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*Teruyasu Tamura*

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## About the Author

Teruyasu Tamura is a professor of American literature at Chukyo University in Japan. He was educated at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies and received a master's degree from International Christian University. He grew up at Izumozaki, a small town on the coast of the Japan Sea, where a famous Zen priest named Ryōkan (1758-1831) was born. This, together with the fact that his family belonged to a Soto Zen temple, may account for his early interest in Zen. Yet, it was not until 1979 when he was studying at the University of Pennsylvania as a visiting scholar that he actually began to sit in *zazen*. A few months later he attended a *sesshin* (Zen retreat) at Kongoji Temple in New York led by Eido Shimano Roshi, and on the last day experienced what Dogen referred to as "the body and the mind dropping off." After returning to Japan, he received Koun Yamada Roshi's guidance. In 1989 he came back to the U.S. to do research on Quakerism at Swarthmore College for one year. He is now writing a series of papers on the subject of Quaker influence in American literature.

This essay is a written version of what he shared at the forum of Swarthmore Friends Meeting on March 18, 1990.

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I had a chance to study Quakerism at Swarthmore College as a visiting scholar for one year from April, 1989. I attended from time to time the Sunday worship at Swarthmore Friends Meeting and at Pendle Hill (a Quaker center for study and contemplation near Swarthmore). I also became one of the more regular sitters at a weekly meeting for Zen sitting held at Pendle Hill. Through these experiences I had a glimpse of Quakerism as it actually lives today for many Friends in that area.

The present article tries to compare Quakerism with Zen Buddhism, but it is by no means a systematic, exhaustive comparison. Rather, it is a personal attempt to understand more deeply some salient features of Quakerism that I have happened to notice as a Zen follower.

Zen is a sect of Buddhism, but it differs from other Buddhist sects in seeking to recapture Buddha Sakyamuni's enlightenment experience itself rather than to learn his teachings through various sutras. 'Zen' is a Chinese transcription of a Sanscrit word *dhyāna*, which means 'silent meditation.' We may say that Zen is awakening to one's original nature or true self through the practice of *zazen* (sitting meditation in a prescribed, cross-legged posture), and by that practice becoming free from all delusions and sufferings.

There are two main schools of Zen in Japan: *Rinzai* and *Soto*. These two schools differ from each other in their way of training. In *Rinzai* school the masters give their students some *kōans* to handle during *zazen*. A *kōan* is a question that sounds quite enigmatic and sometimes entirely nonsensical. For example, "What is the sound of one hand clapping?" or "What is the Original Face before your father and mother were born?" They wrestle with their *kōan* intensively to attain enlightenment.

Unlike *Rinzai* school, *Soto* does not seek enlightenment, and so does not use *kōans*. Instead, it insists on *shikantaza* which

means 'just sitting.' According to Dogen who transmitted *Soto* Zen from China to Japan, we are Buddhas from the first, only we do not know that fact, because our Buddhahood is hidden by the hard crust of the ego. To practice *zazen* is to let go of the ego and make this hidden nature manifest. Therefore, to practice is to be a Buddha; practice is nothing other than enlightenment.

*Soto* and *Rinzai* Zen are rather remarkably different in approach, but the final goal of these two schools is the same: to transcend the ego and realize the Original Face, the true nature, or the true Self. To study the Buddha Way is to study the self; to study the self is to forget the self; to forget the self is to be enlightened by myriad things; to be enlightened by myriad things is to drop off the body and mind of self and others.<sup>1</sup>

When one compares this religion of self-realization with Christian mysticism or Quakerism, one may wonder if there is anything in common between the two. There are many who claim that Zen is quite different from Christian mysticism. For example, a Zen poet Takashi Takemoto cites the definition of mysticism in *Catholic Encyclopedia* as "the direct union of the human soul with the Divinity through contemplation and love" and continues:

The union is alleged to be direct, but it rests none the less on a dualism in which man and the personal God stand opposed to one another. Man is helpless and cannot enter into the mystic union unless God wills it. In Zen, on the other hand, union with the Absolute and union with nature are one and the same thing; it is immediate—with no intermediary whatever. If you can be free from dualistic rumination, you can see the Absolute. There is nothing mystifying about Zen. Zen is clarity itself.<sup>2</sup>

Others assert, however, that mysticism is the same in all ages and in all places, that East and West and other differences

vanish here. I myself dare not declare that it is unconditionally the same in all ages and in all places, although I would say that all mystical experiences, whether Buddhist or Christian, are fundamentally the same, so long as they are genuine. Then, what is "genuine" mysticism?

One dictionary of religion says, "No definition could be both meaningful and sufficiently comprehensive to include all experiences that have been described as 'mystical.'" It was maybe for this reason that William James, instead of defining mysticism, gave "four marks" of what may justly be called "mystical."

1. Ineffability—that is, it defies expression; it cannot be adequately described in words. So its quality must be directly experienced.
2. Noetic quality—it gives deep insight into the truth that cannot be plumbed by the discursive intellect. It is an illumination, full of significance and importance.
3. Transiency—it soon passes away.
4. Passivity—we can do nothing with will power.<sup>3</sup>

By these marks or standards, we may be able to screen out merely pathological or eccentric experiences. Even then, in much of mystic literature we would find a variety of odd images and words which make it look like a dream world. Yet, if we try, as Evelyn Underhill did, to strip off all unessential elements from mystical experiences—all that comes from tradition, culture, temperament, and so forth—we will find that all mystic experiences will be reduced to what might be called "the direct, personal experience of the Being of beings." The Being of beings is variously called: the One, the Absolute, the Reality by philosophers; emptiness, nothingness, the true nature, the true Self, the Original Face by Zen Buddhists; nought, a bare pure ground, an unwall'd world by some mystics. Whatever words mystics may use, their fundamental experiences seem to be similar.

I felt convinced of the identity of all true mystic experiences when I read *The Cloud of Unknowing* written by an unknown author of medieval England. This book gives Carthusian monks a very detailed guidance as to how to attain the highest spiritual experience. I was amazed at the similarity of the methods and teachings of this book to Zen's way of attaining enlightenment. I felt that if I changed the word "God" into "the true Self; or "nothingness" and Christian terms and ideas into Buddhist ones, I could find an equivalent Zen teaching or phrase for each piece of advice of this book. I know that some Catholic manuals, for example, Saint Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercise*, recommend the disciple to expel sensation by imagining holy scenes. This is not a Zen way. But *The Cloud of Unknowing* not only teaches the monk to stop thinking, but strongly dissuades him from using imagination in any way. He must let go of any image, any idea, any feeling. He is warned that even the consciousness of any particular saint or pure spiritual thing hinders him in this exercise. The author of *The Cloud* says that a simple reaching out directly toward God is sufficient, and offers a practice similar to the use of a *kōan*. He says:

If you want this intention summed up in a word, to retain it more easily, take a short word, preferably of one syllable, to do so. The shorter the word the better, being more like the working of the Spirit. A word like "God" or "Love." Choose which you like.<sup>4</sup>

The final aim of the whole exercise is, just like Zen, to let go of everything and make one's mind completely silent, to stop the working of intellect and imagination; that is, to let go of one's ego. So my question is, how can any significant difference arise out of the same kind of inner practice? My conclusion is that any mystical experience attained this way must be

fundamentally the same as Zen experience. Compare the following two citations:

Putting your simple faith in this, discipline yourself accordingly; let body and mind be turned into an inanimate object of nature like a stone or a piece of wood; when a state of perfect motionlessness and unawareness is obtained all the signs of life will depart and also every trace of limitation will vanish. Not a single idea will disturb your consciousness, when lo! all of a sudden you will come to realize a light abounding in full gladness. It is like coming across a light in thick darkness; it is like receiving treasure in poverty. The four elements and the five aggregates are no more felt as burdens; so light, so easy, so free you are. Your very existence has been delivered from all limitations; you have become open, light and transparent. You gain an illuminating insight into the very nature of things, which now appear to you as so many fairy-like flowers having no graspable realities. Here is manifested the unsophisticated self which is the original face of your being; here is shown all bare the most beautiful landscape of your birthplace. There is but one straight passage open and unobstructed through and through. This is so when you surrender all—your body, your life, and all that belongs to your inmost self.<sup>5</sup>

I saw into that which was without end, things which cannot be uttered, and of the greatness and infinitude of the love of God, which cannot be expressed by words. For I had been brought through the very ocean of darkness and death, and through and over the power of Satan, by the eternal, glorious power of Christ; even through that

darkness was I brought which covered over all the world, and which chained down all and shut up all in death.<sup>6</sup>

The first one is a part of a great Chinese Zen master Yengo's talk on enlightenment experience. The second one is from George Fox's *Journal*. Most of Fox's religious experiences came to him in the form of hearing God's voice, but in this case he seems to have attained what is deeper and more fundamental. On the surface, these two citations look rather different, but if we construe Fox's "the very ocean of darkness and death" and "the power of Satan" as the worldly desires or the discursive ideas that disturb one's consciousness, then we will find that they coincide underneath. We should also notice that Yengo uses the word "light" again and again. It reminds me of "the Inner Light." Thus, their experience is expressed or objectified in very different words and symbols, but I believe the experience itself is substantially the same.

In order to understand the nature of mystic experiences, depth psychology, especially Jung's theory of the unconscious, will be very helpful. We really don't know whether Jung's image of the mind is true or not. It is nothing more than a hypothesis. But it undeniably casts a great deal of light upon various psychic phenomena and religious experiences. It also gives us some clues as to what methods are more effective and what points we should keep in mind in our daily efforts toward spiritual growth. So let's cursorily see the structure of the psyche as Jung pictures it, according to Stanislaw Zielinski's description in *Psychology and Silence*.<sup>7</sup>

The conscious forms the top of the psyche, but it is merely a point like the head of an iceberg. It contains little more than one idea or a fleeting impression each moment. Immediately below it spreads a comprehensibly large area of memory, called the subconscious or preconscious. This is a storehouse where

we accumulate our knowledge or memories. All the items stored here are always available and can be revived into the conscious as the occasion demands.

Deeper down lies what he called the personal unconscious. It contains things forgotten, including memories of painful experiences. If we penetrate more deeply, we will reach a stratum which Jung called the collective unconscious. This does not belong to any particular individual. It is held in common by a group of people, such as a family or a social group. The deeper we go down, the wider group the layers of the unconscious represent, such as a nation or the whole humanity. It is a storehouse of what Jung called "archetypes." Here is the wisdom and experience of the ages. Jung stopped here. But when we stop here, we cannot understand mystical experience fully.

There is no reason to stop here, because the depth of layers in our psyche is a storehouse of the memories of the past. We may trace the past back to the time when heaven and earth were yet undivided, and assume a still deeper, limitless, bottomless layer of the collective unconscious, which we may call "the universal unconscious," or "cosmic consciousness" as the Canadian psychiatrist Dr. Bucke did.<sup>8</sup> Then we know that a mystical experience could be understood as a breakthrough to this deepest layer of the unconscious.

Now the problem of religious practice is how we can reach this deepest layer of the Unconscious. Mystics of various religions have found that the best way to get there is through complete silence. Silence is the place where God lives, and silence is the way to reach there. Here is the reason why both Quakerism and Zen put much stress on silence in their daily practice of worship.

Psychoanalysis says that to reach a deeper layer of the psyche we must first quiet the overlying strata.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, to

reach the personal unconscious, we must control the conscious and subconscious by suspending mental activity. In order to reach the collective unconscious, we must pacify the personal unconscious in the same way. And to control and silence the conscious, we must shun or cut off all the stimuli to five senses, because we can never stop thinking or feeling so long as our five senses are stirred up. That's why Zen and Quakerism both stress a simple and moderate way of life. Simplicity is not only an ethical virtue. It is also a practical requirement for spiritual development. Dogen said, "A man who learns the Way must be poor."

Inner silence means "no thinking." This seems to be very simple and easy. But it is very difficult. It is not the beginner's work. I think it is everything to mystical training, including Zen. Indeed almost every method or device is nothing but a means to keep us in complete silence. Sitting postures like *kekkaфуza* (full lotus position), *kōans*, breath-counting, following breaths, etc.—these are all means. The deeper our inner silence is, the deeper we can sink into our unconscious.

Our mind will not cease thinking easily. But once we succeed in sinking down or, to use a Quaker term, "centering down" deep into the unconscious through inner silence, we can attain what is called "mystical experience." Though it is called "mystical," there is nothing mysterious or enigmatic about it. In Greek the word "mystical" means simply "secret" or "hidden." Zen never calls itself mysticism. Coventry Patmore, too, says, "What the world, which truly knows nothing, calls 'mysticism' is the science of ultimates, the science of self-evident Reality."<sup>10</sup> Thus we may say that Quakerism and Zen share mysticism as their core experience. They are both religions of experience. They are both ways of living.

Next I would like to consider the very difficult problem of Quaker worship and vocal ministry. So far I have stressed the

similarity or the sameness of the core experience of the two religions. But the words "worship" and "vocal ministry" clearly show that there is a distinctive difference between Quakerism and Zen. In Zen we do sit in silence like Quakers and practice liturgy like Catholics, but we never consider Zen services as worship. Worship presupposes that there is something higher, bigger than ourselves, or beyond ourselves. God in Quakerism seems to stand at once within a human and beyond the person. God and humankind are exactly the same. But in Zen, Buddha is none other than human beings. We practice the fact that Buddha and we are the same thing. That is not all. Even birds and animals, trees and flowers, mountains and rivers—they are all Buddhas. We show in our action that all the dualities combine to form one reality. Maybe this is not so serious a problem, because even though Quakers start from a duality between God and man, they will come to the same monism when they attain union with God in their mystical experience.

A greater, more serious difference consists in "vocal ministry." The problem is that it is not merely a difference from Zen but seems to be a great cause of confusion and frustration even to Quakers themselves. From the standpoint of Zen, of *The Cloud of Unknowing* and depth psychology, for that matter, vocal ministry seems to be an irrational form of devotion; rather a hindrance than a help to attaining the deepest spirituality, because it breaks silence and prevents one from sinking further down into the unconscious.

In Zen we talk of "mayko." The literal meaning of the word is "state or universe of the devil"; it actually means various physical and psychological phenomena that prevent us from attaining enlightenment. Not all but many students experience them while sitting in *zazen*. It is said that they usually begin to appear around the third day of a *sesshin* (intensive *zazen* retreat). Some see beautiful scenery; some see Virgin Mary;

some hear sweet music; some feel as if falling into a deep well; some suddenly understand the difficult lines of a poem which they have not understood so far. However wonderful *mayko* may be, we must let go of them, because they are obstacles to enlightenment. If we allow them to occupy our mind, we will fail to sink deeper into the unconscious. But as they come from the very deep layers of the psyche, they show that we are not far from enlightenment. Zen masters invariably advise their students not to pay any attention to them but just let go of them. In the Quaker meetings that I have attended so far, messages usually came up before congregations were hardly settled, and most of them did not seem to be even *mayko*. They were likely to be the products of reasoning; therefore, distractions.

I think every religion is sacred to its followers, and its sacredness must be respected, especially Quakerism. It is a rare gem of the humankind. William James said, "Quakerism is something it is impossible to overpraise in a day of shams; it is a religion of veracity rooted in spiritual inwardness."<sup>11</sup> I quite agree with him. I love Quakers. I respect Quakers, sometimes more than Zen Buddhists. Still I must say that vocal ministry does not seem to be advisable from a Zen point of view. All Quakers want to know God directly, but vocal ministry seems to be preventing them from attaining their ultimate aim. I don't think this feeling is peculiar to me. In *Being Seventy* Elizabeth Vining tells us what her friend Chesley told her. Chesley is a Ph.D. in anthropology, a writer and poet, also involved in para-psychology, ESP, and psychic phenomena—a woman of real genius. She told Vining that she had been drawn to the local meeting for worship by the Quaker contribution to social concerns and by Quaker mysticism, but that she was disappointed. Friends rose up and talked about Vietnam and other current topics. She agreed with it all, but that was not

what she went to the meeting for, she said. After writing about what she was told by her friend, Vining asks herself, "Does the church exist to provide spiritual inspiration or to change the social system?"<sup>12</sup> This is a big question.

This problem involved in vocal ministry seems to have been felt even in the early eighteenth century. In *Philosophical Letters* Voltaire tells of the Quaker meeting for worship he attended. A profound silence lasted for a quarter of an hour, he says. Suddenly one of the Friends got up, and gave out a rigmarole of which neither he nor anyone else understood anything. After the meeting closed, Voltaire asked his friend why the most enlightened of them suffered such nonsense. The answer was, "We are obliged to tolerate them because we cannot tell whether any certain man who rises to speak is moved by the spirit or by folly."<sup>13</sup> I have read about some similar cases of vocal ministry and was always touched by the generosity and patience of the fellow members.

Of course, I have also heard and read about wonderful experiences of the "truly gathered meeting" where deep silence pervaded and the Spirit moved over the whole congregation. "Vocal ministry" out of this depth of silence has a marked and different quality than the products of reasoning alone can engender. Thomas Kelly writes, "In the Quaker practice of group worship on the basis of silence come special times when an electric hush and solemnity and depth of power steals over the worship."<sup>14</sup> I can fully understand what Kelly means by "an electric hush and solemnity and depth of power" from my own experience in *sesshins* (intensive *zazen* retreats).

To me a good Quaker meeting seems to be one in which deep silence continues at least for the first half hour because our minds are usually rough with the waves of thoughts and emotions and it will take some time for our minds to quiet down. Then some vocal ministry is given during the latter part

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of the worship. Otherwise most of the vocal ministry would come from the conscious, the surface layer of the psyche. It would be nothing but the product of reasoning and thinking, and the Quaker meeting would turn into a mere forum. In most of the Quaker meetings that I have attended, silence did not continue longer than fifteen minutes. It was sometimes broken in five minutes or so. Each time I wondered how they could calm their minds and get a divine message in such a short space of time. Some of my Quaker friends share my doubt and prefer completely silent worship.

I know that the second stage of Quaker history is usually referred to as Quietism. According to Howard Brinton, "Quietism is the doctrine that every self-centered trait or activity must be suppressed or quieted in order that the divine may find unopposed entrance to the soul."<sup>15</sup> This attitude is the same as that of Zen or *The Cloud of Unknowing*. It might safely be said to be an authentic way to know God. In fact, Brinton estimated it highly as such.

Many modern Quaker writers, however, do not seem to like Quietism, to my embarrassment. In *On Speaking Out of the Silence* Douglas Steere says, "Meetings that have turned completely silent almost inevitably wither away. Something is missing in the corporate relationship."<sup>16</sup> When I met with this comment, I couldn't believe it. It was a puzzle to a Zen Buddhist like me. As I mentioned before, from a Zen point of view, vocal ministry is an obstacle to the cultivation of the depth of spirituality rather than a help. Besides, it seems to be a frequent source of dismay and confusion to Quakers themselves. Yet, I have found since, that many other Quaker writers and leaders think meetings would be weaker and less active without vocal ministry. They are unanimous that vocal ministry is the driving force in Quakerism.

Indeed, when we compare Quakerism with Zen or monastic

Catholicism, we find that the remarkable social services and contributions of Quakerism must have come mostly from vocal ministry. This is the distinctively Quaker element that seems to help turn their religious conviction of universal brotherhood and sisterhood into concrete philanthropic activities and behaviors. Zen may have done much for the development of Japanese culture, but it enriched only the life of the upper and middle classes, not that of the lower classes or the suffering people. Instead of reaching out a helping hand to the unfortunate, Zen taught them quiet submission to the inevitable and stoic composure in the face of danger or calamity, maybe because of the Buddhist conception of *karma* (a man's action, seen as determining his fate). In *Mahayana* Buddhism which stresses disinterested love and relief of the suffering of others, as contrasted with *Hinayana* that emphasizes personal salvation through one's own efforts, a *Bodhisattva* (one who tries to be a Buddha) is supposed to save others before saving themselves. But Zen has done very little to save the poor and suffering. It seems to me that Quakers have been far greater Bodhisattvas than Zen Buddhists.

Undeniably most of the energy, eagerness, and compassion of Quakers come from the meeting for worship with vocal ministry. I know that this form of worship is closely related with the fact that Quakerism is a unique religion in that the same people are both laity and clergy. But how is it that confusion and tremendous power co-exist in it? This was a great puzzle to me for a long time. I wrestled with this question day after day, then, suddenly I hit upon something.

Isn't Quaker worship a mixture or combination of two almost incompatible aims or desires? One aim of Quaker worship is supposed to be to know God, the Inner Christ, the Inner Light, or whatever a Friend may call it. There is the desire of a direct experience of the ultimate reality. Another aim is to hear the



voice of God, to get messages or leadings from God as to what one should do in this world. On the surface, knowing God and hearing God seem to be almost the same thing. But psychologically speaking, they are completely different activities that are carried out on different levels of the psyche. Therefore they require different kinds of spiritual exercise. When one wants to receive some message from God, one doesn't have to see God. There can be some psychological distance or wall between one and God. One has only to come down, say, to the lower layer of the personal unconscious or maybe to the collective unconscious. But when it comes to knowing God experientially, one must come down into the universal unconscious, breaking through the wall marking it off from the collective unconscious. Until one reaches the universal unconscious, one must keep complete inner silence, as we have already seen in the approaches of Zen and *The Cloud of Unknowing*. One should never pay any attention to any image or thought, however valuable it may be on other occasions. Perhaps this search for God in Quakerism comes from the tradition of Catholic mysticism. Vocal ministry, on the other hand, seems to derive from the tradition of Biblical prophets. Their concern was not their own spiritual transformation or self-realization, but to warn the morally depraved society, to save their own society. It was more social than personal.

I thought so far for myself, when, thumbing through Howard Brinton's *Friends for 300 Years*, I came upon a paragraph that exactly coincides with my own conclusion. He says:

Quakerism might be said to combine two concepts but without any attempt to work out a consistent system . . . The admonition heard in Quaker meetings to "center down," to "dig deep," to seek for the revelations of the light in the depths of the soul is characteristic of the great mystics of the Church who followed the path earlier

explored by Plato and Plotinus. The silent waiting . . . and the cultivation of contemplation and sensitivity to inward leading is more Greek than Hebrew. On the other hand, the ministry in Quaker meetings stems from Hebrew prophetism rather than from Greek mysticism . . . The Quaker emphasis on action as a necessary and inevitable consequence of inward revelation is more Hebrew than Greek. Quakers today are known more for their work than for the depth of their spiritual life; more for doing than for being.<sup>17</sup>

This is a very clear-cut explanation. Here is the source of confusion of Quaker worship. My impression was not unfounded and my reasoning was not wrong. So far as Quakers preserve vocal ministry as an essential element of the worship, it will be very difficult for them to attain deep mystical experience. But as the example of Thomas Kelly shows, it is by no means impossible. Here I would like to make some suggestions about contemplation.

As we have already seen, vocal ministry is the vital force in Quakerism; it is essential to Quaker life and practice, though not ideal for deep contemplation. Therefore, those who want to deepen the interior spiritual life might as well distinguish between two kinds of worship of God and use a different method for each. Weekly corporate worship could be done according to the traditional way—waiting upon God in silence in expectancy for leadings or openings to share with the congregation. In their daily devotion, however, they should keep regular practice of complete inner silence, say, for an hour or half an hour. During this practice they should never expect to hear messages from God or to see the image of God. They must keep their mind empty for God to come into. Maybe they can have a week-end personal retreat from time to time,

or join a corporate week-long retreat for this purpose during summer vacation or other holidays.

I believe William Penn was aware of the need of these two types of devotional exercise. He says:

The Christian convent and monastery are within, where the soul is encloistered from sin. The true followers of Christ carry this religious house about with them. They exempt not themselves from the conversation of the world, though they keep themselves from the evil of it.

What a world should we have if everybody should close himself up within four walls. No. The perfection of the Christian life extends to every honest labour among men.

True godliness does not turn men out of the world, but enables them to live better in it and excites their endeavors to mend it; not to hide their candle under a bushel but to set it upon a table in a candlestick. This recluse attitude runs away by itself and leaves the world to be lost. Christians should keep the helm, and guide the vessel to its port; not hide away at the stern of the world and leave those that are in it without a pilot.<sup>18</sup>

This passage from *No Cross, No Crown* is the most beautiful, most imposing, most convincing declaration of the standpoint of lay religious people I have read. This explains why Quakers have been greater Bodhisattvas than Zen Buddhists. Yet, at the same time, William Penn knew the need of personal retreat, or of complete silence. A little later in the same book he says:

Here it is thou must not think thy own thoughts, nor speak thy own words. This is the silence of the holy

cross. Be secluded from the confusions that press upon the mind in those holy retirements. Do not think to overcome the Almighty by the best material, put in the aptest phrase. No. One groan, one sigh from a wounded soul excels and prevails with God. Wherefore stand in thy mind. Wait to feel something divine to prepare and dispose thee to worship God truly and acceptably. This is taking up the cross. Shut the doors and windows of the soul against everything that would interrupt this waiting upon God, no matter how pleasant in itself or how lawful and needful at another time. Then the power of the Almighty will break in.<sup>19</sup>

This shows that William Penn was aware of the nature and the limit of vocal ministry, though he himself was a great minister.

If we ignore the trifle differences, we may say that there are two types of approaches to contemplative worship. One is just to try not to think, to try to keep one's mind literally empty. Whenever some discursive idea comes up, one lets go of it. This is *shikantaza*, "just sitting," of *Soto Zen*, or what *The Cloud of Unknowing* refers to as "reaching out directly toward God." The other is to concentrate one's whole attention on one formless thing in order to prevent one's mind from thinking, feeling, or imagining. *Kōans* at the initial stage belong to this group. Enigmatic *kōans* are not for thinking. On the contrary, it is for not thinking. As they are intellectually insoluble, one will finally cease to think about it and just repeat the phrase in one's mind incessantly. It is no different from short prayers of Christian mystics. As Thomas Kelly and *The Cloud of Unknowing* state, a prayer for this exercise must be short, preferably a short word, a monosyllabic word, because it is not an object to meditate on or to think deeply of, but a means to cut off thinking, just like a *kōan*. While repeating one's word

or short prayer incessantly hour after hour, day after day, one will forget about all other things, and forget about oneself. One will become one with the word of prayer. Then suddenly one will wake up to the true nature of the divinity within.

In Japan there is a Buddhist sect called Pure Land Buddhism that was started by Priest Shinran. He taught the people that in order to go to *Gokuraku* (Heaven), they don't need to do hard practice, that they have only to call on the name of *Amida Buddha*. "Just say *Namu Amidabutsu* (Oh, *Amida Buddha!*)," he said. This belief was so simple, it spread rapidly among ordinary people, mostly uneducated peasants and workmen. It needs no self efforts, so it is supposed to be the opposite of Zen. But Daisetsu T. Suzuki found that there were a handful of truly enlightened people called *myōkōnin* among them. They didn't know long words, they didn't give long preachings. Yet, their own carefree life and the short simple poems they composed showed exactly the same enlightened state of mind as that of trained Zen priests. How did it happen? They repeated *Namu Amidabutsu* in their minds incessantly, not only while sitting in front of their family Buddhist altar, but while working, eating, or talking with other people. If you read *A Testament of Devotion*, you will find that this is precisely the same as what Thomas Kelly did. So we may think this is a universally effective method.

As a method it is very simple and seems to be especially convenient for lay people, but to practice it is extremely difficult. For modern intellectuals who are immersed in floods of information and are compelled to think every moment, it is almost impossible to practice it in their daily life. Thomas Kelly is a real miracle.

If there is any other thing that Zen can contribute to Quakerism, it is the idea of the oneness of body and mind. One of the most important discoveries of Oriental religions is

that body and mind are so closely related with each other that we can control our mind to a great extent by controlling our body and breathing. The main point is to sit still with our backbone straight. If we practice it constantly, we can control even the deepest layers of our psyche which would otherwise be out of reach of our conscious efforts. Full lotus posture is supposed to be the best for this purpose, but it is very difficult for Westerners who have no tradition of sitting on the floor that way. Even sitting on a chair or bench with our backbone straightened makes us feel much calmer and quieter than otherwise. Yamada Roshi once commented on Rodin's famous bronze statue called "A Thinking Man," saying, "If you sit in such a posture, nothing but pessimistic ideas will come up in your mind. To think rightly as well as to keep inner silence, you had better sit in a right posture."

In the March, 1990, issue of *Friends Journal* I found a picture of three young women sitting slovenly in an armchair or on the floor. The caption read, "It is a time in our busy lives to wait and be expectant." Of course, this was a caricature, but it was partly a reflection of the fact that Quakers are not so much aware of the importance of the right sitting posture as Zen Buddhists. We moderns are all busy and tired, indeed, but sitting this way won't relieve our exhaustion so much. In fact, it might make us feel more tired and depressed, and we might be farther away from the calm and serene state of mind.

Quakerism and Zen (or rather *Mahayana* Buddhism) have an interesting similarity. This also comes from the mystical nature of both religions. As Quakers talk of the historical Christ and the Inward Christ, so the *Mahayana* Buddhists talk of three bodies of Buddha:

1. the historical body of Buddha that existed on earth (the *Nirmānakāya*),
2. the true spirit of teaching of Buddha (the *Sambogakāya*),
3. the transcendent, cosmic Buddha body, which is identical

with the ultimate reality itself (the *Dharmakāya*).

Zen masters tell their disciples that when they attain enlightenment they will meet Buddha and other great patriarches face to face. What is meant by "Buddha" here is, of course, not the *Nirmānakāya*, but the *Sambogakāya* and the *Dharmakāya*. Enlightenment is the experiential knowledge of our true nature in which the historical Buddha and we are one and the same.

There are some fierce, horrifying phrases in Zen: "When you meet the Buddha, kill him; when you meet the Patriarch, kill him" or "Boil the Buddha! Boil the Patriarch!" I am afraid Christianity has no saying like these. Quakers would never say, "When you meet the Christ, kill him; when you meet Fox, kill him." For many Christians this would be nothing but a sacrilegious remark. For Zen Buddhists, however, this is the greatest repayment of the kindnesses they have received from the Buddha or the Patriarch. I think Quakers could understand why and appreciate these Zen phrases; because this is exactly what George Fox did. What do they mean?

When one attains enlightenment, one will know the true spirit of Buddha and the highest wisdom directly, not through words. Buddha's teachings as were recorded in sutras and books and have been handed down from generation to generation are nothing but words. Words are very incomplete indexes to the Truth and not the Truth itself. Besides, they are fixed and do not change, though everything in the world changes. Nothing is permanent in this world. When we see what has happened in the world for the past few years, we cannot but appreciate the truth of the Buddhist idea of "impermanence of everything." Yet, fixed words do not change or flow with the world. One Zen phrase says, "Words fail." Another goes, "As soon as you preach a thing, you miss the mark." So, those who have known the inner Buddha directly through their own

experience will not stick to the Buddha's teachings in sutras. When the teachings in sutras differ from or conflict with their experiential knowledge, they are ready to throw them away: that is, kill the Buddha. I think that George Fox and William Penn were genuine Christians. They knew the true spirit of Christ, the Inward Christ, so they could "kill Christ," that is, apply the teachings in the Bible directly from their own experience without being literal in their understandings of the teachings.

Quakerism is a religion of God and Zen is a religion of self, but we have seen that they are both based upon mystical experience, and that a number of common characteristics come out of this core. They both make much of silence and simple life; they both put more stress upon faith and life experience than upon idle words. It is true that they differ from each other rather remarkably in some respects, but most of their differences are by no means incompatible. Since they are derived from different cultural and social backgrounds, they are sometimes complementary to each other in this age of international understanding. For example, Quakers could learn from Zen's way of sitting, as I said, and Zen must learn, and American Zen is actually learning, from Quakers' peace efforts and selfless devotion to social services.

Things are changing rapidly in the world. With the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the invisible curtain that had separated the communist countries from the rest of the world for long years was also taken down. More and more people are becoming aware that all the nations on the earth are one family sharing the same destiny. We are no longer obsessed by the nightmare of a nuclear war, which was casting a threatening shadow upon us only a decade ago. But, on the other hand, the environmental pollution caused by the ever-increasing progress of science and technology has become so grave it might possibly be the ruin of humankind. Even if we should survive this crisis, too much

computerization might make us little better than robots, so long as the present-day civilization goes on as it does. The most urgent problem today is the recovery of man and nature. What is needed by the times is a religion that goes beyond the world of opposites, into the deep reality of existence, a religion that transcends colors, races, cultures, political systems, and even religions, a religion that knows that humankind shares one and the same life and spirit with the rest of nature, a religion that not only knows but acts to realize what it knows. I hope such a religion will emerge out of the close communion between Quakerism and Zen.

## Notes

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