

Chapter IV

True Nature of Mind Self Coextensive with the Universe

1 True Nature of Mind

The true nature of the mind is defined as *the awakened awareness or consciousness*: 覚 (*wakari*) by Dr. Matataro Matsumoto, former professor of Tokyo Imperial University. It is because we are sentient beings, that we are capable of feeling warm and cold, whereas trees and rocks are not. As an experiencing agent, we are one and the same as we used to be, say, sixty years ago. I have so far explained at some length the fact that an experiencing subjective self is unchangeable even when the bodily self ceases to exist.

And then I have brought forth a question for you to consider as to where to locate your ego as a perceiving agent. Since perception is a mental action, in order to discover the seat of the perceiving agent, one has to locate whereabouts of the mind. I have spent much time in turning the matter over in my head since last night.

To the best of my belief, you have been by now persuaded of the truth that all things in nature are nothing other than thoughts, that may appear as they come and go. Over the whole range of eyesight and hearing, thoughts appear one after another, inside and outside, far and near, and here and there, centering around an individual self. I am sure all of you agree with me when I say definitely that it is unreasonable to search nowhere else than the brain for the seat of the mind.

You can see my face now, but the face visible to you is your very awareness of it, and on that premise I shall ask you another question. Which section of the mind operates as a perceiving agent? Let us

think well to settle the new question. Will you please pour some tea into the cup? I frequently hear people complain about a benumbed hand in which they have no feeling. What does the feeling mean as a matter of fact? Here is a blackboard. A blackboard is only a name, but this blackboard I now point at is a material object. Then what is really meant by feeling or perception of an object?

Will you please put your hand fast to the cup? You will feel warmth on the palm of your hand. This may better be described as *a sensuous awareness of warmth*: 覚 (*wakari*). Those among you, who may protest that they know that much without testing, are in fact quite ignorant of it. Let me remind you that awareness is one thing and memory is another.

Put your hand fast to the cup once more and you will become aware of the warmth, you will be fully alive to its warmth. The description of it as a feeling of warmth sounds inadequate; it should be defined as the awareness of its warmth. Warmth and awareness of it are closely coupled each other to distinguish one from the other. I should like you to keep this fact in mind.

In holding your hand close to the cup, all that takes place is a feeling and at the same time the awareness of warmth. They are in truth indivisible one and the same. To be aware is mind. Will you put down the cup, please? When you touch the cup, you feel warm. In other words, warmth does not exist until you touch the cup. Or do you take it that warmth exists in the brim of the cup, whether you touch it or not? The apple is believed to have a good flavour. We say apples taste delicious without actually tasting them.

Do you consider the warmth believed to exist in the brim of the cup to be the same as that which you feel as you touch the cup? Or do you take it to be different? If so in what way is it different?

Shōnin: What do you think of it? Mr. Tokunaga?

Tokunaga: Well sir, I think they are different.

It depends on the spots you touch.

Shōnin: There is a difference between the two in temperature, because the warmth ought to have been les-

sened compared to that you felt a few minutes earlier, but it is the difference only in degrees.

Now, Mr. Ōshima, what is your opinion?

Ōshima : In my opinion, you are aware of its warmth so long as you hold the cup, but you are not unless touch it.

Shōnin : You are right, Mr. Ōshima. You are unaware of its warmth unless you touch it, and the moment you touch it, you become aware of it, you are fully alive to the warmth.

Hence it is not so much a relative difference as a positive distinction that lies between the two. The awareness of its warmth is produced as you touch the tea cup. You never can tell where warmth leaves and awareness of it comes in. It is an all-inclusive experience of warmth to the feel and an awareness of it at the same time. In this way, there is no proof available to show that warmth exists in the cup, unless you touch it and become aware that it is warm to the feel.

Some may come out with a point-blank remark, saying, "Don't be foolish, why, it is warm to the feel all the same." But it is warm only when you touch it. No one can present evidence to indicate that it is warm except by touching the cup. It is possible for you, while sitting here, to conceive of the roaring sound with which a great volume of water is falling down in torrents at Kegon Falls. Will you please compare that sound with that which my voice produces when I utter, "Oh !"? There are two kinds of sounds, those which are heard and those not audible. The indifference to the distinction between the two indicates the absence of a sound outlook.

What do you think makes a difference, if at all, between the sound which you actually hear now and that of which you conceive as being produced by the falls at Kegon? I should like you to give real thought to the matter, prior to proceeding to a study of Kan-non Bodhisattva, which I take upon myself to the best of my ability. In the *Lotus Sutra* it is stated that the Bodhisattva is called Kan-non, because he is ready to save you on hearing you invoke his holy name, in referring to the salvation of all sentient beings which he worked

out following his attainment of Buddhahood.

About a hundred years ago, a religious man of eminent virtue by the name of Bassui Zenji lived in Yamanashi Prefecture, who was head priest of Kōgakuji Temple at Enzan in that Prefecture. It is said that he used to tell his disciples that he would be hanged if they had devoted thirty years of their life to the practice for Buddhahood, listening all the sounds to be heard, and still remained unawakened to their absolute self in spite of all they did. I quite agree with him.

It is important that you realize that the sound you hear is awareness, whether it be a clatter of the wooden clogs in which you walk or a rattling noise a streetcar makes, in which you ride. And even if, carefully listening to all that is to be heard, you applied yourself to practice for Buddhahood for thirty long years, and nevertheless are still unawakened to your absolute self, I will be hanged.

For it is absolutely certain that all you did is sufficient to enable you to become conscious of the greater, or absolute self, although, when it comes to the attainment of Buddhahood, it is essential for you to devote yourself single-mindedly to the invocation of the sacred name of Amida Buddha, so that you may qualify as an heir to the Buddha.

The transparent luminosity as well as varieties of objects visible to you in it are awareness, perception. I believe, however, that it would be easier for you to gain a correct understanding of it if I explain in the light of tactual feel of warmth and cold as above referred to. You can perceive warmth immediately you feel it, without recourse to discriminating power. It is a fact intuitively perceived, which Prof. James defines as pure experience. When you recognize an individual whom you come across on your way, recognition is assisted by memory. In case you give yourself exclusively to thinking apart from experienced facts, you will be carried away by impractical theories until you become blind to actual facts. So see that you get a good grasp of what I mean by awareness, or perception.

Let me ask you another question. Will you please hold your teacup, and compare the awareness of its warmth with the sound of my voice when I utter, "Oh?" In what way does one differ from the other? Or do you recognize something thoroughly identical in them? The sound of a voice is by its very nature different from warmth, or the feel of a warm object, and vice versa.

As it is, the awareness of the sound of my voice and that of the feel of the cup you hold in your hand are identical in that both of them are awareness. I am sure none of you objects to the point of view from which I identify the one with the other. In truth, awareness, or perception is responsible for the existence of all objects in nature. I expect you are by now persuaded that this face of mine you see before your eyes is awareness, a thought of yours.

Now, close your eyes, if you please. Can you see anything at all? Now open your eyes.

Shōnin: Could you see anything?

A: No, I could see nothing.

Shōnin: Is that so really? Close your eyes once again, and you can see darkness, you become aware of darkness, as I imagine you do.

This is a fact, to which Dr. Motora called attention during his lectures to keep awake the students who attended. Dr. Motora taught psychology at Tokyo Imperial University when I studied there. All is perception. When we lift a thing, it is awareness of weight that we have. We have seen varieties of colours in our lives. We have experienced a great variety of sounds, smells, tastes, and touches, but they are not simply forms, voices, smells, tastes and touches, but they are as many perceived objects. We have been ignorant of the truth that all things in nature are thoughts.

It is said in the *Mitsu-gon-kyō* and the *Kō-gon-kyō* that all is caused to exist by being perceived. Berkeley, well-known English philosopher also says, "Esse est percipi (to exist is to be perceived)." A passage in the *Shu-ryō-gon-kyō*, most highly valued by the Zen Sect, reads that though eyesight and objects of eyesight resemble manifes-

Chapter IV

tations of stimuli, they are originally nothing but one's own perception.

"Eyesight" means the eyes, and "objects of eyesight" signifies form, while "manifestations of *Kyō*, stimuli", means something that exists outside of one's own self. But they are originally nothing but one's own perception. A conventional viewpoint has it that perceiver exists apart from the perceived, the subject of perception exists on this side while the object perceived lies on the opposite side. That is far from true; "all things owe their existence to ones own perception" — this is the gist of the above passage.

Although we may be unable to hear a sound without our ears, no sound is heard within the ears, for it is not merely a sound but also an awareness of it at the same time. This face of mine which appears before your eyes exists only here and not there in your head apart from myself. It is when you get a sight of a certain form that an awareness of it is produced in your mind. It is form and awareness of it at the same time.

You are mistaken if you think that this face of mine is an object of perception and accordingly it is a common property, as it were, while you are the subject of perception, that see it in your head. For a particular stimulus that impinges on a certain individual has not an identical impact on others. For all is one's individual perception, all is awareness.

The *Han-nya-shin-gyō*, which consists of only one page, is a condensation of the *Dai-han-nya-kyō* (the Sutra of the Great Wisdom) in six hundred volumes and that brief summary is further condensed into the aphorism "discrimination is equality, equality is discrimination," in other words, "phenomena are Sunya and Sunya is phenomena." All that *Dai-han-nya-kyō* preaches ultimately boils down to the adage, "phenomena are Sunya and Sunya is phenomena."

The matter of a blackboard is inseparable from its colour and form, but it can be observed under its two aspects, colour and form. In the same way, though warmth is none other than perception of it,

it may be viewed not only as an object of tactual sense, but also from the standpoint of the perceiver of it.

In this way, the mind, in whatever circumstances and aspects it may appear, can be defined as an entity which is an image and awareness at the same time; mind appears in various emotional states, such as passion, joy and sorrow, and also as images of different sense objects like those in the visual and sonic world. Therefore mind is mobile and elusive in that it identifies itself with all the thoughts that may arise at any moment, and that in different times and places as the case may be. "Image" means form or shape.

The entire sight of the visual world is a transparent luminosity, in which this face of mine appears surrounded by somewhat shady lightness, and that face is an image and an object perceived at the same time, while it is all of you that act as perceiver. Such is the case also with a sorrowful mind and a thinking mind, and that is why mind is defined as an image and awareness at the same time.

2 Self Coextensive with the Universe

For today I propose to explain the reason why *an individual self as the perceiver* : 覚 (*wakari*) can be as comprehensive as the entire universe. In fact you are watching a whole scene appear before your eyes. This world of eyesight is awareness you have of it, while from the standpoint the other way round, the whole is identified with your individual self that acts as experiencing agent. Now will you please turn your look quickly towards another direction and yet the world of eyesight is equally an awareness of yours which, though it may contain new kinds of objects this time, is nothing more or less than your individual self as an experiencing agent.

Can it be assumed then that no sooner you look in another direction than your own self slides into the brain and reappear in the new sphere of vision? I should like you to grasp fast the fact as it is. The range of vision widens as you go along a road or in the fields, but is it because the subjective self slips into the brain and reappears

out of it in rapid succession in the next field of view as you make your way?

When viewed in that light, it may be concluded that you leave behind the self as a perceiving agent at every turn and the self remains in whatever places you may go to. You who perceive a sight when looking in a certain direction can also see another sight as you look that way. From this fact it follows that even when you look ahead, your self is present behind you all the same as experiencing agent from the first.

On our way here from home, we had a good view from the train windows of rural landscapes which abound in fields, hills and rivers. But all of them are nothing more than our own self as an experiencing agent. In this way the self as the seer and hearer is present everywhere in the universe.

Suppose a novel type of aircraft is developed, thanks to the progress of scientific technology, that is capable of ranging the universe, by taking free advantage of gravity attraction and repulsion, and traveling to various heavenly bodies, provided with a storage of oxide which lasts for ten thousand years. As we fly in this aircraft, changing sights of the universe will appear into view in succession.

It is believed that as we travel about four hundred miles from the earth, we will penetrate into the interior of the jetblack space. Though we can see nothing in it, we continue to perceive the darkness. The field of view, which comes and goes, is nothing but our own self as an experiencing agent. In this way the real identity of the universe originates within the perceiving self, hence the self is one with the universe. You are deluded so long as you remain unawakened to this deathless self, the absolute self.

The awakening to the absolute self is described in Buddhist terms as entrance into the unhindered light of grace. I am sure you can readily understand the plain fact that an individual self as experiencing agent is co-extensive with the universe. Non of you may doubt this plain fact.

I gave elsewhere an account of what happened to Hara Seimin Shōnin, who on being awakened to his absolute self, became able to see and hear everything inside himself and to intuitively recognize his own mental action even in a puff of wind he heard, and in a stream of water he saw. Then the self is no longer an individual ego, but the absolute self that identifies itself with the entire heaven and earth. Though it may sound incredible, it is an indubitable fact.

Therefore the self as an experiencing agent or the absolute self is the one and only being, which is not capable of being divided into parts, and can be described as an unchangeable and imperishable self, the real self. Such is the case with the Universe, for it is complete in itself, not divisible into two halves, one perishable and the other deathless. The great universe exists, or ceases to exist, as a complete whole. This is described as "*Chūdō* (middle way)" in Buddhism.

I will describe the state in which an individual finds himself, on being awakened to the absolute self, and explain the significance of the attainment of divine enlightenment. Daruma Daishi, during his stay in China, one day received a visit from a man by the name of Eka, while sitting in meditation with his legs crossed. The visitor entreated Daishi to make him one of the pupil. But Daishi continued to sit in meditation with his back to Eka without speaking a word in reply until at last night began to fall.

Next day Eka came back to see Daishi and repeated his supplication but in vain. Presently it began to snow and the snow lay thick on him, who was waiting outside for Daishi's answer, but none was forthcoming. Thereupon Eka made up his mind at last to mutilate his own body and brought with him his amputated arm to Daish to testify to his unflinching determination. Then on seeing it, Daruma Daishi gave Eka permission to study under his personal guidance, being persuaded of his seriousness of purpose by this striking witness to his resolution.

Eka was greatly encouraged to carry on his practice of Zen meditation with undivided attention, but it was far from easy for him

to win recognition from his master that he obtained enough merit for divine enlightenment. Then appealing to Daishi for advice, he gave an account of the state of mind he reached by means of Zen meditation to which he devoted himself.

He said, "I have now nothing to pay attention to, and there is nothing any more that is transmitted to my mind." When you look at an object, your attention is directed to it. It is only when you are in sleep that nothing is transmitted to your mind, that is to say, no mental action responds. While fast asleep, you do not even feel the warmth of your bedclothes. At the words of his disciple, Daishi came out with a counter question. "Do you mean that all disappeared, or that you have fallen fast asleep?" Eka replied, "Nothing ceases to exist." Then Daishi went on to say, "What evidence is there to show it?"

At that Eka confidently replied, saying, "I am so distinctly conscious of it that I deem it needless to express it verbally." On hearing these words of Eka, Daishi pronounced. "This is verily the manifestation of the Buddha-nature. You must see to it that you feel no doubt of it." It was then that Eka received from the master delayed recognition of what was his due. This was the state of spiritual awakening Eka reached.

A constant state of serene and distinct awareness is the most invaluable achievement. In that state the mind is directed to no particular objects, and is empty of its contents as I have so far referred to it. And yet it differs from the state of being fast asleep. This doubly clear state of consciousness means the attainment of divine enlightenment, and a manifestation of Buddhahood.

This state of pure consciousness is the absolute self which is coextensive with the entire universe ; the real self, unchangeable and endless, and complete in itself, indivisible into parts. It is the state of enlightenment which is attained by extinguishing all illusions and destroying all Karma.

The *Han-nya-shin-gyō* preaches "Phenomena are Sunya and Sunya is phenomena," which can be condensed into one word,

“Sunya,” emptiness that it is possible to enlarge the other way round to the dictum, “Phenomena are Sunya and Sunya is phenomena.” In Buddhism form, or phenomena mean material objects. Form implies distinction, since material objects differ, because they are objects of the five different senses, forms, sounds, smells, tastes and touches.

The import of the Buddhist theorem that defines as Sunya an infinite variety of forms, which serve as a means of discrimination, conveys the fundamental idea of non-discrimination and equality of all beings. As I have so far referred to it, repeatedly it can be compared to the relationship between water and waves. Did I make myself clear to you?

Shōnin: Mr. Ikesue, do you follow me?

Ikesue: Though I can believe an infinite life exists, I don't think it has any meaning to me.

Shōnin: Is that so? Very well, when it does come home to your heart, you are awakened to infinite life. If you think it may come true, I take that my lecture has achieved its aim.

Some of you might have got an impression that some types of doctrine contained in the Buddhist teachings are hard to understand. It may be so when they are viewed in the light of reason and worldly experience, but on receiving the light of Nyorai's grace, the true significance of the sacred teachings will be revealed to you before your eyes.

Though it may be difficult to comprehend, if depending solely on reason, it will be an easy matter, when you throw yourself upon the compassion of Nyorai, who is ready to help you awake to the truth in his light of grace.

As I make the place-to-place rounds of the country, I meet with a good number of Buddhist believers who have been awakened to infinite life in virtue of their single-minded devotion to the Nembutsu practice.

Once awakened to the truth, it appears just before your eyes. Do you think of my lecture as the mere expression of a personal opinion

Chapter IV

of mine? I know it is no question of opinion ; it is only the unbiased truth that really matters.