

Chaos and Cosmos in Zen

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Chaos: Creativity in the Cosmos

In the chapter "Fit for Emperors and Kings," the Chinese philosopher Chuang-tzu relates the myth of Hun-tun, the emperor of chaos, who died when the seven sense openings were bored into him. The story goes:

Shu, the ruler of the Southern Sea, and Hu, the ruler of the Northern Sea, met in the realm of Hun-tun, the emperor of the Center, that is to say in the world of true reality that contradicted their own as being one of vast disorder. Hun-tun received the two emperors warmly, and they both overcame their knowledge-based and conceptual consciousness, entirely forgot the evaluating, one-sided viewpoint of differentiation. Thus they enjoyed the world of true reality, the land of Hun-tun, Emperor Chaos. Subsequently the two guests wondered how they could possibly repay the kindness of Hun-tun. Concluding their consultation, they decided to present Hun-tun with seven openings — the sense doors of the eyes, ears, mouth, and nose. They duly proceeded to bore one opening into Hun-tun every day. However, on the seventh day, when he was finally becoming like a human being, Hun-tun died.¹

What Chuang-tzu is trying to express with the above story is that the world of true reality is in fact a world beyond all conceptual grasping, a world without differentiation and conscious dissection, a world that it is impossible to objectivize. By trying to bring about the order of cosmos through the fixation and formalization of chaos, Hun-tun dies. As long as Hun-tun remains Hun-tun, he can be active in his original form, but as soon as he is brought into the cosmos through fixation and formalization, his life activity can no longer fulfill itself and he must die.

How, then, are chaos and cosmos related mutually in Zen? To present my conclusion first, Zen sees in the actual world, which

people usually regard as chaos (Hun-tun), creativity and freedom toward the world of true reality. However, this chaos as creativity is expressed in a variety of ways by every single age, by every single human being. If we then explain the word "chaos" with other terms, then chaos is ordered in a sense. In this sense, creativity and cosmos as the expression of chaos are not related dualistically, but are reality and its concerns. The relation of chaos and cosmos in Zen can therefore be understood as parallel to the relation of Heidegger's "*das Sein selbst*" (being itself) and "*das Sein des Seienden*" (being of being). That is to say, the relation of chaos and cosmos in Zen can ultimately be understood as absolutely contradictory as well as absolutely self-identical.

Reality in this context emerges as the complex intertwining of the horizontal and vertical dimensions. It can only be fully realized by someone who, in his mind, has realized the oneness of body and mind. This experience of reality, then, is linked to the question of the identity of self and world in a complex manner. Therefore, in the following, I would like to focus more on the question of identity of the self.

Chaos sive Cosmos

In order to move on to an analysis of the identity of the self, I would like to discuss three different propositions. First, the three principles of thinking that have been at the core of traditional Western logic ever since Aristotle; second, the four *dharma* worlds of Huayan or Kegon Buddhism; and third, the four propositions of the *Mādhyamika* by the Indian thinker Nāgārjuna. Following the discussion of their various ways of describing the identity of self and world, I would then like to illuminate the interrelation between them.

First, let me turn to Western logic. Ever since Aristotle, the formal logic of traditional Western metaphysics has recognized three basic principles of thinking. To use an expression by Martin Heidegger, in the representation (*Vorstellung*) of the being of being three principles of thinking are appropriate. They are:

First, A is A. This is the principle of identity.

Second, A is not non-A. This is the principle of contradiction.

Third, A is either B or non-B. This is the principle of the excluded middle.

Now, as we are living in the contemporary world, certainly in some ways we are living in a world that is based on these principles of formal logic. On the other hand, when we try very basically to give expression to the self, we can no longer just explore the truth as it is evident outside. Rather, we have to turn our eyes inward, and at that moment objectivity becomes quite impossible. In posing, in the most original way, the question of the foundation on which the self is being established, the three principles of thinking are found to be no longer useful or appropriate.

More than that, even when one can assume a position of Hegelian thought, even where dialectics may be suitable, the three principles of thinking appear rather inappropriate. For example, Hegel in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* says that "substance is subject." Assuming this, God is God, and yet at the same time God is also the subjectivity through which God evolves necessarily both logically and spontaneously to the absolute idea. Then again, looking further at the matter from a Hegelian perspective, he says in the introduction to his *Philosophy of Right* that "the reasonable is real; the real is reasonable." With this he establishes a foundation for the oneness of thinking and being.

Now, approaching the self not from a position of speculation but from a position of the acting self, the basis of all thought is established as the oneness of body and mind, the oneness of being and thinking. This is made clear in the four *dharma* truths of Kegon Buddhism, the four distinct ways it recognizes of looking at the world. They are:

1. the *dharma* world of matter (phenomena);
2. the *dharma* world of principle (noumenon);
3. the *dharma* world of the unimpeded interaction of matter and principle;
4. the *dharma* world of the unimpeded interaction of matter and matter.

The first of these, the *dharma* world of matter, is the world of the truth in the realm of phenomena, with all their distinctions and differentiations. The second, the *dharma* world of principle, is the world of the absolute truth of the logos. The third, the *dharma* world of the unimpeded interaction of matter and principle, is the world where the phenomenal world and the world of the logos are joined in a non-dual way. The fourth, finally, the *dharma* world of the unimpeded interaction of matter and matter, is the world where the relation of each being with each other being is merged

into one with no impediments whatsoever; this is the world where all differentiation between matter and principle has been transcended. This last one among the four *dharma* worlds of Kegon Buddhism closely corresponds to the oneness of being and thinking in Hegel, at least when looked at superficially.

To return now to the problem of the oneness of body and mind, if we try to pursue the identity of all things including each of us human beings on the basis of the active self, then we must enter into the unnoticed. Our selves and the selves of all beings have to be aware of their self-identity at each stage of all the above-described positions. At this time, the self must become aware that in any of these four *dharma* worlds it can be truly itself and therefore find the true identity of itself and all beings. On the other hand, the self, in an active process of experience and appropriation, must also in each individual case become aware of the fact that any self-identity of self and world does not substantially exist.

At this point, let us consider the fact that each of us has true self-identity at each stage of the four *dharma* worlds of Kegon. The self-identical nature of the self and the world is first found in the first *dharma* world, the *dharma* world of matter or phenomena. Having undergone the Great Death, the self becomes one with all its actions. At the same time, it realizes that it is none other than that it finds itself in a non-dual relationship with the myriad phenomena of all creation. With this, there is no more gap between the self and its actions, and the self undergoes religious training which allow no shirking of responsibility. At the very same time, then, the self and the myriad phenomena of all creation, standing in a non-dual relationship to it, are seen not only as reality but also as true reality. This, then, is the self-awareness that arises from the first truth of the phenomenal world.

Next, the self-identity of self and world also exists in the second *dharma* world, the *dharma* world of principle or noumenon. Here the experience of true reality is attained through the thinking of non-thinking.² Yet, the realm of this thinking of non-thinking is seen not only as reality but also as true reality.

Third, the *dharma* world of the unimpeded interaction of matter and principle also has its form of the self-identity of self and world. It emerges in the non-duality of the self and all phenomena and in the thinking of non-thinking. The reality at this stage of

truth is the reality of absolute openness before the differentiation of the phenomenal world and the world of truth. Here the self becomes aware of the openness of absolute nothingness; here the self-awareness of the self and the self-awareness of the world become one. This awareness is only possible in the dimension of the sources of self and world. Here the contemplation of the *samadhi* of playfulness and the world of action, based on the true will, become truly and originally one. This is fully realized and appropriated in the way of religious practice, through the arts of culture and the martial arts.

Fourth, in the *dharma* world of the unimpeded interaction of matter and matter the self-identity between self and world appears when the self that has undergone the Great Death transcends the differentiation between principle and matter. The self then relates to each and every single one of the myriad phenomena of all creation by a process of mutual and unhindered interpretation. The self then becomes aware of the fact that only in such a universally interpenetrating world can there truly be found the identity of self and world.

The Emptiness of the World

Here the understanding of Tanabe Hajime and C.F. von Weizsäcker becomes important. In these cases, by way of mediation, the self must advance to the field of absolute nothingness and beyond even the realm of mediation. It must also face the absolute nothingness of the subjectivity of people's selves. This simultaneous conversion of the world and of subjectivity is what in the philosophy of Tanabe is called metanoetics.

To supplement this discussion I must add at this point that the field of absolute nothingness is not a place of any sort. Rather, in the words of Buddhism, it is found in the "Buddha-nature" of the phenomenal world, i.e., in a nature that is devoid of any substantial self-nature. In other words, it signifies the existence of dependent creativity, due to which everything is ultimately without substance. To use a term of Nishida Kitaro — or with Pascal and Bonaventura, or even going back as far as the early Christian patriarchs of the second and third centuries — one arrives at it when one reaches the absolute center, a huge globe, in which there are centers everywhere, without boundaries or limits, where all living beings estab-

lish themselves in their very own way of being. Or again, in the words of Nishitani Keiji, another eminent thinker in the tradition of Nishida, the field of absolute nothingness is a field of emptiness where all living beings exist in “circumferential interpenetration”.

The distinction between subject and object, between intellect, emotions, and will, between truth, goodness, beauty, and holiness, and so on, is preceded by a dimension of absolute nothingness, of emptiness, of absolute openness. This dimension, then, is at the core of the philosophy of the Indian thinker Nāgārjuna and his system of Mādhyamika. It is also the essence of the philosophy of Nishitani Keiji. I am speaking of emptiness (*śūnyatā*).

“I am (or the world is) empty,” can be said in any of the four *dharma* worlds of Kegon. Yet for the very reason that I am (or the world is) ultimately empty, everything that is empty is also ultimately matter. The *Prajñāpāramitā sūtra*, supposedly compiled before the year 50 A.D., says: “Matter is empty; emptiness is matter.”³ Thus, because matter is emptiness, emptiness is also matter. Or, as Nāgārjuna put it, “When emptiness is given, all things are also given. When emptiness is not given, all things are not given either.”⁴

It is thus only because emptiness is established that the myriad phenomena of all creation — and therefore also I (and the world) — can become established at all. Therefore, “I am (or the world is) emptiness” is the first proposition; from this follows “I am (or the world is) not empty,” the second proposition. This in turn means that “I am (or the world is) matter.” In consequence, “I am (or the world is) emptiness and at the same time I am (or the world is) matter,” which represents the third proposition; and “I am (or the world is) neither emptiness nor am I (or is the world) not emptiness,” represents the fourth proposition.

Now, the experience of reality by myself or the world cannot be expressed through any one of these four propositions. The reason for this is that while the foundation of Western objective logic ever since Aristotle is expressed in three principles of thinking, Nāgārjuna in his Mādhyamika recognizes four logical propositions.⁵ They are:

1. A is B — affirmation.
2. A is not B — negation.
3. A is B and not B at the same time — twofold affirmation.
4. A is neither B nor not B — twofold negation.⁵

However, one may also turn around and say that, even in the four propositions of the Mādhyamika, emptiness — and thus at the same time reality — cannot be fully expressed. This is because the Mādhyamika uses a method that does not express reality through words and logic and only thus comes to establish emptiness, and thus also reality.

Therefore I find that the self-identity of myself and the world cannot be expressed exhaustively through the four propositions of the Mādhyamika as introduced above. Concretely speaking, one can also say that my true self-identity lies entirely with the mind (*kokoro*). However, this mind, which in its essence is Buddha-nature, also is my self-nature. And therefore it becomes evident that this self-nature is in reality devoid of any substantive nature. As a result, it is said in the *Mumonkan* that “mind is the Buddha,” and at the same time, “non-mind is non-Buddha.” Buddha-nature as self-nature thus is the mind of the individual and it is also the Buddha. Yet even as we say this, it cannot be so objectively set down. The self-identity of me or the world, or the mind of the individual, is ultimately found in the negation of the four propositions of the Mādhyamika.

Within the Plenty of Nothing

Only in the unity of the dimensions of nature (the world), humanity, transcendence, only in absolute nothingness does this reality emerge. Only when the self becomes thoroughly one with this unity, with this nothingness, can this reality be truly understood.

In Zen, when someone wants to know about pine trees, he is told to “learn from the pine trees”; when he wants to know about bamboo, he should “learn from the bamboo.” But only by becoming thoroughly one with the pine tree can we really understand it; only by becoming thoroughly one with the bamboo can we really enter into it. In the very same way, we have to become thoroughly one with reality. Only then can we truly realize and appropriate whatever is within reality. To express the same idea in the words of Kierkegaard, it is to “live in deep earnest every single moment as an atom of eternity.” To realize all immediately is achieved through an intuition that “allows us to gain a penetrating insight into all beings,” as each of us relates intimately to each of these beings. It can never be found through analytical or theoretical con-

temptation. My self-identity thus pierces through all the various levels and dimensions until it reaches the bottomless bottom. It can never be based on the solid grounds of verbal verification or by ascertaining it theoretically, but can only be understood with the intuition that arises after the self has passed through the Great Death.

This intuition is activated in *zazen* (Zen-meditation) as it is practiced while walking, standing, sitting, or lying down. That is to say, it can be practiced throughout everyday life. On the other hand, traditional Western metaphysics has shown a strong tendency toward theoretical and analytical thinking. Accordingly, man must demand and integrate intuition so that by thinking intuitively he may find himself and thinks on the basis of pure intuition. However, one must still allow the awareness of reality and self-identity that is appropriated through this intuition to be properly expressed. Without language the intuition could not be transmitted to others and would therefore be irretrievably lost.

The Structure of the Mind (*Kokoro*): Chaos and Cosmos

As we have seen in the preceding passages, the attainment of reality and the awareness of the identity of one's self and of the world can be found in two ways. On the one hand, there is the approach to reality from the vertical dimension, developed in the practice of absorption (*dhyaṇa*) and meditation. On the other hand, there is the approach to reality from the horizontal dimension, developed through absolute mediation. However, while living in the actual reality of the present, the vertical and horizontal approaches intertwine with each other in a complete way. To clearly distinguish one from the other becomes nearly impossible. This experience has to be renewed every day.

The field in which this intertwining is alone possible is the human mind. The mind, in the reality that is its old home, must learn how to live in a self-aware manner. If the mind comes to be aware of this true reality, then it can establish itself in the absolutely contradictory self-identity of chaos and cosmos. This mind, then, is what the mind should be — living in a dynamic and creative way. It is none other than the mind that has returned to the chaos of its origin.

On the other hand, as long as the mind participates actively in the stable sphere of life and worldly interaction, it must develop

through the inner contractions of this sphere, through the various dimensions of humanity, the world (nature), and transcendence (absolute nothingness). Participating in one of them already, it must turn to unify with the other two — it must develop from the logic of species to the philosophy of metanoia. By breaking through to an integrated unity, it progresses toward an absolutely infinite openness where all is as all should be and all is done as all should be done. Doing so, the mind passes from the horizontal approach to reality to a field of complete openness toward reality, and thereby becomes aware of the vertical approach as well.

Human beings thus become aware of their true selves; they completely abandon the way of life that is full of self-centered attachments to the world and begin to live in a sphere where the three dimensions of nature, humanity, and transcendence are harmoniously unified. Then, for the first time, all the various problems raised in the horizontal dimension can be solved. In this reality, the vertical and horizontal dimensions become truly and non-dually one in absolutely contradictory self-identity, and the human mind is fully joined with universal life. In this reality, the mind that has realized the oneness of body and mind proceeds along the way of daily renewal to live creatively and in complete openness. Then and only then is the mind no longer only the mind of the self but also the mind of the myriad phenomena of all creation, the mind of the world (nature), closely linked with the dimension of transcendence, i.e., the Buddha-nature that is absolute nothingness.

This understanding of the mind is very different from its counterpart in Christian thought. In the New Testament, for example, the individual (*soma*) that combines the flesh (*sarx*) and the soul (*pneuma*) is considered the equivalent of a person. Also, in Kierkegaard, the spirit (*Geist*) that consists of the relation between the body (*Leib*) and the soul (*Seele*) becomes aware of the self as a person. This self, then, consists of the relationship of the combined body and soul to itself.

However, in Eastern thought and especially in Zen, Buddha-nature, i.e., the mind that has realized the oneness of body and mind, is a great deal more essential than either logos-centered human rationality or even spirit. Moreover, this mind cannot be seen objectively. For example, Hui-k'ō (Eka in Japanese), the sec-

ond patriarch of Chinese Zen and successor of Bohidharma, has said: "It is not possible to obtain the mind."⁶

The structure of this mind, when examined from the perspective of objective logic, can be described as the mind of chaos, but of a chaos that is, so to speak, creativity as such. Or again, when looked at from the logic of emptiness as defined in Nāgārjuna's *Mādhyamika*, it is an intuition that loses itself by becoming absolutely contradictorily one with all beings. If the mind thus becomes all beings, then chaos is turned into cosmos. Through the Great Death of the self, the mind becomes aware of its own structure as being chaos-sive-cosmos or cosmos-sive-chaos. On the other hand, when the three dimensions of nature (the world), humanity, and transcendence are twisted together and have no transparency, then the mind is chaos only — then it loses its dynamic and flexibility as much as its dialectical creativity. It becomes solidified and fossilized; as in the above cited story of Chuang-tzu's Hun-tun, it dies from the transfer into cosmos.

Kokoro in Zen Literature

I would now like to move one step closer to an understanding of the mind, or *kokoro*, by looking at the expression it finds in the literature of Zen. The previous sections of this article have been devoted to the question of the structure of chaos in Zen, to the problem of the relation between truth and reality, to a discussion of self-identity, as well as to an examination of the structure of the mind. With all this, we have come to understand the mind that has realized the oneness of body and mind as the field where the vertical and horizontal dimensions intertwine. This mind then is creatively advancing on a path whose basic structure can be described as chaos-sive-cosmos or cosmos-sive-chaos.

Against this background, I would like to discuss the self after it has passed through the Great Death, that is, after it has become aware of the realm where matter is also emptiness and emptiness is also matter. It is with the help of literature that the actuality of this self can be better understood. The literature of Zen gives expression to the mind and thereby to a theory of the structure of chaos, because it focuses on the mind that emerges after the Great Death of the self, a mind that reiterates anew the directness and spontaneity of the newly born. Still, whatever is expressed in the

literary works of Zen poetry and prose can never be the mind as such, still they come as close to it as possible.

Let me therefore begin with the work of the Zen monk Ryokan (1758-1831) of the late Edo period. His poetry shows with unequalled power the structure of the mind in the realm of chaotic-cosmos or cosmos-sive-chaos; it reveals clearly the dynamic structure of chaos in human creativity. He says:

How transparent the water of the mind!
Skim the surface, yet never see its end.
Then an ardent wish arises —
And images, so many, stand before the eyes.
Caught, man begins to see them as existing.
Depending then, there's no return to the true mind.
Lamentable is a man of such illusion!
To the end entangled by all ten sufferings.⁷

In the first two lines, Ryokan likens the originally pure and transparent mind to a flat body of water, an expanse without limits that covers everything. In the next lines, he describes how this originally pure and transparent mind, as it becomes attached to and is immersed in existence, is like a mirror that turns increasingly dull and loses its transparency. The relationship between all things and the mind is then no longer that between two clear mirrors that reflect each other completely and without impediment. The mind is then speculative — a word that in its etymological root, the Latin *speculare*, already contains the meaning of mirror. In the relation between the mind and all beings, it gives rise to a mind of attachment and, at this very moment, the mirror reflects only an image of the myriad beings and thus the mind becomes speculative.⁸ The clear and direct mutual reflection between the two mirrors of the world and the mind is lost.

In the last lines of his poem, Ryokan concludes that, once the relation of the mind to all beings is like that of a mirror to its image and the mind has duly lost its original transparency, the man living with such a mind will be caught by illusion and ends by falling into the ten kinds of karmic error. In other words, someone who loses the original transparency of the mind will fall into straightforward chaos.

Basho, another famous Zen poet, also expresses the reality of the mind with great depth. About one year before his death, in 1693, he wrote the following *haiku*:

A hermitage of Saigyō —
It could be in this flower garden.⁹

In this poem, Bashō thinks of Saigyō with love and respect. His flower garden, deep in the woods, reminds him of the area on Mount Yoshino where Saigyō had his hermitage. Saigyō (1118-90), who lived in the end of the Heian and the beginning of the Kamakura periods, was another of Japan's famous monk-poets. Thinking of death in his flower garden, a year before he himself passed away, Bashō gives expression to a strong sense of yearning.

Saigyō himself wrote very subtle and intricate verses on the mind — for example, in the following *waka*:

Even my mindless body is profoundly moved:
A snipe rising from a swamp in the autumnal evening.¹⁰

Saigyō was a contemporary of the founder and first patriarch of Japanese Rinzai-Zen, Eisai (1141-1215). He died one year before the latter's return from China and ten years before the birth of Eisai's famous student Dōgen (1200-53). Saigyō therefore did not live to see the golden age of Japanese Zen. Still, he was deeply imbued with its spirit when he, at the age of 23, moved by his experience of the heartlessness of the world, entered a monastery to lead a life of contemplation. There he wrote his poetry — properly understood as arising from the chaos that is creativity, from an original openness that unifies chaos and cosmos on the deepest level, from a mind that was purified and utterly transparent.

In his *waka* he expresses the self of the hermit who cannot understand the simple elegance of the artistic mind (or *kokoro*). His mind has become fully one with the actions of the snipe flying off from a marsh, and his song rises up carried by a surge of feeling that must find words.

Bashō, on the other hand, thinks of Saigyō with longing. By couching this longing in the highly elegant and literary format of his *haiku*, Bashō creates the particularly artistic poetry he is justly famous for. In his work *Oi no kobumi*, an account of his wanderings from 1687 to 1688, he himself explains it.

The *waka* of Saigyō, the *renga* of Sōgi, the paintings of Sesshū, and the tea ceremony of Rikyū, are all one in that they break through to the Way. Moreover, in their very elegance they follow the great nature and become the friends of the four seasons. One sees always and in all the

flowers, and sees always and in all the moon. Without the refinement of the image, one is like a barbarian. Without the refinement of the mind, one is like a beast. Leave the barbarians, get away from the beasts, transform and thus return to nature as such.¹¹

In this paragraph, Basho explains that the elegance or the artistic quality contained equally in the *waka* and *renga* poems as much as in painting and the tea ceremony is originally one. It is thus in the arts that one can best follow heaven, earth, and nature, i.e., the entire course of the universe, that one can truly become a friend of the four seasons. Also, whatever the eyes see and the mind thinks are all part of the natural beauty, such as the flowers and the moon. In the arts, the human mind can and should return to its origin and become one with heaven, earth, and nature.

The same idea is also present in Dogen's *Shobogenzo*, cited above:

To study the Way (*satori*) is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be enlightened by all things. To be enlightened by all things is to remove the barriers between one's self and others. At that time there is no trace of enlightenment, though enlightenment itself continues [into one's daily life] endlessly.¹²

The way of elegance and cultural refinement thus leads ultimately to a return to the oneness with nature. More than that, this way is also the same as the path of Buddhist practice — is in fact precisely the recovery and discovery of chaos, of chaos as it is evident in the world of present reality and of chaos as the essence of creativity.

Then, however, this chaos as creativity, through the poetry of *haiku*, *waka*, and *renga*, is transformed into cosmos. It is also transformed through painting and the tea ceremony; and it is transformed through the path of Buddhist practice.

My favorite of all Basho's *haikus* in which he expressed the original mind that experiences reality through the arts and transformation is the following:

On this way there is no traveler —
The end of autumn.¹³

The structure of the mind and thereby the structure of chaos can be clarified through this poem in some more detail. First, the most obvious meaning of the *haiku* is Basho's depiction of the atmosphere of a lonely road in the dusk, a road on which he is actually traveling. There is nobody there; it is late autumn, just a lonely stretch of country road.

On a second level, although Basho himself may have not been aware of this, the verse contains a premonition of his own death a mere two weeks later. At only fifty-one years of age, neither long-lived nor dying young, his image of the lonely road in autumn may well signify his vision of human life. The poem then would refer to the separation from the world through death that every human being has to pass through alone.

On a third level, Basho's words may be taken to refer to the way of the *haiku*, the high style of literary poetry that he developed in particular. Basho, in this poem, may be expressing his sorrow that nobody follows him on his steep and difficult path of *haiku*, i.e., his particular type of *haiku* and *renku* literature, that the way of the *haiku* is inevitably approaching its solitary end.

The "way" in the poem thus indicates a real road, the course of the poet's life, and also the way of the *haiku*, integrating three levels of meaning. In the same way, "the end of autumn" refers simultaneously to an actual period of the year, to the approaching end of the poet's life, and also to the decline of the art of his particular poetry. And again, the traveler is a real person who travels along a lonely road to some destination; he is the poet himself who journeys along the course of his life; and he is the aspiring artist who may join Basho in his ambitions for true poetry. All three major words of the short stanza thus refer to all three distinct levels of meaning.

The actual life of the poet Basho and his aspirations and concerns for the high art of *haiku* poetry are utterly merged into one, into chaos, in the person of Basho himself. It is this merging that Basho first creatively expresses in his concrete vision of the empty road in late autumn. All three together, the course of his life, the way of the *haiku*, and the real road through the country become one in him, and in this poem he gives creative expression to this complete oneness. The way, the end of autumn, and the traveler — in all their three levels of meaning — as they are utterly merged into one in the person of Basho with his saintly way of Basho's life and his unique self-awareness, for the first time develop into cosmos.

Beyond having three levels of meaning, the main aspects of the poem — way, end of autumn, traveler — must also have broken through to the true self-awareness of the poet's mind. Without this break-through, the mind would not be transparent and would fall

into the ten kinds of sins. This in turn would make it quite impossible for the poet utterly to merge them into one in his own person and thus write truly creative poetry. It is especially in those places where the words of the poem appear senseless that the poet lets his readers feel the workings of this oneness.

Basho as a person thus stands in the field of original, absolute openness at the root of humanity and inhumanity. He stands, in whatever he does, where the two dimensions (the horizontal and the vertical) intertwine in a complex and intricate manner, where every day and moment, he lives completely in the here and now. The way of human life, the arts, and actual reality truly shine forth here, where they are merged most thoroughly into one. At this point, chaos and all those things that can be seen objectively are for the first time employed together in true creativity. Chaos as creativity thus is expressed in the distinct and different fields and terminology of every single age, every single culture, every single individual.

Receiving its particular shape, it is activated and made into cosmos through ethics, philosophy, religion, and the arts. Then again, actively and as creativity, chaos is linked with cosmos in an absolutely contradictory self-identity. It is expressed most powerfully through a heterogeneous culture, a heterogeneous lifestyle, heterogeneous forms of humanity, and heterogeneous times. When these encounter each other, chaos emerges in its full potential. In the various poems cited above, Ryokan, Saigyō, and Basho truly show this encounter of heterogeneous culture, lifestyle, and times as the way of truly living human beings.

Our time, the end of the twentieth century, is particularly characterized by the encounter of heterogeneity in the spheres of life and interaction, of scholarship and culture; it is very much an age of chaos. But will this chaos find its expression in culture, ethics, philosophy, and the sciences that have been transformed into cosmos through vivid creativity? Or will this chaos fall into straightforward and purely formalized cosmos and thereby come to an ignominious end? These questions depend in their solution on the day-to-day way of life of every single one of us.

Basho thought of life as a journey,¹⁴ and while he was alive as a traveler he also enjoyed his actual wanderings across the land. He died on October 12, 1694 after an illness. Four days before his death he wrote the following poem:

Ill during a journey —
Dreams return to the withered field.

Here the four main components — illness, journey, dream, withered field — again have the same three levels of meaning as the words in the poem cited earlier. They refer to the actual reality of a traveler, to the poet's own situation in life, and to the state of the art of *haiku*. Again, as in the poem above, the three levels of meaning are utterly merged into one in the poet's mind — a mind (*kokoro*) that is joined with the *kokoros* of nature (the world) and with the mind of absolute nothingness, of an absolute and limitless openness, in an absolutely contradictory self-identity. That is to say, through the self-denial of each of these three levels, they have become one.

To say the same thing in Buddhist terms, the world and humanity, logos and fact, principle and matter — if the mind is opened to absolute nothingness, to absolute openness — will never lapse into straightforward chaos, but will be established as cosmos in an absolutely contradictory self-identity. Then, in chaos as creativity, they will be activated to exist in a truly free and independent manner. What is essential about this is that the mind of each individual, the mind of nature (the world), and the mind of absolute openness are joined into one in an absolutely contradictory self-identity. This mind, when it fully reaches self-awareness, shines forth brilliantly in a simple flower garden, at the end of autumn, in a journey, in an illness, in a dream, in a withered field.

The real world of chaos, where the mind is open to absolute limitless openness in complete transparency, is attained as cosmos in each and every individual and can be expressed in each and every manner possible. Yet, the mind, the *kokoro*, can only emerge as chaos-sive-cosmos in the field where the vertical and horizontal dimensions intertwine perfectly. To reach this field is and remains the continuous task that every one of us faces on every single day of our lives.

Notes

1. See *Chuang-tzu*, in: M. Fudunaga, ed. *Chugoku koten sen 12*, (Tokyo, 1984), 337ff. English translation of the entire text: B. Watson, ed., *The Complete Works of Chuang-tzu* (New York, 1968).
2. See Dogen, *Shōbōgenzo*, translated by Y. Yokoi, (Tokyo, 1986), vol. I, 163.
3. See *Mo-ho p'an-yo p'o-lo mi-jiao*, "Yu-fou p'in," No. 11.
4. See Nāgārjuna, *Mādhyamika sastra* 24; M. Saigusa ed., *Churōn* (Tokyo, 1984).
5. See T. Yamanouchi, *Logos to Penma* (Tokyo, 1974).
6. S. Hirata, ed., *Mumonkan* (Tokyo, 1969), 146.
7. See Y. Iriya, ed., *Ryōkan shishū* (Tokyo, 1982), 87.
8. In Christianity, all things of this world can only be grasped as images in a mirror (see *Letter to the Corinthians*, 13.12). In Zen, on the other hand, the relation between mind and all things is like that between two mirrors that reflect each other without limit.
9. S. Nakamura and T. Otani, eds., *Basho kushū* (Tokyo, 1962), 58.
10. K. Kazemaki and Y. Kojima, eds., *Sanka shū* (Tokyo, 1965), 52.
11. S. Sugira et al., eds., *Basho bunshū* (Tokyo, 1981), 52.
12. See note 2 above.
13. S. Nakamura and T. Otani, eds., *Basho* (note 9 above), 129.
14. S. Sugiura et al., eds., *Basho* (note 11 above), 70.