

## Chapter Eight

## Conclusions

The primary goal of this study was to translate the descriptions of six Japanese Zen Buddhist masters of their experience and understanding of causality, attachment, and no-self into Western psychological language. Particular attention was given to what were the implicit understandings of what is a person, what is pathology, and what is healing. The following is a summary of the research findings.

As I report these findings, I am flooded with memories and impressions. What I have been involved with seems much more than just doing research for a report. This is partly because I have lived in Japan as an expatriate during this project. As a consequence to this I have shared parts of my research with people from many walks of life. One question that I have been repeatedly asked by people from many places is what possible interest could I have in trying to do a psychology of Zen Buddhism. Where I come from in California I was never asked this question. Most people that I've discussed my research with here in Japan look at me like I've gone to the moon. As a result I have become aware that most people's associations with Zen are very different than my own. For example, most Japanese people's association of Zen with funerals and ceremonies for the dead results in their thinking that Zen has no relevance to living.

Therefore, in reporting these research findings I want to do so in a way that makes Zen psychology useful to people who have no interest in Zen. This is an attempt to de-mystify some of the associations people have with Zen in the part of the world where my graduate school is located. This purpose has similarities to that of Bernard Faure (1993), who began his book by writing, “Much has been written about Zen Buddhism over the past decades. The present book, however, does not belong to the plethoric genre of ‘Zen mysticism’” (p. 3). This purpose also acknowledges that this project could be done with members of any religious practice around the world. There is nothing special about Zen in this sense. In this sense Zen is part of the human longing for connection to that which is greater than the immediate circumstances within which people find themselves.

### *Causality*

People who respond by being mystified by this research include practitioners of Zen. In particular when I tell Zen practitioners that causality is one of the focuses of this research, they usually respond by saying that it sounds very academic and irrelevant. One of my conclusions from this project is that psychologically the relevance of causality is concerned particularly with psychological determinism. For Western psychology this has been one of the most important questions – how does mind come to be what it is? A major part of the focus of Western psychology has been on developmental considerations, particularly on the influence of historical factors. As Western psychological

theory has broadened to include object relations theory and family systems theory, the focus on psychological determinism has also broadened to include more emphasis on environmental factors.

A common criticism of Buddhism by Western psychologists is that it neglects psychological development. Jack Engler (1986), for example, writes that Buddhism neglects “earlier stages of personality organization and the types of suffering that result from a failure to negotiate them” (p. 49). It is true that Buddhism and Zen have put little attention on development. The *roshis* occasionally mentioned developmental considerations, which I discussed in the “Attachment and Other Functions of Mind” section of chapter five. However, rather than viewing this as a deficiency of Zen psychology, one of my conclusions from this study is that the psychological determinism of Zen has a very different focus than that of Western psychology.

The Western psychological emphasis on historical development is founded on the point of view that continuity of the psyche is based on the psyche enduring over time. The assumption is that for historical continuity to occur, a self needs to be developed, needs to be made. This is not the point of view of Zen. Zen believes that rather than developing the self, when mind and the ego in particular is correctly apprehended, the self that is already present appears in one’s experience. Functions of mind that need to be developed do so naturally when the ego is aligned with the self that is inherently already present. This is not to say that developmental psychology does not have value. Rather, it is to say for Western psychology that there is unappreciated value in the inherent self.

Causality forms the basis of the world-view that allows for this developmental approach of Zen. Through causality as the *roshis* understand it mind develops naturally. As the various functions of mind develop, they do so in an interactive way and are coordinated together.

Causality literally is cause makes effect and this effect then becomes the cause for the next effect. However, the *roshis* were careful to say that causality is not linear, but rather cause and effect are one. Cause is not separated from effect. Causality is interactive and co-dependent. It generally is not the case that one cause results in one effect. Rather, it is usually that a plethora of causes interact and the result is a plethora of effects, an interdependent origination.

Causality also is not ethical, but rather neutral. Two of the *roshis* used the word “accidentally” (Tanaka, April 4, 2001, p. 4; Nagashima, February 20, 2001, p. 3) to describe how it occurs. There is no God or self behind the functioning of causality. It occurs without meaning and outside of human concerns. Causality is thus not the same as *karma*. Equating these two is a common mistake made by people. *Karma* specifically is human being related. It is the consequences of human action. It is more causality within the human realm. Causality itself includes human beings as well as all other things and functions without any regard to human cares.

Mind is a phenomenon that exists and functions like all other phenomena according to causality. This means that mind is a condition formed by other conditions that are bonded through attachment. Important here is the lack of personal agency. There is no self or agency behind the formation of mind. It is a

phenomenon that arises only according to certain conditions interacting and bonding. This is not a variable, but an absolute. Also important here for mind is the position or relationship to causality. Mind is always within causality, or a part of causality. Thus, relative to causality mind can never be in an objective position, but always is in a subjective position. A third aspect that is important is the interrelationship and interconnectedness of causality. This means that mind is not separated from anything else. Mind cannot be understood apart from its environment. And a fourth aspect that is important is that causality is always changing, always moving. This is due to the myriad of causes and effects that are causality. Each phenomenon is a temporary aggregation or combination in a process of formation and dissolution. Causality is dynamic.

These aspects of causality are a good description of what I have referred to as the spatial self. This spatial self is one that is always determined by its present environment. Spatial in this sense refers to present relationships, in the way that Yasuo Yuasa (1987) uses this term, not the sense of space as an entity as Mark Epstein (1995) writes. This was discussed in chapter four. The emphasis is on these spatial aspects of causality and not on the time or historical aspects of causality.

An explanation of the historical functioning of mind has been considered essential to psychological theory by Western psychology. An example of this belief is the following writing of Greenberg and Mitchell (1983), who assert that regarding psychological theory three “specific and overlapping dimensions of theoretical concern must be addressed. First, motivation: ... Second,

development: in the transformation from the relatively unformed infant to the relatively patterned adult, what are the crucial events? Third, structure: ...” (p. 19). However, for Zen psychology such a theory is not so important. The focus of Zen is much more on the spatial aspects of the mental self.

The spatial self as a contextual and situated self does put it in common with object relations and family systems psychology theories. This I discussed in the previous chapter. One difference in focus, however, is that Zen emphasizes the fluid nature of this situatedness. Conditions change moment to moment. Therefore, what a person is also changes moment to moment. Zen asserts that this change occurs much more rapidly than can be perceived by the psyche. This points to an important consideration for Zen psychology, which is understanding the capacities and limits of the human mind. One such limit is its perceptual abilities. This also points to how time is understood. Rather than focusing on what continues over time, as Western psychology generally does, the focus in Zen is on discontinuity over time.

This is where Zen parts company with the Western theories previously mentioned. This is while a person is situated, in Zen thought a person is also not situated. This is the idea of “*mu* 無”--being and non-being. “*Mu* 無” is the nature of every phenomena according to causality. All phenomena exist spatially, but only through conditions and interrelationship with other conditions. Mind is in a supportive and co-dependent relationship with all other phenomena. Mind in and of itself is nothing. This is the Zen idea of emptiness.

This means that a person has a spatial self, but this spatial self is in the moment has no enduring self and will change in the next moment, however slight this change may be. There is nothing in a person's situatedness that can be taken exclusively as one's identity. A person is their situatedness, but not only such. Using Bernard Faure's (1991) idea of the Zen system of Two Truths, a person is both relative and absolute at the same time. Form and formlessness interpenetrate each other to such a degree that it's impossible to say a phenomenon is exactly this or that.

The *roshis* spoke of emptiness as the true nature of their self. In so doing they spoke about emptiness, in addition to having an ontological reference, as also having a specific psychological reference. Emptiness as they experience it is not a void or even the lack of a self. It rather refers to the lack of the separate ego-self and the inability to perceive emptiness. The meaning of the negative term is empty of the aspects of mind that interfere with the realization of emptiness. Empty of the separate ego-self, empty of perception, empty of discrimination. Specifically emptiness psychologically is the letting go of all psychological reference points, all forms of meaning, all aspects of one's situatedness. This psychological possibility is one that Western psychology commonly does not consider. However, the Zen masters that I have talked with testify not only to its reality, but also to its necessity in order to realize fully the human potential.

Emptiness is not a void. Several of the *roshis* emphasized this. When Harada Roshi (November 14, 2000, p. 11) said that it's not that emptiness is a

void, it's just that it can't be perceived, he was referring to something that is beyond the capacity of mind to perceive. What it is in positive terms according to Zen can't be said. Any attempt to do so limits what is essentially limitless. Mind, however, does have the capacity to intuit what emptiness is referring to. This is possible when a person disengages all separative mental activities and engages the oneness of being with all other things.

That emptiness cannot be perceived means that it cannot be understood or experienced through the faculties of mind, such as perception and thinking, that separate or discriminate. It can only be understood from the "inside" perspective--through intuition and through experience. It cannot be understood in an objective way. This is a mysterious nature of mind, that which cannot ever really be known. Case #19 of the *Mumonkan* (Huikai, 1228/1977) is an example of this.

Zen psychology asserts that it is very important to understand the limits of mind. Faculties such as perception, thinking, and discrimination are useful and necessary for functions of mind that require objectification. Another limit of mind is that it is always subject to causality. Through choice and intention a person can affect the result of cause and effect. However, the result also is affected by many causes outside of the control or knowledge of a person. Thus, for psychological health it is necessary to live within causality.

Thus causality brings into psychological determinism the elements of discontinuity, formlessness and mystery. Without separating from one's circumstances, one is also not one's circumstances. The spatial self is what a

person is. This is not a dissociated or detached way of being. The empty self also is what a person is, but it requires letting go of all that a person is spatially. In this way the empty self is what a person is not. This is no separation between these two. They both are--or are not--together.

The spatial self is where the self as understood by Zen receives its continuity and its coordination. Mind is considered to be healthy if it is coordinated and functional within its environment. Continuity occurs through being in relationships.

Psychological continuity is generally understood in Western psychology according to time. Mind is considered to be healthy if it is coordinated and functional over time; in other words, mental health is mind, and particularly the sense of self, having some kind of cohesiveness over time. From this point of view developmental psychology is very important. The understanding in Zen psychology is different. Time, rather than being the realm of continuity, is the realm of change and discontinuity. The Western sense is a mental self enduring despite the rigors of time. The Zen sense is a mental self changing in harmony with time. In each moment the self is alive according to the circumstances within which the person is and lets go of or is discontinuous with the previous moment. Mental health in the Zen sense is being able to participate fully in the circumstances of the moment and not hold onto the past.

This difference in the understanding of continuity helps explain the divergence between Western psychology and Zen as to how severe mental pathology is described. In Western psychology the terms used reflect the sense

of mind not being cohesive over time and coming apart. Descriptors like fragmented, disintegration, decompensated, fallen apart, lost their self; having a lack of autonomy and appropriate boundaries; or an inability to constitute their self are used. In Zen psychology the terms used reflect the sense of mind not being fluid over time and becoming rigid. Descriptors like attachment, fixation, self-centered, craving--particularly craving for security, created a self, limited, separate from their environment, out of harmony, and lost their natural openness are used.

This understanding of causality allows for the possibility of both gradual and sudden awakening. Mind according to causality functions in both ways. It is through the spatial self as continuity in relationships that gradual awakening occurs. People gradually get better or worse. And it is through the empty self that sudden awakening occurs. Mind has the capacity to suddenly shift. It is empty, not of a fixed nature, so it can be flexible. When a new cause suddenly appears, mind can shift dramatically.

As a person is a situated experience, Zen asserts that it is important for a person to be situated without holding back. Really be who you are. Rather than a removed or dissociated approach to life, Zen encourages full involvement and participation in life. This is the sense that the *roshis* had of participating in life: being a part of a bigger picture, doing their best--making choices and effort, but acknowledging there is much that they cannot control and do not know and that the next moment will be different. This is full involvement and letting go at the same time. Therefore, paradoxically, the more a person both becomes and lets

go of their situatedness, the more their natural or inherent self appears in their experience.

As who a person is is changing moment to moment, any kind of holding on to situated experience has pathological possibilities. Attachment to a particular form of experience is not healthy psychologically. Neither is detachment healthy, as separation from one's circumstances is creates a false sense of self. Thus, the *roshis* spoke of the importance of not escaping from one's suffering, but rather staying with one suffering and finding the resources to deal with one's pain.

Full participation in a situated experience from the Zen point of view requires the ability to be responsive. This is the idea of freedom to act. By being present in the moment, without holding on to the past or other current situations, a person has all of their faculties at their disposal. The psychological functions that Zen emphasizes are presence, responsiveness, adaptability, awareness, and attention.

Zen in particular puts emphasis on attention. It is through attention, coupled with feeling, that a person is aware of their environment. In Zen practice the means of the realization of emptiness are what I referred to as attention-feeling, attending mentally and feeling emotionally to what presents itself to consciousness. This is a very different emphasis than what is commonly emphasized in the West. Western society and psychology put much more emphasis on choice and thinking. Generally speaking such an emphasis reflects

the value given to separation and individuation, whereas the Zen emphasis reflects value given to being in relationship with one's circumstances.

The understanding of emptiness as the letting go of all psychological reference points can appear to have an affinity with the idea of pure experience. This is the idea that William James (1888) wrote about in America, that the Japanese philosopher Kitaro Nishida (1911/1990) referred to as an explanation of the Zen experience, that D.T. Suzuki (1933) made references to, and that Bernard Faure (1991, 1993) was very critical of. This idea in various non-academic forms has also had great appeal in parts of popular culture in the West. Pure experience is the idea that a person can have an experience that is free of all forms of situatedness. It is the belief that it is possible for people regardless of their differences in background to have in a moment of pure experience the same experience.

It is easy to think that when one lets go of their situatedness, they experience an oneness with all beings, that this oneness is the same for everyone who experiences it, and that this oneness is more valuable and important than one's ordinary discriminating consciousness. There are many references in Zen literature that seem to support this way of thinking. For example, Dogen (1227/1998) writes in the *Fukanzazengi*, "Learn the backward step that turns the light inwards to illuminate the Self. Body and mind will drop away by themselves, and the essential Self will be manifest" (p. 116). The *roshis* also spoke this way. Tanaka Roshi said regarding his Zen experience, "So I could find my true face is nothingness, absolute nothingness. It is the so-called

formless self” (January 18, 2001, p. 6). Nakajima Roshi said, ““*Mu* 無” transcends, is beyond something and also not something. We call it absolute nothingness” (July 10, 2001, p. 5). All of these statements, with words like “essential Self,” “true self,” “beyond,” and “absolute nothingness,” can easily be read to imply that emptiness and nothingness are superior to form and somethingness.

This is one of the points that Faure is very critical of regarding Chan and Zen. Faure asserts, “in Chan practice, conventional truth tends to be negated for the sake of ultimate truth” (1991, p. 77). In my own experience I have seen this often to be the case. I have seen many people come to Japan to practice Zen on the basis of the appeal of “pure experience.” In so doing they consider cultural considerations regarding Zen practice to be not so important. They tend to believe that “pure experience” will wash away any cultural difficulties they may have. Of course this is not what happens and consequently I have seen many foreigners leave Japan in various states of psychological turmoil.

Therefore, I agree with Faure that Zen has underemphasized the situated aspect of experience and that the writings of Nishida and Suzuki are misleading in this way. Pure experience is not as simple as it romantically appears to be as it is written in many Zen books. All of the various problems that the Zen community has had in its establishment in America testify to the importance of recognizing the situated nature of experience.

Nevertheless, I believe that it is a grave mistake to dismiss pure experience as an illusion or as not possible. Rather, the understanding of pure experience needs to be reapproached and reconstructed.

The challenge of understanding pure experience is a challenge that human beings have faced since the beginning of time. It is, in Zen terminology, how to realize the formless in the midst of form. In terms of the present consideration it is how to realize pure experience in the midst of situated experience.

The realization of emptiness, *satori* and enlightenment, is I believe a kind of pure experience. All of the *roshis* interviewed described their realization of emptiness in various ways. They were all describing psychologically as I have understood the letting go of their situated mind. They all testified to the reality of being able to do this. Yet, even among these six Zen masters, each spoke in different ways of this experience and described the process also in different ways. Thus, each of these “pure experiences” was described from a different situated perspective. This only makes sense, as each to me is clearly an individual.

As I suggested in the previous chapter, I think that the term “pure experience” is an oxymoron. I don’t believe that there can be any kind of experience that is “pure.” All experience is situated. Rather, the “experience” of emptiness as the *roshis* describe it is not an experience at all in the ordinary sense of the word. Experience occurs in conjunction with perception and other mental functions. It happens within human consciousness, within the way that mind perceives and makes sense of an event. Emptiness or nothingness is the

absence of these experiential psychological activities. Consciousness, rather than being engaged in experiential activities, is engaged in non-experiential activities. This is what the *roshis* are trying to describe when they discuss their *satori* experiences. This is also what Zen psychology asserts is a necessity for complete development psychologically of a human being.

Specifically in psychological terms the value of *satori* is the realization that the subject of mind is not an existent or substantial as people tend to experience it, but rather has no fixed nature and can dissolve without a person's mind coming apart. *Satori* is thus the oneness of subject and object. Subject and object, however, arise again as soon as this aspect of mind is re-engaged. Oneness as pure experience is simply another aspect, albeit an essential aspect, of consciousness.

Accurate descriptors do become difficult at this point, something that Zen acknowledges. The *roshis* tried to address this difficulty through the use of the Zen word “*mu* 無,” through this word referring to the quality of mind as both being and non-being at the same time. Being is situated experience, non-being is pure experience. The term pure experience, however, can easily be understood to imply that non-situated experience is possible. “*Mu* 無” as the *roshis* use it, however, does not negate or undervalue situated experience. It rather means that experience always has a non-situated aspect. The two are non-separable. Both are essential aspects of the human psyche.

The intertwining of spatial self and emptiness is the fulcrum of Zen psychology. This is the oneness of form and formlessness, the unity of *samsara*

and *nirvana*, the intertwining of continuity and discontinuity, situated experience and pure experience together. All of mind from the Zen point of view arises from this interactivity.

This allows for the possibility of freedom within one's circumstances, "freedom in" situatedness and "freedom to" act, rather than having to seek freedom through separation, "freedom from" some psychological pain. And it allows for the possibility of the psyche to function optimally in a participatory way without an enduring self.

### *Attachment*

The spatial self of Zen is made up of relationships, relationships that are dynamic and always changing. As such, anything that interferes with the ability to be this spatial self is considered to be pathology. This is pathology in the Zen sense.

Attachment according to Zen is one of the basic ways that pathology occurs. This occurs as either attachment in terms of time; that is, being attached to something from either the past or the future instead of being present in the moment, or in terms of space; that is, being attached to a separative self, a sense of self apart from relationship.

Attachment, however, in Zen is not just a pathological function. Attachment also is fundamental to all phenomena. Attachment is a fundamental function of the ontology of all things. Harada Roshi said, "it wouldn't be a mistake to say that this world is made of condition and attachment" (November

14, 2000, p. 4). Thus, attachment in Zen can be both a function of health and a function of pathology.

Distinguishing between these functions of attachment is very challenging. As a way to do this I referred to what I call natural attachment and ego attachment. Natural attachment reflects the natural condition of things. Attachment is a basic part of life and of the psyche. It is natural and healthy for a baby to be attached to their mother, or for lovers to be attached to each other. The *roshis* talked in many ways about the health of natural attachment. They clearly did not deny this function of attachment.

Ego attachment is adding something onto natural attachment. This could be said to becoming attached to attachment. The *roshis* (see chapter five, “descriptions of ego attachment” section) talked about it with terms such as grasping, holding on, clinging, adherence, self-centered, fixed, narrowminded, illusion, and desire. These terms all reflect the point of view of the spatial self. Grasping, for example, means being attached to something that is out of relationship to the present situation. It could be holding on to something from the past even though this something is not appropriate in the present. Self-centered means being selfish, over-valuing one’s personal interests, instead of considering the whole situation.

The motivation for ego attachment is related to not accepting the spatial self as it is. This can occur primarily either through fear, not being able to “flow” as Nagashima Roshi (February 20, 2001, p. 4) said through the constant changes of causality, or through desire, being “selfish” as Nakajima Roshi (June

26, 2001, p. 5) said, wanting to hold onto a pleasurable experience and avoid a painful experience.

These descriptors of ego attachment should not be considered to function only on the conscious level of mind. They function on all levels of mind. Fukushima Roshi in particular emphasized this. He said, “not just to understand attachment in your head, but actually to be non-attached would require to break even from those unconscious illusions that we talked of before, so it’s not an easy thing” (January 23, 2002, p. 4). This only makes sense because attachment as fundamental to phenomena is a component of all parts of the psyche. And so is ego attachment. This is because according to the *roshis* ego attachment arises at the root of mind. This root is understood as prior to both the conscious and unconscious. This is where consciousness first appears in its most primitive condition. It is at this root that attachment can first become attached to itself.

Thus, Zen psychology does recognize the unconscious in the Western sense, as evidenced by Fukushima Roshi’s use of the word in the previous quote. This Western sense is that of a part of the psyche which influences the conscious mind, but is for the most part out of awareness of the conscious mind. Additionally, Zen psychology also emphasizes the significance of the root of the conscious and unconscious, or how they come into being. This root of mind is not generally recognized in Western psychology. The Zen understanding of what a person is is conditions and attachment. Mind is functions integrated and coordinated. There is no self apart from this activity. The activity itself is empty

of self. The activities of mind are all transformations of consciousness that appear through the root of mind.

The Western focus on the unconscious includes ideas like repression for Freud, archetypes for Jung, and the use of transference in the therapeutic relationship as an expression of the unconscious. Zen psychology, rather than disputing the validity of these ideas of the interaction of the conscious and unconscious, has its own focus. The Zen focus stays exclusively within the spatial self. It is not concerned with how the unconscious influences the psyche over time in historical ways, which is a major focus of the Western unconscious. In terms of the unconscious the Zen concern is what interferes with the spatial self and what assists the spatial self. Ego attachment has been identified as one of the primary ways that the psyche on all levels interferes with the functioning of the spatial self. It can be conscious, unconscious, or at the root of mind. The other primary form of interference with the spatial self that the *roshis* spoke of was illusion. Illusion is fundamentally the belief in a separate, substantial self when in reality there is no such self. Ego attachment is more the affective function, illusion more the mental function.

The way that Fukushima Roshi speaks that attachments can be in the unconscious is not the traditional way of speaking in Zen. I suspect he speaks this way due to his exposure to America, to which he has been many times. The more traditional way in Zen is to consider the human psyche as a whole and not differentiate conscious and unconscious parts. Rather, the traditional Zen distinction has been between the conscious/unconscious mind and what I am

referring to as the root of mind. An example of this difference of focus between Zen and Western psychology is in the Jung-Hisamatsu conversation (Muramoto, 1998). Jung said, “Perhaps one could say that these are *klesas* – namely, properties or symptoms of the unconscious” (Muramoto, 1998, p. 41).

Hisamatsu’s response was, “From our viewpoint, *klesas* belong to the sphere of consciousness” (Muramoto, 1998). Fukushima spoke the way that Jung spoke regarding the unconscious. Hisamatsu, rather than speaking of the unconscious in the Western sense, spoke of consciousness and “the formless self” (Muramoto, 1998, p. 47). This “formless self” is not the Western unconscious, but is closer to the Zen ideas of no mind (Jap. *mushin* 無心) and no-self (Jap. *muga* 無我). In terms of the structure of mind no mind and no-self are relevant to the root of mind, not the Western unconscious.

I think this distinction between the Western unconscious and the root of mind will help to understand the dialogue between Zen and Western psychology. I agree with Bernard Faure (1993, p. 64) that D.T. Suzuki’s translation of *mushin* as unconscious has been confused this issue. For example, Suzuki (1972) writes, “by the unconscious is meant to have thoughts and yet not to have them; ... not to have the Mind tainted while in contact with all conditions of life--this is to be Unconscious” (p. 58). This to me is clearly no-self or no mind and not the Western sense of unconscious.

People often in recognizing the delusive effects of ego attachment have in response advocated detachment as a solution. Detachment is the removal of oneself from a situation in order to deal with a psychological problem. There is

a place for such in psychological work. For examples, “time outs” are a common way that I counsel people to deal with anger problems. When such a person recognizes that they are getting close to an anger explosion, remove themselves from the situation until they calm down enough to re-engage it without exploding in anger. The *roshis* too recognized this as valid. Harada Roshi talked about when detachment might be effective in psychological work: “That might be effective if they are really extremely attached to one thing. But if they’re not really attached to anything or not so strongly, it might not be effective” (May 17, 2001, p. 9). Thus, detachment is useful when a person is possessed, or completely taken over, by a feeling or idea. Removal from the situation allows the person to re-balance and have the feeling or idea become a part of the person rather than dominating the person.

Commonly, however, detachment is not a healthy response to a psychological situation. Rather than dealing with the cause of a problem, it is avoiding a problem and this only leads to further difficulties in the future. The *roshis* strongly advocated staying with a problem as the way to deal with suffering. For example, Nakajima Roshi said, “If someone you face is suffering from the real pain do not, please do not tell him or her do not suffer anymore. Instead, oh, you have the pain and think of it and have your suffering and pain more and more completely. Because he or she has the courage or certain energy to solve his or her own problem in his or her mind. So once you make sure that he or she has the certain way of his or her own solutions you can say that word.

If you try to run away from the suffering, the suffering always follows you” (July 10, 2001, p. 13).

This is the basic Zen approach to suffering. Handle it by staying with it. This is based on the belief that a person already has the resources necessary to handle the situation. What is necessary is to find or discover these personal resources. This is consistent with the belief in what I called the inherent self. In the spatial self self does not need to be made or developed, it rather needs to be found. This is a fundamental attitude that I continually communicate to my clients in psychotherapy, particularly when they are in a great deal of pain.

This finding is done primarily through what I have referred to as attention-feeling. This is distinct from thinking or making choices. Thinking is examining something from an objective viewpoint, trying to discriminate between different aspects. Making choices is having two or more alternatives or possibilities and deciding between them. Attention-feeling is the subjective viewpoint, staying within an experience and trying through attending to and feeling to integrate the experience into oneself consciously. The orientation is to discover or find what is already the case, not to figure it out or choose between alternatives.

I want to be careful to point out that in the context of the Zen approach to healing attention-feeling does not mean that feeling is superior to thinking. In California I often encountered the idea in psychotherapy that a person should stop thinking and feel instead as a way to make contact with their authentic self. This is not the way that the *roshis* think. Attention-feeling as I use it means a

balancing of mental and emotional aspects, not a prioritizing of feeling over thinking.

Another aspect of the Zen approach to healing ego attachment is to make use of whatever conditions are present. Use ego attachment to resolve ego attachment. This means using the energy of attachment for positive purposes. Ego attachment is given it's own contradictory situation to solve. Yasunaga Roshi said, "the master at least can make use of such an attachment as a tool. ... the more you covet for *satori* the better you will practice *zazen*" (May 8, 2001, p. 14).

A third aspect of the Zen approach is to go to the source. This is the root of mind. Ego attachment cannot be resolved on the conscious level or on the unconscious level of mind. It can only be resolved at the root of mind, where ego attachment first appears. Working with the conscious and the unconscious has usefulness. Right thinking is important. Cognitive training is a part of Zen. So is passing through whatever illusions or attachments may arise from the unconscious. The Japanese word for this is *makyo* 魔境, which literally means "a world of devils." *Makyo* is what can arise during a person's Zen meditation, particularly when one is a novice practitioner. However, neither is sufficient to resolve ego attachment. Thinking that one has resolved ego attachment can be a delusion that creates all kinds of problems. This is also true of any self-pride that can develop from having been through many "spiritual" experiences.

Therefore, the Zen approach is to attempt to focus on the root of ego attachment, what is beneath the conscious and unconscious minds. In this sense

Zen psychology is a depth psychology. However, while Western depth psychologies focus on the unconscious, Zen depth psychology focuses on the root of mind.

This Zen approach is consistent with the “inside” approach that I have described. Consistently Zen, rather than detachment or change of circumstances, seeks for freedom within conditions as they are. The Zen focus is on what is the individual doing to interfere with the spatial self. Ego attachment is such a concern. The environment is assumed to be okay. It is within the individual that the relationship is disturbed and that suffering occurs.

Certainly this needs to be applied judiciously. There are many circumstances, of course, in which it is the situation that is the problem, not the individual. The political implications of this are important to be aware of. Some family systems theories could be said to be the opposite of Zen. Both Zen and family systems theory have spatial understandings of a person. However, many family system theories, such as Strategic, Structural, MRI/Brief Therapy, and Milan Systemic, describe how a family enters therapy with an identified patient, usually a trouble-making person, but the solution is in changing the family system interaction, not the individual.

The Zen solution, rather than detachment or changing the system, is non-attachment and big attachment. Non-attachment is being the spatial self fully without any time considerations. This means neither being attached to its present form nor being attached to the results of the present activity. Non-attachment is being natural attachment fully without ego attachment. Non-attachment is full

participation in the moment without trying to manipulate the situation according to one's own point of view. Fukushima Roshi agreed with my understanding of non-attachment. He said after hearing my definition:

Yes, I would say yes, not being attached to the results of your actions. We can say that. Yes, I think so, because as long as there's the ego, there's that tendency to want to control, to want to have the result go your own way, so I would agree with that, yes. (January 23, 2002, p.4)

Big attachment is rather than being attached to oneself, being attached to all things. This is expanding attachment so that a person is fully the spatial self. Whereas non-attachment has the sense of letting go, big attachment has the sense of holding onto. This is attachment as “*mu* 無”--both non-attachment and big attachment together.

The value of big attachment is that a person does not detach from the spatial self. Attachment is used positively. Yasunaga Roshi explained:

If someone tries to be no-attached or be detached, such attitude is also an attachment. So in a way I could tell you that being no-attached is being attached to everything. ... If you do not pay attention to just one thing, in this case you pay attention to everything around you. (May 8, 2001, p. 17)

This is the manifestation of Zen psychology. Not freedom from. Freedom to, freedom in. Not detachment. Not ego-attachment. Non-attachment. And big attachment.

### *No-Self*

No-self, *muga* 無我 in Japanese, refers to the lack of an ego-self. Its negative phrasing only means the absence of ego-self. It does not mean a lack of

self altogether. The *roshis* were very clear about this. Fukushima Roshi explained, “It’s not just a negative meaning. It means that there is no ego. There is no self nature” (January 23, 2002, p. 4).

No-self therefore directly is pointing to the absence of ego-self, but is also implying the presence of true self. The spatial self that I have described is a manifestation of the functioning of this true self. Fukushima Roshi again explained:

All is empty of self and yet you can say by cutting off the ego there’s a way in which the way you are living, the way in which you’re living is living without ego, but it’s actually a very positive thing. . . . it is the self, which has cut off the ego that is functioning, that is alive. There is a very simple expression in Japanese, it’s the self of “*mu* 無,” which might sound strange in English, but it’s very natural in Japanese. (January 23, 2002, p. 4)

No-self is psychological health according to Zen psychology. And conversely, self as ego is considered to be psychological pathology. No-self is the expression of the human being who is living the spatial self, both as situated and as emptiness. Ego-self is the person who separates from their situatedness and who believes themselves to be an entity, a substantial self. In this study there were several aspects of both no-self and ego-self that were communicated by the *roshis*.

It is important to understand in Zen psychology what is being referred to by the use of the term ego. This explanation of the “Zen ego” is one of the conclusions of this study that differentiates this study from previous understandings of the ego. My thesis is that Zen psychology posits that ego is a basic function of mind. Several of the *roshis* said that everyone has an ego. As

the *roshis* expressed it, this function is basic to consciousness. It is the subjective aspect of consciousness that arises as soon as consciousness splits or bifurcates from unity and oneness into duality and subject-object. This split occurs at what I have referred to as the root of mind, thus being prior to both the unconscious and conscious parts of the psyche.

This ego is very different than that of Western psychology. In Western psychology the ego is generally understood to have some kind of function in relationship to the conscious and unconscious. For example, in Freudian theory the ego is understood to have a mediating role between a person's inner instincts and their outer reality. In Zen psychology, however, my conclusion is that the ego as the subjective sense, the sense of identity of a person, is at the base of all functions of mind. The ego as the subject of consciousness has a determining influence on every function of mind.

In this Zen theory consciousness arises *through* the ego – on every level of the psyche: root, unconscious, and conscious. As Yasunaga Roshi said, “consciousness is a function of your ego” (May 8, 2001, p. 18). Thus, the ego, rather than being a mediator as in Freudian theory, is more like a filter. As this filter it is the function of the psyche that influences all other functions. It is the crucial function in psychological health and pathology.

The ego in this understanding is not developmental. It is not something that needs to be made or nourished as a person grows up. It is already a function that a person has as soon as they are born. This does not mean that the ego is not closely related to functions that need to develop during a person's life. In Zen

practice training of ego functions is very important, particularly the ability to pay attention, concentrate, and feel. These functions do need to be developed and coordinated.

The ego accordingly can be described by how it functions at each of the levels of mind, the root, the unconscious, and the conscious. The conscious ego is understood to be the conscious executor of the psyche. It is the function that reflects, cogitates, perceives, deliberates, and discriminates. It is also the function that is a person's subjectivity, their most inner and intimate sense of "I," of identity. It is their core sense of self. The unconscious ego and the root of mind ego does not have the conscious functions just described, such as reflection, cogitating, deliberating, and discriminating, but it still has the function of subjectivity and the core sense of self.

The term ego-self refers to the ego being taken by a person to be a self, to be a substantial entity. It refers to the misapprehension of the subject of mind. It is when the subject of mind is apprehended as a self, as an entity that is separate from its environment, that the ego-self arises. The conscious executor of mind, rather than being understood according to causality and "*mu* 無," is identified with and thus understood to be an independent existing agent. Rather than the ego itself, it is the ego-self that needs to be eliminated according to this understanding.

This ego-self is a "coloring" or "perfuming" of the ego that changes the nature of the subject of a person in a radical way. This occurs not only within the conscious and unconscious minds, but also at the root of mind. It is thus

fundamental to the functioning of mind. It affects the whole of mind. All other functions get “tilted” according to the ego-self. For example, perception, a function often discussed by the *roshis*, functions according to the disposition of the ego-self. Another example is that Harada Roshi once said to me that desire itself is not a problem, it’s the one who desires that is the problem.

The ego-self initially arises at the root of consciousness as a fundamental misapprehension of the nature of consciousness. In this way it is primordial, prior to any conscious recognition of this activity. In this sense it is not developmental. It tends to arise as soon as consciousness appears, although the ego-self itself is not inherent to consciousness. The ego is inherent to consciousness. People tend to misapprehend this ego and it then is transformed into the ego-self. This is a second reason why Zen puts little emphasis on developmental psychology. The first reason previously discussed is the emphasis on the spatial self rather than the historical self.

The ego-self, while not developmental as a function, is, however, developmental in terms of what form it takes. A person can develop certain ego attachments or illusions as well as certain abilities and mental functions. This development is very much influenced by relationships and events in life, such as trauma or a nurturing mother.

This theory of the non-developmental and developmental nature of the ego-self is distinct from an idea that is very common in Buddhist circles in America. This is the idea that a person must develop an ego-self first and then throw it away. I have heard it expressed as a person must be a self before they

can be no-self. Jack Engler's (1986) writing, as discussed in the previous chapter, expresses this idea. My conclusion from this research is that this idea is not part of the psychology of Zen. The history of Zen supports my thesis. The fourth Chinese patriarch of Chan Buddhism, Daii Doshin, is reported to have become enlightened at the age of fourteen,<sup>36</sup> an age at which his ego-self in the sense that Engler writes could not have been matured. The ego-self is not necessary for development. The ego and its functions can develop without the ego-self. Generally the ego-self is part of people's development because it usually arises at birth. However, as in Daii Doshin's case, the ego-self can be eliminated at any point in a person's life and the person not only will continue to develop, but will do so in a more healthy way. Daii Doshin's post-*satori* development, after age fourteen, is chronicled in the *Denkoroku*<sup>37</sup> (Keizan, 1268-1325/1993). To me personally it has always seemed silly to have to develop something that a person then must make great effort to eliminate.

The *roshis* spoke of various ways to recognize the ego-self. One is that it is dualistic. It sees a separation between subject and object, between what it identifies as "I" and that with which it does not identify. The ego-self is thus related to the activity of identity. As in all aspects of the ego-self, it is not that identity itself is delusive, it's only when there's an exclusiveness that the delusion of the ego-self arises. This dynamic of the ego-self makes it particularly hard to understand and describe.

A second way to recognize the ego-self is that it is selfish and narcissistic. It is a "me-first" attitude. This comes in various forms, not just grandiosity.

Over-assertion of self can be one of its aspects, but it also can be protective and withdrawn from life. A third way of recognition is interference. The ego-self interferes with the natural functioning of the spatial self. It sets up a self apart from causality and gives this self-importance rather than being with causality as it is.

One very important aspect of the ego-self regarding its functioning as the subject of mind is that it can't be seen or understood objectively. A person cannot separate from their subjectivity. Whatever they see as their subjectivity is not their actual subjectivity. Yasunaga Roshi explained, "consciousness is a function of your ego. So when your consciousness is conscious of your consciousness, that consciousness is not your own real consciousness" (May 8, 2001, p. 18). A person can understand certain manifestations of the ego-self, as previously described, but their ego-self itself can never be seen or understood in this way. This is a quality of the ego-self that is particularly important regarding considerations of healing the ego-self.

The ego-self as a misapprehension is not real. It is an illusion, an attachment to self. It is a construction, a self made when there is in reality no such self. Part of the reason for using a negative term, no-self, refers to the need that Zen sees to do away with this false self. Zen in various ways refers to this elimination of ego-self, a very different way of speaking than Western psychology, which generally focuses on the construction of self. Harada Roshi referred to the ego-self as a "thought" (May 17, 2001, p. 3), indicating the sense that it is a mental construction. The Zen understanding is that when the ego-self

is eliminated, the self that is already inherently in a person appears and functions in consciousness. I used the term inherent self to describe this. Inherent self could be said to be a positive way of saying no-self. Both terms refer to the same thing.

The *roshis* spoke of two main activities that support the ego-self. One is ego attachment, which has been researched in this study. The other is illusion, the false discrimination of a substantial and separate self.

This understanding of the functioning of the ego-self is an idea that is common in various ways in popular culture. For example, people talk about someone being on an “ego trip” or someone being very “egotistical.” The sense is a person has become unbalanced and their ego has become too strong. I have found in my psychotherapy work with expatriates in Japan that regardless of where they come from, they understand this idea. Consequently, it has become a very useful tool for me in my work. Usually the ego-self can be connected to many aspects of a person. It is what I call a negative ego complex. When a person recognizes this, this understanding becomes very useful for their recovery and healing.

The possibility of living without an ego-self, which is what the term no-self really refers to, is one that is in great doubt with many people who are not Zen practitioners. In the previous chapter in the “death of the ego” section, I discussed the doubts of two authors, Jeffrey Rubin (1996) and Bernard Faure (1991, 1993). However, all the *roshis* clearly said that not only was it possible, that this was their experience. Their descriptions were different, but they all

agreed that the ego-self could disappear. The reality of this I think is one of the most significant parts of this research. It is something that Western psychology needs to take seriously. It is also something that the American Zen community needs to examine. As Zen is transmitted from Japan to America and the older Asian teachers die, the American Zen community is confronted with what really is the death of the ego-self and what is enlightenment. These six Zen teachers all have valuable experience and understanding regarding this pressing issue.

Living without the ego-self is no-self or *muga* in Zen terms. My most important conclusion about no-self is that it is what I have referred to as the “inherent self.” No-self is a natural self. It develops on its own according to causality without any intentional need on the part of the person. It is inherently present in a person. In Zen terms a person just needs to awaken to it.

This awakening occurs both gradually and suddenly. Many factors and causes lead up to it, but the final moment of awakening is a coalescing of all of these and can occur quite suddenly. Understanding often is a struggle until the moment in which one finally grasps the problem. Thus, gradually and suddenly are interwoven, as “*mu* 無.” Gradually and suddenly together are how mind understands and realizes its inherent self.

This inherent self is what has been referred to over the centuries in Zen and Chan literature with terms like the absolute self, the unborn self, one’s face before one’s parents were born, etc. The *roshis* often talked this way about their experience of no-self. An example is Tanaka Roshi: “I could find my true face is

nothingness, absolute nothingness. It is said so-called formless self. So new death and birth” (January 18, 2001, p. 6).

One of my conclusions is that I think it is a mistake to refer to no-self as the unconscious, as D.T. Suzuki (1960, 1972) did. No-self is not the same as the unconscious as it is understood in Western psychology. Therefore, using the same term causes confusion. No-self refers to the absence of the ego-self, not the Western unconscious. I think referring to no-self with terms such as the inherent self and the root of mind are more accurate.

There are other conclusions about no-self. In terms of the previous discussion no-self is the spatial self. No-self is the functioning of the psyche without the ego-self. No-self is a participatory self as well as a self that is not bound or limited by the conditions within which the person is. This is an expression of self as “*mu* 無,” being and non-being. It is also the Zen idea of freedom, *jiyu* 自由, which Fukushima Roshi (January 23, 2002, p.6) explained as “freedom to;” that is, freely, with all of one’s faculties at their disposal, being able to act as is appropriate.

No-self thus is a dynamic, not a static state or an entity. No-self is alive, it is active. It is the functioning of the psyche without an ego-self. This is the psychological meaning of emptiness. Emptiness does not mean an experience of some kind of void, some kind of nothingness. It doesn’t even mean the experience of the loss of self as the ego-self is an illusion. To realize something never was implies there was nothing to experience. Rather, one awakes to their true self, that of no-self. Emptiness has often been interpreted psychologically as

a literal experience of emptiness and loss of self. This is clearly not what the *roshis* are living.

In terms of specific functions the *roshis* talked about this as the interaction of the six senses<sup>38</sup> with the environment. The eye sees naturally without being told to do so. Through the senses the psyche interacts with the environment in a relational way. This is the idea of oneness, that there is no separation between self and other. Mind is always understood in an interactive way. Two of the *roshis*, Nakajima Roshi (July 10, 2001, p. 11) and Harada Roshi (Daigaku Rumme, Interview, July 9, 2001, p. 8), made the provocative assertion that a person can only think one thought at a time. In terms of the spatial self that has been discussed this would mean that in a moment a person is one thought, but this moment lasts only a fraction of a second and quickly becomes another thought. This is the psyche as the combination of being something and being change also.

The psyche is asserted to be always moving, changing at a speed much faster than it is capable of perceiving. One manifestation of this is consciousness is seen as a stream or flow. Specifically in terms of the ego this means that any kind of fixed identity is an illusion. It also means that the ego is in a position of not being able to know much of what is occurring. One of the manifestations of this is the unconscious. Another is that which Harada Roshi (November 14, 2000, p. 18) called “mysterious.” While I think that it is important to understand dynamics such as the unconscious, one of my conclusions is that it is also

important to acknowledge this mystery, that the position of each person is that of being within a body, within a world, that will always be in part mysterious.

The *roshis* talked about living no-self in particular in two complementary ways, that of sincerity and that of letting go. To live no-self is to participate and not to hold back or withdraw. It is to be involved fully. But it is also, in the spirit of non-attachment and change, not to hold onto anything. This letting go I noticed applies both to time, in the sense of not holding on over time, and to space, in the sense of not holding on to that which a person can't control or doesn't know. Yasunaga Roshi embodied this spirit when he said, "I did my best. After that anything will happen that's okay, no problem. So in this case it's a very hilarious, even hilarious" (April 18, 2001, p. 5). This is living "*mu* 無"--being and non-being at the same time.

This study found specific ways that Zen practice utilizes for the healing of the ego-self and realizing no-self. A basic methodology is staying inside oneself and not engaging functions of mind that encourage the objective or outside position. This means a focus on the use of attention. A basic method is simply to pay attention, receive and feel what comes to consciousness. Acceptance is valued because the focus is on finding and discovering what is already there. Acceptance also bypasses perceptions and values given by the ego-self. This is an experience first and think second orientation. Experience is given a high value by the *roshis*. The limits of thinking are emphasized. This, however, is not random experience. It is very directed experience, directed

within Zen cognitive training and very much focused on the ego-self at the root of mind.

In doing this kind of healing work the focus is on no-self, on finding one's inherent self. This is a solution focused orientation. The only value in becoming aware of attachments and illusions, considered to be the basic activities of the ego-self, is to let go of them. Attachments and illusions are certainly influenced by outside relationships, but once they are accepted by the person, they are that person's own activity. The problems and the solution are both within the individual. Attachments and illusions are expressions of dysfunctions of the spatial self and they are what Zen practice looks to heal. They both are understood as activities in the present, in relationship, not as patterns from the past. There thus is no focus on activities like transference as there is in depth psychology practice. This I conclude is a major difference between the intersubjectivity theory of Stolorow and Atwood (1992) and Zen psychology.

In Zen healing occurs at the root of mind. This is prior to both the conscious and unconscious and is ultimately, strangely enough, a very individual act. Yet, through this individual act one becomes one with all things. This healing occurs through awakening, the disappearance of the ego-self and the realization of what one is already, before the appearance of the ego-self. Awakening occurs both gradually and suddenly. Many factors lead to finally awakening to one's real condition. Rather than changing oneself or developing a healthy self, the focus is on becoming what one is prior to the self-creation of the

false self that is the ego-self. This is not changing the nature of one's conscious and/or unconscious mind(s), but changing the very nature of consciousness itself. It is the realization on one's inherent self. It is the manifestation of fundamental aliveness.

### *Limitations of the Psychology of Zen*

There were some specific limitations that were discovered for a psychology of Zen. In doing this study in Japan I became more aware of how cultural Zen practice is. It is impossible to separate pure experience and situated experience as simply as many people have naively tried to do. I wrote about some of the problems that have arisen from this in the section on "Pure Experience" in chapter seven. These two are inextricably interwoven. This does not invalid Zen psychology. However, it does require a lot of filtering through what is cultural and what is not.

So much of Zen is explained by Japanese Zen masters in Japanese cultural expressions. This is only natural, but it is sometimes hard for non-Japanese to understand. For example, sincerity in relationships is often expressed by Japanese people as trying very hard, making great effort, as in the expression *isshokenmei*.<sup>39</sup> There are many references to this by several of the *roshis* in the interviews. However, for Americans sincerity is generally expressed through different behaviors, such as honesty and good intentions. Sorting through these cultural differences is important, but challenging. I have personally witnessed many occasions in which the cultural differences were not

understood and misunderstandings have arisen. My conclusion from this is that new expressions need to be developed in English. Using Japanese expressions in English leads to confusion, as does using existing expression in English for Japanese expressions. This report has been an effort to develop new English expressions to serve this purpose.

I think that psychology of Zen has been misunderstood by many people outside the Zen tradition. I found three particular reasons for this: (1) the unfamiliar methods of Zen, (2) the devaluing of the intellectual mind, and (3) the traditional inaccessibility of the masters of Zen practice. I think that these have been the liabilities regarding the general usefulness of a psychology of Zen. The devaluing of the intellectual mind in particular is an essential part of Zen practice, but its presentation can be changed. None of the Zen masters that were interviewed played non-intellectual games with me. They were very sincere, answered my questions directly, and entered into a dialogue. It is this kind of activity that is needed for a psychology of Zen to be better understood by people outside of Zen.

I also found that there have been ways in which Zen has over-emphasized the absolute and emptiness at the expense of the relative and beingness. This has resulted in a passivity, an “it can’t be helped” attitude, by some Zen practitioners, an over-emphasis on “pure experience,” and an under-emphasis on situated experience. A couple of the *roshis* (Harada Roshi, May 17, 2001, p. 6; Nakajima Roshi, June 26, 2001, p. 7) specifically mentioned the passive attitude of some Zen practitioners. This is one of Bernard Faure’s (1991, 1993) criticisms of Zen

and Chan. There obviously has been some truth to this. Awareness of this tendency of Zen I believe is important. Such awareness will serve to keep Zen psychology a living practice and not just something to read about and theorize about.

One of the biggest and most important challenges for Zen psychology is to understand what is pure experience and then to apply this understanding to clinical work. I agree with Bernard Faure (1991, 1993) that D.T. Suzuki's understanding of pure experience was much more cultural than Suzuki was willing to admit. This points to a challenge that a psychology of Zen must, but has been reluctant to, engage. It does not invalidate pure experience. It does mean recognizing more clearly what situated experience is and it does mean re-understanding pure experience.

The psychology of Zen has been underutilized in the work of psychology in part due to these limitations. This study has been an attempt to explicate the Zen understanding of mind and to make it more accessible to people outside of Zen practice. With more study and research it is hoped that a psychology of Zen could help psychology become more cross-cultural, understand the functioning of mind in new ways, and broaden the applicability of psychological work.

#### *Application to Clinical Work*

All clinical work is based on the clinician's theoretical orientation. How the therapist chooses to interact with the client and which interventions are utilized is founded on the theoretical orientation of the therapist. What has been

outlined in this report is the basis of a theoretical orientation to doing clinical work. What has been found in the *roshis'* experience are Zen answers to what Greenberg and Mitchell (1983, p. 19) write are the “four fundamental issues” of psychoanalytic theory: (1) what is “the basic unit of analysis. What is primary and what is derivative? What are the basic constitutive building blocks of experience: drives, wishes, values, goals, relations with others, identifications, choices, action, and so on?” (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983), (2) motivation, (3) development, and (4) structure (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). The answers to each of these that have been described in this report are: (1) relationships with others, (2) the dynamic between the true self and the false self or ego-self, (3) the development of functions of the psyche, and (4) the conscious-unconscious-root of mind structure. Of these four, development has been the least described, due to the Zen lack of interest in this aspect of mind.

As such what has been initiated in this report is a broad-based theoretical approach to clinical work. This is an approach that can influence all aspects of psychological practice. This is different from how Western psychologists have approached Buddhist psychology in general and Zen psychology in particular. The approach so far by Westerners has focused on what I have called the time aspect of the spatial self. This is the aspect of self as impermanent and always changing. It is understanding no-self to mean literally no self, to understand emptiness as being nothing. Examples of this understanding that have been discussed are the writings of Epstein (1995) and Rubin (1996). What this study has discovered is while it is true that self is *not* something, that it is impermanent

and without substance, it is also true that self *is* something, that of being relationship in the moment, that of being the spatial self.

The result of understanding Buddhist psychology as Epstein and Rubin have is that they propose a complementary relationship of psychoanalytic and Buddhist theory in clinical work. In this relationship psychology focuses on the various ways in which self is and Buddhism focuses on the ways in which self is not. For example, Rubin (1996) writes:

Psychoanalysis highlights the self-centricity, substantiality, and historicity of subjectivity, while Buddhism elucidates its fluid, non-self-centric, and spiritual aspects. Typically, psychoanalysts and Buddhists neglect, if not denigrate, those aspects of subjectivity occluded by their conception of it. One facet of each of the dialectically connected pairs is thus neglected by each tradition. Buddhists neglect selfhood's substantiality and historicity, while psychoanalysts eclipse its nonsubstantiality and spirituality. (p. 74)

This has been a common approach to Buddhist psychology in clinical work in the West. A more recent example of this approach is the writing of Adeline van Waning (2002). She writes:

Psychoanalysis helps us to suffer less from unconscious conflicts, confusions, and fixed attitudes; Buddhism helps us to be more awake and aware in the here and now, and to be open to the spiritual dimension which is present in everything. (p. 103)

She describes working with a client using this understanding. This client identified with his depression and anxiety. She asserts, "It is fundamental that the client can then *let go of this identification*, to *disidentify*. This will result in there being room for more openness, equanimity and energy" (van Waning, 2002, p. 99, italics in original).

Working this way with clients is part of the Zen approach that has been discussed in this report. Letting go is fundamental in Zen methodology. This is one way of integrating Zen psychology into clinical work.

All three of these writers are writing about Buddhist psychology from the Theravada perspective. The perspective that the *roshis* described may be a difference between Theravada and Zen. From the *roshis*' perspective these writers regarding Buddhist psychology are focusing on what self is not and missing what self is. They then assert that psychology is more positively oriented to what self is. However, what has been discovered in this study has the potential to contribute to all aspects of psychology, which is more than widening psychology to make room for the Buddhist time considerations regarding self. Each of the four issues of psychological theory that Greenberg and Mitchell (1983) consider fundamental for psychological work has been examined in this study from the *roshis*' perspective. The psychology of Zen has a contribution to make to each of these four issues.

Practically in clinical work a couple of the *roshis* had some specific suggestions about working from a Zen point of view. Harada Roshi spoke of two things. The first is for the therapist to “really thoroughly listen” (Nov. 14, 2000, p. 17) to the client. He said, “the most important thing or the foundation of that would be to really listen completely to the person, to let him or her speak until they have nothing left to say if the time is available” (Nov. 14, 2000, p. 16). This speaks to the importance of the therapist really entering the client's

subjective experience. Using Zen terminology, the therapist becomes one with the client.

The second point that Harada Roshi made is what to do within this listening. He said:

In the process of their speaking throw questions back to them and have them reflect on that and this is a kind of relationship that I think could be useful. The method we use in Zen is that when a person comes with a question to throw the question back to them in a way that we try to get them to realize that the answer is within the person himself or herself who's asking. If I, you, simply give them an answer it's not their own and so it's a matter of getting them to realize that the answer is right in the question itself. (November 14, 2000, pp. 16-17)

This is the Zen method – to throw the question back to the person in such a way that they realize the answer is within themselves.

People repeatedly tend to look outside themselves. The Zen orientation is to stay within oneself. The challenge for the therapist is to orient a person to do this. Zen masters traditionally have done this through the use of *koans* and idiosyncratic behavior. All of this is not necessarily appropriate for therapeutic work, but can be at times in appropriate doses. Particularly in the use of the intellectual mind this is appropriate. For someone who tends to think too much, the intervention is staying with one's experience through attention-feeling. For someone who tends to feel too much, the intervention is strengthening the intentional function of the psyche through emphasizing the attention part of attention-feeling.

Nakajima Roshi also emphasized listening. He said, "In order to observe the person, you have to make the person to speak more. You may ask him or her

to speak more” (July 10, 2001, p. 13). He also recommended the use of the body for therapy. He said, “One of the characteristics of the Zen sect is to impose the manual labor to the practitioners. So when someone is really suffering one method to cure his or her suffering is to use his or her body thoroughly and fully” (July 10, 2001, p. 13). The use of the body goes together with the use of attention-feeling. Attention-feeling needs a focal point and the body provides a healthy one. By using the body in conjunction with attention-feeling a person can calm down, drop much neurotic activity, and be much more clear. It is often useful to stop, focus on the body, breathe, and look around at one’s immediate environment. Nakajima Roshi also spoke of how to approach suffering. He said:

If someone you face is suffering from the real pain do not, please do not tell him or her do not suffer anymore. Instead, oh, you have the pain and think of it and have your suffering and pain more and more completely. Because he or she has the courage or certain energy to solve his or her own problem in his or her mind. So once you make sure that he or she has the certain way of his or her own solutions you can say that word. If you try to run away from suffering, the suffering always follows you. ... The main solution is what he or she believes in. So this is the role of the religion. The suffering of the human being is just a small thing. If this suffering is observed from the wider point of view, from the point of the life, there’s a certain way provided for the solution. Like the self-cure of the physical body, the mind has a certain cure ability. It’s capable to cure itself. (July 10, 2001, p. 13)

Zen has great faith in each human being. Everyone has an inherent self, as I have called it. Therefore, looking outside oneself is not necessary. Rather, find within the resources one already has. Then a person can have great faith in their ability to handle difficult situations and transform suffering. Thus, in

clinical work a person is oriented to this inherent self, oriented towards discovery and finding. Hope is an important part of this. The therapist through their faith in the inherent self can convey to each person in pain that there is hope.

Nakajima Roshi said that the main solution is what a person believes in. The therapist can support this in a person through hope and the orientation to the inherent self.

The psychology of Zen does emphasize letting go as van Waning describes. However, too much emphasis on letting go gives the sense of detachment from life. Openness and equanimity can easily be understood to mean that it is better to sit back and be serene. The *roshis*, as well as emphasizing letting go, also emphasized doing something wholeheartedly, sincerely, with big attachment.

In clinical work this translates into, as well as working on letting go, also working through how a person is withholding from relationships and entering them more fully. From the Zen point of view both are important.

One contribution that this psychology of Zen can make to clinical work is how to participate in relationships. This is the focus of the spatial self. This study identified the ego-self as the key function affecting how a person is in relationship. This study also described how ego attachment, and to a lesser extent, how illusion influence a person in relationship. These functions of mind can all be examined in clinical work.

This approach gives the clinician a way to work within the therapeutic relationship in the present without needing to focus on the past-related activities,

such as is done through transference. This can be done through the focus on ego attachments, illusions, the ego-self, and the inherent self. Ego attachments and illusions are activities of the ego-self and will show up in the therapeutic relationship as well as in the rest of the client's life. This has the potential to be immensely useful to clients. For example, understanding when a feeling is an ego attachment can serve to change the nature of the feeling. Feelings have the characteristic of seeming true and/or seeming like they will never change. This is one reason why people become hopeless. Feelings need to be worked with, to become more pliant and less absolute. Seeing the activity of holding on, being attached, within a feeling can serve to open the feeling up and make it more workable.

This points to the value of becoming aware of the nature of one's ego in all activities. According to Zen psychology the ego-self, until enlightenment, is a factor in all psychic functions. If there is sensitivity to this, it can be discovered, as in becoming aware of the ego aspect of feelings. The ego-self forms what I refer to with clients as a "negative ego complex." The ego-self, being a part of all functions, interweaves and forms a complex. This can be identified and can be eminently useful for people. For example, a person can become aware of the egotistical aspects of their thinking, their feeling, their behavior, their body sensations (particularly in the form of tension and knots), and how all of these parts interact to form a complex.

The flip side of the ego-self is no-self. This is the sense that van Waning referred to as letting go. It is the sense of not holding on through the ego-self.

When a person lets go, they relax. They rest in whatever is their condition. A focus on letting go sensitizes a person to the discontinuous aspects of their self, to that which they can't control.

In particular the value of letting go is that it orients a person to what I have referred to as the inherent self. Letting go means finding what is already the case, discovering what one is in truth apart from the attachment and illusions of the ego-self. This is a general orientation that is very useful in therapy. Each client has an inherent self. They are encouraged to find it.

The inherent self is a solution-focused approach. It is the miracle that only appears in glimpses when the ego-self is very dominant. However, these glimpses can be focused on, expanded, and integrated. Such glimpses often appear suddenly and unexpectedly. What is needed is to orient oneself to these glimpses, do the gradual work that is necessary, and be open to the unexpected. This is the Zen approach--intuit the inherent self and then practice this intuition. This practice can continue for a long time, it is not brief therapy. This is an important role for the therapist.

The sudden/gradual paradigm provides a very good way to understand how healing occurs. Healing is both gradual and sudden. A person needs to do the gradual work, to apply and participate oneself and make efforts to heal. Then, if a person is open, sometimes a sudden shift can occur. Mind in its fluidity, having no fixed self nature, can function this way. I have found use of this paradigm very useful for clients, both for explaining how healing and pathology occur.

What I have referred to as attention-feeling is the primary technique used in Zen practice. In psychotherapy the use of the mind as attention-feeling is a primary way of accessing what is beneath a person's confusion and conscious preoccupations. This is an experience first, process second orientation. This is distinct from, although very similar to, the mindfulness practice that is a part of Theravada practice. Mindfulness in my opinion tends to reinforce detachment. Attention-feeling reinforces non-attachment. It does this through a person fully entering some experience, such as a painful emotion, but learning how not to get stuck in it. Clients can be trained to set aside their thinking mind, relax, stay with their experience, and move through it. Such work gives a person faith in themselves, that they have the resources inherently to be able to handle whatever stresses and pain they may encounter.

Also very useful for psychological work is the "inside" approach that has been discussed in this report. In particular two aspects of this approach are practical in doing this kind of work, one being not to look outside oneself and the second not to judge oneself. These, along with attention-feeling, provide a practical methodology for working with many kinds of client situations.

### *Suggestions for Further Research*

The results of this study have pointed to a broad-based psychological theory, one that the primary unit of analysis, the motivation, the development, and the structure of the psyche. The primary unit of analysis is strikingly similar to that of Western object relations theory. However, what the psychology of Zen

is pointing to regarding the motivation, the development, and the structure of the psyche has many differences from Western object relations theory. This study has been an initial investigation into these areas. Each needs to be more fully researched. Such research would serve to broaden psychological theory and clinical applications.

One primary Zen idea that should be further researched is that of “*mu* 無,” the idea of mind as being and non-being together. In this study some manifestations of this were identified, particularly self as continuity and discontinuity and experience as both situated and pure. Western psychology has focused on the being aspects of self, its continuity and its situatedness. The interpretation of Buddhist psychology in the West has focused on the discontinuous aspects of self, the non-situated nature of self, the non-being of self. The results of this study indicate that self is “*mu* 無,” both of these aspects of self intertwined and interpenetrating each other. These two aspects of self have yet been fully integrated together. This study is a step in that direction. Further efforts are needed.

Along these lines it would be very interesting to research further the differences between a Theravada psychology, a Tibetan Buddhist psychology, and a Zen psychology. Differences were hinted at in this study, but not focused on and developed. Zen as a Buddhist religion has much in common with other forms of Buddhism. However, there are many differences. The particular Zen aspects of Buddhist psychology have not been focused on. Buddhist psychology is generally understood in the West either through Tibetan or Theravada

Buddhist psychology. This study is a step towards articulating a psychology of Zen. Differentiating it from other Buddhist psychologies would further articulate a psychology of Zen.

A Zen epistemology according to “*mu* 無” would be important to further research. Zen knowing includes both knowledge that occurs through dialogue and situatedness and through suddenness and non-situatedness. This is knowledge through both continuity and discontinuity. The Western discipline of hermeneutics emphasizes the continual way of knowing. How knowing can occur according to discontinuity and non-situatedness would be very interesting to research.

In this study the ego-self was identified as the crucial function of mind regarding psychological pathology and health. Further research into the functioning of the ego-self is important. This idea of the role of the ego-self already exists in popular society. What is needed is to understand more thoroughly how the ego-self functions in terms of attachment, illusion, and fear. This study has focused on attachment. Other functions of mind also need to be similarly studied in terms of the ego-self.

That the ego-self can die, that it is not a person’s real self, is a possibility that needs much more research. This is, as I have discussed in this report, very much in doubt outside of Zen practitioners. The experience of those who report the death of the ego-self needs to be more thoroughly documented. Such experience needs to be brought into the mainstream of psychological discussion

and out of the hiding that it has been traditionally kept within. This potential of the human mind needs to be acknowledged and understood.

Understanding better how mind functions as no-self would be a very important contribution to psychology. There are many aspects on no-self that could be researched. One example is mind as a sense organ. It is understood in Buddhism as the sixth sense. How it functions this way could be more fully described psychologically. Another example is how mind can be understood to function without a self. Self is generally so important to Western psychological theory that a more fully articulated theory of no-self would be very valuable.

Further research into the functioning of conscious, unconscious, and root of mind would be very important. Understanding these three more fully would articulate a new theory of the structure of mind. Understanding more fully the Zen unconscious, with its emphasis on ego-attachment and illusion, would give a new dimension to the unconscious. It would, for example, support a way of working with the unconscious that is spatially and not historically oriented. Understanding more fully the root of mind would be helpful in understanding how both the ego and the ego-self function in mind. This is something that the psychology of Zen considers crucial to the functioning of mind and thus is important to understand more completely.

Further research of the role of causality in psychological determinism is important. Specific ideas discussed in this report that need to be further researched include the difference between causality and *karma* and Zen developmental psychology. There is not a lot written on the distinction between

causality and *karma*. This may be why this distinction is often misunderstood. Researching this academically in terms of examining Zen texts would be very useful. Also how this distinction is understood in current Zen practice would be helpful. Such research would serve to deepen the understanding of what causality is and how it functions.

Zen psychology has not focused on developmental issues. This was discussed in this report. However, there is a developmental psychology within Zen thought that is not articulated. It is more implicit within Zen psychology. The *roshis* referred to it on occasions as discussed in this report. Researching this would expand existing Western developmental psychology and produce a better understanding of the functioning of the inherent self of Zen psychology.

Because so much of Zen practice in Japan is tied to Japanese culture, research into identifying the cultural aspects of Zen psychology would be very useful. Some cultural aspects were discussed in this report, but these aspects were not focused on. Particularly in terms of the spatial self cultural influences could be much more identified.

One cultural aspect that was briefly discussed in chapter five was the Zen view of emotions, particularly love. This is quite different from the Western view of emotions and love. In Zen love is understood more as a danger rather than something that touches the soul. Understanding this better would be very useful, particularly as emotions are emphasized in many Western psychotherapies as a counterbalance to over-thinking and a way to heal the

psyche. In the Zen that was studied for this report emotions are not understood to be a counter-balance to over-thinking.