

Spring 2020

NASCENT STATE

Journal of Intuition

Magazine

The Heresies

The Heresies of Europe were Buddhism in the West. The article examines their content and lays out the evidence

Intuition & Invention

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Suchness

The art of seeing

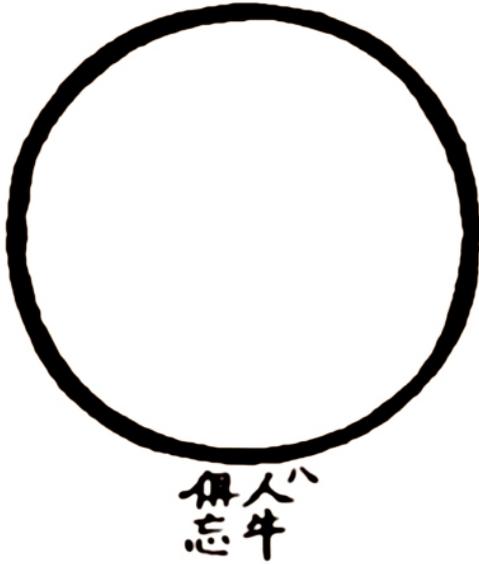
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(Cover Art)

The Ten Bulls

by Tokuriki Tomikichiro

8. The Bull and Self Transcended

From the Editor

Readers may wonder why a journal devoted to Western intuitive thinking should open with an image drawn from the East.

The image, taken from the Oxherder pictures of Zen Buddhism, depicts a mind free of distraction. This is a necessary condition of intuitive thinking. Western thinkers also know this. Carl Jung, for example, said ‘for intuition really to become paramount, sensation must to a large extent be suppressed’.

Intuition is universal.

This first edition of *Nascent State Magazine* will explore both Eastern and Western approaches to intuitive thinking. We have an articles on *The Heresies* as an expression of Buddhist thought in the West, on *Intuition and Invention*, focusing on the application of intuitive thinking in a purely Western context, and on *Suchness*, or the Zen practice of intuitive observation.

It is hoped that the reader will have discovered the necessity for intuitive thinking in life. Our most important decisions and judgements are intuitive, and yet for all this we pay little attention to it. The purpose of this journal is to remedy this. Each edition will focus on a different aspect of intuition, its nature and practice.

The journal is presented in a PDF, free-to-download format. Download it and read it at your leisure. For enquiries, contributions and comments:

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Content

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The Heresies

Buddhism in Europe



Bernard Gui, a Dominican friar, was one of the most prolific Inquisitors of the Middle Ages. In 1307 he tried a heretic named Dolcino of Novara, along with his partner, Margarita, a woman he described as of ‘singular beauty, of noble blood, and much wealth’. He was so taken by Margarita that he offered her freedom and a suitable husband if she would renounce heresy. To his disappointment ‘she chose death at the stake.’ [1]

Most of what we know about the heresies comes from the records of the Inquisition, which was set up to discredit and eradicate them. It is for this reason most people have heard of the heresies but few people know what they believed. The Inquisitor’s records, always hostile and often mocking, tell us they held a dualistic view of God; they were vegetarian, believed in reincarnation, held all property in common, and treated men and women equally. It is difficult for the modern

reader to justify the brutality of their treatment with such beliefs.

There were three main heresies - Manichaeism, Gnosticism and Catharism - and while each had a separate identity, they also had much in common. Such was the uniformity of outlook that some have suggested they were inspired by a common source. Charles William King (1818 – 1888), who made a study of the heresies in his *The Gnostics and their Remains* (1864), wrote:

‘In the history of the Church it is most certain that almost every notion that was subsequently denounced as heretical can be traced up to Indian speculative philosophy as its genuine fountain-head...’ [2]

King pointed to a fact not mentioned in any of the Inquisitor’s accounts; they were essentially Buddhist. The evidence for this, once considered, is impressive. The prophet Mani (216 - 274 AD) for example, the founder of Manichaeism, was regarded as a Buddha in his own lifetime. The *Shabuhrgan*, one of the few surviving Manichean tracts, tells us that the king of Turan addressed him; ‘Of all these you are the greatest and lightest, for, in truth, you are the Buddha yourself.’ [3]

A second and equally important heresy was Gnosticism. With regard to Gnosticism we are fortunate that the *Pistis Sophia* (c. 3 - 4AD), the most complete and reliable of the Gnostic texts, has survived history intact. George Mead (1863 - 1933), its translator, also took the view that the similarities between Gnosticism and Manichaeism indicated a common source. In addition, Mead tells us that reincarnation ‘formed an integral part of their system’. [4].

Which brings us to the third and equally important heresy, Catharism. The Cathars, like the Manicheans and the Gnostics, were also accused by the Church of being dualists and of believing in reincarnation. Bernard Gui, in dismissive tones, tells us:

‘Also, under no circumstances will they kill any

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animal or winged creature, for they say and believe that there are in brute animals and even in birds those spirits which leave the bodies of men...and that these spirits pass from one body to another.' [5]

If all of this points to a Buddhist influence, if not origin, then we might ask why there is no mention of it in the records. The answer is that the heresies presented a number of problems for the Church, both in terms of its doctrine and its authority.

In terms of doctrine, the subject reincarnation was the most problematic. The subject was cursed or 'anathematized' by the Church in the sixth century, and anyone who spoke of reincarnation except in the most negative terms put themselves in danger of excommunication and possibly the charge of heresy. In terms of its authority, the dualistic view of God, where both good and evil are seen to coexist within a greater whole (such as can be found in the Yin-Yang symbol of Taoism), undermined the Church's claim to represent a purely good God, and therefore to be the force of good on earth.

Finally, there was the problem of blind faith and submission to authority. The word 'gnostic' means 'knowledge', and refers to direct and personal insight into the spiritual nature of the world. The records of the writer Alain de Lille (born c. 1128), who commented extensively on the heresies, are highly revealing in this regard:

'The perfect freedom with which they were endowed meant repudiation of all formal religious institutions and law. No hierarchy was needed. One of the group was known as a 'prophet' and apparently was their chief spokesman, although any of the company might experience visions which would be recounted in private meetings.' [6]

The antagonism towards the heresies came from the dogma of the Church. Dogma is founded on logic, which means there can be only one truth and one correct answer. Once Christianity became the official religion of Rome, the need of the Empire to govern the people and lands under its jurisdiction meant there could be only one true religion, and that was the religion of Rome. Anyone who challenged the dogma of the Church also challenged the authority of Rome.



The Church became increasingly authoritarian. This culminated in the thirteenth century, when the Cathar stronghold of Beziers in France was attacked and burnt to the ground. The Catholic historian Paul Johnson, in his *A History of Christianity* (1976), tell us:

'In 1209, Arnold Aimery exulted to the Pope that the capture of Beziers had been 'miraculous'; and that the crusaders had killed 15,000, 'showing mercy neither to order, nor age nor sex'. Prisoners were mutilated, blinded, dragged at the hooves of horses and used for target practice.' [7]



'As the present sciences are useless for the discovery of effects, so the present system of logic is useless for the discovery of the sciences'

Sir Francis Bacon

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The brutality speaks for itself. The net effect was that from the thirteenth century onwards, all opposition to the Church was crushed; nothing could be said in public about brutality or corruption and most certainly nothing could be said to challenge its dogma. It was this extreme form of censorship that created the conditions for the Reformation and the Renaissance that followed, when Martin Luther, Galileo and Giordano Bruno all suffered the same fate as the heretics before them.



We might think that with the advent of the modern era, that this dark history is now behind us, and yet the net effect on Western culture has been to make reincarnation, dualism, vegetarianism and the pursuit of spiritual experience seem like a purely Eastern idea. If the modern West has embraced the wisdom of the East, it is largely because this element has been absent in our own culture for so long. It is perhaps also for this reason that so many people today regard themselves as atheists; those who value the freedom to think above blind faith in authority feel alienated by conventional religion.

This makes the heresies highly relevant to the modern era. The word 'heretic' means 'one who chooses', and if we are to decide for ourselves what we think and how we behave, then we effectively become heretics in the modern era. To do this well rather than badly, we must develop our own intuitive judgement about what is right and wrong, appropriate or inappropriate. This ability arises directly from the development of

the inner life which is central to both Buddhism and Gnosticism. Perhaps only now, in a largely secular West is it possible to do this without fear of persecution. This possibility exists within each of us, if we are willing to take it.

References

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- [2] C. W. King, *The Gnostics and their Remains* (London: David Nutt, 270 Strand, 1887), Introduction p. xv
- [3] *The Shabuhrgan, Life of Mani*, BT 11 no. 2.2, p.3 <https://sites.fas.harvard.edu/~iranian/Manicheism/Manicheism_II_Texts.pdf> (accessed 29 June 2018)
- [4] George Robert Stowe Mead, *the Pistis Sophia*, 1896 (New York: Dover Publications, 2005 edn.) Introduction p. xlvi
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Intuition in the West

A history of intuitive thinking

Jim Blackmann

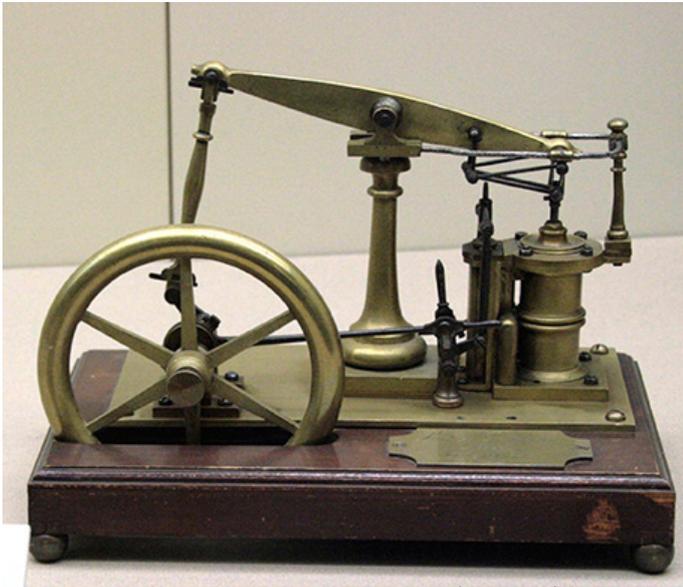
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Intuition & Invention

Intuition as Method



The Watt Steam Engine (c. 1765)

Archimedes, the Greek mathematician, was given the difficult task of calculating the mass of a complex crown for the King of Syracuse. After much thinking he retired to his bath and, as he lowered himself into the water, the excess ran off over the sides. Instantly he had the solution; the same mass would displace the same amount of water, regardless of the shape. It is recorded that he ran naked from his bath, shouting 'Eureka! Eureka!', meaning 'I have found it!'

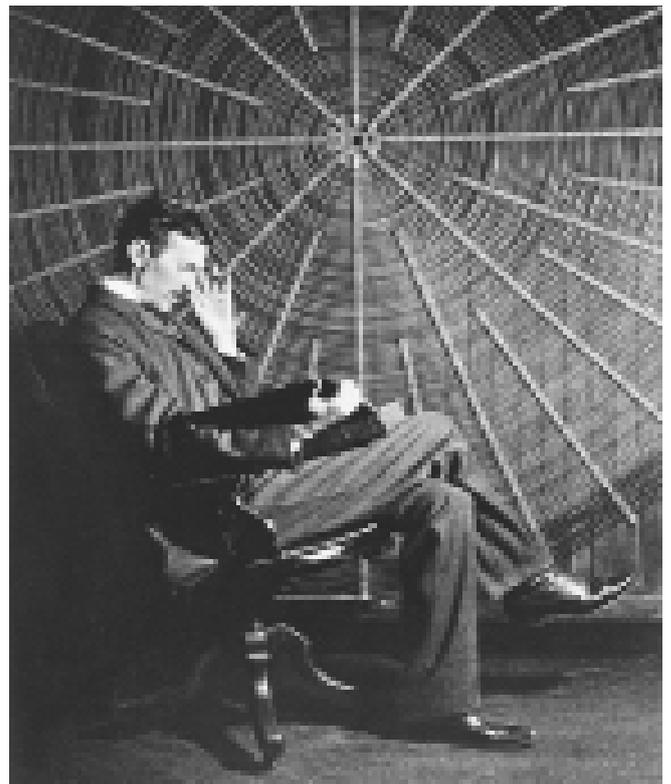
The story of Archimedes and his 'eureka moment' means we have given little attention to the process that leads to invention. There are no courses, no university degrees, nor any private tutors to teach invention. This is in spite of the fact that the whole of the modern era - energy, travel and communication - was born out of invention. And yet for all this we treat invention as a lucky accident, and assume it happens in the way a lottery win 'happens'.

In terms of studying the inventive process, most of the accounts we have are anecdotal or second-hand. James Watt (1736 - 1819) is said to have been inspired to improve the existing steam engine by observing how the steam in a kettle forced the

lid to rise and fall. Eli Whitney (1765 - 1825) had the idea for the cotton gin after observing a cat attempting to pull a chicken through a fence, only to separate it from its feathers. And James Hargreaves (1720 - 1778) had the idea for the spinning jenny after observing a thread-wheel continue to revolve after it had overturned and landed on the floor.

Others had observed kettles, cats, and thread wheels before without this resulting in an inspired idea, and so it follows that there is something more at play than mere observation; there is very clearly an outlook or attitude of mind which is conducive to invention.

Many inventors, while noted for a single idea, often had more than one patent to their name. Nikola Tesla had nearly three hundred and Thomas Edison had over a thousand. Shunpei Yamazaki (b. 1942), a Japanese inventor, currently has more than 5000 patents registered. So not only is there a method, but those who are familiar with the method clearly have an increased capacity to turn up new ideas.



Nikola Tesla (c. 1896)

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Nikola Tesla was perhaps one of the most significant inventors of the twentieth century. His inventions included the alternating current motor, the neon light, the remote control and wireless energy. He is also the uncredited inspirer of radar, the radio and robotics. Tesla possessed an eidetic imagination, or the capacity to see visually what existed only in his mind. Many of his inventions were not drawn on paper, but verbally described to the engineers who then went onto make them. He was regarded as something of an enigma. He gave an account of the inventive process to his biographer, John J. O'Neill, who recorded it in the book *Prodigal Genius: The Life of Nikola Tesla* (1944):

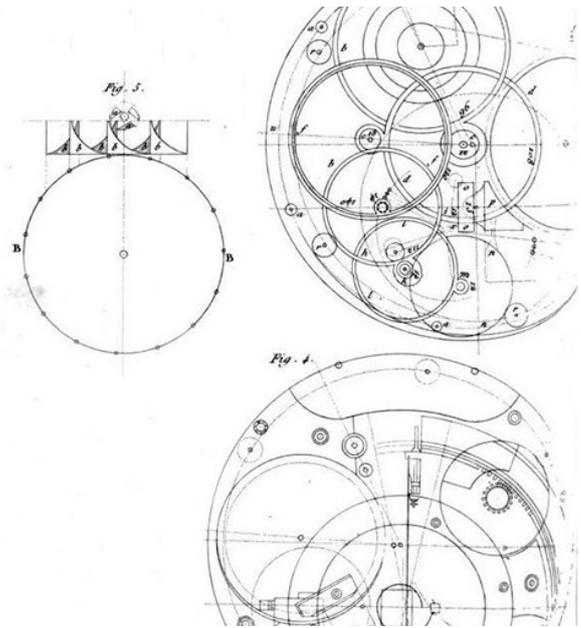
'Here, in brief, is my own method: After experiencing a desire to invent a particular thing, I may go on for months or years with the idea in the back of my head. Whenever I feel like it, I roam around in my imagination and think about the problem without any deliberate concentration. This is a period of incubation.' [1]

Tesla's brief account of the inventive process is significant, not least because very few like it exist. After what he refers to as the 'period of incubation', he goes onto say:

'Then follows a period of direct effort. I choose carefully the possible solutions of the problem. I am considering, and gradually center my mind on a narrowed field of investigation. Now, when I am deliberately thinking of the problem in its specific features, I may begin to feel that I am going to get the solution. And the wonderful thing is, that if I do feel this way, then I know I have really solved the problem and shall get what I am after.' [2]

What is interesting about Tesla's account is that it is not merely intellectual, but also emotional. To be able to consider what does not yet presently exist requires imagination, and imagination is by no means dry and analytical. To be imaginative is to be open-minded, and that means to be able to entertain ideas which would otherwise appear absurd to the analytical mind.

The necessity for open-mindedness might explain why many of the inventors of the Industrial Revolution were often untrained in engineering, or were employed in fields entirely unrelated to their subsequent invention. While each clearly had a fascination with their respective subject



Detail from John Harrison's marine chronometer (1767)

of interest, they also had the enthusiasm of amateurs, and consequently were able to consider ideas an expert might have rejected as unnecessary or impractical.

The steam engine was invented by Thomas Newcomen (1664 - 1729), an ironmonger; the seed drill was invented by Jethro Tull (1674 - 1741), a farmer; the marine chronometer was invented by John Harrison (1693 - 1776), a carpenter; the flying shuttle was invented by John Kay (1704 - 1779), a reed maker; the spinning jenny was invented by James Hargreaves (1720 - 1778), another carpenter; the spinning frame came from Richard Arkwright (1732 - 1792), a barber; Samuel Crompton (1753 - 1827), who gave us the spinning mule was a musician, and the cotton gin was invented by Eli Whitney (1765 - 1825), a teacher.

A degree of interest in the problem at hand is clearly essential to the inventive process - there is little point in trying to come up with a new flying machine without some knowledge of air resistance or gravity - and yet too much familiarity with existing ideas can also be a barrier to the freedom of thought needed to consider what is presently deemed untenable or even impossible.

This can be seen in the way inspired ideas arrive. The instant arrival of the idea must be preceded by a period of reflection, but this must be open-minded reflection rather than analysis. What results, if it is done properly, is a single flash of insight, very much like the eureka moment of



Leonardo da Vinci's design for a Tank (c. 1487)

Archimedes. As with invention, there are very few accounts of the insight process. An interesting example can be found in the book *The Tao of Physics* (1975) by the physicist Fritjof Capra:

'These insights tend to come suddenly and, characteristically, not when sitting at a desk working out the equations, but when relaxing, in the bath, during a walk in the woods, on the beach, etc. During these periods of relaxation after concentrated intellectual activity, the intuitive mind seems to take over and can produce the sudden clarifying insights which give so much joy and delight to scientific research.' [3]

Capra's account makes it clear that insight is a product of the intuitive rather than the logical mind. It is perhaps for this reason that the inventive process is so little understood. The education system teaches us to think logically, not intuitively. In a multiple-choice exam, we are presented with a question and four possible answers; we work through each of the answers and try to find fault with them, and the answer which is free from error is then chosen as the right one. That is why, in an exam, novel answers get no points.

To think intuitively we have to think in terms of images rather than in terms of definitions of right and wrong. Imaginatively we can grasp, instantly,

a highly complex situation without needing to analyse it. Johann Goethe (1749 - 1832), the German writer whose interests included botany, anatomy, and the study of colour, was gifted with a number of insights in his lifetime. He referred to this as an 'aperçu', or an illuminating idea:

'They are properly what we call in scientific and poetic matters, an aperçu; the perception of a great maxim, which is always a genius-like operation of the mind: we arrive at it by pure intuition; that is by reflection, neither by learning nor tradition.' [4]

That is why inventive ideas often arrive suddenly, as a kind of revelation, and can leave the recipient feel flabbergasted or overwhelmed, causing them to burst into laughter or even tears on its arrival. If logic is dry and mechanical, intuition is very clearly emotional.

Just as we can learn to think logically or mathematically, we can also learn to think intuitively. Just as there is a logical method, there is also an intuitive method. Creative types tend to be highly imaginative, often driven by enthusiasm and, at times, often naivety. All of this indicates that imagination overrides the critical faculty. It is no accident that Leonardo da Vinci was both a notable artist and a notable inventor; imagination drove his thinking.

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It is not necessary to trade off logic for imagination - a working prototype requires the capacity for both - but it is necessary to value imagination equally with reason, at least if we want to increase our capacity for inspired ideas.

In lieu of any formal training, we can improve our inventive capacity by becoming more familiar with the intuitive mind itself. We have intuitive thoughts and ideas all the time, but we pay little attention to them. We have minor insights into people, into their motives and nature, and into everyday events and familiar objects. Such thoughts can occur at times when we are not thinking about the subject directly, but often when we are walking along a road, or preparing a meal, or observing a child playing with a piece of wood, as did René Laennec (1781 - 1826), who invented the stethoscope.

We can also learn to value creativity over criticism. If the logical method teaches us to be critical, the intuitive mind teaches us to be imaginative. With imagination there is often no right or wrong, only possibility. This is why a new idea may appear nebulous at first, as though it is being whispered to us, like Echo to Narcissus.



Echo and Narcissus by John William Waterhouse (1903)

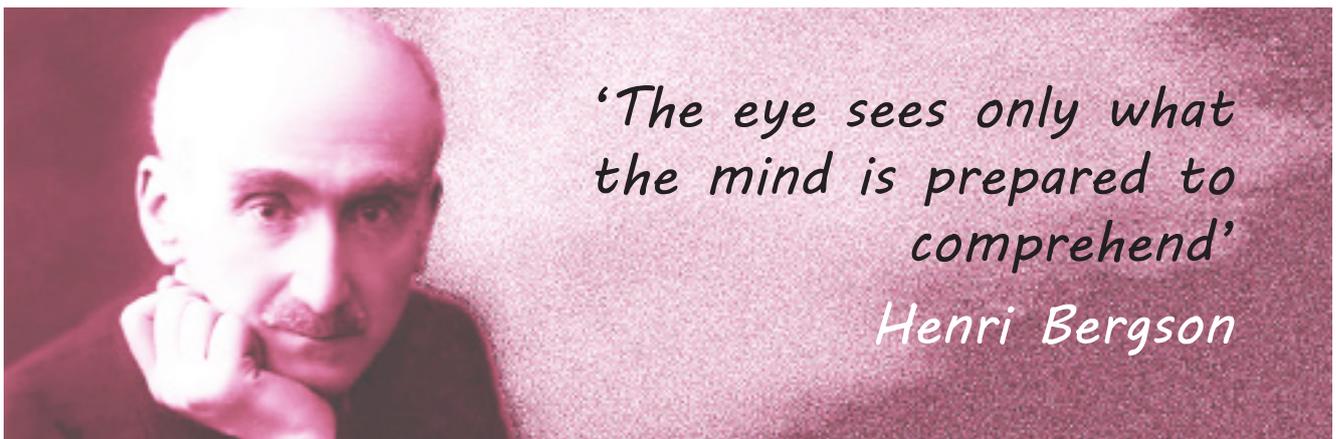
It is an extraordinary fact that, in spite of the whole of the modern era being based on invention, society does not value the inventor in the way that it values bankers or businessmen. It is telling that if the subject is even discussed, it is purely in economic terms.

It would be useful, at least for future generations, for present day inventors, would-be, amateur or recognized, to make notes of their thought processes, particularly to those applied to the production of new ideas. Just as the outer world can be studied, the inner world of thinking can also be studied. The records of the inventors can therefore be of interest to anyone who studies creativity.

Inventors are too often dismissed as cranks or eccentrics, or at best as the lucky recipient of a chance idea. If society will not take the inventor seriously, then perhaps inventors should take themselves seriously. Write down your thoughts; make records of the creative process. Just as a rich history of war exists, a rich history of invention can come into being. Your thoughts matter, even if others cannot see it.

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Suchness

The art of seeing

A man travelled to a farm in a poor country, where he saw a young boy drawing an old bucket from a well. The boy carried the bucket across the land and, as he did, water leaked from the bottom. The man took pity on the boy and went into town and bought him a new one. He returned to the farm and gave the new bucket to the boy, and the boy smiled in gratitude. Next day the man returned to the farm where he saw the young boy drawing water from the well again. The boy walked across the dry land, and as he did, the new bucket leaked water just like the old one. 'What have you done to the new bucket?' demanded the man; 'It's full of holes.' 'How else am I going to irrigate the land?' asked the boy.



We think we see the world as it is. We think we see people, events and nature exactly as they are, and yet everything we see is accompanied by what we think, and what we think can affect what we see just as certainly as bad eyes or a glowing sunset.

There is an art to seeing the world as it is, and it is known in the East as 'tathata' or 'suchness', which means 'to see the true state of things'. Suchness plays an important role in Zen; indeed it could be said that the aim of Zen is to get the student to see things as they really are. D. T. Suzuki (1870 - 1966), who was largely responsible for introducing Zen to the West, defined suchness this way in his *Essays in Zen Buddhism* (1927):

'A mind really sincere and thoroughly purified is the necessary preliminary to the understanding of reality in its suchness.' [1]

The ability to see things as they are is important not just in Zen, but in life too. We can misread a look, a remark or a situation, and we can do it without even realizing it. A relationship can break down because one party does not understand the other. We can be betrayed by someone we thought was a friend, and we can live in dread of an event which later turns out to be a blessing. For some matters we can put this down to life lessons, but for other matters, such as romance scams or mis-selling, we can be stung badly.

We do not see the bias in our thinking. Like our own accent, we are too familiar with our own outlook to see it clearly. That is why a lumberjack, a botanist and an artist will all look at the same tree and see it differently, and why a dark road will seem foreboding to someone who is lost and a welcome sight to someone who is heading home. William James (1842 - 1910), who wrote the one of the founding works of modern psychology, had the following to say about the way mind interprets reality:

'The so-called 'fallacy of the senses', of which the ancient sceptics made so much account, is not fallacy of the senses proper, but rather of the intellect, which interprets wrongly what the senses give.' [2]

Imagine you are standing at the top of your local high street and recall the name of the first business on the high street, whether it is a bank, a restaurant or a shop. Then imagine walking down the high street and then name each of the businesses as you pass it. If you are honest you

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will admit that you can recall perhaps a third of the businesses, even though you will have passed them a thousand times. The reason for this is that we only notice something when it is accompanied by a thought, so if we need shoes, we will look for shoe shops.

The problem is that what we think can also limit what we see. If we are looking for beauty we will find beauty, and if we are looking to find fault, we will see nothing but faults. To see the world as it is, we have to observe without comment or prejudice; this is the 'suchness' of Zen, and to do it rightly, we have to silence the mind. This is not as easy as it seems, but if we can observe without prejudice, we will far more than our prejudices allow.

The practice of silent observation is about more than simply seeing rightly; it is about making right judgments, particularly about the important things in life. Bad decisions are often based on seeing too little of the situation and jumping to conclusions. If we want to know whether to trust someone or not, or to change jobs or not, or to move home or not, then we have to see the bigger picture. To see the bigger picture, we have to hold off our judgements and prejudices and listen to our gut-

feeling. Gut-feeling doesn't speak to us in a clear voice or in words or definitions, but emotionally, and almost in a whisper. So to hear it, we have to silence the mind. Suzuki had the following about gut-feeling:

'People in China and also in Japan...when some difficult problems come up, often say 'Think with your abdomen', or simply 'Ask your belly'. [3]

*There is
need of a method
for finding out the truth.*

*'We shall comply with it exactly
if we reduce involved and obscure
propositions step by step to those
that are simpler, and then starting
with the intuitive apprehension
of all those that are absolutely
simple, attempt to ascend to
the knowledge of all others by
precisely similar steps.'*

Descartes

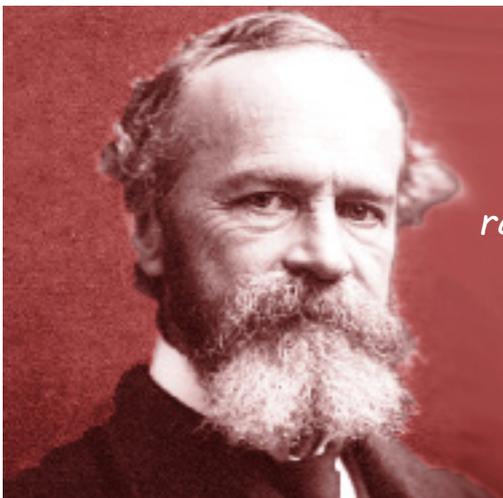
We will all have experienced a time when our gut-feeling spoke to us, but we didn't listen. It would be a mistake to think we have to retire to a Zen monastery in order to do this. We have the opportunity to observe silently in everyday life. We can observe a flower in a garden, listen carefully to a friend, take in the mood in a park or enjoy the silence of the night. Each time we do so, we train the mind in the art of suchness.

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[3] D. T. Suzuki, *Studies in Zen, Essay IV, The Koan* (London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1986) pp. 42-58, (p. 53).



*The specious present, the intuited
duration, stands permanent, like the
rainbow on the waterfall, with its own
quality unchanged by the events that
stream through it*

William James