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Satori and the Moral Dimension of Enlightenment

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Satori and the Moral Dimension of Enlightenment

Dale S. Wright*

Abstract

This essay addresses the question posed by Brian Victoria's description of "moral blindness" in twentieth-century Japanese Zen masters by claiming that since Zen monastic training does not include practices of reflection that cultivate the moral dimension of life, skill in this dimension of human character was not considered a fundamental or necessary component of Zen enlightenment. The essay asks what an enlightened *moral* sensitivity might require, and concludes in challenging the Zen tradition to consider re-engaging the Mahāyāna Buddhist practices of reflection out of which Zen originated in order to assess the possible role of morality in its thought and practice of enlightenment.

This essay responds to Brian Victoria's critique of Zen social ethics by attempting to answer his question about Japanese Zen masters before and during the Second World War: how could they seemingly act without moral conviction in confronting the crisis of their time? How could Zen "enlightenment" manifest itself in anything less than morally admirable actions? By assessing the role of morality in Zen tradition, the paper considers how the Zen tradition might extend itself in response to the moral impasse that these questions bring to light.

Although himself a fully ordained Zen priest in the Japanese tradition, Victoria's publications have shaken the world of Zen in Japan and in the

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West. His books aspire to document how Zen masters became advocates of Japanese military values, co-opted by the Japanese government into rationalizing the militarization of Japanese society in the 1930s and 40s by proclaiming the "unity of Zen and war."[1] Beyond this willingness to construct ideological links between military aggression and the teachings of Zen, Victoria describes how certain acclaimed Zen masters showed "complete and utter indifference to the pain and suffering of the victims of Japanese aggression."[2] He asks how it was possible that acknowledged Zen masters had witnessed "what were so clearly war atrocities committed against Chinese civilians, young and old, without having confronted the moral implications of (. . .) this mindless brutality."[3]

Some have responded to this critique of twentieth-century Japanese Zen by saying that those who demonstrated such "moral blindness" were obviously not enlightened—they were not *true* Zen masters.[4] Given the sheer numbers of authenticated Zen masters whose actions in the war fit this pattern, however, and the scarcity of those who can be held up as exemplars, this response is inadequate. In my judgment, a more honest and historically disciplined conclusion would be that these Zen masters were indeed "enlightened" according to the tradition's own criteria, but that, by these internal, defining criteria, Zen enlightenment has tended not to include a substantial moral dimension. This understanding will of course be counterintuitive for many of us because by "enlightenment" we want to mean an attainment of human excellence that is comprehensive and complete. That desire, however—to interpret particular concepts of enlightenment in terms of contemporary ideals— undermines our efforts to understand them historically. Historically considered, every attainment of enlightenment, like everything else human, has a particular character, one that takes different forms in different settings, cultures, and epochs. And in Zen, enlightenment has often been conceived and experienced in a way that does not include morality as a substantial or central element.

This is not to say, of course, that Zen masters are necessarily immoral, or even amoral. No doubt some masters in Zen history have been moral exemplars in their communities. But I conclude, following Tom Kasulis,

Chris Ives, and others, that this is not directly attributable to their Zen training so much as it is to their participation in the traditions of East Asian Confucian morality, as well as to the moral teachings of the broader Chinese Buddhist tradition. In other words, Zen masters, like everyone else in East Asia, lived moral lives and expressed themselves morally *to the extent of* their absorption of the Confucian and Buddhist culture in which they lived. Wherever moral stature is a component of the character of a Zen master, that stature would for the most part be the result of something other than Zen training. One reason why this would appear to be the case is that if we search for evidence of substantive interest in morality in the two dimensions of the Zen tradition where we would most expect to find it—in the vast canon of Zen sacred literature and in the full repertoire of Zen practices—we discover that it is largely absent.

Reading widely in the enormous Zen canon, which chronicles many centuries of Zen history, we find very little reference to the moral issues faced by Zen masters. We find, for example, no mention of what happened when Zen masters faced moral dilemmas having to do with war or open conflict like the ones that Brian Victoria has described in modern Japan, or any other for that matter. What happened, for example, when a Zen master had to decide between speaking on behalf of peasant farmers who were impoverished or starving in a time of famine and supporting the wealthy ruling powers of the region, who controlled the supply of food and resources? How did Zen masters respond when a local regime governed through intimidation and cruelty, or when corruption was blatant, widespread, and devastating to society? What happened when a donor to a Zen monastery asked in return for substantial favors that seriously compromised the values of the Buddhist tradition? How were moral issues like these decided and how did such decisions draw upon the awakened minds of Zen masters?

The answer is that, for the most part, we do not know because the authors of Zen texts did not consider incidences like these to be worthy examples of the "function" or "skill" of great Zen minds. In fact, the texts very rarely mention occasions of moral significance when describing the

great masters of Zen. They directed their descriptions and their praise instead towards what they took to be situations in life that, to their minds, most fully disclosed the character of awakened Zen life. Even though the vast *Transmission of the Lamp* literature describes thousands of occasions in which a master's Zen mind came to fruition in some specific worldly context, none of these feature as their central issue the *moral* capacities of their exemplars.[5] It is not that we see a history of moral error or atrocity, but rather that we do see a history of disinterest. The focus of Zen in most places and epochs was elsewhere. This is significant, and from it we ought to conclude that, not just in twentieth-century Japan but throughout the East Asian Zen tradition, morality was neither an explicit concern of praise or practice, nor a dimension of human life upon which Zen enlightenment was typically thought to have a significant bearing.

Moreover, morality appears to have been largely absent from the overall education that Zen monasteries have traditionally offered.[6] Zen practice, for reasons associated with its particular conception of enlightenment, directed the minds of practitioners elsewhere. In the extensive repertoire of Zen practices, none appear to be intentionally and directly focused on the powers of moral reflection; none appear to aim explicitly at the cultivation of traditional virtues such as generosity, kindness, forgiveness, empathy, regard for the suffering of others, justice, or compassion. Other important virtues are strongly cultivated, but not those we would consider the moral virtues. And if we inquire about social/ethical outcome, asking whether mastery of Zen practice has tended to lead to the explicit morality of social engagement, whether *satori* culminates in greater constructive involvement in society, greater compassion for the suffering of ordinary people, or in more concern for the socio-political whole, the answer is "generally not." At no point in the history of East Asian Zen was skillful engagement in social/moral issues considered to be one of the primary consequences of Zen enlightenment.

Why not? Why would Zen *satori* not naturally encompass a kind of moral wisdom and become manifest in activities of compassion and concern for others? Buddhist philosophy provides the best theoretical answer to

that question. It claims, by way of the concept of "dependent arising," that whatever comes into being is irrevocably shaped by the conditions that give rise to it. Thus, you become what you do insofar as your practices help shape the character of your participation in the world. As the East Asian Confucian tradition has long maintained, moral sensitivity is a function of conditioning through explicitly moral practice and learning, rather than primarily a matter of sudden insight or a fully ingrained natural birthright. Although morality is thought to be within human beings as an innate potential, unless it has been cultivated there through appropriately moral practices it will not come to fruition or be actualized.[7] This is true of virtually everything. If you do not practice meditation, or architecture, or cooking, you will not be good at it. If you do not practice moral reflection, you will similarly not be good at it because this particular skill is grounded in the specific practices that give rise to it. Without the development of a basis for morality through explicit reflective practice, mature moral intuitions will have no grounds from which to arise.

As we know, Zen training focuses elsewhere. It is a highly specialized form of training that in its complex history has emphasized a number of features: submission to the guidance of skilled teachers, rigorous physical discipline, calming or samatha types of meditation that clear the mind of thinking processes, focused meditations on non-analytical topics like koans and capping phrases, a variety of practices of silence, the cultivation of direct perception without conceptual mediation, and a quest for intuitive understanding. Enlightenment arises dependent upon the particular character and texture of these modes of training. It will therefore feature dimensions of human excellence that align with these determining conditions. The enlightened Zen master will tend to be characterized by mindfulness, self-discipline, endurance, stability, self-control, courage, confidence, loyalty, powers of mental concentration, a sense of selflessness, freedom, immediacy, mental presence and focus, including the ability to set aside the peripheral in order to stay focused on what is essential. Given that orientation, little or no attention will have been given in this training to other dimensions of human life, including those that pertain to morality. If

these other dimensions of character are only rarely mentioned in Zen canonical literature, and if monastic practices do not specifically target these sensibilities, it would be unreasonable to expect them to be *necessary* components of the outcome of Zen monastic culture. Those adept at Zen practice are characterized by traits that arise dependent upon the particular shape of its discipline, and in these dimensions of character, Zen masters are exemplary.

A *morally* exemplary person by contrast is someone who has undergone a different kind of training. The aim of moral training is to instill the desire for justice, a desire, against the pull of most instincts, to treat others as you hope they would treat you. Training in this dimension would be largely discursive, both the consideration of principles and cases/narratives in which a moral judgment is to be made. Such training must, for example, address conflict of motive or interest, and include reflection on human relations, especially difficult and ambiguous situations. While Zen training does aim at an awareness of non-dualism, this is not the specific form of non-dualism cultivated in the moral dimension of life. Moral training is not primarily oriented to a metaphysical sense of non-dualism; instead it focuses on non-dualism with respect to the relative interests and needs of oneself and others. Expertise in matters of moral significance requires considerable experience in the complexity of human relations and extensive practice in moral thinking. What earlier Mahāyāna Buddhists called "skill-in-means" is essential because effective consideration of how to act must take into account particular features of the life and character of each person implicated in the situation. But moral excellence is not just a matter of means. It is a further dimension of moral excellence to determine appropriate ends with skill and integrity. The fact that even thieves can practice skill-in-means shows us the necessity of deep reflection on authentic moral ends. Lacking sufficient concern for appropriate goals in the moral sphere, nothing provides guidance for choices that have moral bearing. Since so much of Zen training focused on the development of non-discursive meditation, states of mind prior to conscious thinking of any kind, little room remained for the development of the reflective dimension

of human character. Without it, however, the expectation of morally admirable lives has little basis.

Following the war, D. T. Suzuki acknowledged the weakness of this kind of specialization in the Zen tradition in Japan. He wrote: "present-day Zen priests have no knowledge or learning and therefore are unable to think about things independently or formulate their own independent opinions. This is a great failing of Zen priests."[8] Suzuki harbored no assumption that Zen *satori* would enable moral excellence. "With satori alone," he wrote, "it is impossible [for Zen priests] to shoulder their responsibilities as leaders of society . . . by itself satori is unable to judge the right and wrong of war. With regard to disputes in the ordinary world, it is necessary to employ intellectual discrimination . . . ."[9] Going further, he opened the possibility that a more comprehensive *satori* might encompass intellectual powers: "I wish to foster in Zen priests the power to increasingly think about things independently. A satori which lacks this element should be taken to the middle of the Pacific Ocean and sent straight to the bottom!"[10] What Suzuki's claim calls for is a thorough reconsideration of the breadth of Zen enlightenment on the grounds that, whatever its other remarkable virtues, satori as it now stands does not encompass excellence in addressing important moral matters, matters about which a Zen master cannot afford to be naïve.

To what is Zen *satori*, as traditionally defined, thought to be applicable? In what spheres of life will a spontaneous, unreflective mode of comportment be likely to yield actions that we would find admirable? Two domains seem most receptive to this Zen state of mind: first, any aspect of life that is not structurally complex, and, second, any sphere of life that has been fully mastered and is, as a result, well known. The first domain encompasses relatively simple activities, activities for which little or no thought is required, where few subtle choices need to be made and practitioners can see immediately how to respond. Such situations in life are increasingly rare, however, and even when we do encounter them much of our fluency in them is attributable to our past mastery of these situations more than to their simplicity.

The second domain is therefore more revealing. We can be spontaneous and engage fluently "without thinking" in any activity whose contours and demands are already well known to us. In these areas of life, the grounds for unmediated intuition are already solidly in place. Here we can imagine the craftsman who knows his work and materials so well that for most dimensions of the craft no thought is required. Indeed, in some of these circumstances, thought simply gets in the way. The potter who knows in the muscles of her hands how to shape the clay will proceed on some tasks without thinking. The rules and principles of her craft need not be conscious; indeed, they may never have been known in an explicit conceptual form. On these same grounds of practice and experience, the skilled athlete can make moves without consulting the principles of the game; indeed, if he does consult them, his moves will be too slow, too self-conscious to succeed.

Some great athletes and potters are, when asked, unable to articulate the principles of their discipline because, embedded in their practice, they have never stood back to consider how they do what they do. Their moves have always proceeded without thinking. But it is a mistake to conclude from this, as some Zen practitioners have, that knowing the principles of a craft is somehow detrimental to its practice, or that it is irrelevant to practice. Indeed, there are limitations to what someone can accomplish without thinking even in relatively simple disciplines. Potters or athletes who have studied the theory of their craft or sport will have enormous advantages at just those junctures where reflection provides opportunities for flexibility, imagination, and insight. Having never reflected on the principles that govern what they do, nor on the full spectrum of possible moves, their options are significantly limited in comparison to the practitioners who stand back to get reflective distance on their activity. An irony of Zen history is that many of the great masters of Zen attained their elevated status in part because of their non-Zen skills, their skills of persuasion, or analysis, or social understanding, for example. Thus, even in areas where spontaneity is valuable, thinking is sometimes its basis and always its resource.

Now, refining the issue further, we can ask: in matters of moral significance, how does spontaneous action "prior to reflection" fare? Here we can distinguish between two types of spontaneity, in two different types of people—one whose acts proceed spontaneously on the basis of unreflective participation in prevailing moral custom, and another whose acts proceed spontaneously on the basis of a cultivated sensitivity through previous moral reflection. The first of these types has not grappled with questions of moral significance. Typically, such a person does not see the need for moral thought, and responds to moral situations in a spontaneous and straightforward way by following established patterns of behavior. As long as the situations that this person encounters are simple or straightforward in terms of the moral custom already in his or her mind, customarily acceptable actions are likely to result. But as soon as a situation arises that does not conform to custom, this person will have no resources to call upon in making a decision. Moreover, such a person will never be in a position to judge the adequacy of the moral customs currently in effect. Both of these conditions pertain to the Zen masters described by Victoria and Suzuki: these masters were unable to recognize that their current situations could not be adequately handled through past custom, and were ill equipped to think for themselves about how to solve these new problems. Their training had not prepared them to see how the moral customs of loyalty and patriotism that they practiced might themselves generate immoral instincts and outcomes.

The second kind of spontaneous practitioner acts out of a deep reservoir of moral reflection. This person can act in most cases "without thinking" because he or she has examined cases like these before, perhaps both in theory and in conscious practice. Such a person can often proceed without thinking because this sustaining background of reflection is more than adequate to encompass situations that arise. Wherever it is not adequate, a person practiced in moral deliberation can step back out of immediate action and into further reflection in order to consider what options for action are most viable. Simple moral situations can be handled without thinking, flowing smoothly and effortlessly from a deeply

cultivated moral wisdom. Complex or previously unknown situations are, by contrast, recognized as such and immediately give rise to thinking rather than to spontaneous, habitual action. Past experience in explicit moral deliberation provides the resources enabling one to respond thoughtfully to unfamiliar or unexpected situations. It also gives one the capacity to challenge traditional moral practices and customs in facing an unfamiliar situation that does not fit into previous models of behavior. In this sense, it is background thinking—conscious reflection—that enables the moral improvisation that would befit the image of a Zen master's flexibility and spontaneity.

From this perspective, one of the greatest dangers to the Zen tradition is its ever-present temptation to be disdainful of conceptual thinking. In the moral sphere, this is truly dangerous because responding to complex moral issues with sound judgment requires clear thinking. Wherever Zen interprets its "no-mind" doctrine literally, moral difficulties like the ones that Victoria documents in Japan will eventually surface. Similarly troublesome is the claim that "Zen mind" is "beyond good and evil," precisely because it is regularly proclaimed without inviting or allowing open reflection on what that might mean. In what sense is the Zen master beyond good and evil? The inability to answer that question with intellectual and moral clarity opens the gates of Zen to the possibility of moral travesty.

That these extreme interpretations of Zen can be found in Yasutani Hakuun roshi, one of the best-known Zen masters of twentieth-century Japan and, for Western practitioners, one of the most influential Zen masters, is a clear warning sign. Teaching, without significant qualification, that "Buddhism has clearly demonstrated that discriminative thinking lies at the root of delusion,"[11] and that "thought is the sickness of the human mind,"[12] does more to undermine the possibility of "wisdom and compassion" than it does to enable them. If you have not developed the arts of reflection and imagination in the domain of morality, your actions will be vulnerable to a whole host of dangers, even to those that the early Buddhists had diagnosed so clearly—to greed, hatred, and delusion. As early

Buddhist thought shows, morality is a fundamental dimension of life, one that requires both reflection and the training of one's vision through daily practice.

The conception or "thought of enlightenment" that guides Buddhist practice serves also to shape its outcome. The "thought of enlightenment" in Zen, inscribed into the design of its practices and imagined in literary accounts of Zen masters, covers a specific and not all-encompassing range of human ideals. Morality, as we have seen, plays no substantial role in it. This is the point or thesis of the neo-Confucian critique of the Zen tradition in China, Korea, and Japan—that the form of enlightenment to which Zen practice gives rise is insufficiently comprehensive. Although these neo-Confucian sages were inspired and deeply influenced by the Zen tradition, they concluded that the image and conception of enlightenment in Zen was far too limited.

Specifically, they thought that Zen lacked a substantial moral dimension, that it did not encourage inspired social/political participation, and that its contribution to the culture as a whole was lacking. They also thought that quite often the non-rational components of Zen were counterproductive—did they not realize that the coherence and viability of the culture as a whole depended upon leaders who had the knowledge, deliberative capacity, and moral sensitivity to work for the betterment of the whole society? Although neo-Confucian critiques of Zen were often tempted into hyperbolic excess too, they had realized something important about the way Zen Buddhism had come to develop throughout East Asia. Some of their points are still germane, and for the most part the Zen tradition has not gone very far in responding to them.[13]

This is clearly D. T. Suzuki's point in his post-war remark that "the opportunity was lost to develop a world vision within Japanese spirituality that was sufficiently extensive and comprehensive."[14] The spirit of Zen was limited, he concedes, and therefore in need of extension and further cultivation. Like all religious traditions, Zen has gone through historical periods when practitioners assume its current form of practice and

attainment to be unsurpassable, and other periods when it has been able to grow and extend itself.

There are two important images in the Zen tradition that encourage each of these two tendencies. The first is based on the historic claim that every instance of Zen enlightenment is identical to all others insofar as the "stamp" of the master has been placed upon the mind of the disciple in a "mind-to-mind transmission" of enlightenment from the Buddha down through all the patriarchs of Zen. This image is inherently conservative. It is based on the desire to preserve the tradition "as it has always been," on the thought that any change in "enlightenment" would be a "fall" from the fully enlightened status of the Buddha himself. The second image derives from the Chinese Zen claim that every authentic enlightenment "goes beyond" the teacher and the tradition as it was inherited. This account is based on the realization that the most exciting Zen masters were creative, that their actions extended the tradition in unforeseen directions. It seemed to recognize that the success of the tradition's efforts to preserve the vitality of Zen is located in its ability to criticize itself and to develop in new directions in response to the new possibilities and situations that emerge.

These two images are in tension; their messages feature the contrasting poles of stability and change, permanence and impermanence. The first image has a tendency to reify the concept of enlightenment. It assumes that enlightenment is a fixed essence, that, unlike everything else from a Buddhist point of view, it is neither impermanent nor dependent upon conditions. A practitioner under the influence of this image assumes the unsurpassability of the tradition that is being handed down, and has therefore been provided no reason to question it or to pursue anything beyond its current state. Historically, this is probably the position that has most often been promulgated in Zen. There have been times in the history of Zen, however, when this reification was not the dominant path, times when important and historic advances in the East Asian Buddhist "thought of enlightenment" were achieved. In such times or amongst representatives of the tradition such as these, there is the excitement of new paths, open questions, and a courageous refusal to objectify the goal of Zen.

In my judgment, the question on which the Zen tradition faces its most important challenge is the meaning of Zen "no-mind" and its relation to the full scope of enlightened life. Wherever the state of enlightenment that is sought in Zen is literally "without thinking," then the dominance of that one guiding thought will render further self-conscious movement in the tradition impossible. It seems to me that the Zen tradition needs to re-engage the question of the relation between thinking and forms of awakening that are "without thinking." The reasons for this need are amply demonstrated in the Zen masters chronicled by Victoria who were largely unprepared to face the moral challenges of their time. Lacking the resources of clear reflection that can only be generated through practice, Zen masters would be unable to assess their own goal. Without thinking, they will not have been able to consider how a spontaneous state of "no-thought" stands in the overall scope of human life. Cultivating an understanding of one's own goal is essential because only through such an account can one grasp or explain how its benefits ought to be balanced against other values that are important in admirable human lives. Deliberation about ends—about ideals like enlightenment—are reflective enterprises. To the extent that Zen practitioners do not engage in reflective thinking, they will have no choice but to take it on faith that their inherited goals are adequate. Without having cultivated the skills of conceptual reflection, they will not be fully prepared to think clearly about, or to enter into conversation and debate about, the kind of life that they seek, live, and teach to others.

It is certainly not the case that deliberation has been missing altogether in the history of Zen. But it is true, I believe, that its practice has at times been undermined both by the dominance of non-reflective forms of mediation and by the tendency to take the "no-thought" doctrine literally. As a result, what reflection there is has become constricted and, at times, convoluted. Reflective thinking and open discussion of the teachings have not been encouraged in Zen monastic settings to the extent that they have been in other forms of Buddhism. Although there are certainly good reasons for this emphasis, as a result of it ideas are not honed and developed in Zen in such a way that they can be elevated through practice. Given the kinds of

practices that are dominant, the stamp of enlightenment that monks receive in Zen includes very little of the skills of reflection, conversation, reasoning, debating, organizing, or planning. All of these capacities, it seems to me, are essential to ideal forms of human life. They are components of a truly comprehensive concept of enlightenment. To whatever extent Zen practice has no bearing on these basic human capacities, to that extent Zen enlightenment must be considered a partial and limited achievement, one component of a more comprehensive thought of enlightenment.

It might also be the case that Zen monastic training has tended to inculcate a kind of relation to authority and hierarchy that undermines the opportunity for monks to develop the skills of reasoning and open debate. It would be unreasonable to expect that after practicing decades of unquestioning subservience to monastic authorities, that habit of subordination would simply go away once a monk became a leader in the Zen tradition. When called upon, some Zen masters appear to have simply placed themselves in the service of the government's goals without facing the incongruence between those goals and their own principles. Loyalty and patriotism were in some cases uncritically extolled by Zen masters as enlightened virtues.[15]

Had the tradition developed its practitioners' skill in considering the scope of these virtues, Zen leaders might have been able to see how limited and potentially problematic loyalty and patriotism are as virtues. But only in the act of reflection can one see that patriotism can be among nations what individual self-centeredness is among persons, and that openness and generosity are as important among nations as they are among individuals. If Zen practitioners had been encouraged to engage in debate on the meaning of "non-dualism," they might have more easily recognized the dangers of the dualism between "us" and "them" that advocates of the "unity of Zen and war" could not see. That advanced Zen practitioners so easily adopted this form of dualism is one sign that the "thought of enlightenment" in Zen has been insufficiently comprehensive. Had Zen masters continued to practice Zen's own grounding in the tradition of Buddhist philosophy, they might have been in a much better position to face this crisis.

If, as one Zen leader claimed in the midst of the war effort, "it is not the responsibility of Zen priests to comment about what's going on in the world," then we must ask: what, then, is their responsibility?[16] And why is Zen enlightenment *not* able to shed light on "what's going on in the world"? Given these serious limitations on the scope of Zen, imposed by the tradition's own self-definition, how, then, should we formulate a "thought of enlightenment" that *is* comprehensive enough to provide us with vision about "what's going on in the world"? That, it seems to me, is the koan-like question for the Zen tradition to address today: Does Zen enlightenment bring the whole person to a higher level of human vision and action, or is it limited to very specific segments of life? Can Zen discipline benefit everyone, including those who engage in reflective disciplines, or is Zen necessarily limited to having an effect on unreflective life? If the tradition maintains these significant limitations on its understanding of enlightenment, then that would amount to an admission that Zen practice cannot be good training for people who occupy prominent and important positions in a society. It would be to admit that Zen practice is not appropriate training for prime ministers, for urban planners, for directors of human resources, for engineers, ambassadors, physicians, judges, lawyers, business leaders, scientists, teachers, parents, and many more. A contemporary society that does not place these kinds of people in positions of significance is currently unthinkable; these are the people who will lead us into the future. If Zen is not applicable to these essentially reflective disciplines and to the people who inhabit them, then its usefulness to our future will be highly circumscribed.

So, to what in human life *does* Zen apply? Does it enhance and provide depth of perspective *only* to those activities that can be done "without thinking"? I do not think so, and the implicit claim sometimes made in the Zen tradition that this is so unnecessarily sells the tradition short. It seems to me that a more comprehensive way to understand the meditative cultivation of mind is that, if comprehensively structured, it can serve to deepen our contact with the world in every sphere of our activity—it can serve to put us into contact with the depth dimension of any sphere of

human life, whether more or less reflective. If that is so, then beyond the forms of cultural life that have traditionally been affected by Zen practice—swordsmanship, calligraphy, the tea ceremony, etc.—people in widely diverse forms of life could benefit from the deepening of sensitivities that Zen practice makes possible. But this broadening of the scope of Zen would only be possible insofar as the Zen tradition expands and develops its "thought of enlightenment"—the understanding a practitioner has of the character and consequence of Zen training. The tradition needs once again to open the question: what is enlightenment? And by means of that question, it needs to go beyond itself into more and more comprehensive forms of human excellence as it has, as a tradition, over many centuries. The challenge for the Zen tradition is to respond to the crisis suggested by Victoria and Suzuki by extending itself to include practices that are relevant to the cultivation of moral excellence as well as to other reflective powers that are essential to admirable forms of human life. We should expect nothing less from this great tradition.

Notes

[1] See Victoria (2003:67).
[2] See Victoria (2003:12).
[3] See Victoria (2003:169).
[4] Although there were never historical occasions that drew attention to it, this tendency to place morality in the background that we see so clearly in Japanese Zen can also be found in the original Chinese tradition and in its Korean variants. See Victoria (2003:15).
[5] By morality here I assume a distinction between a form of morality that consists in following social custom and norms and a form of morality such as "social ethics" that includes a concept of justice above and beyond social custom, as well as the capacity to give critical assessment to prevailing norms.
[6] An important exception to this claim would be instruction in and meditation on the precepts, on the rules of comportment relevant to life in a Zen monastery. This focus, however, was largely on the meaning of the precepts for the cultivation of one's own spirituality, rather than on concern for those beyond the walls of the monastery.
[7] It is also important to recognize how social structure conditions moral/political participation in any society. Zen, like other forms of Buddhism, was fully dependent on the larger society and on the government for its resources. We have learned that it is excessively naïve to ignore the question of who is footing the bill for any institution. Rea-

lizing this, it is important to ask: what kinds of reciprocal exchange and agreement are included in the unwritten contract between Zen monastic institutions and the political power structures of East Asian societies? Still, providing social, political, and economic explanations for why Zen enlightenment might not encompass morality fails to attribute to Zen masters the capacity to recognize these social, political, and economic deficits, and the freedom to consider doing something about them. An explanation beyond the sociological is still required.

[8] Cited in Victoria (2005:148).

[9] Cited in Victoria (2005:148-49).

[10] Cited in Victoria (2005:149).

[11] Cited in Victoria (2003:76).

[12] Cited in Victoria (2003:87).

[13] The contemporary Chan tradition may be one notable exception to this. Although not necessarily responding to neo-Confucian critiques at this point, many Chan masters have broadened their teachings considerably to re-envelope Chan concerns and practices within the tradition of Mahāyāna Buddhism. This allows the image of the enlightened Chan master to meld with the image of the bodhisattva, bringing depth of moral concern more forcefully back into Chan than the earlier tradition had allowed. Moreover, because global Zen is evolving within the broader context of Buddhism, as well as a variety of other cultural influences, moral awareness has come to be a growing trend in these emerging forms of Zen as evidenced by their participation in the larger setting of socially engaged Buddhism.

[14] Cited in Victoria (2005:148).

[15] It is certainly true that religious leaders in all nations at all times have tended to something like this same compliance. But that historical fact does not alter our contemporary sense that a higher form of enlightenment would include the ability to raise critical and moral questions about wartime activities.

[16] Cited in Victoria (2003:145).

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