

INTRODUCTION

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In the teachings of the Zen Masters can surely be seen the brilliant exposition of some valid inner realisation of the basic Truth, not unlike the exposition of the same basic Truth in Advaita, by masters like Adi Shankaracharya and the sage Jnaneshwar. Indeed, there is the theory that Bodhidharma arrived in China bringing with him a doctrine of great antiquity from India.

Huang Po is regarded by many as the founder of the great Lin Chi (Rinzai) Sect which still continues in China and flourishes widely in Japan. Huang Po is generally known in Japan as Obaku.

Zen followers are not content to pursue Enlightenment through eons of varied rebirths, inevitably burdened with pain and ignorance, approaching with infinite slowness the supreme experience which Christian mystics have described as 'union with the Godhead'. They believe in the possibility of the happening of full Enlightenment through going beyond conceptual thinking and grasping the Intuitive Understanding.

This book has been broadly based on *The Zen Teaching of Huang Po*, translated by John Blofeld in 1958.

1. The Master said, "All sentient beings, including the Buddhas, are in reality nothing but the One Mind: It is all that exists. This Mind is without beginning and is indestructible. It has neither form nor colour, and transcends all attributes and comparisons. It is That which exists before you, the boundless void that cannot be measured; start thinking about it and you fall into error.

The sentient beings, attached to form, seek externally for Buddhahood, and are not aware that whatever they do for a full eon, they will be frustrated. They do not understand that if only they stop their conceptualising and worrying, they will realise that the One Mind is the Buddha and the Buddha is all living beings. This One Mind is not greater in the Buddha and smaller in the ordinary man."



According to Advaita:

- a) I dream the universe, and all that is dreamt is 'I' – I who am but not as a 'me'; you perceive the universe, but you ARE only as 'I' and not as any 'you'.
- b) I alone can look, but I do not see what is seen by a 'me'; I alone can speak, but I do not say what is said by a 'me'; I alone function, but I do not do what is done by a 'me'.
I AM, but there is no 'me' or 'you' or 'him' or 'her'.
- c) I am the seeing of all that is seen; the hearing of all that is heard; the knowing of all that is known or can be known; I am the Awareness of all that is aware, the conceiving of all that can be conceived and, therefore, I cannot be conceived.
'I can only be 'conceived' as AWARENESS, unaware of being aware.

2. You are the Buddha-Mind, fundamentally complete in all respects; it is futile to supplement that perfection by any meaningless practices like performing the six paramitas (charity, morality, patience under affliction, zealous application, right control of mind, and the application of the highest wisdom), and many similar practices, or gaining merits as countless as the sands of the Ganga. You may perform them whenever you like performing them, but not under compulsion. Otherwise, your way of thinking is not compatible with the Way. To make use of your mind and think conceptually is to attach yourselves to the form and miss the substance. The ever-present Buddha is not a Buddha of form. Just awake to the One Mind, and there is nothing whatsoever to be attained.

The Buddha and all sentient beings are the One Mind and nothing else.



According to Advaita, what is at the root of bondage and unhappiness is the sense of personal doership, the notion of volition. The entire mechanism of daily living is based on the notion that volition is behind every act of the human being and that, therefore, he is 'responsible' for those acts. The fact of the matter, however, is that human beings do not 'act' but 'react' to an outside stimulus. Most of the time living, for most people, is conditioned by a series of reflexes based essentially on instinct, habit and even propaganda. The scope of deliberate, considered action is in actual life extremely limited, and yet almost every person firmly believes that he is the doer, and it is for this reason that the sage Ashtavakra refers to this notion of individual volition as the bite of the deadly serpent, the ego.

The only practice which can free man from the poison of personal doership is the abandonment of the identification

with a particular object as a separate entity with doership. Human beings may think that they live their lives, but in fact their lives are being lived as part of the total functioning of this entire manifestation. All events together constitute the functioning of the manifestation according to the inexorable chain of causation. It would be incredible to imagine that such functioning of Totality could leave any scope for individual volition except, of course, as part of that very functioning.

The only remedy for the snakebite of doership is the 'faith' that the human being exists not as an individual body-mind entity – a mere object – but as Noumenon*, the One Subject. Such faith brings about the sudden and spontaneous understanding that 'I am the One Subject and the entire manifestation is My objective expression. 'I Am' the Universal Consciousness within which has spontaneously arisen the totality of the phenomenal manifestation, the functioning of which is what we call our daily living.

* Noumenon: A word widely used by the great philosopher Immanuel Kant to show the distinction between the invisible world of Reality (Noumenon) and the apparent world of sensible 'phenomena'.

3. The sun shines throughout the four corners of the world and illuminates the whole earth but the void does not gain in brilliance, nor does the void darken when the sun sets. The phenomena of light and dark are the basic duality of the manifestation, but the nature of the void remains unchanged.

If you look upon sentient beings as a foul, dark or a mortal-seeming appearance while you look upon the Buddha as a pure, bright, Enlightened being, such conceptual thinking, resulting from attachment to form, will keep you away from the Supreme Understanding. If you are not awake to the fact that there is only the One Mind and not a particle of anything else to get hold of, you will overlay Mind with more and more conceptual thinking which will make you seek the Buddha outside of yourself, and you will remain attached to forms, pious practices and similar things which will keep you away from the Supreme Understanding.



Advaita tells us that sudden enlightenment comes about only through an understanding which needs no effort of any kind. The basis of sudden enlightenment is the deep understanding that there cannot exist any individual as such, because all there is, is Consciousness, in which appears the totality of the manifestation, including the individual human beings.

Just as sunlight makes objects in a room perceivable but is not concerned with what happens to the objects, it is in Consciousness that all phenomenal objects appear, and all such objects are perceived and cognised by Consciousness through the sentient objects, but Consciousness is not involved in what happens to the objects.

The Witness cannot be the doer, and you are not a phenomenal object but Consciousness which merely witnesses the operations in the manifest world. With this