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FOREWORD TO SUZUKI'S
"INTRODUCTION TO ZEN BUDDHISM" ¹

877 Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki's works on Zen Buddhism are among the best contributions to the knowledge of living Buddhism that recent decades have produced, and Zen itself is the most important fruit to have sprung from the tree whose roots are the collections of the Pali Canon.² We cannot be sufficiently grateful to the author, first for having brought Zen closer to Western understanding, and secondly for the manner in which he has performed this task. Oriental religious conceptions are usually so very different from our Western ones that even the bare translation of the words often presents the greatest difficulties, quite apart from the meaning of the terms used, which in certain circumstances are better left untranslated. I need only mention the Chinese "tao," which no European translation has

¹ [Originally published as a foreword to Suzuki, *Die grosse Befreiung: Einführung in den Zen-Buddhismus* (Leipzig, 1939). The Suzuki text had been translated into German by Heinrich Zimmer from the original edition of *An Introduction to Zen Buddhism*. The foreword by Jung was published in an earlier translation by Constance Rolfe in a new edition of the Suzuki work (London and New York, 1949).—EDITORS.]

² The origin of Zen, as Oriental authors themselves admit, is to be found in Buddha's Flower Sermon. On this occasion he held up a flower to a gathering of disciples without uttering a word. Only Kasyapa understood him. Cf. Shuei Ohazama, *Zen: Der lebendige Buddhismus in Japan*, p. 3.

yet got near. The original Buddhist writings contain views and ideas which are more or less unassimilable for ordinary Europeans. I do not know, for instance, just what kind of mental (or perhaps climatic?) background or preparation is necessary before one can form any completely clear idea of what is meant by the Buddhist "kamma." Judging by all we know of the nature of Zen, here too we are up against a central conception of unsurpassed singularity. This strange conception is called "satori," which may be translated as "enlightenment." "Satori is the *raison d'être* of Zen without which Zen is not Zen," says Suzuki.³ It should not be too difficult for the Western mind to grasp what a mystic understands by "enlightenment," or what is known as such in religious parlance. Satori, however, designates a special kind and way of enlightenment which it is practically impossible for the European to appreciate. By way of illustration, I would refer the reader to the enlightenment of Hyakujo (Pai-chang Huai-hai, A.D. 724-814) and of the Confucian poet and statesman Kozankoku (Huang Shan-ku),⁴ as described by Suzuki.

878 The following may serve as a further example: A monk once went to Gensha, and wanted to learn where the entrance to the path of truth was. Gensha asked him, "Do you hear the murmuring of the brook?" "Yes, I hear it," answered the monk. "There is the entrance," the Master instructed him.

879 I will content myself with these few examples, which aptly illustrate the opacity of satori experiences. Even if we take example after example, it still remains exceedingly obscure how any enlightenment comes and of what it consists—in other words, by what or about what one is enlightened. Kaiten Nukariya, who was himself a professor at the So-to-shu Buddhist College in Tokyo, says, speaking of enlightenment:

Having set ourselves free from the mistaken conception of self, next we must awaken our innermost wisdom, pure and divine, called the Mind of Buddha, or Bodhi, or Prajna by Zen masters. It is the divine light, the inner heaven, the key to all moral treasures, the centre of thought and consciousness, the source of all influence and power, the seat of kindness, justice, sympathy, impartial love, humanity, and mercy, the measure of all things. When this innermost wisdom is fully awakened, we are able to realize that each and every one of us is identical in spirit, in essence, in nature with the universal

³ *Introduction to Zen Buddhism* (1949), p. 95.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 89 and 92f.

life or Buddha, that each ever lives face to face with Buddha, that each is beset by the abundant grace of the Blessed One, that He arouses his moral nature, that He opens his spiritual eyes, that He unfolds his new capacity, that He appoints his mission, and that life is not an ocean of birth, disease, old age, and death, nor the vale of tears, but the holy temple of Buddha, the Pure Land, where he can enjoy the bliss of Nirvana.⁵

880 That is how an Oriental, himself an adept in Zen, describes the essence of enlightenment. One must admit that this passage would need only a few trifling alterations in order to find its way into a Christian mystical book of devotion. Yet somehow it sends us away empty as regards understanding the satori experience described again and again in the literature. Presumably Nukariya is addressing himself to Western rationalism, of which he himself acquired a good dose, and that is why it all sounds so flatly edifying. The abstruse obscurity of the Zen anecdotes is distinctly preferable to this adaptation *ad usum Delphini*: it conveys a great deal more by saying less.

881 Zen is anything but a philosophy in the Western sense of the word.⁶ This is also the opinion of Rudolf Otto, who says in his foreword to Ohazama's book on Zen that Nukariya has "imported the magical world of Oriental ideas into our Western philosophical categories" and confused it with these. "If psychophysical parallelism, that most wooden of all doctrines, is invoked in order to explain this mystical intuition of Non-duality and Oneness and the *coincidentia oppositorum*, then one is completely outside the sphere of the *koan*, the *kwatsu*, and *satori*."⁷ It is far better to allow oneself to become deeply imbued at the outset with the exotic obscurity of the Zen anecdotes, and to bear in mind the whole time that satori is a *mysterium ineffabile*, as indeed the Zen masters wish it to be. Between the anecdote and the mystical enlightenment there is, to our way of thinking, a gulf, and the possibility of bridging it can at best be hinted but never in practice achieved.⁸ One has

⁵ *The Religion of the Samurai*, p. 133.

⁶ "Zen is neither psychology nor philosophy." ⁷ In Ohazama, p. viii.

⁸ If in spite of this I attempt "explanations" in what follows, I am nevertheless fully aware that in the sense of satori I have said nothing valid. All the same, I had to make an attempt to manoeuvre our Western understanding into at least the proximity of an understanding—a task so difficult that in doing it one must take upon oneself certain crimes against the spirit of Zen.

the feeling of touching upon a true secret, and not one that is merely imagined or pretended. It is not a question of mystification and mumbo-jumbo, but rather of an experience which strikes the experient dumb. Satori comes upon one unawares, as something utterly unexpected.

882 When, in the sphere of Christianity, visions of the Holy Trinity, the Madonna, the Crucified, or of the patron saint are vouchsafed after long spiritual preparation, one has the impression that this is all more or less as it should be. That Jakob Böhme should obtain a glimpse into the *centrum naturae* by means of a sunbeam reflected in a tin platter is also understandable. It is harder to digest Meister Eckhart's vision of the "little naked boy," not to speak of Swedenborg's "man in the purple coat," who wanted to dissuade him from overeating, and whom, in spite—or perhaps because—of this, he recognized as the Lord God.⁹ Such things are difficult to swallow, bordering as they do on the grotesque. Many of the Zen anecdotes, however, not only border on the grotesque but are right there in the middle of it, and sound like the most crashing nonsense.

883 For anyone who has devoted himself, with love and sympathetic understanding, to studying the flowerlike mind of the Far East, many of these puzzling things, which drive the naïve European from one perplexity to another, simply disappear. Zen is indeed one of the most wonderful blossoms of the Chinese spirit¹⁰—a spirit fertilized by the immense world of Buddhist thought. Anyone who has really tried to understand Buddhist doctrine—even if only to the extent of giving up certain Western prejudices—will begin to suspect treacherous depths beneath the bizarre surface of individual satori experiences, or will sense disquieting difficulties which the religion and philosophy of the West have up to now thought fit to disregard. If he is a philosopher, he is exclusively concerned with the kind of understanding that has nothing to do with life. And if he is a Christian, he has of course no truck with heathens ("God, I thank thee that I

⁹ Cf. Spamer, ed., *Texte aus der deutschen Mystik des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts*, p. 143; Evans, *Meister Eckhart*, I, p. 438; William White, *Emanuel Swedenborg*, I, p. 243.

¹⁰ "There is no doubt that Zen is one of the most precious and in many respects the most remarkable [of the] spiritual possessions bequeathed to Eastern people." Suzuki, *Essays on Zen Buddhism*, I, p. 264.

am not as other men are"). There is no satori within these Western limits—that is a purely Oriental affair. But is this really so? Have we in fact no satori?

884 When one reads the Zen texts attentively, one cannot escape the impression that, however bizarre, satori is a *natural occurrence*, something so very simple,¹¹ even, that one fails to see the wood for the trees, and in attempting to explain it invariably says the very thing that throws others into the greatest confusion. Nukariya is therefore right when he says that any attempt to explain or analyse the content of Zen, or of the enlightenment, is futile. Nevertheless he does venture to assert that enlightenment "implies an insight into the nature of self,"¹² and that it is an "emancipation of mind from illusion concerning self."¹³ The illusion concerning the nature of self is the common confusion of the self with the ego. Nukariya understands by "self" the All-Buddha, i.e., total consciousness of life. He quotes Pan Shan, who says: "The moon of mind comprehends all the universe in its light," adding: "It is Cosmic life and Cosmic spirit, and at the same time individual life and individual spirit."¹⁴

885 However one may define the self, it is always something other than the ego, and inasmuch as a higher insight of the ego leads over to the self, the self is a more comprehensive thing which includes the experience of the ego and therefore transcends it. Just as the ego is a certain experience I have of myself, so is the self an experience of my ego. It is, however, no longer experienced in the form of a broader or higher ego, but in the form of a non-ego.

886 Such thoughts were familiar to the anonymous author of the *Theologia Germanica*:

In whatsoever creature the Perfect shall be known, therein creature-nature, created state, I-hood, selfhood, and the like must all be given up and done away.¹⁵

11 "Before a man studies Zen, to him mountains are mountains and waters are waters; after he gets an insight into the truth of Zen, through the instruction of a good master, mountains to him are not mountains and waters are not waters; after this when he really attains to the abode of rest, mountains are once more mountains and waters are waters." *Ibid.*, pp. 22f.

12 *Religion of the Samurai*, p. 123.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 124.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 132.

15 *Theologia Germanica*, ed. by Trask, p. 115.

Now that I arrogate anything good to myself, as if I were, or had done, or knew, or could perform any good thing, or that it were mine; that is all out of blindness and folly. For if the real truth were in me, I should understand that I am not that good thing, and that it is not mine nor of me.

Then the man says: "Behold! I, poor fool that I was, thought it was I, but behold! it is, and was, of a truth, God!"¹⁶

887 This tells us a good deal about the "content of enlightenment." The occurrence of satori is interpreted and formulated as a *break-through*, by a consciousness limited to the ego-form, into the non-ego-like self. This view is in accord not only with the essence of Zen, but also with the mysticism of Meister Eckhart:

When I flowed out from God, all things declared, "God is!" Now this cannot make me blessed, for thereby I acknowledge myself a creature. But in the breakthrough¹⁷ I stand empty in the will of God, and empty also of God's will, and of all his works, even of God himself—then I am more than all creatures, then I am neither God nor creature: I am what I was, and that I shall remain, now and ever more! Then I receive a thrust which carries me above all angels. By this thrust I become so rich that God cannot suffice me, despite all that he is as God and all his godly works; for in this breakthrough I receive what God and I have in common. I am what I was,¹⁸ I neither increase nor diminish, for I am the unmoved mover that moves all things. Here God can find no more place in man, for man by his emptiness has won back that which he was eternally and ever shall remain.¹⁹

888 Here the Master may actually be describing a satori experience, a supersession of the ego by the self, which is endued with the "Buddha nature" or divine universality. Since, out of scientific modesty, I do not presume to make a metaphysical statement, but am referring only to a change of consciousness that can be experienced, I treat satori first of all as a psychological

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 120–21.

¹⁷ There is a similar image in Zen: When a Master was asked what Buddhahood consisted in, he answered, "The bottom of a pail is broken through" (Suzuki, *Essays*, I, p. 229). Another analogy is the "bursting of the bag" (*Essays*, II, p. 117).

¹⁸ Cf. Suzuki, *Essays*, I, pp. 231, 255. Zen means catching a glimpse of the original nature of man, or the recognition of the original man (p. 157).

¹⁹ Cf. Evans, *Meister Eckhart*, p. 221; also *Meister Eckhart: A Modern Translation*, by Blakney, pp. 231f.

problem. For anyone who does not share or understand this point of view, the "explanation" will consist of nothing but words which have no tangible meaning. He is then incapable of throwing a bridge from these abstractions to the facts reported; that is to say, he cannot understand how the scent of the blossoming laurel or the tweaked nose²⁰ could bring about so formidable a change of consciousness. Naturally the simplest thing would be to relegate all these anecdotes to the realm of amusing fairytales, or, if one accepts the facts as they are, to write them off as instances of self-deception. (Another favourite explanation is "auto-suggestion," that pathetic white elephant from the arsenal of intellectual inadequacies!) But no serious and responsible investigation can pass over these facts unheedingly. Of course, we can never decide definitely whether a person is *really* "enlightened" or "released," or whether he merely imagines it. We have no criteria to go on. Moreover, we know well enough that an imaginary pain is often far more agonizing than a so-called real one, since it is accompanied by a subtle moral suffering caused by a dull feeling of secret self-accusation. In this sense, therefore, it is not a question of "actual fact" but of *psychic reality*, i.e., the psychic process known as satori.

889 Every psychic process is an image and an "imagining," otherwise no consciousness could exist and the occurrence would lack phenomenality. Imagination itself is a psychic process, for which reason it is completely irrelevant whether the enlightenment be called "real" or "imaginary." The person who has the enlightenment, or alleges that he has it, thinks at all events that he is enlightened. What others think about it decides nothing whatever for him in regard to his experience. Even if he were lying, his lie would still be a psychic fact. Indeed, even if all the reports of religious experiences were nothing but deliberate inventions and falsifications, a very interesting psychological treatise could still be written about the incidence of such lies, and with the same scientific objectivity with which one describes the psychopathology of delusional ideas. The fact that there is a religious movement upon which many brilliant minds have worked over a period of many centuries is sufficient reason for at least venturing a serious attempt to bring such processes within the realm of scientific understanding.

²⁰ Suzuki, *Introduction*, pp. 93. 84.

Earlier, I raised the question of whether we have anything like satori in the West. If we discount the sayings of our Western mystics, a superficial glance discloses nothing that could be likened to it in even the faintest degree. The possibility that there are stages in the development of consciousness plays no role in our thinking. The mere thought that there is a tremendous psychological difference between consciousness of the existence of an object and "consciousness of the consciousness" of an object borders on a quibble that hardly needs answering. For the same reason, one could hardly bring oneself to take such a problem seriously enough to consider the psychological conditions in which it arose. It is significant that questions of this kind do not, as a rule, arise from any intellectual need, but, where they exist, are nearly always rooted in an originally religious practice. In India it was yoga and in China Buddhism which supplied the driving force for these attempts to wrench oneself free from bondage to a state of consciousness that was felt to be incomplete. So far as Western mysticism is concerned, its texts are full of instructions as to how man can and must release himself from the "I-ness" of his consciousness, so that through knowledge of his own nature he may rise above it and attain the inner (godlike) man. John of Ruysbroeck makes use of an image which was also known to Indian philosophy, that of the tree whose roots are above and its branches below:²¹ "And he must climb up into the tree of faith, which grows from above downwards, for its roots are in the Godhead."²² He also says, like the yogi: "Man must be free and without ideas, released from all attachments and empty of all creatures."²³ "He must be untouched by joy and sorrow, profit and loss, rising and falling, concern for others, pleasure and fear, and not be attached to any creature."²⁴ It is in this that the "unity" of his being consists, and this means "being turned inwards." Being turned inwards means that "a man is turned within, into his own heart, that he may understand and feel the inner working

²¹ "Its root is above, its branches below—this eternal fig-tree! . . . That is Brahma, that is called the Immortal." *Katha Upanishad*, 6, 1, trans. by Hume, *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, p. 358.

²² John of Ruysbroeck, *The Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage*, p. 47. One can hardly suppose that this Flemish mystic, who was born in 1273, borrowed this image from any Indian text. ²³ *Ibid.*, p. 51. ²⁴ P. 57, modified.

and the inner words' of God." ²⁵ This new state of consciousness born of religious practice is distinguished by the fact that outward things no longer affect an ego-bound consciousness, thus giving rise to mutual attachment, but that an empty consciousness stands open to another influence. This "other" influence is no longer felt as one's own activity, but as that of a non-ego which has the conscious mind as its object.²⁶ It is as if the subject-character of the ego had been overrun, or taken over, by another subject which appears in place of the ego.²⁷ This is a well-known religious experience, already formulated by St. Paul.²⁸ Undoubtedly a new state of consciousness is described here, separated from the earlier state by an incisive process of religious transformation.

891 It could be objected that consciousness in itself has not changed, only the consciousness of something, just as though one had turned over the page of a book and now saw a different picture with the same eyes. I am afraid this is no more than an arbitrary interpretation, for it does not fit the facts. The fact is that in the texts it is not merely a different picture or object that is described, but rather an experience of transformation, often occurring amid the most violent psychic convulsions. The blotting out of one picture and its replacement by another is an everyday occurrence which has none of the attributes of a transformation experience. *It is not that something different is seen, but that one sees differently.* It is as though the spatial act of seeing were changed by a new dimension. When the Master asks: "Do you hear the murmuring of the brook?" he obviously means something quite different from ordinary "hearing."²⁹ Consciousness is something like perception, and like the latter is subject to conditions and limitations. You can, for instance, be conscious at various levels, within a narrower or wider field,

²⁵ Ibid., p. 62, modified.

²⁶ "O Lord . . . instruct me in the doctrine of the non-ego, which is grounded in the self-nature of mind." Cited from the Lankavatāra Sutra, in Suzuki, *Essays*, I, p. 89.

²⁷ A Zen Master says: "Buddha is none other than the mind, or rather, him who strives to see this mind."

²⁸ Galatians 2:20: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me."

²⁹ Suzuki says of this change, "The old way of viewing things is abandoned and the world acquires a new signification . . . a new beauty which exists in the 'refreshing breeze' and in the 'shining jewel.'" *Essays*, I, p. 249. See also p. 138.

more on the surface or deeper down. These differences in degree are often differences in kind as well, since they depend on the development of the personality as a whole; that is to say, on the nature of the perceiving subject.

⁸⁹² The intellect has no interest in the nature of the perceiving subject so far as the latter only thinks logically. The intellect is essentially concerned with elaborating the contents of consciousness and with methods of elaboration. A rare philosophic passion is needed to compel the attempt to get beyond intellect and break through to a "knowledge of the knower." Such a passion is practically indistinguishable from the driving force of religion; consequently this whole problem belongs to the religious transformation process, which is incommensurable with intellect. Classical philosophy subserves this process on a wide scale, but this can be said less and less of the newer philosophy. Schopenhauer is still—with qualifications—classical, but Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* is no longer philosophy at all: it is a dramatic process of transformation which has completely swallowed up the intellect. It is no longer concerned with thought, but, in the highest sense, with the thinker of thought—and this on every page of the book. A new man, a completely transformed man, is to appear on the scene, one who has broken the shell of the old and who not only looks upon a new heaven and a new earth, but has created them. Angelus Silesius puts it rather more modestly than Zarathustra:

My body is a shell in which a chick lies closed about;
Brooded by the spirit of eternity, it waits its hatching out.³⁰

⁸⁹³ Satori corresponds in the Christian sphere to an experience of religious transformation. As there are different degrees and kinds of such an experience, it may not be superfluous to define more accurately the category which corresponds most closely to the Zen experience. This is without doubt the mystic experience, which differs from other types in that its preliminary stages consist in "letting oneself go," in "emptying oneself of images and ideas," as opposed to those religious experiences which, like the exercises of Ignatius Loyola, are based on the practice of envisaging sacred images. In this latter class I would

³⁰ From *Der Cherubinischer Wandersmann*. [Trans. by W. R. Trask (unpub.)]

include transformation through faith and prayer and through collective experience in Protestantism, since a very definite expectation plays the decisive role here, and not by any means "emptiness" or "freeness." The characteristically Eckhartian assertion that "God is Nothingness" may well be incompatible in principle with the contemplation of the Passion, with faith and collective expectations.

⁸⁹⁴ Thus the correspondence between satori and Western experience is limited to those few Christian mystics whose paradoxical statements skirt the edge of heterodoxy or actually overstep it. As we know, it was this that drew down on Meister Eckhart's writings the condemnation of the Church. If Buddhism were a "Church" in our sense of the word, she would undoubtedly find Zen an insufferable nuisance. The reason for this is the extreme individualism of its methods, and also the iconoclastic attitude of many of the Masters.³¹ To the extent that Zen is a movement, collective forms have arisen in the course of the centuries, as can be seen from Suzuki's *Training of the Zen Buddhist Monk* (Kyoto, 1934). But these concern externals only. Apart from the typical mode of life, the spiritual training or development seems to lie in the method of the *koan*. The koan is understood to be a paradoxical question, statement, or action of the Master. Judging by Suzuki's description, it seems to consist chiefly of master-questions handed down in the form of anecdotes. These are submitted by the teacher to the student for meditation. A classic example is the Wu anecdote. A monk once asked the Master: "Has a dog a Buddha nature too?" Whereupon the Master replied: "Wu!" As Suzuki remarks, this "Wu" means quite simply "bow-wow," obviously just what the dog himself would have said in answer to such a question.³²

⁸⁹⁵ At first sight it seems as if the posing of such a question as

³¹ "Satori is the most intimate individual experience." *Essays*, I, p. 261.

A Master says to his pupil: "I have really nothing to impart to you, and if I tried to do so you might have occasion to make me an object of ridicule. Besides, whatever I can tell you is my own and can never be yours." *Introduction*, p. 91.

A monk says to the Master: "I have been seeking for the Buddha, but do not yet know how to go on with my research." Said the Master: "It is very much like looking for an ox when riding on one." *Essays*, II, p. 74.

A Master says: "The mind that does not understand is the Buddha: there is no other." *Ibid.*, p. 72. ³² *Essays*, II, pp. 84, 90.

an object of meditation would anticipate or prejudice the end-result, and that it would therefore determine the content of the experience, just as in the Jesuit exercises or in certain yoga meditations the content is determined by the task set by the teacher. The koans, however, are so various, so ambiguous, and above all so boundlessly paradoxical that even an expert must be completely in the dark as to what might be considered a suitable solution. In addition, the descriptions of the final result are so obscure that in no single case can one discover any rational connection between the koan and the experience of enlightenment. Since no logical sequence can be demonstrated, it remains to be supposed that the koan method puts not the smallest restraint upon the freedom of the psychic process and that the end-result therefore springs from nothing but the individual disposition of the pupil. The complete destruction of the rational intellect aimed at in the training creates an almost perfect lack of conscious presuppositions. These are excluded as far as possible, but not unconscious presuppositions—that is, the existing but unrecognized psychological disposition, which is anything but empty or a *tabula rasa*. It is a nature-given factor, and when it answers—this being obviously the satori experience—it is an answer of Nature, who has succeeded in conveying her reaction direct to the conscious mind.³³ What the unconscious nature of the pupil presents to the teacher or to the koan by way of an answer is, manifestly, satori. This seems, at least to me, to be the view which, to judge by the descriptions, formulates the nature of satori more or less correctly. It is also supported by the fact that the "glimpse into one's own nature," the "original man," and the depths of one's being are often a matter of supreme concern to the Zen master.³⁴

³³ "Zen consciousness is to be nursed to maturity. When it is fully matured, it is sure to break out as satori, which is an insight into the unconscious." *Essays*, II, p. 60.

³⁴ The fourth maxim of Zen is "Seeing into one's nature and the attainment of Buddhahood" (I, p. 18). When a monk asked Hui-neng for instruction, the Master told him: "Show me your original face before you were born" (I, p. 224). A Japanese Zen book says: "If you wish to seek the Buddha, you ought to see into your own nature; for this nature is the Buddha himself" (I, p. 231). A satori experience shows a Master the "original man" (I, p. 255). Hui-neng said: "Think not of good, think not of evil, but see what at the moment your own original features are, which you had even before coming into existence" (II, p. 42).

896 Zen differs from all other exercises in meditation, whether philosophical or religious, in its total lack of presuppositions. Often Buddha himself is sternly rejected, indeed, almost blasphemously ignored, although—or perhaps just because—he could be the strongest spiritual presupposition of the whole exercise. But he too is an image and must therefore be set aside. Nothing must be present except what is actually there: that is, man with all his unconscious presuppositions, of which, precisely because they are unconscious, he can never, never rid himself. The answer which appears to come from the void, the light which flares up from the blackest darkness, these have always been experienced as a wonderful and blessed illumination.

897 The world of consciousness is inevitably a world full of restrictions, of walls blocking the way. It is of necessity one-sided, because of the nature of consciousness itself. No consciousness can harbour more than a very small number of simultaneous perceptions. All else must lie in shadow, withdrawn from sight. Any increase in the simultaneous contents immediately produces a dimming of consciousness, if not confusion to the point of disorientation. Consciousness not only requires, but is of its very nature strictly limited to, the few and hence the distinct. We owe our general orientation simply and solely to the fact that through attention we are able to register a fairly rapid succession of images. But attention is an effort of which we are not capable all the time. We have to make do, so to speak, with a minimum of simultaneous perceptions and successions of images. Hence in wide areas possible perceptions are continuously excluded, and consciousness is always bound to the narrowest circle. What would happen if an individual consciousness were able to take in at a single glance a simultaneous picture of every possible perception is beyond imagining. If man has already succeeded in building up the structure of the world from the few distinct things that he can perceive at one and the same time, what godlike spectacle would present itself to his eyes if he were able to perceive a great deal more all at once and distinctly? This question applies only to perceptions that are *possible* to us. If we now add to these the unconscious contents—i.e., contents which are not yet, or no longer, capable of consciousness—and then try to imagine a total vision, why, this is beyond the most

audacious fantasy. It is of course completely unimaginable in any conscious form, but in the unconscious it is a fact, since everything subliminal holds within it the ever-present possibility of being perceived and represented in consciousness. The unconscious is an irrepresentable totality of all subliminal psychic factors, a "total vision" *in potentia*. It constitutes the total disposition from which consciousness singles out tiny fragments from time to time.

898 Now if consciousness is emptied as far as possible of its contents, they will fall into a state of unconsciousness, at least for the time being. In Zen, this displacement usually results from the energy being withdrawn from conscious contents and transferred either to the conception of "emptiness" or to the koan. As both of these must be static, the succession of images is abolished and with it the energy which maintains the kinetics of consciousness. The energy thus saved goes over to the unconscious and reinforces its natural charge to bursting point. This increases the readiness of the unconscious contents to break through into consciousness. But since the emptying and shutting down of consciousness is no easy matter, a special training of indefinite duration³⁵ is needed in order to set up that maximum tension which leads to the final break-through of unconscious contents.

899 The contents that break through are far from being random ones. As psychiatric experience with insane patients shows, specific relations exist between the conscious contents and the delusional ideas that break through in delirium. They are the same relations as exist between the dreams and the waking consciousness of normal people. The connection is an essentially compensatory relationship:³⁶ the unconscious contents bring to the surface everything that is necessary³⁷ in the broadest sense

³⁵ Bodhidharma, the founder of Zen in China, says: "The incomparable doctrine of Buddhism can be comprehended only after a long hard discipline and by enduring what is most difficult to endure, and by practising what is most difficult to practise. Men of inferior virtue and wisdom are not allowed to understand anything about it. All the labours of such ones will come to naught." (*Ibid.*, I, p. 188.)
³⁶ This is more probable than one that is merely "complementary."

³⁷ This "necessity" is a working hypothesis. People can, and do, hold very different views on this point. For instance, are religious ideas "necessary"? Only the course of the individual's life can decide this, i.e., his individual experience. There are no abstract criteria.

for the completion and wholeness of conscious orientation. If the fragments offered by, or forced up from, the unconscious are meaningfully built into conscious life, a form of psychic existence results which corresponds better to the whole of the individual's personality, and so abolishes the fruitless conflicts between his conscious and unconscious self. Modern psychotherapy is based on this principle, in so far as it has been able to free itself from the historical prejudice that the unconscious consists only of infantile and morally inferior contents. There is certainly an inferior corner in it, a lumber-room full of dirty secrets, though these are not so much unconscious as hidden and only half forgotten. But all this has about as much to do with the whole of the unconscious as a decayed tooth has with the total personality. The unconscious is the matrix of all metaphysical statements, of all mythology, of all philosophy (so far as this is not merely critical), and of all expressions of life that are based on psychological premises.

900 Every invasion of the unconscious is an answer to a definite conscious situation, and this answer follows from the totality of possible ideas present, i.e., from the total disposition which, as explained above, is a simultaneous picture *in potentia* of psychic existence. The splitting up into single units, its one-sided and fragmentary character, is of the essence of consciousness. The reaction coming from the disposition always has a total character, as it reflects a nature which has not been divided up by any discriminating consciousness.³⁸ Hence its overpowering effect. It is the unexpected, all-embracing, completely illuminating answer, which works all the more as illumination and revelation since the conscious mind has got itself wedged into a hopeless blind alley.³⁹

901 When, therefore, after many years of the hardest practice and the most strenuous demolition of rational understanding, the Zen devotee receives an answer—the only true answer—from Nature herself, everything that is said of satori can be understood. As one can see for oneself, it is the *naturalness* of the answer that strikes one most about the Zen anecdotes. Yes, one

³⁸ "When the mind discriminates, there is manifoldness of things; when it does not it looks into the true state of things." *Essays*, I, p. 99.

³⁹ See the passage beginning "Have your mind like unto space. . . ." Suzuki, *Essays*, I, p. 223.

can accept with a sort of old-roguish satisfaction the story of the enlightened pupil who gave his Master a slap in the face as a reward.⁴⁰ And how much wisdom there is in the Master's "Wu," the answer to the question about the Buddha-nature of the dog! One must always bear in mind, however, that there are a great many people who cannot distinguish between a metaphysical joke and nonsense, and just as many who are so convinced of their own cleverness that they have never in their lives met any but fools.

902 Great as is the value of Zen Buddhism for understanding the religious transformation process, its use among Western people is very problematical. The mental education necessary for Zen is lacking in the West. Who among us would place such implicit trust in a superior Master and his incomprehensible ways? This respect for the greater human personality is found only in the East. Could any of us boast that he believes in the possibility of a boundlessly paradoxical transformation experience, to the extent, moreover, of sacrificing many years of his life to the wearisome pursuit of such a goal? And finally, who would dare to take upon himself the responsibility for such an unorthodox transformation experience—except a man who was little to be trusted, one who, maybe for pathological reasons, has too much to say for himself? Just such a person would have no cause to complain of any lack of following among us. But let a "Master" set us a hard task, which requires more than mere parrot-talk, and the European begins to have doubts, for the steep path of self-development is to him as mournful and gloomy as the path to hell.

903 I have no doubt that the satori experience does occur also in the West, for we too have men who glimpse ultimate goals and spare themselves no pains to draw near to them. But they will keep silent, not only out of shyness, but because they know that any attempt to convey their experience to others is hopeless. There is nothing in our civilization to foster these strivings, not even the Church, the custodian of religious values. Indeed, it is the function of the Church to oppose all original experience, because this can only be unorthodox. The only movement inside our civilization which has, or should have, some understanding of these endeavours is psychotherapy. It is therefore

⁴⁰ *Introduction to Zen Buddhism*, p. 94.

no accident that it is a psychotherapist who is writing this foreword.

904 Psychotherapy is at bottom a dialectical relationship between doctor and patient. It is an encounter, a discussion between two psychic wholes, in which knowledge is used only as a tool. The goal is transformation—not one that is predetermined, but rather an indeterminable change, the only criterion of which is the disappearance of egohood. No efforts on the part of the doctor can compel this experience. The most he can do is to smooth the path for the patient and help him to attain an attitude which offers the least resistance to the decisive experience. If knowledge plays no small part in our Western procedure, this is equivalent to the importance of the traditional spiritual atmosphere of Buddhism in Zen. Zen and its technique could only have arisen on the basis of Buddhist culture, which it presupposes at every turn. You cannot annihilate a rationalistic intellect that was never there—no Zen adept was ever the product of ignorance and lack of culture. Hence it frequently happens with us also that a conscious ego and a cultivated understanding must first be produced through analysis before one can even think about abolishing egohood or rationalism. What is more, psychotherapy does not deal with men who, like Zen monks, are ready to make any sacrifice for the sake of truth, but very often with the most stubborn of all Europeans. Thus the tasks of psychotherapy are much more varied, and the individual phases of the long process much more contradictory, than is the case in Zen.

905 For these and many other reasons a direct transplantation of Zen to our Western conditions is neither commendable nor even possible. All the same, the psychotherapist who is seriously concerned with the question of the aim of his therapy cannot remain unmoved when he sees the end towards which this Eastern method of psychic “healing”—i.e., “making whole”—is striving. As we know, this question has occupied the most adventurous minds of the East for more than two thousand years, and in this respect methods and philosophical doctrines have been developed which simply put all Western attempts along these lines into the shade. Our attempts have, with few exceptions, all stopped short at either magic (mystery cults, amongst which we must include Christianity) or intellectualism (philos-

ophy from Pythagoras to Schopenhauer). It is only the tragedies of Goethe's *Faust* and Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* which mark the first glimmerings of a break-through of total experience in our Western hemisphere.⁴¹ And we do not know even today what these most promising of all products of the Western mind may at length signify, so overlaid are they with the materiality and concreteness of our thinking, as moulded by the Greeks.⁴² Despite the fact that our intellect has developed almost to perfection the capacity of the bird of prey to spy the tiniest mouse from the greatest height, yet the pull of the earth drags it down, and the *samskaras* entangle it in a world of confusing images the moment it no longer seeks for booty but turns one eye inwards to find him who seeks. Then the individual falls into the throes of a daemonic rebirth, beset with unknown terrors and dangers and menaced by deluding mirages in a labyrinth of error. The worst of all fates threatens the venturer: mute, abyssal loneliness in the age he calls his own. What do we know of the hidden motives for Goethe's "main business," as he called his *Faust*, or of the shudders of the "Dionysus experience"? One has to read the *Bardo Thödol*, the Tibetan Book of the Dead, backwards, as I have suggested,⁴³ in order to find an Eastern parallel to the torments and catastrophes of the Western "way of release" to wholeness. This is the issue here—not good intentions, clever imitations, or intellectual acrobatics. And this, in shadowy hints or in greater or lesser fragments, is what the psychotherapist is faced with when he has freed himself from over-hasty and short-sighted doctrinal opinions. If he is a slave to his quasi-biological credo he will always try to reduce what he has glimpsed to the banal and the known, to a rationalistic denominator which satisfies only those who are content with illusions. But the foremost of all illusions is that anything can ever satisfy anybody. That illusion stands behind all that is unendurable in life and in front of all progress, and it is one of the most difficult things to overcome. If the psychotherapist can take time off from his helpful activities for a little reflection,

⁴¹ In this connection I must also mention the English mystic, William Blake. Cf. an excellent account in Percival, *William Blake's Circle of Destiny*.

⁴² The genius of the Greeks lay in the break-through of consciousness into the materiality of the world, thus robbing the world of its original dreamlike quality.

⁴³ [Cf. above, par. 844.]

or if by any chance he is forced into seeing through his own illusions, it may dawn on him how hollow and flat, how inimical to life, are all rationalistic reductions when they come upon something that is alive, that wants to grow. Should he follow this up he will soon get an idea of what it means to "open wide that gate / Past which man's steps have ever flinching trod." ⁴⁴

906 I would not under any circumstances like it to be understood that I am making any recommendations or offering any advice. But when one begins to talk about Zen in the West I consider it my duty to show the European where our entrance lies to that "longest road" which leads to satori, and what kind of difficulties bestrew the path which only a few of our great ones have trod—beacons, perhaps, on high mountains, shining out into the dim future. It would be a disastrous mistake to assume that satori or samādhi are to be met with anywhere below these heights. As an experience of totality it cannot be anything cheaper or smaller than the whole. What this means psychologically can be seen from the simple reflection that consciousness is always only a part of the psyche and therefore never capable of psychic wholeness: for that the indefinite extension of the unconscious is needed. But the unconscious can neither be caught with clever formulas nor exorcized by means of scientific dogmas, for something of destiny clings to it—indeed, it is sometimes destiny itself, as *Faust* and *Zarathustra* show all too clearly. The attainment of wholeness requires one to stake one's whole being. Nothing less will do; there can be no easier conditions, no substitutes, no compromises. Considering that both *Faust* and *Zarathustra*, despite the highest recognition, stand on the border-line of what is comprehensible to the European, one could hardly expect the educated public, which has only just begun to hear about the obscure world of the psyche, to form any adequate conception of the spiritual state of a man caught in the toils of the individuation process—which is my term for "becoming whole." People then drag out the vocabulary of pathology and console themselves with the terminology of neurosis and psychosis, or else they whisper about the "creative secret." But what can a man "create" if he doesn't happen to be a poet? This misunderstanding has caused not a few persons in recent times to call themselves—by their own grace—"artists," just as

⁴⁴ *Faust*, Part I, trans. by Wayne, p. 54.

if art had nothing to do with ability. But if you have nothing at all to create, then perhaps you create yourself.

907 Zen shows how much "becoming whole" means to the East. Preoccupation with the riddles of Zen may perhaps stiffen the spine of the faint-hearted European or provide a pair of spectacles for his psychic myopia, so that from his "damned hole in the wall"⁴⁵ he may enjoy at least a glimpse of the world of psychic experience, which till now lay shrouded in fog. No harm can be done, for those who are too frightened will be effectively protected from further corruption, as also from everything of significance, by the helpful idea of "auto-suggestion."⁴⁶ I should like to warn the attentive and sympathetic reader, however, not to underestimate the spiritual depth of the East, or to assume that there is anything cheap and facile about Zen.⁴⁷ The assiduously cultivated credulity of the West in regard to Eastern thought is in this case a lesser danger, as in Zen there are fortunately none of those marvellously incomprehensible words that we find in Indian cults. Neither does Zen play about with complicated *hatha-yoga* techniques,⁴⁸ which delude the physiologically minded European into the false hope that the spirit can be obtained by just sitting and breathing. On the contrary, Zen demands intelligence and will power, as do all greater things that want to become realities.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 44. ⁴⁶ *Introduction*, p. 95.

⁴⁷ "It is no pastime but the most serious task in life; no idlers will ever dare attempt it." Suzuki, *Essays*, I, p. 27; cf. also p. 92.

⁴⁸ Says a Master: "If thou seekest Buddhahood by thus sitting cross-legged, thou murderest him. So long as thou freest thyself not from sitting so, thou never comest to the truth." *Essays*, I, p. 235. Cf. also II, p. 83f.