

Emptying Mind through Voiceless Traditions of Dhyana Buddhism.

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Abstract: *Emptying mind is a state of thoughtless awareness or no-mind state. It is the essence of Buddha nature. One can attain no-mind state through "Dhyana". Dhyana is being in meditation, not meditating upon external factors. Dhyana is emptying oneself and existing in absolute emptiness. According to voiceless traditions like Ch'an, Zen, "Dhyana" is simply relaxing, alert, open and available to oneself and to his surroundings. Dhyana is natural and spontaneous flow, enables one to empty their mind through attaining thoughtless wisdom. The purpose of emptying mind is to remove suffering of sentient being.*

Key words: *Dhyana Buddhism, voiceless traditions, emptying mind.*

Introduction:

Buddhism says that, everything is created by our mind. The cause of our suffering is in our mind. One's mental problems are due to deluded mind with all negative emotions like anger, jealous, hatred etc. Dhyana is the best ways for curing one's suffering by destroying illusions and liberate oneself through realization of one's own nature. Dhyana has become a core practice of all types of Buddhism as Shakyamuni Buddha attained "Enlightenment" through dhyana. Mahayana Buddhism is an Indian Dhyana Buddhism that discusses about the "emptiness". Emptiness means the egolessness of the self. Dhyana is an explicit part of Buddhist practice. It is reining one's mind and transcending it through "self absorption". During dhyana, mind is focused towards its resting place, in its origin, in order to know one's own nature. In dhyana, one can direct his awareness to his own feelings, emotions, and sensations. All Buddhist dhyana helps one to liberate from delusion that is the cause of suffering.

Ch'an and Zen Buddhism are derived from Indian Mahayana Buddhism. Both Ch'an and Zen are special transmission outside scriptures. As they did not stand upon words, they are called as voiceless traditions. Both Ch'an and Zen are subtle and inexplicable wisdom. The Ch'an is the meditative

spiritual practice that introduced into China from Indian Dhyana Buddhism as early as the third century. Zen Buddhism is a sect of Dhyana Buddhism derived from Ch'an Buddhism from China to Japan. In Ch'an and Zen meditations, one has to meditate upon present-mindedness to realize one's own nature.

Literature Review:

In China, Bodhidharma established Mahayana school of Buddhism as Ch'an Buddhism. The Ch'an tradition began with the voiceless practice of silent "wall gazing" meditation of Bodhidharma for the duration of nine years. Ch'an School laid stress on intuitive wisdom and was continued in the lineage of patriarchs: Bodhidharma- Hui Ko, Seng-tsan, Tao-hsin, Hung-jen, and Hui-neng. According to Ch'an Buddhism, the enlightenment can be attained through the direct perception of one's own mind. One can perceive one's mind through dhyana. Intuition is the essence of Chan and directly pointing towards one's own mind. It emphasizes that; transmission of enlightenment is from mind to mind without words.

*"Look into your mind and there is no mind.
Look at the appearance and appearances have no forms.*

Gaze at the distant objects and objects do not exist.

*Understand these three modes of cognition.
And you will see emptiness".¹*

Lao Tzu.

"For this reason, in emptiness there is no form, no feeling, no perception.

Impulse, consciousness; no eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, mind....²

The Heart Of The Perfection Of Wisdom Sutra.

¹ . *Chinese Wisdom, Gerald Benedict, Watkins Publishing, 2009, London.(Pg.145).*

² . *The Spirit Of Buddha, Martine Batchelor, Manjul Publishing House PVT, 2011, New Delhi.(Pg.122).*

Zen Buddhism:

Zen Buddhism is dhyana school of Buddhism and is introduced into Japan from Ch'an Buddhism. Zen emphasizes that Dhyana is the key to enlightenment. Zen is characterized by mental discipline, calmness, and effort to see one's own nature. Zen is emptying oneself to go beyond oneself and to be aware that all are interconnected. The main principle of Zen is the "emptiness" and is the thoughtless awareness.

One of the most subtle and most important points to understand in Zen doctrine is described in the line from the *Heart Sutra*, "*form is emptiness, emptiness is form*".³

Zen is experience everything in life as it is without influence of past-accumulated belief, and ideas. Zen mind is unified mind; completely fuses with one's action.

It is purest awareness, alertness, one exist in real nature.

Zen can be summarized by the traditional four-phrase:

"Outside teaching; apart from tradition.
Not founded on words and letters.
Pointing directly to the human mind.
Seeing into one's nature and attaining
Buddhahood."⁴

When mind is freed from thoughts, it becomes knowing, and then there is no-mind state; "wu" in Chinese, "satori" in Japanese and "Samadhi" in Sanskrit.

The principles of Zen can be well explained by meditating on unique anecdotes.

Once a beginner asked a Zen master, "Master, what is the first principle?"
Without hesitation the master replied, "If I were to tell you, it would become the second principle".⁵

One can experience the truth through dhyana. It cannot be explained by words, it is not intellectual, it is existential. Knowledge is limitative and truth is unlimited, infinite.

³. *Zen for Beginners*, Judith Blackstone, Zora Josipovic, Orient Black Swan Pvt, 2008, Chennai. (Pg.51).

⁴. *The Ways Of Zen*, Alan Watts, Vintage ,1989,USA.(Pg.88)

⁵ .*Zen its History and Teachings and Impact On Humanity*, Osho, Macmillan,2010, USA.(Pg.86).

Research Methodology:

Mind is a dynamic stream of experiences marked by confusion and suffering. Main purpose of various meditative practices of Ch'an and Zen help to transform the mind. These meditative practices develop positive inner qualities that are already remain dormant within us. Ch'an and Zen practices, teach us a clear and accurate way of seeing things as it is. The main objective of Ch'an and Zen meditation is to liberate the mind from ignorance and suffering. The transformation of mind helps one to experience his inner being. Ch'an and Zen meditation is the best ways to bring about positive changes within oneself that bring about better society.

"Past mind has completely come to an end.
Future mind has not yet occurred.
Present mind is very hard to circumscribe;
It has no shape, it has no colour,
It is like space, insubstantial and unreal.
Since this is so, one can come to realize that,
Mind lacks intrinsic existence".⁶

Atisha Dipamkara.

Ch'an and Zen create awareness at the levels of body, thought and emotion. Awareness in each moment helps one more centered, alert and exist in absolute silence. It is all about rediscover one's own nature by dissolving one's ego. By plunging into oneself, one experiences tremendous oneness with universe.

A disciple asked a Zen master: "what is the greatest miracle in the world?"

*The master replied: "To sit here all by myself
Enjoy one's own company—that is the secret of Zen."*⁷

Meditative Practices of Ch'an and Zen:

Zazen:

Zazen is the sitting meditation. During Zazen practice, practitioners sits in a lotus, half-lotus or seiza posture and direct his attention just below the navel, and focus his awareness in his breathing. In Zazen practice, one should follow the natural rhythm of breathing. As the practice progresses, breathing automatically becomes slower and deeper.

This practice helps one to exist in the present moment. This meditation brings about pleasant sensation of lightness of the body and clarity in the mind.

⁶. *The Art Of Meditation*, Matthieu Ricard, Atlantic Books, 2008, London.(Pg.172).

⁷. *The Alchemy Of Zen*, Swami Chaitanya Keerti, Wisdom Tree, New Delhi.(Pg.9).

Shikantaza meditation:

Shikantaza meditation is “just sitting” meditation. It is just simply sitting without any object of meditation. The practitioner should maintain in wakeful posture, regular breathing and in the proper alignment of the limbs. This leads one to unthinking of thinking. There is absence of mentation. One has to maintain full awareness in the present moment and transcendent his mind. Then, the realm of one’s inner being is in pure awareness in the tranquility of nothingness.

Koan:

Koan is the form of riddles or stories that bring about enlightenment. Koan is paradoxical and it involves a transformation of Consciousness. It breaks down egoistic, dualistic thought. It gives first insight to ultimate reality and acts as a tool that allows one to approach enlightenment. Koans give glimpse of truth.

When Chao-chou was a novice, he approached Master Nan-chu’an and asked,

“What is the way?”

“Ordinary mind is the way”.

“How should I pursue it?” asked Chao-chou.

And Master Nan-Chu’an said: “If you move towards it, it moves away”.

Mindfulness:

Mindfulness meditation can be practiced throughout the day. Mindfulness is an important meditation for transformation of mind. One can practice this meditation while walking, eating, sleeping, and standing, talking and also while performing in all daily activities. It helps one aware of present moment by focusing one’s attention on one’s own mind. Mindfulness involves full awareness of the present moment by fully focusing on one’s activity. This awareness helps one audit one’s mind and purify their thought process. So, it helps one to encounter one’s true nature by emptying his mind.

It mentioned in the Pali Canon, the term “*ditthi dhamma sukha vihari*,” is often used for mindfulness. It means to dwell happily in the present moment, is this very life.⁸

Analysis:

The mind is not self-existent entity; it is dependent on the conception of ideas and thoughts on external experience. Mind belongs to the world of thoughts.

Thus, constantly, it conceives new concepts, ideas through sensory organs. This thought is conditioned by feelings and is always in a state of flux. Due to afflictions resulted by wrong perception causes suffering and misery.

So, Dhyana Buddhism emphasizes the importance of mental discipline for freedom from one’s suffering. Buddha prescribed various introspective meditations for expunging all negative thoughts and feelings. Mindfully meditating upon one’s feelings, thoughts and perceptions helps meditator to empty their mind and eventually liberate oneself from the cycle of rebirth to attain enlightenment.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

“Dhyana” is the greatest contribution to the evolution of human existence. Man identifies himself with mind. Mind is in chaos, as it always exists in past or in future. Present belongs to existence. Present is not part of mind. Present is in perfect harmony. Ch’an and Zen are absolute awareness. By practising meditative techniques of Ch’an and Zen, one is always in the state of pure awareness. In the state of absolute awareness one move from mind into the no-mind and experience the truth as it is. Then vision is clear, just seeing, just watchfulness, just clarity, just pure consciousness. This is “emptied Suchness”.

“Vision is clear.

But there are no objects to see.

There is no person.

*There is no Buddha”.*⁹

Ch’an and Zen are absolute awareness. In Ch’an and Zen, there is no object of meditation. Pure awareness on nothingness, it is the state of emptiness, existing in one’s own nature. It is stillness of mind, pure silence; in this silence one becomes the truth.

“So awake

Before it is too late

And reflect earnestly

Upon your thoughts, feelings and perceptions

Abide by the Dhamma

And you shall see

The golden light of truth

*Grow within you”.*¹⁰

⁸ . *Interbeing, Thich Nhat Hanh, Full Circle, 2009, New Delhi.(Pg.34).*

⁹ . *Walking in Zen Sitting in Zen, Osho, Westland, 2008, Chennai. (Pg.355).*

¹⁰ . *Verses from the Dhammapada, Kadambari Kaul, Indialog Publications Pvt, 2007, New Delhi(Pg.35).*

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