occurs without his volition, and may have the feeling he is being manipulated by outside forces. In hypnosis, there are peculiar selfless sensations, and changes in body boundaries; the ego is no longer in control.

There is no doubt that these phenomena are also prominent in Zen experiences. The attainment of the "selfless frame of mind"—of *satori*—is at the same time a degradation of the ego's functions, a breakdown of normal body boundaries:

In and out, I was thoroughly transformed; and then it was that the eye became the ear, and the ear like the nose, and the nose like the mouth; and there was nothing that was not identified. As the mind became concentrated, the form dissolved, the bones and flesh all

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thawed away; I did not know upon what my frame was supported; or where my feet were treading; I just moved along with the wind, east or west, like a leaf of the tree detached from its stem; I was unconscious whether I was riding on the wind, or the wind riding on me. (1)

The Zennists insist on the importance of meditation in Zen training, but they are vague about exactly what role this plays in the attainment of *satori*. The aim of meditation is to go "beyond the realm of thought"; and an unusual amount of time is devoted to it. Even laymen generally practice meditation for about two hours a day. And in the *Zendo*, during the *sesshin* or periods of "collecting the mind," *zazen* or meditation is kept up almost continuously from 3:30 a.m. to 10 p.m., in an almost frenzied attempt to secure "mental calmness."

One of the difficulties in this meditation is the propensity of the novices to fall asleep instead of going into a trance. The disciples are cautioned against doing this, and are advised to use various devices such as keeping the eyes open, and walking around periodically. One of the main uses of the *keisaku* or "warning stick" is to keep the monks awake during their long periods of meditation.¹

¹ In a revelation of submissiveness that has a masochistic tinge, Alexandra David-Neel idealizes the use of the "warning stick" as salutary. She interprets the meditation-hall fatigue as resulting *from* meditation, rather than as an alternative to trance induction, and points out that the superintendent monk "is skilled in detecting when a monk is overcome by fatigue. He refreshes [*sic*] the fainting and revives their energy by striking them on one shoulder with a heavy stick. Those who have experienced it [the *keisaku*] agree that the ensuing sensation is a most pleasant relaxation of the nerves." (2)

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The Zennist insistence on the trance reveals its central role in the Zen conversion. The much-vaunted *koan* and its logic-defying function play a truly minor part in the Zen rebirth: concentration is all-important, and the tip of the nose or the notorious navel are just as effective as the *koan*. In Herrigel's training, concentration was limited to carefully practised breathing exercises.

One does not have to wait long for results. The more one concentrates on breathing, the more the external stimuli fade into the background. They sink away in a kind of muffled roar which one hears with only half an ear at first. . . . In due course one even grows immune to larger stimuli, and at the same time detachment from them becomes easier and quicker.

This detachment from stimuli is an essential condition for effortless performance of the Zen skill. The proper mental state for masterful execution is to be "unconsciously conscious." In swordsmanship, for example, this means that the swordsman, no longer worries about how to strike the opponent; he forgets that he has a sword in his hand, and simply strikes him down. How does the swordsman maintain this olympian detachment in the midst of a life and death situation? The Zennist is appropriately noncommittal on this point, and prefers to dress the achievement of trance detachment in the poetic metaphor of mystical union. Herrigel, for example, calls the desired state the "primordial state," and says that its symbol "the empty circle, is not empty of meaning for him who stands within it."

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More significant is his actual description of his feelings as he became more practiced in achieving the trance.

Day by day I found myself slipping more easily into the ceremony which sets forth the "Great Doctrine" of archery, carrying it out effortlessly or, to be more precise, feeling myself being carried through it as in a dream. Thus far the Master's predictions were confirmed.

But he was not yet perfectly adept at this detachment:

Yet I could not prevent my concentration from flagging at the very moment when the shot ought to come.

When he finally did loose a perfect shot, Herrigel was unable to reap the satisfaction of overcoming years of frustration: he was totally unconscious of the fact, and the master had to indicate it:

Then, one day, after a shot, the Master made a deep bow and broke off the lesson, "Just then 'It' shot!" he cried, as I stared at him bewildered.

In one method of inducing hypnosis, the subject sways gently back and forth. This postural sway is similar to the rhythmic "dancing" movements which lend a poetic flavor to descriptions of the Zen skill:

I do not know how far I succeeded in "dancing" the ceremony. . . .

The Master "danced" the ceremony.

We practised in the manner prescribed and discovered that hardly had we accustomed ourselves to dancing the ceremony without bow and arrow when we began

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to feel uncommonly concentrated after the first steps. This feeling increased the more care we took to facilitate the process of concentration by relaxing our bodies. And when, at lesson time, we again practised with bow and arrow, these home exercises proved so fruitful that we were able to slip effortlessly into the state of "presence of mind."

Adeptness at the self-induced trance is in fact the chief skill that Herrigel learned. He himself was surprised at his easy command of the state of "presence of mind." The security that this gives is unmistakable. The Zennists use terms like "fearlessness" and "power" in referring to the achievement of the trance, and thus themselves unwittingly pinpoint how closed is the circle of the Zen world view. For, fearlessness is nothing more than perfect performance in the master's presence. When a student has adopted the master's values, he becomes convinced that he has achieved the ability to release the power of "It"—of the cosmic will. Adeptness at trance induction equals adeptness at magical manipulations or, in the philosophical terms preferred by modern Zennists, adeptness at becoming a vehicle for the expression of Universal Will. The disciple's handling of the trance, in short, is the most direct expression of his belief in the symbolic explanations of the Zen cosmology proffered by the master.

Zennists, especially the Rinzaï, tend to underplay the role of the trance, and consider the moment of *satori* itself as all-important. But *satori* is nothing more than acceptance of the new value system, an introjection of the master's superego in a final, submissive adaptation to his authoritarian pressures. This submis-

sion is cognitively facilitated by the sensations of depersonalization, narcissism, and diffuse ego boundaries: the mysterious experiences of the self-hypnotized adept serve as the empirical basis for confirmation of the symbols of the new value system. The Buddhist metaphysic of unity—the abolition of will, and the attainment of selflessness—fits perfectly the sensations of the trance experience. There is no more direct way to relate to these ideas than to experience them. The trance experience is the convincing “reality” around which the novice reorients himself in accepting the Zen world view.

The Zen pupil makes no real progress until he becomes so adept at inducing the trance that “It” can take over—that is, until he performs the skill in a trancelike stupor. Increased adeptness at inducing the trance leads to increasing acceptance of the new value system. Herrigel could finally induce it after “dancing” a few steps. In correct performance, confidence depends on the ability to manipulate the trance easily. Once adept at allowing “It” to take over, one is assured that all will go well, and “unshakable fearlessness” is attained. Abruptly awakened from the trance and plunged into the real world, unconscious performance of the art is interrupted, pleasurable submission to the master ceases, and consciousness brings cares. When the trance which serves to confirm the symbols of the new value system is broken, the real world must suffer by comparison.

This explains the most perplexing of all dilemmas for the serious, objective, non-Zennist student of Zen. Promoters of Zen to the West are unanimously de-

lighted with the *koan*; and they insist that in order to solve these riddles, one must go beyond thought, to a mind of a higher order. Once having arrived at this deeper understanding, the *koan*—and indeed all of life—becomes crystal clear in (uncommunicable) meaning. Actually, the *koan* becomes “clear” simply because one no longer tries to decipher it. In the mysterious, psychotic-like experiences of the trance, the Zen symbolism is lived. One is attuned to the pulsations of cosmic essence for a time, only to be eventually returned to the banalities of the lackluster everyday world. The *koan*, as part of this world, simply does not count in comparison to the revelations one has experienced; thus, it becomes “clear.”

The ideal goal for the Zennist is to be so continually permeated by Zen that he is sustained in everything he does. In other words, he becomes the perfect vehicle for the continued expression of the “nameless power.” But this, of course, is quite impossible; the experiences of the trance do not carry over into all the waking hours, and the trance cannot be a twenty-four hour event. Only the anchorite master, who has no commitments to the outer world of reality, can be truly self-realized, in the Zen meaning of this word. If one were perfectly selfless according to Zen, the experiences of unity would be all of experience; but ordinarily one can only strive to be worthy of a sustained visitation by “It.”

Thus, the modern Zennist makes common cause with the ancient Taoist; the goal of ritual rebirth into special powers remains unchanged. In the joining of one’s “Primal Stuff” to the “Primal Stuff” of the universe, one becomes “Awakened” and lives suffused in

the power of the primordial state. He experiences the creative life process being given into his hands by a higher power: everything is done, claims the Zennist, before the individual himself knows it.

Historically, men have generally attributed to auto-hypnosis a magical quality, and the emotional states resulting from it have been valued as holy. All methods of contemplation which aimed at the attainment of ecstasy were based on the theoretical principle the Quakers formulated: "God only speaks in the soul when the creature is silent." The ecstatic bliss consequent upon correctly executed self-hypnotic contemplation was thought to be derived from a union with the divine achieved by suppressing the self.

By a process of circular reason the experiences of the self-hypnotic state were woven into a self-consistent scheme. It was necessary to establish the significance of the emotional trance states; this was easily accomplished by speculations about the metaphysical virtues of unity and selflessness. At the same time, these psychological experiences were taken to "prove" that the philosophical holy teachings were correct. The modern Zen trance is a perfect demonstration of these reinforcing and complementary approaches: the metaphysics of mysticism are proved psychologically and experientially by the trance; and the experiences of the states of the self-induced trance are explained by an esoteric metaphysics of Universal Oneness.

At first, the durability of this archaic technique for establishing and justifying mystical speculations might seem surprising. But man's inner experiences have been the longest to enjoy the status of extraneurological significance. In China, spirits were at first considered

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external to man. Then this idea changed into the belief that they could permanently inhabit a man's body, instead of merely coming and going. The problem was to make the body a fit abode. A two-part cleansing operation was devised to achieve this. First, it was necessary to quiet all outward activities, appetites, and emotions. The creature had to become still and silent. Then, all the perturbations and activities of daily life had to be left behind—which thus came to be considered accretions upon the pure core of being. The business of self-perfection was to work one's way back through this morass of doing to man's primally perfect condition.

In China, the withdrawal from outside impressions was called *Tso-wang*, "sitting with blank mind." In Japan it was called Zen. The technique of bringing it about was invented by the Chinese Quietist precursors of Zen, who themselves may have borrowed it from the Buddhists.¹ The aim of this self-hypnosis was to travel

¹ There is really no need to search for origins. Techniques for incorporating spirits, for serving as a vehicle for spirits, are widespread. There is a basic parallel between the Quietist mystic technique of making oneself an abode of cosmic power, and the general primitive practices of mediumistic trances—and especially shamanistic spirit possession. Doesn't the shaman have the power to manipulate spirits and cure illnesses and evils by means of that possession? Indeed, the shaman's practice of wandering off into long isolation before acquiring power to serve as a vehicle for the spirits is reminiscent of the Taoist and Zen patriarchs. They too lived in antisocial isolation until the notoriety attendant upon their performance of magical feats led them back into society to exercise their powers. Linton places phenomena of spirit manipulation in one class; he defines a continuum with regular possession by spirits on one end, and mystic experience on the other, with "mediumistic hysterics" lying somewhere between. (3)

back to "pure consciousness"—the fount of power, the inner essence whose attainment conferred an absolute joy greater than any earthly pleasure. The trance not only produces the unbounded ecstatic joy of the primal state, but also confers undreamed of power by the union with the divine essence. The attainment of this power by means of the self-induced trance was the principal rationale of Zen. One has only to leave the accretions of matter behind to attain to ultimate power over matter, over the physical world—and also over all living things.

Modern Zen continues the ancient technique of silencing the self so that the divine can become manifest; it clothes the method in a gossamer of metaphor. For many, obviously, the ability actively to bring about an increase in one's power is preferable to a trusting inactivity and dependence upon divine grace. But the primitiveness of the trance method is ontological—there is a psychological return to infantile omnipotence and magical manipulations. The whole is rationalized by a highly refined symbolic terminology expressed in positive philosophical terms, and a cloak of respectable modernity averts critical scrutiny by hopeful devotees.

Besides, as we shall see in the next chapter, Zen's otherworldly values are in part directed to ethical action in this world, so that the practicality of the end overshadows the avowed otherworldliness of the means. This is the source of Rinzai sect displeasure with the Soto: indulgence in the otherworldly values of the trance is not attenuated by a rigorous work routine that aims to effect action in the present world.

The trance partakes of an escape, too central, too all-embracing.

Soto seekers of enlightenment, in fact, dispense altogether with the famous *koan*. The *koan* is nowhere better understood than in the Soto sect as simply a device fit for inducing a trance, and the Soto sect has many of its own formulas. It is not by logic that the Soto Zennist goes beyond thought, but simply by abandoning himself to the experiences of the trance. This is done by mechanically repeating a monotonous sound that isolates the mind from outside stimuli. The Soto use *Nembutsu*—the repetition of the formula *Namu Amida Butsu*, “Hail Amida Buddha.” Enlightenment can be attained by plunging into the “Great Doubt”—this is all-important:

When the Great Doubt presents itself, it is empty and boundless on all sides, it is beyond life and death. . . . All is forgotten. . . . There are no feelings any more, and only one *Mu* prevails. In such a situation, if one rushes forth at a stretch, without fear or reflection, one . . . will have the greatest joy which has never before been experienced in his forty years. . . . At this time one realizes that life and death or nirvana are all like a dream. . . . This is called the period “reaching the bottom of ourselves, attaining the glorious enlightenment, throwing off all the cumbrances of the ego.” One cannot tell it to others, nor explain it to others. . . . These achievements can be reached in only 3 to 5 days, if students proceed earnestly. How can the Great Doubt present itself? One should concentrate oneself on *Mu* of Joshu, in spite of . . . the environment, and throw off all feeling or ideations. Then almost anyone of them can have the Great Doubt present itself to him. . . . One should expect some difficulties in the process of

attaining such a precious inner experience common to all the Buddhas. (4)

In present-day Japan, famous masters offer special courses for attaining these precious inner experiences—some of these courses are as short as five days. In the intensive course, the student may be urged to concentrate on Joshu's *Mu koan*; but this hardly means that this *koan* is used as an intellectual device. In Soto trance-inducing practice, the famous braintwisting "No" is merely a call, a sound like the "Om" used by Yogi. The *Mu* practice may begin as a calm call and end as a vigorous cry. Over a five-day period, an entire group practices this cry, in a loud monotonous chanting, which may well be an effective form of self-hypnosis. Sometimes the master enjoins the students "to see into their own natures" with shouts like "For your life!" "With all your might!" ("*Isshokemmei! Isshokemmei!*"). The *Mu* cry, as it builds to an intense pitch, turns into a "*Mu-uwa*" sound; this drone may occupy four of the five days in the intensive session. Obviously, this is very far from preoccupation with the *koan* as an intellectual dilemma, from the perplexing profundity of an answer of "No" to the pupil's question to Joshu as to whether a dog has Buddha Nature.

Soto emphasis on the induced trance state and the most rapid means of attaining it is an example of archaic Buddhist and Taoist self-hypnotic methods. Trance induction is still the central preoccupation of Zen. Adepts at the trance know when they have *satori*, and speak of big *satoris* and little *satoris*. Without the

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trance, there could be no *satori*. The Buddhist world view is experienced in the trance, and confused with it.

But if the benefits of the Zen trance-inducing discipline were confined to periodic withdrawals into unusual feeling states, it would perhaps not be so historically durable. Nor would it be as socially desirable as it is. A not infrequent result of becoming adept at trance induction is that the disciple feels a new immunity to social pressures, a new distance from urgent personal problems. This is the "fearlessness" that Herrigel experienced, the ability to face trying, mundane affairs with the illusion of a newfound strength. The trance, in sum, like all supernatural religious experiences valued by one's fellows, is an achievement that conveys a new sense of power, or an intimate relatedness to power.

6 Zen Cosmology and Zen Values

FOR man, the unexplained is not only irksome, but threatening. The futile childish "Why?" must be answered with a ready explanation of even the eternally unexplainable. Man invests emotionally in his flimsy symbolic edifices and draws comfort from them as if they were sound real estate. But very few of these edifices, as Sapir remarked, ever touch the ground. Pabulum illusions are as necessary to man as is eternally disappointing reality. A knowledge of the real permits successful adaptation and survival—without sharp-tipped arrows no amount of magical incantation can bring down prey. Belief is the spur to higher creativity, to the creation of a human universe. It is in the nature of things for lackluster reality eternally to run a lagging second. The ecstatic experiences attained by self-hypnosis were at first quickly characterized as a rebirth into magical, charismatic powers; then more imaginative minds turned this primitive concept into a philosophy of universal becoming of the all-pervading Cosmic Will. Zen terminology is monotonously regular in its conveyance of this idea: "Everything is living." "Creative force of nature." "Universal life is

universal spirit." "Buddha dwelling in the individual mind." "The earth is the glorious creation of Universal Spirit, man the living altar of Buddha himself."

An objective view of things Zen is naturally easier to a non-Zennist. Non-Zennists, for example, understand that the growth of Zen in eighth-century China was an unmistakable reformation or revolution within Buddhism. The extremely iconoclastic, sometimes profane, sayings of the great masters come into clearer perspective against this background. A *koan* reply like "the Buddha is a dried piece of dung" is no braintwisting mystery to a revolutionary iconoclast, however incomprehensible it seems without any appreciation of the reform setting in which it was coined. Buddhism was, after all, a foreign religion, an import from India; and in eighth- and ninth-century China it fell from favor. Typical is Han Yu's diatribe against Buddhism's useless monks in monastic retreats: "Restore its people to human living. Convert its buildings to human dwellings." The "no work, no food" *Zendo* principle, proudly cited by the Rinzai sect as an example of Zen realism, may be nothing more than a necessary adaptation to the rigorous post-persecution atmosphere of ninth-century China.

Inevitably, the end of the reform signalled a new day. As Buddhism became respectable once again after the reform zeal had abated, the reformers had to change their tune. Furthermore, they had to reconcile themselves with their own anti-Buddha denunciations, since they had to officiate at state and private rituals and were no longer free to slander the Buddha. This turnabout posed no real problem. What had previ-

ously been said so outspokenly now came to be interpreted in a subtle new way: the Zen method's mad and illogical techniques were evolved to convert revolutionary calumnies into an educational device. The technique of reality confusion is actually as old as Taoism, but presumably the Zen reform added much new material.

For example, unmistakably reformist counsels seem, when divorced from their historical context, profoundly illogical:

"I come here to seek the truth of Buddhism," a disciple asked a master.

"Why do you seek such a thing here?" answered the master. "Why do you wander about, neglecting your own precious treasure at home? I have nothing to give you, and what truth of Buddhism do you desire to find in my monastery? There is nothing, absolutely nothing."

A master would sometimes say: "I do not understand Zen. I have nothing here to demonstrate; therefore, do not remain standing so, expecting to get something out of nothing. Get enlightened by yourself, if you will. If there is anything to take hold of, take it by yourself." (1)

But the objectivity of the non-Zennist historian seems blind stupidity to the Zen believer. To the Zenist, Zen can in no way be understood as a historical reform within Buddhism. Rather, Zen *is* Buddhism, in its true form—the practical genius of the Chinese mind applied to the metaphysical speculations of India. In the Zen view, in order for Buddhism to develop in the Far East, it *had* to grow into Zen. Indian mysticism was too speculative, out of touch with the practical

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world. Buddhism's ideas were the basis for Zen; but the newer development was a response to the peculiar needs of the Far Eastern people, and brought Buddhism into a direct, practical and simple relationship with everyday affairs.

For the Zennist, the question is really one of emphasis. The one true Buddhist religion cannot be a mere historical reform—it must be the gradual evolution and revelation of *the truth* to mankind, effected by a sprinkling of great spiritual masters. This truth is that anyone who is properly selfless and unattached (in the Buddhist sense of the abandonment of selfish, covetous striving) can become a vehicle for the expression of Cosmic Will acting in and upon the everyday world. The absolute reason of the universe is Enlightenment; therefore, to obtain Enlightenment “is to realize in one's inner consciousness the ultimate truth of the world which for ever is.” This is the universal becoming, the ineluctable life impulse of the universe. “Everything that interferes with it is destined to be defeated.” Enlightenment is crucial in this cosmology, because it means freedom for the Cosmic Will to express its inner life force, to create “all that is good and beautiful.” In this absolute explanation for the universe, the individual has a part to play. The individual concentrates his spiritual efforts in the work of self-emancipation, and trusts to a direct, personal confirmation or transmission from “the Buddhas”—i.e., from the life force. His co-operation in making possible the expression of this powerful life force is essential; but at the same time, the vehicular nature of his role is

unmistakable. There is, however, no mistaking which force is the stronger in the universal urge to become:

Ignorance prevails as long as the will remains cheated by its own offspring or its own image, consciousness, in which the knower always stands distinguished from the known. The cheating, however, cannot last, *the will wishes to be enlightened, to be free, to be by itself.* (2)

The early masters, combining exemplary life with their vision of the truth, served as an expression par excellence of the Cosmic Will. Most important, they fulfilled the requisite condition without which Enlightenment cannot come about: conscious, "fractured" cerebration was dispensed with, and individuation, therefore, was arrested—even reversed; the One was no longer prevented from being known to Itself. The masters of old were in Zen's word, "virile"—meaning unweakened and untainted by philosophical esoterics. To be saintly it was necessary to forgo intellection; to be stupid in the ways of the world was to be wise in the way of universal becoming. Lao-tse, affirming his sanctity, prided himself on his stupidity: it enabled him to elude worldly wisdom.

But the modern Zennist is wrong in imagining that the intellectual's esoteric understanding of universal becoming is the same as that of the average man's. The refined spiritual humanism of the philosopher is not the coarse belief of the popular mind. An enlightened individual's "creative" act, under a cosmic government, was a most practical one. Chinese mysticism was a practical mysticism which ordered the universe via magical ritual and special powers.

There is, after all, an essential sameness in the Mahayana doctrine of Enlightenment as creative Cosmic Will working through souls who have resolved the dichotomy between Will and Consciousness by Right Conduct and Right Mind, and in the popular doctrine of cosmic government as the ritual purity that allows a *mana*-charged elite to order the spirit powers. Within the same cultural ethos, the same doctrine appeals to both intellectual and masses alike. The idea that "eternal Enlightenment" or the "Buddhas" can transmit spirit power—indeed, that the manifestation of this power is the one object of life's inner force—can be understood by everyone in his own way. "Self-realized souls transmit spirit power" is essentially identical with "Perfect virtue enables the expression of Cosmic Will"; but the philosophically sophisticated and the superstitiously credulous interpret these remarks differently. Understood in this way, Mahayana is really the refined systematization of the philosophy of cosmic government into an esoteric doctrine. Furthermore, in cosmic government the inferior ritual of the lowborn could not properly order the spirit forces: the commoner abstained from the process of governing. In Mahayana philosophy, this essential point remains unchanged: universal becoming is best effected by selfless noninterference. The extra-individual nature of the values is identical. In a universe of becoming, the individual abstains from any *self*-ish actions that would prevent the expression of Cosmic Will. Individuation, as separation, is a negative quality. In Zen, both master and pupil co-operate in the achievement of the proper conditions necessary to

effect the workings of Cosmic Becoming. "It" shot, and "It" made the hit after joint negotiation by master and pupil of self-less, consciousness, "heart-to-heart" communication and transmission of powers.

Not only is individuation a negative quality: it is the strivings of individuals, especially their self-seeking, acquisitive strivings, which is the source of evil in the world. If mankind would only abandon acquisitive strivings, in the Zen view, the ordering forces of nature would reveal themselves at their highest. Suprarational beauty and suprarational good would then work, through man, in unhindered creativity here on earth.

But it has never been so. In fact, says the Zennist, with the "merciless tides of modern commercialism and mechanization," and "waves of sordid materialism," even the East and with it the last remaining sanctuary island—the *Zendo*—may be engulfed in evil. At the time of the first Zen patriarchs, however, things were better than now—but even then Enlightenment was not general. The first patriarchs had *satori* because of their pure, unattached, and spontaneously good lives, and because of their perfect, "uncerebrated understanding" of the truth. Enlightenment worked through them as a result of their perfect naturalness: they did not use their consciousness for dichotomous "fracturing" of experience and the perpetuation of error in the illusion of separateness of man from Cosmic Will.

The golden age of Zen was during the T'ang dynasty; at that time the *koan* had not received final form as a systematic technique. During the Sung dynasty, in the Zennist view, the decline of Zen began, and

some method had to be devised to maintain its vitality. If the belief in the power of Enlightenment, and the hope of effecting the highest expression of the powers of nature were to be kept alive, some means had to be found to divest mankind of the error of attachment—some means of changing its erroneous way of viewing reality. In the Zennist view, the *koan* exercise was established for the benefit of the subsequent generations. The missionary quality of this religion is unmistakable.

It is small wonder, then, that with the primacy of superindividual values even on the highest philosophical level, Zen recognizes and is wholly prepared to accept the fact that the Zen method is unmitigatedly coercive. In order to achieve Enlightenment—the marvelous unleashing of blessed spirit powers which will work within the world and transform it into a wondrous paradise wherein all are Buddhas—any means are sanctioned. The individual can well become the grist, so to speak, for his own mill of “Becoming.” In the Buddhist metaphysics, mankind as composed of a lump of individuals is but a part of cosmic pulsation.

Curiously, there has been a good deal of misgiving about the use of the *koan* on the part of Zennists themselves. The coercive aspect of the discipline which surrounds *koan* usage in the *Zendo* is painful to the more sensitive believers. It has been called “largely artificial” and accused of harboring “grave pitfalls”; it has even been adjudged a “deterioration,” but one which has been very hard to do away with. One Zennist recently criticized the *koan* as not really integral to Zen, and

certainly not a necessary part of Zen for the interested Westerner.

But a rationale for the continued use of the *koan* technique is not hard to find: since the possessor of a cosmic truth has a supernatural mandate to see that it is revealed, even the most artificial of means is sanctioned. It is, after all, out of love that one reveals the highest wisdom to blinded creatures who err:

It was of course quite human on the part of the Zen master. . . . His motherly instinct made him think of some way to open or even to coerce the minds of his disciples to the unknown beauties of *satori* which, when left to their own ignorant ways, they would never come upon. (3)

On the part of believers who possess the "Truth" of creation, coercive meddling cannot be wrong. Besides, the Zennist says, with utmost candor, who is to judge?

The mind may grow by itself . . . but man cannot always wait for her, he likes to meddle for better or worse. He is never patient; whenever there is a chance to put his finger in, he is sure to do so. The interference is sometimes helpful, sometimes decidedly not. As a rule it works two ways. We welcome human interference when more is to be gained than lost and call it improvement and progress; but when it turns out otherwise, we call it retrogression. (4)

The value option of the true believer is uncompromising. Even if the *koan* system led to only a small expression of inner creativity, even if it were an artificial system that could not replace the direct, inspired vision of the virile patriarchs of old, still, says the

Zennist, "even a semblance would be a blessing." This semblance might be pregnant with possibilities: that is, Cosmic Will can be given, even by the artificial *koan* system, a toehold, so to speak, from which to work. The *koan* system thus has been adopted and pushed to its extreme.

Granted that the *koan* is an artificial system; granted too, that it is not a sure means of attaining *satori*, since not everyone can attain *satori*, which is the accomplishment of an elite; granted finally, says the Zennist, that the *koan* system is replete with abuses and dangers, that in itself it is a highly uncertain device: all this counts for naught. In his opinion, the *koan* system is justified because it saved Zen from dissipation during the Sung dynasty.¹ Had this doctrine of direct enlightenment been lost, mankind could never be shown the way out of its error by a gifted elite.

Thus, the highest possible value is attached to the Zen revelation of Truth. Cosmic Will works through souls to order the universe to the highest degree of spiritual power. In a world of acquisitive meddlers, who dares question the thoroughly coercive reform method that effects the expression of these spiritual powers by effacing individual thoughts in individual minds?

¹ This is the view of the Rinzai sect. The use of the *koan* as a trance-inducing aid cuts across sect lines, but the Soto do not seem to insist that the *koan* has to be "solved." The Rinzai champion undoubtedly feels that the *koan*-instrumented conversion which utilizes total pressures creates the more ideal Zen man: more puritan, more spartan, less oriented to a self-indulgent escape into a trance routine unrelieved by rigorous work obligations in this world.

7 The Thought Reform Rebirth

A TRADITION of meddling with the mind's grip on reality—whether it be by means of the *koan* or the Cominform—is not easily given up. Proper, socially-responsible performance according to rigid codes of conduct is an ideal that dies hard, and this seems especially so in the Orient. Chinese “brainwashing” or thought reform, is a conversion method familiar to everyone. The phrase itself¹ is so felicitous that it has stormed into general usage, usually to refer to any “evil” influence that isn't easily amenable to detached, critical analysis.

A discussion of thought reform fits readily into a work on Zen and psychotherapy, since there are more similarities than differences between them. If the *Zendo* conversion program were taken out of the monastery and applied to society at large, and were animated by a more mundane ethic, there would be nothing to choose between Zen and thought reform. And if responsible psychotherapy, represented chiefly

¹ A direct translation of Chinese “*hsi nao*”—“wash brain.” The program undertaken as a vast national policy of ideological remolding is called “*Szu Hsiang Kai Tsao*,” which means “thought reform.”

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by the psychoanalytic and patient-centered approaches, relinquished its self-conscious watchfulness of the therapist's values and manipulatory powers, it also would attain the stature of a proselytizing social cure all.

Thought reform operates very simply; to the reader who has come this far, none of its techniques hold any mystery. The essence of its approach is to gain complete control over the physical and social environment, especially those parts which sustain the individual's attitudes, beliefs, and values. At the same time, the contacts and emotional bonds which support the old beliefs and values are broken down, and in their place new relationships are substituted. This allows the probability of the adoption of a new world view. As in psychotherapy and Zen, the individual is isolated from his usual environment and exposed to a close contact with someone whose beliefs differ from his.

Many think that a unique feature of thought reform is that it employs an almost pure form of Pavlovian conditioning on a broad societal scale. Pavlov discovered that an animal that was rewarded with food when it was shown a circle of light would salivate upon being shown the circle alone. This is the famous conditioned reflex.¹ Conflict was created in the animal

¹ In an interesting testimonial to the spread of sophistication in the twentieth century, the *New York Times Magazine* not long ago carried an article accusing Russian propagandists of using an *en bloc* Pavlovian technique in their dealings with America. The alternately hot and cold dealings with the Western allies was said to be causing Americans to salivate anxiously in the manner of Pavlov's dogs. This patently facile view is as far short of the mark in explaining our contemporary anxieties as is a purely Pavlovian explanation of Chinese thought reform. Thought reform involves not only an interrogator and a prisoner, but the entire reform group, and all of Chinese society as well.

when, instead of being shown either a clear-cut circle or clear-cut eclipse of light, it was shown less easily discriminated patterns. In thought reform, the process is basically similar. A prisoner is forced to make certain statements in favor of his captors; he is then given small positive rewards. If he does not at first believe his statements, there is internal conflict between his thinking and his motor and speech activities; in order to resolve this inner conflict and allay the consequent anxiety, the prisoner is forced to change his thinking. The milieu is controlled rigidly; but the psychological pressures are from within.

There is little question about the stressful methods employed, and the regressive nature of the adaptation that the prisoner must make to sustained coercion. In order to adapt to the pressures, the prisoner must meet the demands of the interrogator. As in the *Zendo*, pressures are often so great that psychotic breaks and depressions occasionally occur. We see, too, the familiar picture of induced regression through the creation of an infantile setting. The prisoner, for example, when he has to urinate, may have to have someone help him, since his own hands are in chains—something his mother did years ago. In the new value system, initial failures to adapt, or even to understand, produce much shame and guilt anxiety—shame in the sense of humiliation, a feeling of failure to live up to the standards of one's peers, with accompanying fears of being punished and cast out. Like the mental hospital, the thought reform milieu is an alien world; to avoid isolation and death, the "patient" must bring himself into line by adopting the new beliefs and values; but in

thought reform, these are not in a psychiatric perspective. (The entire thought-reform process has recently been described by a Western psychiatrist. (1))

The Chinese technique for attaining the thought reform rebirth reduces chance to a minimum—Zen masters must smart with envy. In the first stage, the individual is subject to a concentration of emotional assaults which must eventuate in his total surrender. These begin immediately upon arrest, when the prisoner is blindfolded, handcuffed, and led away. A lengthy interrogation begins which may continue for several consecutive days and nights. The prisoner's protestations of innocence are met with the interrogator's demands that he confess his known crimes. Continued denial of guilt brings handcuffs and chains; the fatigue and discomfort consequent upon lack of sleep are reinforced with the frustration of not being able to communicate ideas to the inquisitor. The demands of the interrogator must somehow be met, and the prisoner develops an increasing need to discover a means of satisfying him. As in psychotherapy, the new authoritarian figure must be won over.

Following the interrogation, the prisoner is set upon by his Chinese cellmates, led by an appointed cell chief, who demand to know what took place during the session. This group does not sustain him, for he is then denounced by his fellow cellmates and reproved for his stubbornness in not confessing. Their attack on the prisoner is called a "struggle." The cellmates are an "advanced" reform group, who have adopted the "correct standpoint" and are gaining "merits" toward

their own release. First-hand reports by prisoners recount humiliations: the chained prisoner is treated as an enemy and has to eat with mouth and teeth, as a dog does; and there are inducements to regression, unconscious in their effect: "In the W. C. someone opens your trousers and after you are finished they clean you." The prisoner is called a reactionary, and his guilt is constantly impressed upon him: he must confess and reform.¹

The "help" offered by the cellmates includes not only persuasion, but also insults and even physical violence: cellmates may walk around the prisoner, spit in his face, and punch him in the stomach. Sometimes this "help" is offered by a "sympathetic person" who is placed in the cell deliberately for that purpose. This treatment lasts two or three months; at the same time the prisoner is fed poor food in an amount just adequate for survival. Inevitably he comes to the breaking point—a condition of utter hopelessness in which he is guilt-ridden, demoralized, and depressed, frequently to the point of experiencing auditory hallucinations and being suicidal.

At the breaking point or just beyond, there is a dramatic change in attitude on the part of the authorities. They apologize for the harsh treatment, and promise to make things better if the prisoner will only

¹ Brainwashing shares this feature with psychotherapeutic methods: the individual must himself take his reform in hand, he cannot depend on anyone else. Idealistic interpretations of the Zen discipline say this indicates the objective neutrality of the process; obviously, neutrality does not exist where the milieu is coercive.

co-operate.¹ The prisoner is impressed with the idea that he is not being coerced, that he can choose to take the road that leads to life by reforming and re-educating himself, rather than continuing upon the road to death by persisting in his obstinacy.² This change in tactics has tremendous effect. Prisoners have said that it offered them their first glimmer of hope for a way out, a way of defeating the frustration and confusion, the hopelessness of isolation. However, the clamor for confession continues on all sides—it is the theme of every interrogation, every “struggle,” and all the informal “help” sessions on the part of one’s cellmates. There is the incessant refrain: “Come clean! Be sincere! Recognize your crimes!”

As might be expected, the eventual confessions contain information and denunciations of others which were not even demanded. In his “selfish zeal” to escape isolation, the prisoner may even embellish his confession with denunciations of his friends. The confession assumes a reality of its own, no matter how much it contradicts the truth as the prisoner understood it before his internment. It has become impossible for the prisoner to maintain objective criteria concerning the relationship of his confession to actual events.

Once the confession is over, the process of “re-education” begins. In study group sessions with cellmates, particular emphasis is placed on “thought problems.”

¹ There are a few accounts of *satori* in Zen which have occurred after a sudden leniency or after changing to a more lenient master. As in psychotherapy, there must be some encouragement to become committed to the process.

² This idea, in less severe symbolism, but with essentially the same implications, is inherent in all therapies.

One Westerner recounts: "We were all considered 'thought sick' and could not be cured unless we came out with wrong thoughts." There must be full emotional participation in the reform, full devotion to the program of self-criticism. There may also be special periods set aside for a more intense effort to cleansing oneself of polluted ideas.¹

In addition to the group approach to reform, there is 'an "individual approach," in which an instructor specifically responsible for a prisoner works with him, sometimes for years. He gains a considerable understanding of the prisoner's psychological make up: not surprisingly, he is called the "analyst."

Gradually the prisoner becomes a new person, with a new view of reality. The idea that the old man must perish and a new one be born is frequently spelled out by the officials in just these terms; and this is how the prisoner comes to perceive his experience. The pressures brought to bear upon him are so severe that this transformation is an understandable adaptation.

After his identity as an individual, as well as a member of a group, has been destroyed, the prisoner is reduced to a subhuman level. His guilt, constantly impressed on him by interrogators and cellmates, makes him feel he deserves punishment. He is plunged into a condition of complete discord with his environment: his reality standards and his behavior bear no relationship to the demands of external reality. He is a lost stranger, immersed in a culture in which he cannot

¹ A directly comparable period is the Zen *Sesshin*. It takes place several times during the monastic year, and is characterized by intensified efforts to achieve *Satori*.

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communicate, to which he cannot relate, which offers him cues that he cannot understand. Furthermore, it is made quite clear that it is the prisoner and *his* reality that must change—the government's infallibility remains absolute.

The second stage of the reform process allows the prisoner an opportunity to be born anew. The impasse is broken, the psychological pressures eased, and the environmental assaults eased somewhat. The prisoner glimpses the chance to achieve some harmony with his milieu, even if it means that he himself must give way—that he must change and reform. In fact, the prisoner seeks to maintain the possibility of solution at all costs. By identifying with his aggressor, the prisoner becomes motivated to help the official achieve his own confession and reform.

By adopting the standpoint of the prison group, the prisoner comes to see reality in a new way. His guilt is channeled into a pseudo logical system, and he views past events as an outgrowth of personal evil and error. The final confession is an atonement and submission, the only adaptation possible to the summation of pressures. In his adoption of alien reality standards, the prisoner does himself no conceptual violence. Like the Zen pupil learning a skill, and adopting the master's mystic explanations for successful hits on target, the prisoner's confession may do violence to facts, but its distortions are logical, and they seem to be documented by reality.

Thus, the bridge into life is crossed, and the prisoner is reborn. In his new identity he comes to see that his entire former life has been in the service of evil, and

he welcomes a thorough reform. The new rebirth, a successful adaptation to pressures, also lifts the need for continued regression. The prisoner now experiences the tangible benefits of reform, and they are considerable: the personal confession has been, in effect, a therapeutic catharsis; in his new view of reality, all questions have been answered or are answerable; with self-surrender, there is a merging with the omnipotent force, and a sharing of its strength. On a psychological level this last benefit is perceived as the satisfaction of personal redemption, the joining with a great crusade. The feeling of righteousness in the new omnipotence spreads to encompass all of mankind in a "struggle for peace" and "human brotherhood." As in Zen, the new world view becomes a missionary cause for which no sacrifice is too great.

One can understand better the sincere strivings of Zen disciples or Chinese prisoners to find their place in the doctrines held up to them by looking at the Chinese themselves, rather than at the Western prisoners. Young Chinese and Zen pupils react positively and ambitiously to the imperatives of their own culture, and do not consider them imposed from outside. Furthermore, since he is brought up in these doctrines, the individual may not value another world view, even if he can imagine one.

The effectiveness of complete milieu control lies in its elimination of the possibility of receiving alternative ideas. Westerners who had undergone thought reform as prisoners, and who were then released into a different value system quickly invalidated the group-sustained world view. But the Chinese have no such

opportunity to experience other systems. Most of the Chinese youth who attend the revolutionary colleges—a euphemism for a thought reform enclosure environment—do so on a voluntary basis, to try to fit in with the regime, and find out what it expects of them.¹

The strong motivation of these young Chinese to fit successfully into their society is often overlooked by those who champion a Pavlovian interpretation of the thought reform process. The human animal is not a dog: total striving contains complex cognitive as well as emotional elements. Many of the revolutionary college students were post-adolescents or young adults, normally times of identity crisis, when the individual is most susceptible to—in fact, most eager for—conversion to a new ideology. Thought reform shifted the young Chinese identity from filial son to responsible participant in an adult crusade, and thus utilized positive energies.² Frustration at the Revolutionary College is not so immediate as in the prison milieu, nor do group pressures seem so overtly coercive.

¹ Douglas G. Haring observes that “Characteristically, the normal attitude of commoners in East Asian nations is not to influence the government, but to try to find out ‘what the government expects of them.’ This was evident in Japan under the occupation—everyone asked what the Americans expected of them.” (Personal communication.)

² One striking detail of the thought reform confessions of young Chinese is that almost in every case the central feature is a personal and symbolic denunciation of the father. He is a symbol of the exploiting classes as well as personally evil. The student finds this denunciation to be the most painful part of his entire thought reform, but in the end he almost invariably complies. Religious conversion also demands precisely this catharsis of the parental superego, and the embracing of a wider, less constrictive, more symbolic conscience upon which to predicate one’s behavior.

The new students approach the reform course with attitudes varying from apprehension to enthusiasm. Their first impressions are usually favorable, and morale is high. Lectures and discussions are held in which students and leaders criticize the old society, and describe diseased thought and politics. There is formal course work in dialectics, Leninism, and so on, and group leaders, called "cadres," encourage spirited exchanges of views in small group sessions.

After some weeks, a pervasive change occurs. There is a shift in emphasis from intellectual and ideological analyses to personal criticism. The way the Zen archer discovers that it is not his intellectual approach to the skill that is wrong, but his personal shortcomings, so the student finds that it is not Communist doctrine he must study, but his personal attitudes. He discovers that even without physical coercion, environment can manipulate and control him completely. He is isolated from any alternate conception of reality: there are no external contradictory communications or ideas, no opportunity for objective appraisal or critical evaluation. Only if he meets group standards will he receive psychological support from his environment. If he fails to meet them, the environment will do all it can to undermine him.

The kinship of the thought reform conversion to other "therapeutic cures" is obvious. Infantilization, regression, the digging up of past errors, self-examination via painstaking analysis and insight into problems—these are all capped, after the emotional catharsis of confession and rebirth, by the new identity. Thought reform has special techniques, such as a suggestive,

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hypnotic aspect which facilitates the remolding. All of these ingredients are combined—and here it departs radically from self-conscious, responsible psychotherapy—into a program of proselytizing deliberateness, the successful result of which is practically guaranteed by the thoroughly controlled and manipulated environment. The thought reform prison is in effect a this-worldly *Zendo*.

Thought reform manipulates both the individual's motivation to conform, as well as his need to find acceptance within his group. "Man does not live by bread alone"; but sustained by common identification with his fellows, he can almost live without it. Conversion-oriented therapies, whether they be Chinese, Zenist, or others, attain their maximum effectiveness not merely by manipulating the individual in a closed environment, but by inducing him to manipulate himself. A man's inability to tolerate social isolation, his urge for identity, and his allegiance to symbols all are puppet strings which he drags in full view. There is no reason, then, to believe that the Chinese, Machiavellian with evil intent, have launched themselves on an inhuman, grand design. On the contrary, they are naturally and unconsciously responding to inner urges that are specifically human. Their genius lies in the perfection of method.

8 The Psychotherapeutic Meeting of East and West

ZEN'S appeal to a few philosophical Western minds never attracted unusual attention, nor did the young artist's or poet's death grip on a fresh source of enigmatic profundity. The West has long since accepted the Orient as a provisioner of ideas for philosopher and artist. The appeal of Zen to Western professional psychotherapists is quite another matter, and has made many serious students go back to Zen to see if they have missed something. Minds which have been responsible for a good deal of recent intellectual history—among them, Jung's—have intimated sympathy for Zen. Horney, reputedly, was a serious student of Zen. A more recent effort to spread Zen's inspirational potential into the public domain was made during a seminar on Zen at Fromm's Cuernavaca home, to which contributions were made by Western psychotherapists as well as Dr. D. T. Suzuki.

We have already discussed how easily psychoanalytic phenomena like "spontaneity," "narcissism," and "ambivalence" are confused with the Zen "cure." This confusion does not, unfortunately, exhaust an attraction to Zen that goes much deeper than matters of

mere technique. Zen's usefulness, for some, seems to extend even to the point of serving as a framework for Western therapeutic analysis. The results are often curious. The *satori* experience, for instance, has been equated with shock therapy, an equation which is at least not professionally unsound. But one ought to keep a sharp eye on those transactional psychologists who might follow the suggestion of one of their number to study under a Zen master until they experience *satori*, after which they could return to "vitalize" and "profoundly awaken" our culture.

An even more curious professional use of Oriental mysticism is in the interpretations of psychotherapeutic events. One therapist claims that depressed patients and schizophrenics are frustrated in their attempts to adjust to reality because they fight the "empty spaces"—the driftings and empty preoccupations to which they are prone. It is just these "empty spaces" that are considered by this therapist to have high productive value in effecting cure. Equating these spaces with the "Wu Wei Doctrine of No-Mind," this therapist urges his patients to go down "and explore" them. He finds, as in Oriental philosophy, that the empty space is a fertile void: exploring it is a turning point toward therapeutic change for his patients (1).

Besides being a testimonial to the vitality of the Wu Wei Doctrine, this kind of reasoning is also a perfect example of the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy. That B occurs after A does not necessarily mean that A caused B: the cure consequent upon exploration of the "fertile void" need not have derived from the exploration—at least not from that specific

symbolic interpretation of it. More sober-minded therapists find that good results can be obtained if communication with the patient is established while his peculiar antireality distortions and preoccupations are respected. The private character of a psychosis must be abolished in order to effect a cure, and the analyst must participate in the psychotic edifice to deprive it of its wholly "private" character. "Exploring the fertile void" together with the patient thus permits him to take a step away from complete antisocial isolation.

The denial of a logical view of reality and the appeal to direct unconscious communication of powers may be personal predilections that can produce amusing error. But when the adherent to these views manipulates another's reality in a therapeutic situation, the possibilities for the patient's being led astray are ominous. Professional psychotherapists have already sounded their own alarm against "irrational psychotherapy," whose candidly anti-insight, anticonsciousness nature and accent on unconscious communication are close to Zen. In fact, this therapy embodies all the essentials of the Zen world view, as well as the basic Zen rationale for furthering that world view by any means. Because the world view and the rationale are clothed in respectable scientific garb, our uneasiness is all the more justified.

Therapeutic jargon shares a quality with poetic metaphor: in skillful hands it beclouds critical appraisal, just as a poetic metaphor can make an unattractive idea appealing. One has only to attempt to decipher the claims of irrational therapists in order to uncover some skillful scientific smuggling. Their mini-

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mal definition of therapy is the process which takes place whenever one person interacts with another and thereby increases his integrative, adaptive capacity. Since therapy is an art, they claim, no amount of description can transform this technique into a science.

This view of therapy treads hard on the heels of the Zen master. The deliberated, the reflected, the cerebrated—to the Zennist these are all a fracturing of experience. The individual's own direct feelings are uppermost; his understanding of what is taking place is unimportant. This, of course, is the same as the psychoanalytic view that the emotional catharsis is primary in therapy, and that intellectual understanding may itself be a defense mechanism against emotional involvement. But the irrational therapist implies something quite different when he downgrades the intellect. Understanding is unimportant, he claims, because the first task of therapy is to enable the individual to function adequately within himself and his surroundings.

How is this to be brought about in the absence of insight? To the irrational therapist, it seems paradoxical that the psychiatrist treats the neurotic by breaking through repressions, while at the same time he refuses to treat the psychotic because all of his repressions are already broken through—the psychotic's unconscious fantasies, instead of being repressed, are at the surface in full view. To the irrational therapist this seems irrational. He feels the best course would be to let the individual alone, to let his unconscious guide him without his being aware of it. After all, he claims, it is then that the unconscious functions best. The goal

of therapy to him is *rerepression*—a new term quite different in meaning from “repression.” The irrational therapist is not quite sure what, exactly, *rerepression* is, except that it does not occur because of guilt or fear, but seems instead designed to raise the level of functioning of the individual in the most economical possible way. Therefore, for him therapy should have as its primary aim the restoration of “unconscious functions” which seem to work best when the individual is unaware of them. The more unconscious participation there is in the individual’s functioning, the more likely he is, for the champions of *rerepression*, to function personally and socially on an adequate level.

Expectedly, it is characteristic of these unconscious powers that they can be felt and even communicated. For the irrational therapist, the therapeutic process itself is basically one of unconscious exchange—he calls the relationship of the therapist’s unconscious to the patient’s unconscious an exchange of “unconscious dynamics.”¹

These procrustean manipulations of mysticism

¹ Attempts to rehabilitate otherwise incurable psychotics by some form of therapy must naturally rely on methods which depart radically from orthodox practice. For example, it is questionable whether, in the treatment of schizophrenia, “technical” means are of any avail. An “unconscious relatedness” appears to be necessary and to produce good results. But techniques like bottle feeding and rocking the patient which apply and seem to work well in the treatment of chronic psychotic patients should not be generalized into standards of therapy. It is the possibility of just this generalization to which we are calling attention here. Another crucial fact is that these “techniques”—which include administering punishment—are not necessarily followed by insight therapy.

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within a scientific framework owe nothing to the East, but they are a bridge between East and West. Repression is nothing more mysterious than effective suppression on the basis of newly-acquired ego strength within a new superego framework. The patient carries with him the introject of the infallible irrational therapist for a long time after therapy has ended. The irrational therapist and the Zen master have in common their employment of personal dominance and rerepression in the transmutation of the "patient" into a new value system. Talk of the primacy of the interpersonal relationship and unconscious communication, and attempts to "scientifically" delineate the subtleties of rerepression as a "homeostatic" aid do not disguise a dominance-submission relationship which terminates in the introjection—by the patient—of a new superego.

Open avowal of aim is often a virtue of those with deeply-held convictions. The irrational therapist leaves no doubt that to him a tidy fit into the larger society is the chief good, and not the furtherance of individual rationality. In a statement of desired adjustment that neither the Zennist nor the thought reformer would disavow, the irrational therapist makes plain the goal of rerepression:

[Submission to the cultural structure] demands a re-repression of certain aspects of *fantasy existence*, and the acceptance of the need for a certain amount of *conformity and realism*. . . . In this way, the cultural pressures which operated initially to bring about repression also operate in the Post-Interview patient to bring about re-repression. The critical difference is that now *the individual accepts these cultural restrictions* for their

positive value, and only to the extent that they do not interfere with his vital needs and with his new-found image of himself as a unique individual who has a status *even more profound* than that which the culture can provide him. (2)

Exactly: the individual has been brainwashed. Repression combines with ego-strengthening for a more compulsive handling of a limited segment of reality. The elimination of "certain aspects of fantasy existence" could be translated directly into Zennist terminology: the uprooting of the error of self-seeking attachment. Once this "fantasy" of *self-ishness* is done away with by rerepression in the service of a new value system, then, "a certain amount of conformity and realism" is achieved. But the individual is not denuded: not only does he accept "cultural restrictions for their positive value," he also has a "new-found image of himself as a unique individual who has a status even more profound than that which the culture can provide him." This status and this new-found image derive from the value system inculcated by the therapist: *the vitality and the mystical profundity of unconscious powers*. Just as in Zen, the irrationally-cured patient can better adjust to the larger society by periodically refreshing himself in the special, rejuvenating, and esoteric values of his conversion cure. If enough individuals could be converted to the new values, then this catharsis would be a culture-wide value. But, wistfully complains the irrational therapist, the responsibility for the development of "social therapists" on any planned basis has not been accepted by our society.

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The therapeutic utopia would have no ideological disputes with the Zen utopia. In a society constructed on a mystical value system, all citizens would do their share in inculcating the creative values of the unconscious, and in maintaining selfless submission to the society at large. "Unconscious dynamics" like the "nameless power" would work through all citizens for the creation of a suprarational world. Personal dissatisfactions—"fantasy existence"—would be effaced in periodic rejuvenation sessions with one's favorite therapist (master), in a resteeeping in transcendental powers and a rerepression of personal values.

In scientific guise, the mystic presents his personal vision of a reform. But we cannot say that he is dishonest, even if he is justified in assuming that we are gullible. To the mystic, reality cannot be apprehended cognitively; it must be experienced directly, and unconsciously. Unconscious communications exist in every human relationship. In the magical isolation of the therapeutic situation, it is easy to impute to these nonverbal communications an extraindividual significance, especially if one personally inclines to such a world view. Curiously, the psychotherapies of the twentieth century are utilizable in the same way that Buddhists utilized the psychological experiences of the trance state: to generalize a religious philosophy, while using the symbolism of that philosophy, in turn, to describe the experiences of the trance state. The theory of irrational therapy derives from an "understanding" of the workings of the therapeutic situation: empathetic personal experiences and nonverbal communications are termed proof of direct communication

from "unconscious to unconscious" in a mystical value system. In turn, the symbolisms of speculative mysticism serve to confirm and account for the felt experiences. This example of the durability of circular reasoning would be less upsetting if the mutually reinforcing extrapolations were confined to the actions of one individual; but they extend to the many who fall within the professionally legitimized grasp of the irrational psychotherapist.

The psychotherapeutic meeting of East and West need not be so unqualifiedly mystical; nor need it so cavalierly dismiss the patient's need for fullest possible individuation. Fromm has expressed his gratitude "for this precious gift of the East"; but he is well aware of the methodological differences between Zen and psychoanalysis. The Western professional knows—or should know—that the infiltration of his scientific, rational therapeutic process by mysticism would mean the end of psychoanalysis. The gift from the East perhaps seems precious, depending on one's own view of the plight of modern man. The analyst who deftly treats the torments of a few chosen souls nears the end of his professional career with the sobering and perhaps haunting realization that he has barely scratched the surface of human misery.

Western man is anxious and desperate, says Fromm, due to his "schizoid inability to experience affect." Life is aimless, and nobody "knows what he is living for." Glimpsed through an individual psychotherapy, the situation of mankind seems serious. The question is not why *some* people become insane, but rather "why *most* people do not become insane." The source

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of man's unhappiness is his "separateness, aloneness, powerlessness." The world has become too cold and unethical, too mechanical and impersonal, too hostile to man—who has a right to expect it to be warm, friendly, and fair.

For man, as Goethe pointed out, a vision of the desirable is already a statement of the possible. The separation, alienation, and distortion that plague modern man can be overcome: the humanist therapist's program is to make the entire unconscious conscious. This, admits Fromm, is a more radical aim than that of psychoanalysis; for full recovery of the unconscious, he proposes a "humanistic psychoanalysis."

Traditional psychoanalytic practice would be outstripped in the aim of integrating man into a productive whole, of making him part of a wider, humanistic frame of reference. In Fromm's view, this new therapeutic orientation would be nourished by the soil of a spiritual, humanistic tradition represented by Buddha, the prophets, Jesus, Master Eckhart, Blake, Whitman, Bucke. The new therapy would create the new man by replacing the conscious with the "cosmic unconscious." Fromm's personal beliefs, in sum, outstrip the possibilities of his own discipline. The therapist has his own vision of the good society, and would join hands with the Zennist in the creation of a utopia to match this vision. The ideal tool for this creation would be a blending of Zen and psychoanalytic techniques.

The ease with which this psychotherapeutic mind takes to a proselytizing program suggests that the psychotherapeutic technique offers a tempting tool for the messianically-prone. Therapeutic change takes

place as a result of an interpersonal emotional involvement; it is a basic human process, and any "cures" can be due to any combination of factors. The theory of cure and the actual success of a given psychotherapeutic treatment have yet to be satisfactorily correlated; there is no necessary connection between the correctness of a theory and its success in producing "cures." The multifold effects of one individual on another has yet to be exhaustively tallied—one reason why therapy is still an "art" as much as a science.

The gamut of therapies is, after all, infinitely broad. An enormous gulf separates insight therapy, in which the patient becomes self-aware and self-responsible, from supportive therapy, in which a new superego may be introjected in a way that the individual will function better. But lines between therapies are often very thin. Even in a rational approach to therapy there may be a minimum of unrepression, and more than a minimum of interference. Occasionally even an orthodox analyst may admit the therapeutic value of losing his temper with a patient. And in the treatment of schizophrenics, the gaining of ego strength is far more vital than the achievement of self-knowledge. Even the restoration of full reality testing is not an absolute goal: the therapist may attempt to limit disorganization simply to those conscious processes which do not collide with reality to the detriment of the patient, who may be allowed to keep the remainder of his fantasies. The definition of psychoanalysis itself can be made very broad, so that it covers any therapy which attempts to bring the patient into a satisfactory adjustment with his environment, as well as help him de-

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velop his capacities. Brainwashing and Zen, as well as certain shamanistic cures, fit without embarrassment the terms of the strictest definitions of psychotherapy, and even into loose definitions of psychoanalysis.

However—even the most orthodox psychoanalysis carries the seeds of proselytization. The avoidance of countertransference, the desire to achieve strictly objective neutrality as a spectator, helper, but never co-acter, is an ambitious ideal of the therapist. The therapist wishes to have an extremely individuated patient; but he may find he is hurt by the patient's quick independence of him after cure. In his strictly neutral role as sympathetic shadow-boxer, the analyst must use the powerful transference in the patient's interest. Perhaps the most telling indication of the psychoanalytic ethic of rational, neutral therapy is the therapist's own psychoanalysis, which Freud counselled should be renewed at five-year intervals. The patient's interests are always paramount in this ethic. Freud himself formulated in no uncertain terms a credo for his powerful therapeutic method:

We rejected most emphatically the view that we should convert into our own property the patient who puts himself into our hands in seek of help, should carve his destiny for him, force our own ideals upon him, and with the arrogance of a Creator form him in our own image and see that it was good. (3)

Not only is the patient to be protected against the influence of the analyst; the nature of the psychoanalytic cure is such that it often serves to alienate the individual from his family and community. The ana-

lyst's task, in helping the patient, is to resolve not only the therapeutic transference, but also the "internal transference"—the patient's automatic and unquestioning, but restrictive and self-defeating obedience to the superego introject. Thus, the psychoanalytic liberation is effected by calling into question everything that might hobble the patient. It is here that the psychoanalyst takes to task the psychiatrist, and considers him treasonous to the patient because he seeks a recovery in terms of an adjustment to society, rather than in terms of the patient's own needs. The goal of treatment is individual freedom, not an adjustment to social standards—not even to family group, including parents. Society, and its surrogates in the home, are responsible for repressions and illness. Freud made this quite clear.

Just as we make any single person our enemy by discovering what is repressed in him, so the community cannot respond with sympathy to a relentless exposure of its injurious effects and deficiencies. (4)

Because positive therapeutic results may be socially dysfunctional, it is easy to understand the dilemma into which the analyst is placed. How can he permit himself to split man and society? It is impossible, in the present state of knowledge, to draw a sharp line between individual neurosis, social structure, cultural ethos, economic influences, and even international politics. (The last thing a science finds out, according to Whitehead, is what it is really all about.) Freud, apparently ignoring this, criticized his disciples who broke with him, precisely because they did not attempt

to draw lines between their beliefs about society and the changes they sought to effect in their patients.

The importance of theological tradition in the former history of so many Swiss [*i.e.*, Jung] is no less significant for their attitude to psychoanalysis than is the socialistic element in that of Adler for the line of development taken by his psychology. (5)

The effect of this blending of personal and therapeutic orientations was to blend the social values of the therapist with the emerging values of the patient. And when personal politics appear, analytic aloofness and neutrality suffer. Adler, for example, is said to have once "bedevilled" a patient in order to cut through his erroneous "life style."

But the personal and the social were not so easily separable as Freud thought. A shift in analytic orientation away from unrepression was necessary in many cases where the entire character of the patient had to be analyzed before he could be cured. In character analysis, the psychoanalyst may see something quite different from what appears in neurosis. Instead of the superego being repressive in a personality maladaptive sense, the individual has distorted perceptions that are, in essence, social. Social values as such are inseparable from the analytic scene when the analyst considers that the individual's socially-formed character is working against his happiness and adjustment. One of Fromm's major contributions was in this general area: he attempted to define the cultural temper that was responsible for certain character orientations. For example, he thinks the "market value" orientation in our culture leads individuals to manipulate and maneuver,

rather than live out other facets of their inner potential. The question of course then arises: "What is the purpose of human existence and what should man's goals be?" To answer it, the analyst must take a place beside the philosopher and religious leader. He can no longer be a neutral participant in a value-free therapeutic relationship.

When social values are inseparable from therapeutic need, character analysis relates them to the most objectively conceived analytic orientation. But Fromm finds that even the results of character analysis have been relatively disappointing, because the aim for cure of the neurotic character has not been radical enough. Not surprisingly, there is little in his zeal that was not anticipated in the mature reflections of the master: Freud, sensitive to the "injurious effects and deficiencies" of the community, actually criticized society long before the "Neo-Freudians." There was really no need to wait for the recognition of "character disorders" in order to know where to hope the real change would take place.

Is there one of you who has not at some time caught a glimpse behind the scenes in the causation of a neurosis and had to allow that it was the least of the evils possible in the circumstances? And should one really require such sacrifices in order to exterminate the neuroses while the world is all the same full of other inextinguishable miseries? (6)

For Freud, the choice was clear—duty lay in eliminating the neurosis. But society was to be condemned in any event. After all, perhaps the only thing that kept the focus of attention on the individual patient was

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the lack of sufficient *therapeutic* resources to enable effective action to be taken against society itself. The criticism of society—once the evil is recognized as residing there—turns easily into a crusade if enough forces are marshalled. It was no Neo-Freudian or support therapist, but Freud himself, who observed:

It is very probable . . . that the application of our therapy to numbers will compel us to alloy the pure gold of analysis plentifully with the copper of direct suggestion . . . (7)

An undercurrent of total social reform inheres in a therapeutic method that seeks to enable man to function better as a member of society; in unguarded moments of aspiration, the most orthodox psychoanalysis leans to meet the East. The modern East, in turn, draws its scientific inspiration from the West, and finds that it can do so without departing from its own ideals. In Japan, for example, a cultural tradition that places social adjustment and family authority over the expression of individuality is motivated to a peculiar use of psychoanalysis: to free the individual, via therapy, for the family, for conformity to the culture pattern. For a culture where group-centered roles predominate, freeing the individual from family ties and community morality is an entirely negative value.

Expectedly, in this Eastern psychotherapy, fitting the patient back into society so that he exhibits the proper expected cultural behavior does not need the service of unrepression. Insight techniques and objectivity and neutrality are regarded as antithetical to therapeutic goals. In brief, suppression and conformity seem to be the dominant theme in this Eastern therapy.

This is not to say that the Japanese therapists have failed to understand Freud (especially when his Western counterpart claims the need to go beyond Freud in a socially-oriented use of his technique). It may simply be that to work for the freer individual and the good society at one and the same time may not be the province of the psychotherapist, but rather of the duly elected public officials.

If the Western therapist wants to see Zen therapy in action, he need look no further than modern Morita therapy, which is a direct outgrowth of Zen principles. Dr. Morita, who died in 1938, discovered the therapy "by accident": he found that losing his temper and striking one of his patients led to her sudden cure. This kind of psychotherapy is in perfect harmony with the ideas of Zen, and Morita elaborated his technique to fit Zen ideas.

The Morita therapist assumes an authoritative attitude and eschews any use of insight. Self-knowledge has little place, and as in Zen, even words or verbal expressions are discouraged. To analyze with insight and logic is, in Morita and Zen terminology: "to cut wound on sound flesh."

Japanese critics have remarked that this therapy, which is rooted in the more authoritarian social climate of about forty years ago, will not be effective with the younger, more individuated Japanese.¹ For Morita

¹ Coercive reform techniques work less well in an atmosphere where personality types are more diverse, and where political and social controls no longer join to support the process. See D. G. Haring, "Japanese National Character: Cultural Anthropology, Psychoanalysis and History," *Yale Review*, XLII (Spring) 1953, for the effects of three centuries of Tokugawa dictatorship on the Japanese character.

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is no ordinary supportive therapy—it employs time-honored Zen devices—for instance, the thundering “Kwats” cry, and, evidently, the *keisaku* or “warning stick” of the *Zendo*. Morita therapy should warn the Western analyst who flirts with the East that the Easterner may have no qualms about using shock treatments to create his traditionally inspired utopias.

9 Conclusion

MORITA therapy carries out the Zen imperative: selfless submission to the interests of group harmony is the paramount value; individuation is, after all, separation, attachment, illusion, "fracturing," and the dispersal of inner powers. An identical philosophy animates the Chinese "*hsi nao*" technique—a concern with harmonizing oneself and adapting to one's surroundings. The attainment of harmony itself is therapeutic and uplifting, and of far greater value than defending some "selfish" view of the universe that is not shared by others.

Brainwashing offends aesthetic sensitivities by the introjected idea of running a soapy scrub brush over the brain cells. Perhaps if the Chinese had called this technique "classical therapy" or "culturally directed therapy," they might have avoided a good deal of the average Western citizen's dislike, and even provoked a sympathetic nod from a few psychotherapists. After all, Zen's respectability comes from being looked at in this light, as a unique Japanese healing device for the "unintegrated" man. The core of the problem seems to be that there has not been enough critical rigor in the appraisal of reform techniques, except those that even on cursory examination offend our sensitivities.

Thus brainwashing is adjudged "bad"; Zen "immediateness," "direct experience," revelation of the "inner man," "creative unity with the source of life"—these are all adjudged "good."

The humanist may object that he does not use Zen in the service of a messianic faith—he aims instead to use Zen philosophy to support and affirm the universal nature of the West's finest achievements: individuation, rationalism, and freedom. In Fromm's view, for example, Zen does not contradict these achievements. He finds, paradoxically, that Eastern religious thought is more congenial to Western rational thought than is Western religious thought. Certainly, the exponents of Zen have done nothing to discourage this view. Suzuki insists that Zen philosophy offers neither idol nor predetermined authority. It can be apposite to any scientific development, and even serve as a catalyst in accomplishing the task at which the West has failed so mightily—the integration of religion, philosophy, and science. Nor need the superstitious appeal of Zen to the credulous or its many magical aspects trouble the sophisticated Westerner. Zen has two aspects, readily separable and capable of being maintained as discrete, depending on the recipe desired. In its pure form, it is "acosmistic"; in its popular form, it has an "affirmative aspect" which accepts everything that is going on in the "world of multiplicities." Seemingly, Zen is a basic affirmation of positive living, of life's creative essence, independent of doctrine and dogma—a purely neutral affirmation of universal becoming that serves human dignity as no other credo can.

This is a hopeful and naive view, refuted, unfailingly, by the West's ultimate authority on Zen:

Zen . . . is . . . extremely flexible to adapt itself almost to any philosophy and moral doctrine as long as its intuitive teaching is not interfered with. It may be found wedded to anarchism or fascism, communism or democracy, atheism or idealism, or any political and economic dogmatism. (1)

Of course: modern militaristic Japan acknowledged Zen as the ideal doctrine for her rising generation. But this is using Zen in the "world of multiplicities"; to the philosophically pure whatever takes place in this world has little cosmic significance. "Intuitive teaching" is all-important; and this must not be interfered with.

But Zen is no more successful at separating the individual from society than was early psychoanalytic theory. In fact, the otherworldliness of "intuitive teaching" has no other referent than this-worldly action: the dominance-submission, master-pupil relationship is a reform method. However much it would accent the "egoless" aspect of existence, Zen puts the individual in the service of a new superego. Or, rather, *because* it accents the "egoless," there is nothing to oppose to the master's dominant reality. It is precisely here that Zen's "morality" shows its spurious nature: the "egoless" convert's conduct is dictated ostensibly by his "Real Self," by Universal Mind manifesting itself through him. Actually, as a result of the dominance-submission conversion of the master-disciple relationship, a Zennist has done nothing more than in-

ternalize the superego of the master and the *Zendo*, or of the Zen pupil group. In consequence, the value system which has been introjected *reaches no further than the interpersonal social group of master and fellow Zennists*. Universal Mind working through egoless self leaves, as the *only guide for conduct, the ad hoc morality of the social group*. Not only is the individual a "vehicle" for the expression of cosmic will: he is also a vehicle for the expression of any conduct dictated by the group's morality, a morality capable of being understood anew at any moment in time. "The world of multiplicities" provides the framework for the everyday "practical" conduct—ones does what one must do according to the contemporary cultural imperative. No Zennist would have gone to the lions as a principled objection to the imperatives of Rome. Nor, in a more earthly vein, was there any rational Zen canon against Pearl Harbor.

It is, after all, in the very nature of Zen for the mass of Zennists to be amorally submissive to the chosen few. There are not many graduates of the *Zendo* life, for the Zennist firmly believes that Zen is meant for an elite, and not for the masses. In olden days, the principles which animated Zen were less fuzzy, the elite was composed of charismatic leaders, souls gifted in divine spirit power. But nothing essential has changed. In a hierarchy of divinely given natural excellence, the most the masses can hope for is that spirit power will manifest its presence by a minor *satori*. Meanwhile, since the "nameless power" is also the highest force, those that are permeated with it are the highest humans—and unquestioning allegiance to

these chosen few is the obvious guide to conduct and the highest value. Historically, Zen was the perfect reinforcement for unquestioningly obedient samurai loyalties; statesmen who then urged the adoption of Zen knew that the existing order had nothing to lose and everything to gain.

In the eternal tug of war between the ideal and the real, the most sincere intention is no guarantee against imbalance. For the Western humanist the ultimate question must be, does the Zen discipline turn out the kind of man that he would people his humanist world with? It is easy to be dazzled by the surface reflection of one's ideals in an Oriental religion; but merely an imagined awareness of the facts misleads one into naiveté: rationality and independence are the last qualities that can result from such an antilogical, dominance-submission, master-disciple relationship. It may very well be that religion is superior to psychotherapy in allowing for the affiliative need in human nature (2). But the question which the Western psychotherapist must answer is what exactly is he advocating in opting for Zen: interrelatedness and religious conversion, or a fancied ultimate therapy that will release the full creative powers of the individual? An honest appraisal might help him avoid many errors. A therapist cannot, for instance, abolish the terminological distinction between conscious and unconscious and still retain a therapeutic method characterized by strict neutrality on the part of the analyst. To advocate that the therapist "uncover the whole unconscious" is either poetry, or a euphemism for imparting to the patient the analyst's own deeply-held

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beliefs. Nor can the therapist use the therapeutic interview both as a proving ground and as a source for the symbols of his own preferred value system. Extrapolation into the psychotherapeutic interview of hoped-for ideals is a duplication of Zen usage of the trance.

A great deal of fuss has been made over the unconscious, some of it understandable. Even internal medicine cannot do without the recreative powers of the individual, and doctors are periodically astounded by demonstrations of the vitality of the life force. It is all the more understandable that the analyst should be fascinated by the healing powers that often emerge to heal the anguished neurotic. But how unlimited are the creative powers of the unconscious, that the rational healer should hold them in awe?¹ If one frankly posits the creative powers of the unconscious as *an extra-individual* value, he is getting further away from a rational humanism.

A credo which stresses the primacy of unconscious powers in creating the good life on earth, and which advocates the elimination of the need and the desire to achieve critical discernment via cerebration has an understandable appeal to the psychotherapist, who sees beneath the surface of compulsive intellectualism. But besides having dubious professional value, this point of view produces some egregious logic. Fromm, for example, says of Zen enlightenment that it is "a repe-

¹ John Sullivan, an experimental psychologist, in a review of L. S. Kubie's *Neurotic Distortion of the Creative Process* (University of Kansas, 1959) cites Kubie's vigorous attack on the thesis that the unconscious is the source of creativity. Sullivan agrees that this thesis is a "ridiculous" doctrine. *Saturday Review* (July 11, 1959), p. 31.

tion of the pre-intellectual, immediate grasp of the child, but on a new level, that of the full development of man's reason. . . ." (3) As well saddle oneself with a *koan* as deduce how reason can relive a "pre-intellectual" experience. The child, it seems, has an "immediate, direct, total grasp of the world before the power of education changes this form of experience. For the new-born infant there is as yet no separation between the me and the not me."¹ By this criterion, the unacknowledged lords of the earth are crawling things, gropingly ingesting organic matter in silent harmony. Even our primate cousins don't qualify, since they occasionally evidence a rudimentary ego, or show some object attachment by hoarding tokens which they can exchange for bananas. One may justifiably wonder whether evolution is to be reversed to "happy" Oligocene times, when there was only "direct" experience and as yet no complex cerebration. The separation, in fact, between the "me" and the "not me" began over a billion years ago when irritability was attained in a single cell, and the universe acquired an "inside" as well as an "outside."

A deeply-held conviction and the world of reality are sometimes difficult to tally, and this is nowhere made clearer than in the contention that man should at one and the same time live *without* intellectual reflection and *with* intellectual reflection: "Man must

¹ The early Taoists used the symbol of the infant as an expression of Primal Unity underlying apparent multiplicity. This was a condition closest to undifferentiated Tao. But the logically inevitable occurred: to the later Taoists the ideal was no longer the infant, but the child in the womb. (4)

be trained to drop his repressedness [says Fromm] and to experience reality fully, clearly, in all awareness, and yet without intellectual reflection, except where intellectual reflection is wanted or necessary, as in science and in practical occupations." (5) Practical occupations fill the waking day of about two and a half billion people; and science enlists the services of more people with each generation. Evidently, the scientist daily cerebrating the "fractured" symbolisms of his mathematical formulas and chemical analyses is hopelessly doomed to parataxic distortion and separation, as are also attentive babysitters and eager college students.

Emotionally determined premises can easily give rise to false reasoning when religious, artistic, and philosophical values are at stake. And, as analysts observe and as anthropologists have long known, entire cultures can be predisposed to an analogic, subjective outlook on the real world, with the result that contradictions, elastic meanings, and the equation of disparities can be accepted without question. Of course, Aristotelian logic is not the whole of life nor even the whole of thought; and it would be laughable to claim that it should be. A full contribution to human culture includes those endeavors in which emotionally determined premises predominate: art, music, architecture, literature. They also seem to form an essential part of the individual's own nervous experience, a necessary esthetic and emotional balance to analytic thinking.¹

¹ Recognition of this need has led some to consider the development of the cerebral hemispheres in man's brain an evolutionary imbalance: overdevelopment of the memory storing, associative areas is thought to have undermined man's prior organic "unity" at a time

But the more practical endeavors which involve techniques to master disease, natural calamities, and even governmental tyranny, require, inevitably, a more cerebrated approach to problem solving. "Direct" experiencing of the real world often entails "unfractured" approaches; for instance, the concept of *mana* in a nobility or the practice of ritual cannibalism.

Humanist freedom depends on the ability to manipulate the real world—a world known through understanding, through intellect—and not on the willingness to be manipulated by an unconscious world apprehended by the merest hints and intuitions. One of the conditions of this understanding of the real world is that it is bought at the price of reflective, analytical separation from it—that is, it is mediated via symbols. The symbolisms of language or mathematics may separate man from the direct, "unfractured" experiencing of the "real"; but the artificiality of these symbolisms is in the nature of a tool, only by means of which

when phylic behavior depended more on the hind-brain. Thus, Burrow spoke of "dissassociation" in his "phylobiological" theories; L. L. Whyte conceived of "unitary" man to replace what he considers the progressively pathetic, cerebriic creature created first by evolution and more recently by historical insistence on analytic thinking. See Trigant Burrow, *The Neurosis of Man*, 1949, and L. L. Whyte, *The Next Development in Man*, 1950. But, learning behavior and the development of the forebrain lie in the very nature of the mammalian mother-offspring relationship, and evolution put a premium on it seventy million years before man's appearance on earth. Insistence on man's intellectual overindividuation as the basis for the world's woes brushes closely against the Zen rationale for a noncerebral rebirth, no matter how "scientific" its inspirations. Not surprising, therefore, are the "group-experiments" of Burrow and his followers, who seek to overcome "dissassociation" by shifting attention from the cortex to the old brain by "cotensive" behavior.

reality can be acted upon. The crux of the matter is here; for the scientist has the unique power to act upon the real through symbolic analytic separation from it, and it is in this way that man increases his freedom by purposeful action upon natural forces. Mathematical formulas are the basis for the conquest of space; chemistry enables us to get higher crop yields; probings into the physical and chemical properties of matter enable man to coax the physical universe to do his bidding. By his very symbolic separation from "direct" experience, man permits himself to have the greater experience of fashioning the real world to his own use. Ultimately the reality principle gives more "pleasure" than the pleasure principle.

There is nothing new in these propositions: they are as old as the Greeks and were pretested by *Australopithecus africanus*. In the modern literature they are used to explain man's ascendance in the animal kingdom. But the long view of historical inevitability seems bungling in terms of the all-embracing vision. To paraphrase Goethe somewhat violently, a glimpse of the possible in a single therapeutic reform transmutes easily into a megalomania of philanthropy. The psychotherapist is innocent: the therapeutic method carries within itself an antagonism to restraint.¹ It offers to a frustratingly brief human life span the possibility of relief from the burden of history's plodding uncertainty.

Of course, there is no really "objective" fact. Even the coldest symbolic term is an expression of human

¹ Freud's disquiet has been justified: "I only want to feel assured that the therapy does not destroy the science." (6)

intent: axe, space, map, up. The most matter-of-fact invention or coined word is an infusion of purpose into nature, a creative interplay. Where humans interact, as in psychotherapy, the most objective of facts subserves the process of becoming. And in the eternal unfinished state of knowledge, incompleteness and directive belief are inseparable. But the crux of the matter is this: man's aspiration for power over things gives him self-indulgent room to flaunt his directive belief. His possession of power in dealing with another human being changes this. It becomes essential to allow for the emotional basis of his aspiration and, consequently, the self-directed nature of his belief. Most forms of psychotherapy imply immense coercive power. Only a strict insistence on the analyst's neutrality and the objectivity of insight therapy seem to allow the patient to maintain integrity and develop the possibility of greater freedom. The shadings of suggestive therapy blend inexorably into thought reform and Zen, with their coercive induction of the individual into a new view of reality—a view implanted in him by someone else, quite apart from his volition, on the basis of the gradient nature of the therapy. The individual never knows exactly the extent and kind of changes which will be required of him until he is already involved in the therapeutic reform.

Restraint in enveloping others with one's own directive beliefs is possible for most psychotherapists. The slowly unfolding promise that a systematic science of man will develop permits the expression of creativity in conscientious expansion, revision, or negation of inherited data. The therapeutic situation, besides being

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curative, is also a research device to obtain knowledge about intrapsychic and interpersonal processes.

But the need for restraint is not due alone to the promise of a comprehensive science of man. The nature of directive beliefs is such that they are fed from without as much as from within. The passing of time saps the vitality of man's most impassioned ideas, and the ease with which he can rotate them as they become superannuated is astonishing. Modern history furthers its own value, in effect; the surge for greater individuation not only subverts the splendid *modus vivendi* of yesterday, it is already undermining our pet vision of tomorrow. Japanese criticism of Morita therapy, for instance, reflects an appreciation of the ultimate value of individuation and autonomy, the spread of a tradition radically antagonistic to Zen. To function creatively within this Western tradition is to accept the fact that neither corps of Zennists nor of psychotherapists will or can create tomorrow's utopia.

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in magical Taoism and Buddhism, its deep reliance on an Eastern tradition of esotericism. He shows that Zen's psychological workings, which some have compared to psychoanalysis, is in fact closer to the coercive psychological conversion method of Chinese "thought reform." More broadly, Dr. Becker views Zen against a background not only of Eastern psychology and values, but also alongside Western "scientific" methods of conversion.

Dr. Ernest Becker is a cultural anthropologist, at present doing research and teaching in the Department of Psychiatry, College of Medicine, State University of New York. His book will have a strong appeal to all those interested in the overlap between the social sciences and psychiatry.

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