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Date: Wed, 24 Mar 1993 12:30:29 CST
Reply-To: Forum on Indian and Buddhist Studies
<BUDDHIST%JPNTUVM0.BITNET@pucc.Princeton.EDU>
From: Phil Leith <CCPHIL%MIZZOU1.BITNET@pucc.Princeton.EDU>
Subject: Re: Wattage: Self and Other part 3 of 3 -Repl

Well, it's like this here. These tapes are about 25 years old. The only information about getting copies of the tapes was on the tapes: it says to contact the National Endowment for the Arts.

I did. They hadn't the slightest idea what I was talking about, and the tone of their letter was very much like a flame, I might add.

My qualms about posting them settled down very quickly.

Besides that, due to the interest these tapes sparked in me, I have gone out and bought 5 of the man's books -- and so has Mr. Seaver.

[Alan Seaver: seaverw@columbia.dsu.edu - coombspapers' comment]

For those of you interested, Mr. Watts passed away about 20 years ago. He died of lung Cancer.

For what it's worth -

P

this originally aired on KSAN radio, San Francisco, many years ago. All typos are of course mine. I'm also no expert on Japanese and all their names, so the ones I didn't recognize, I sounded out & put a * by.

Perhaps someone out there who can figure out what they're supposed to be can correct me. A couple words were undistinguishable (these tapes are pretty bad quality), & I've just marked them like so: __-__.^U

Alan Seaver

ALAN WATTS: LECTURE ON ZEN

Once upon a time, there was a Zen student who quoted an old Buddhist

poem to his teacher, which says

The voices of torrents are from one great tongue,
the lions of the hills are the pure body of Buddha.

"Isn't that right?" he said to the teacher.

"It is," said the teacher, "but it's a pity to say so."

It would be, of course, much better, if this occasion were celebrated with no talk at all, and if I addressed you in the manner of the ancient teachers of Zen, I should hit the microphone with my fan and leave. But I somehow have the feeling that since you have contributed to the support of the Zen Center, in expectation of learning something, a few words should be said, even though I warn you, that by explaining these things to you, I shall subject you to a very serious hoax. Because if I allow you to leave here this evening, under the impression that you understand something about Zen, you will have missed the point entirely. Because Zen is a way of life, a state of being, that is not possible to embrace in any concept whatsoever, so that any concepts, any ideas, any words that I shall put across to you this evening will have as their object, showing you the limitations of words and of thinking.

Now then, if one must try to say something about what Zen is, and I want to do this by way of introduction, I must make it emphatic that Zen, in its essence, is not a doctrine. There's nothing you're supposed to believe in. It's not a philosophy in our sense, that is to say a set of ideas, an intellectual net in which one tries to catch the fish of reality. Actually, the fish of reality is more like water--it always slips through the net. And in water you know when you get into it there's nothing to hang on to. All this universe is like water; it is fluid, it is transient, it is changing. And when you're thrown into the water after being accustomed to living on the dry land, you're not used to the idea of swimming. You try to stand on the water, you try to catch hold of it, and as a result you drown. The only way to survive in the water, and this refers particularly to the waters of modern philosophical confusion, where God is dead, metaphysical propositions are meaningless, and there's really nothing to hang on to, because we're all just falling apart. And the only thing to do under those circumstances is to learn how to swim. And to swim, you relax, you let go, you give yourself to the water, and you have to know how to breathe in the right way. And then you find that the water holds you up; indeed, in a certain way you become the water. And so in the same way, one might say if one attempted to--again I say misleadingly--to put Zen into any sort of concept, it simply comes down to this:

That in this universe, there is one great energy, and we have no name for it. People have tried various names for it, like God, like *Brahmin, like Tao, but in the West, the word God has got so many funny associations attached to it that most of us are bored with it. When people say "God, the father almighty," most people feel funny inside. So we like to hear new words, we like to hear about Tao, about Brahmin, about Shinto, and , and such strange names from the far East because they don't carry the same associations of mawkish sanctimony and funny meanings from the past. And actually, some of these words that the Buddhists use for the basic energy of the world really don't mean anything at all. The word tathata, which is translated from the Sanskrit as "suchness" or "thusness" or something like that, really means something more like "dadada,"

based on the word tat, which in Sanskrit means "that," and so in Sanskrit it is said tat lum asi, "that thou art," or in modern America, "you're it." But "da, da"--that's the first sound a baby makes when it comes into the world, because the baby looks around and says "da, da, da, da" and fathers flatter themselves and think it's saying "DaDa," which means "Daddy," but according to Buddhist philosophy, all this universe is one "dadada." That means "ten thousand functions, ten thousand things, one suchness," and we're all one suchness. And that means that suchness comes and goes like anything else because this whole world is an on-and-off system. As the Chinese say, it's the yang and the yin, and therefore it consists of "now you see it, now you don't, here you are, here you aren't, here you are," because that the nature of energy, to be like waves, and waves have crests and troughs, only we, being under a kind of sleepiness or illusion, imagine that the trough is going to overcome the wave or the crest, the yin, or the dark principle, is going to overcome the yang, or the light principle, and that "off" is going to finally triumph over "on." And we, shall I say, bug ourselves by indulging in that illusion. "Hey, supposing darkness did win out, wouldn't that be terrible!" And so we're constantly trembling and thinking that it may, because after all, isn't it odd that anything exists? It's most peculiar, it requires effort, it requires energy, and it would have been so much easier for there to have been nothing at all. Therefore, we think "well, since being, since the 'is' side of things is so much effort" you always give up after a while and you sink back into death. But death is just the other face of energy, and it's the rest, the not being anything around, that produces something around, just in the same way that you can't have "solid" without "space," or "space" without "solid." When you wake up to this, and realize that the more it changes the more it's the same thing, as the French say, that you are really a train of this one energy, and there is nothing else but that that is you, but that for you to be always you would be an insufferable bore, and therefore it is arranged that you stop being you after a while and then come back as someone else altogether, and so when you find that out, you become full energy and delight. As Blake said, "Energy is eternal delight." And you suddenly see through the whole sham thing. You realize you're That--we won't put a name on it--you're That, and you can't be anything else. So you are relieved of fundamental terror. That doesn't mean that you're always going to be a great hero, that you won't jump when you hear a bang, that you won't worry occasionally, that you won't lose your temper. It means, though, that fundamentally deep, deep, deep down within you, you will be able to be human, not a stone Buddha--you know in Zen there is a difference made between a living Buddha and a stone Buddha. If you go up to a stone Buddha and you hit him hard on the head, nothing happens. You break your fist or your stick. But if you hit a living Buddha, he may say "ouch," and he may feel pain, because if he didn't feel something, he wouldn't be a human being. Buddhas are human, they are not devas, they are not gods. They are enlightened men and women. But the point is that they are not afraid to be human, they are not afraid to let themselves participate in the pains, difficulties and struggles that naturally go with human existence. The only difference is--and it's almost an undetectable difference--it takes one to know one. As a Zen poem says, "when two Zen masters meet each other on the street, they need no introduction. When fiends meet, they recognize one another instantly." So a person who is a real cool Zen understands that, does not go around "Oh, I understand Zen, I have satori, I have this attainment, I have that attainment, I have the other

attainment," because if he said that, he wouldn't understand the first thing about it.

So it is Zen that, if I may put it metaphorically, *Jon-Jo said "the perfect man employs his mind as a mirror. It grasps nothing, it refuses nothing. It receives but does not keep." And another poem says of wild geese flying over a lake, "The wild geese do not intend to cast their reflection, and the water has no mind to retain their image." In other words this is to be--to put it very strictly into our modern idiom--this is to live without hang-ups, the word "hang-up" being an almost exact translation of the Japanese bono and the Sanskrit klesa, ordinarily translated "worldly attachment," though that sounds a little bit--you know what I mean--it sounds pious, and in Zen, things that sound pious are said to stink of Zen, but to have no hang-ups, that is to say, to be able to drift like a cloud and flow like water, seeing that all life is a magnificent illusion, a plane of energy, and that there is absolutely nothing to be afraid of. Fundamentally. You will be afraid on the surface. You will be afraid of putting your hand in the fire. You will be afraid of getting sick, etc. But you will not be afraid of fear. Fear will pass over your mind like a black cloud will be reflected in the mirror. But of course, the mirror isn't quite the right illustration; space would be better. Like a black cloud flows through space without leaving any track. Like the stars don't leave trails behind them. And so that fundamental--it is called "the void" in Buddhism; it doesn't mean "void" in the sense that it's void in the ordinary sense of emptiness. It means void in that is the most real thing there is, but nobody can conceive it. It's rather the same situation that you get between the speaker, in a radio and all the various sounds which it produces. On the speaker you hear human voices, you hear every kind of musical instrument, honking of horns, the sounds of traffic, the explosions of guns, and yet all that tremendous variety of sounds are the vibrations of one diaphragm, but it never says so. The announcer doesn't come on first thing in the morning and say "Ladies and gentlemen, all the sounds that you will hear subsequently during the day will be the vibration of this diaphragm; don't take them for real." And the radio never mentions its own construction, you see? And in exactly the same way, you are never able, really, to examine, to make an object of your own mind, just as you can't look directly into your own eyes or bite your own teeth, because you ARE that, and if you try to find it, and make it something to possess, why that's a great lack of confidence. That shows that you don't really know your "it". And if you're "it," you don't need to make anything of it. There's nothing to look for. But the test is, are you still looking? Do you know that? I mean, not as kind of knowledge you possess, not something you've learned in school like you've got a degree, and "you know, I've mastered the contents of these books and remembered it." In this knowledge, there's nothing to be remembered; nothing to be formulated. You know it best when you say "I don't know it." Because that means, "I'm not holding on to it, I'm not trying to cling to it" in the form of a concept, because there's absolutely no necessity to do so. That would be, in Zen language, putting legs on a snake or a beard on a eunuch, or as we would say, gilding the lily.

Now you say, "Well, that sounds pretty easy. You mean to say all we have to do is relax? We don't have to go around chasing anything anymore? We abandon religion, we abandon meditations, we abandon this, that, and the other, and just live it up anyhow? Just go on." You know, like a father says to his child who keeps asking "Why?"

Why, Why, Why, Why? Why did God make the universe? Who made God? Why are the trees green?" and so on and so forth, and father says finally, "Oh, shut up and eat your bun." It isn't quite like that, because, you see, the thing is this:

All those people who try to realize Zen by doing nothing about it are still trying desperately to find it, and they're on the wrong track. There is another Zen poem which says, "You cannot attain it by thinking, you cannot grasp it by not thinking." Or you could say, you cannot catch hold of the meaning of Zen by doing something about it, but equally, you cannot see into its meaning by doing nothing about it, because both are, in their different ways, attempts to move from where you are now, here, to somewhere else, and the point is that we come to an understanding of this, what I call suchness, only through being completely here. And no means are necessary to be completely here. Neither active means on the one hand, nor passive means on the other. Because in both ways, you are trying to move away from the immediate now. But you see, it's difficult to understand language like that. And to understand what all that is about, there is really one absolutely necessary prerequisite, and this is to stop thinking. Now, I am not saying this in the spirit of being an anti-intellectual, because I think a lot, talk a lot, write a lot of books, and am sort of a half-baked scholar. But you know, if you talk all the time, you will never hear what anybody else has to say, and therefore, all you'll have to talk about is your own conversation. The same is true for people who think all the time. That means, when I use the word "think," talking to yourself, subvocal conversation, the constant chit-chat of symbols and images and talk and words inside your skull. Now, if you do that all the time, you'll find that you've nothing to think about except thinking, and just as you have to stop talking to hear what I have to say, you have to stop thinking to find out what life is about. And the moment you stop thinking, you come into immediate contact with what Korzybski called, so delightfully, "the unspeakable world," that is to say, the nonverbal world. Some people would call it the physical world, but these words "physical," "nonverbal," "material" are all conceptual, and \Box bangs stick on the floor \Box is not a concept. It's not a noise, either. It's \Box Bangs stick again \Box . Get that? So when you are awake to that world, you suddenly find that all the so-called differences between self and other, life and death, pleasure and pain, are all conceptual, and they're not there. They don't exist at all in that world which is \Box bangs stick \Box . In other words, if I hit you hard enough, "ouch" doesn't hurt, if you're in a state of what is called no-thought. There is a certain experience, you see, but you don't call it "hurt." It's like when you were small children, they banged you about, and you cried, and they said "Don't cry" because they wanted to make you hurt and not cry at the same time. People are rather curious about the things they do like that. But you see, they really wanted you to cry, the same way if you threw up one day. It's very good to throw up if you've eaten something that isn't good for you, but your mother said "Eugh!" and made you repress it and feel that throwing up wasn't a good thing to do. Because then when you saw people die, and everybody around you started weeping and making a fuss, and then you learned from that that dying was terrible. When somebody got sick, everybody else got anxious, and you learned that getting sick was something awful. You learned it from a concept.

So the reason why there is in the practice of Zen, what we did before this lecture began, to practice Za-zen, sitting Zen.

Incidentally, there are three other kinds of Zen besides Za-zen. Standing Zen, walking Zen, and lying Zen. In Buddhism, they speak of the three dignities of man. Walking, standing, sitting, and lying. And they say when you sit, just sit. When you walk, just walk. But whatever you do, don't wobble. In fact, of course, you can wobble, if you really wobble well. When the old master *Hiakajo was asked "What is Zen?" he said "When hungry, eat, when tired, sleep," and they said, "Well isn't that what everybody does? Aren't you just like ordinary people?" "Oh no," he said, "they don't do anything of the kind. When they're hungry, they don't just eat, they think of all sorts of things. When they're tired, they don't just sleep, but dream all sorts of dreams." I know the Yun-Mens won't like that, but there comes a time when you just dream yourself out, and no more dreams. You sleep deeply and breathe from your heels. Now, therefore, Za-zen, or sitting Zen, is a very, very good thing in the Western world. We have been running around far too much. It's all right; we've been active, and our action has achieved a lot of good things. But as Aristotle pointed out long ago--and this is one of the good things about Aristotle. He said "the goal of action is contemplation." In other words, busy, busy, busy, busy, but what's it all about? Especially when people are busy because they think they're GOING somewhere, that they're going to get something and attain something. There's quite a good deal of point to action if you know you're not going anywhere. If you act like you dance, or like you sing or play music, then you're really not going anywhere, you're just doing pure action, but if you act with a thought in mind that as a result of action you are eventually going to arrive at someplace where everything will be alright. Then you are on a squirrel cage, hopelessly condemned to what the Buddhists call samsara, the round, or rat-race of birth and death, because you think you're going to go somewhere. You're already there. And it is only a person who has discovered that he is already there who is capable of action, because he doesn't act frantically with the thought that he's going to get somewhere. He acts like he can go into walking meditation at that point, you see, where we walk not because we are in a great, great hurry to get to a destination, but because the walking itself is great. The walking itself is the meditation. And when you watch Zen monks walk, it's very fascinating. They have a different kind of walk from everybody else in Japan. Most Japanese shuffle along, or if they wear Western clothes, they race and hurry like we do. Zen monks have a peculiar swing when they walk, and you have the feeling they walk rather the same way as a cat. There's something about it that isn't hesitant; they're going along all right, they're not sort of vagueing around, but they're walking just to walk. And that's walking meditation. But the point is that one cannot act creatively, except on the basis of stillness. Of having a mind that is capable from time to time of stopping thinking. And so this practice of sitting may seem very difficult at first, because if you sit in the Buddhist way, it makes your legs ache. Most Westerners start to fidget; they find it very boring to sit for a long time, but the reason they find it boring is that they're still thinking. If you weren't thinking, you wouldn't notice the passage of time, and as a matter of fact, far from being boring, the world when looked at without chatter becomes amazingly interesting. The most ordinary sights and sounds and smells, the texture of shadows on the floor in front of you. All these things, without being named, and saying "that's a shadow, that's red, that's brown, that's somebody's foot." When you don't name things anymore, you start seeing them. Because say when a person says "I see a leaf," immediately, one thinks of a spearhead-shaped thing outlined

in black and filled in with flat green. No leaf looks like that. No leaves--leaves are not green. That's why Lao-Tzu said "the five colors make a man blind, the five tones make a man deaf," because if you can only see five colors, you're blind, and if you can only hear five tones in music, you're deaf. You see, if you force sound into five tones, you force color into five colors, you're blind and deaf. The world of color is infinite, as is the world of sound. And it is only by stopping fixing conceptions on the world of color and the world of sound that you really begin to hear it and see it.

So this, should I be so bold as to use the word "discipline," of meditation or Za-zen lies behind the extraordinary capacity of Zen people to develop such great arts as the gardens, the tea ceremony, the calligraphy, and the grand painting of the Sum Dynasty, and of the Japanese Sumi tradition. And it was because, especially in tea ceremony, which means literally "cha-no-yu" in Japanese, meaning "hot water of tea," they found in the very center of things in everyday life, magic. In the words of the poet *Hokoji, "marvelous power and supernatural activity, drawing water, carrying wood." And you know how it is sometimes when you say a word and make the word meaningless, you take the word "yes"--yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. It becomes funny. That's why they use the word "mu" in Zen training, which means "no." Mu. And you get this going for a long time, and the word ceases to mean anything, and it becomes magical. Now, what you have to realize in the further continuance of Za-zen, that as you-- Well, let me say first in a preliminary way, the easiest way to stop thinking is first of all to think about something that doesn't have any meaning. That's my point in talking about "mu" or "yes," or counting your breath, or listening to a sound that has no meaning, because that stops you thinking, and you become fascinated in the sound. Then as you get on and you just--the sound only--there comes a point when the sound is taken away, and you're wide open. Now at that point, there will be a kind of preliminary so-called subtlety, and you will think "wowee, that's it!" You'll be so happy, you'll be walking on air. When Suzuki Daisetz was asked what was it like to have satori, he said "well, it's like ordinary, everyday experience, except about two inches off the ground." But there's another saying that the student who has obtained satori goes to hell as straight as an arrow. No satori around here, because anybody who has a spiritual experience, whether you get it through Za-zen, or through LSD, or anything, you know, that gives you that experience. If you hold on to it, say "now I've got it," it's gone out of the window, because the minute you grab the living thing, it's like catching a handful of water, the harder you clutch, the faster it squirts through your fingers. There's nothing to get hold of, because you don't NEED to get hold of anything. You had it from the beginning. Because you can see that, by various methods of meditation, but the trouble is that people come out of that an brag about it, say "I've seen it." Equally intolerable are the people who study Zen and come out and brag to their friends about how much their legs hurt, and how long they sat, and what an awful thing it was. They're sickening. Because the discipline side of this thing is not meant to be something awful. It's not done in a masochistic spirit, or a sadistic spirit: suffering builds character, therefore suffering is good for you. When I went to school in England, the basic premise of education was that suffering builds character, and therefore all senior boys were at liberty to bang about the junior ones with a perfectly clear conscience, because they were doing them a favor. It was good for them, it was building their character, and as a result of this

attitude, the word "discipline" has begun to stink. It's been stinking for a long time. But we need a kind of entirely new attitude towards this, because without that quiet, and that non-striving, a life becomes messy. When you let go, finally, because there's nothing to hold onto, you have to be awfully careful not to turn into loose yogurt. Let me give two opposite illustrations. When you ask most people to lie flat on the floor and relax, you find that they are at full attention, because they don't really believe that the floor will hold them up, and therefore they're holding themselves together; they're uptight. They're afraid that if they don't do this, even though the floor is supporting them, they'll suddenly turn into a gelatinous mass and trickle away in all directions. Then there are other people who when you tell them to relax, they go like a limp rag. But you see, the human organism is a subtle combination of hardness and softness. Of flesh and bones. And the side of Zen which has to do with neither doing nor not doing, but knowing that you are It anyway, and you don't have to seek it, that's Zen-flesh. But the side in which you can come back into the world, with this attitude of not seeking, and knowing you're It, and not fall apart--that requires bones. And one of the most difficult things--this belongs to of course a generation we all know about that was running about some time ago--where they caught on to Zen, and they started anything-goes painting, they started anything-goes sculpture, they started anything-goes way of life. Now I think we're recovering from that today. At any rate, our painters are beginning once again to return to glory, to marvelous articulateness and vivid color. Nothing like it has been seen since the stained glass of □?Ù. That's a good sign. But it requires that there be in our daily use of freedom, and I'm not just talking about political freedom. I'm talking about the freedom which comes when you know that you're It, forever and ever and ever. And it'll be so nice when you die, because that'll be a change, but it'll come back some other way. When you know that, and you've seen through the whole mirage, then watch out, because there may still be in you some seeds of hostility, some seeds of pride, some seeds of wanting to put down other people, or wanting to just defy the normal arrangements of life.

So that is why, in the order of a Zen monastary, various duties are assigned. The novices have the light duties, and the more senior you get, the heavy duties. For example, the Roshi very often is the one who cleans out the benjo, the toilet. And everything is kept in order. There is a kind of beautiful, almost princely aestheticism, because by reason of that order being kept all of the time, the vast free energy which is contained in the system doesn't run amok. The understanding of Zen, the understanding of awakening, the understanding off-- Well, we'll call it mystical experiences, one of the most dangerous things in the world. And for a person who cannot contain it, it's like putting a million volts through your electric shaver. You blow your mind and it stays blown. Now, if you go off in that way, that is what would be called in Buddhism a pratyeka-buddha--"private buddha". He is one who goes off into the transcendental world and is never seen again. And he's made a mistake from the standpoint of Buddhism, because from the standpoint of Buddhism, there is no fundamental difference between the transcendental world and this everyday world. The bodhisattva, you see, who doesn't go off into a nirvana and stay there forever and ever, but comes back and lives ordinary everyday life to help other beings to see through it, too, he doesn't come back because he feels he has some solemn duty to help mankind and all that kind of pious

cant. He comes back because he sees the two worlds are the same. He sees all other beings as buddhas. He sees them, to use a phrase of G.K. Chesterton's, "but now a great thing in the street, seems any human nod, where move in strange democracies a million masks of god." And it's fantastic to look at people and see that they really, deep down, are enlightened. They're It. They're faces of the divine. And they look at you, and they say "oh no, but I'm not divine. I'm just ordinary little me." You look at them in a funny way, and here you see the buddha nature looking out of their eyes, straight at you, and saying it's not, and saying it quite sincerely. And that's why, when you get up against a great guru, the Zen master, or whatever, he has a funny look in his eyes. When you say "I have a problem, guru. I'm really mixed up, I don't understand," he looks at you in this queer way, and you think "oh dear me, he's reading my most secret thoughts. He's seeing all the awful things I am, all my cowardice, all my shortcomings." He isn't doing anything of the kind; he isn't even interested in such things. He's looking at, if I may use Hindu terminology, he's looking at Shiva, in you, saying "my god, Shiva, won't you come off it?"

So then, you see, the bodhisattva, who is--I'm assuming quite a knowledge of Buddhism in this assembly--but the bodhisattva as distinct from the pratyeka-buddha, bodhisattva doesn't go off into nirvana, he doesn't go off into permanent withdrawn ecstasy, he doesn't go off into a kind of catatonic samadhi. That's all right. There are people who can do that; that's their vocation. That's their specialty, just as a long thing is the long body of buddha, and a short thing is the short body of buddha. But if you really understand that Zen, that buddhist idea of enlightenment is not comprehended in the idea of the transcendental, neither is it comprehended in the idea of the ordinary. Not in terms with the infinite, not in terms with the finite. Not in terms of the eternal, not in terms of the temporal, because they're all concepts. So, let me say again, I am not talking about the ordering of ordinary everyday life in a reasonable and methodical way as being schoolteacherish, and saying "if you were NICE people, that's what you would do." For heaven's sake, don't be nice people. But the thing is, that unless you do have that basic framework of a certain kind of order, and a certain kind of discipline, the force of liberation will blow the world to pieces. It's too strong a current for the wire. So then, it's terribly important to see beyond ecstasy. Ecstasy here is the soft and lovable flesh, huggable and kissable, and that's very good. But beyond ecstasy are bones, what we call hard facts. Hard facts of everyday life, and incidentally, we shouldn't forget to mention the soft facts; there are many of them. But then the hard fact, it is what we mean, the world in an ordinary, everyday state of consciousness. To find out that that is really no different from the world of supreme ecstasy, well, it's rather like this:

Let's suppose, as so often happens, you think of ecstasy as insight, as seeing light. There's a Zen poem which says

A sudden crash of thunder. The mind doors burst open,
and there sits the ordinary old man.

See? There's a sudden vision. Satori! Breaking! Wowee! And the doors of the mind are blown apart, and there sits the ordinary old man. It's just little you, you know? Lightning flashes, sparks shower. In one blink of your eyes, you've missed seeing it. Why? Because here

is the light. The light, the light, the light, every mystic in the world has "seen the light." That brilliant, blazing energy, brighter than a thousand suns, it is locked up in everything. Now imagine this. Imagine you're seeing it. Like you see aureoles around buddhas. Like you see the beatific vision at the end of Dante's "Paradiso." Vivid, vivid light, so bright that it is like the clear light of the void in the Tibetan Book of the Dead. It's beyond light, it's so bright. And you watch it receding from you. And on the edges, like a great star, there becomes a rim of red. And beyond that, a rim of orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet. You see this great mandala appearing with great suns, and beyond the violet, there's black. Black, like obsidian, not flat black, but transparent black, like lacquer. And again, blazing out of the black, as the yang comes from the yin, more light. Going, going, going. And along with this light, there comes sound. There is a sound so tremendous with the white light that you can't hear it, so piercing that it seems to annihilate the ears. But then along with the colors, the sound goes down the scale in harmonic intervals, down, down, down, until it gets to a deep thundering base which is so vibrant that it turns into something solid, and you begin to get the similar spectrum of textures. Now all this time, you've been watching a kind of thing radiating out. "But," it says, "you know, this isn't all I can do," and the rays start dancing like this, and the sound starts waving, too, as it comes out, and the textures start varying themselves, and they say, well, you've been looking at this this as I've been describing it so far in a flat dimension. Let's add a third dimension; it's going to come right at you now. And meanwhile, it says, we're not going to just do like this, we're going to do little curlicues. And it says, "well, that's just the beginning!" Making squares and turns, and then suddenly you see in all the little details that become so intense, that all sorts of subfigures are contained in what you originally thought were the main figures, and the sound starts going all different, amazing complexities if sound all over the place, and this thing's going, going, going, and you think you're going to go out of your mind, when suddenly it turns into... Why, us, sitting around here.

Thank you very much.

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