

*THE TENTH MAN*

*The Tenth Man is the only Man.  
There is No Other.*

# *The Tenth Man*

THE GREAT JOKE  
*(which made Lazarus laugh)*

*Wei Wu Wei*



HONG KONG UNIVERSITY PRESS

*'I have only one object in writing books :  
to demonstrate that there could not be anyone to do it.'*

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PART I

IDENTITY

It is only with total humility, and in absolute stillness of mind that we can know what indeed we are.



I. *Metanoesis*

## I

EVERY QUESTION concerns you looking or not-looking, doing or not-doing, knowing or not-knowing;

Never the thing (object) looked-at, done, known; never *it's* being or not-being.

As long as there is you *doing*, it makes no difference whether there is doing or not-doing—for both are doing by you.

*Paravritti, metanoesis*, the '180 degree turn-over', is not a turning over by a 'doing or not-doing' you, a turning from positive to negative; it is not done by 'a you'. It is not done by any other 'entity' either. It is not done at all. It is the timeless, unceasing *prajñāic* functioning of our dhyānic non-being that becomes phenomenally present when there is neither doing nor non-doing, i.e. when there is 'fasting of the mind'.

It is not the object that is or is-not, but the cogniser of the thing that *either* is *or* is-not—that *neither* is *nor* is-not *as a cogniser*.

All looking, doing, cognising is the same process as looking for 'I' (the looker, doer, cogniser) as an object. Why? because a you (I) is looking, etc., and also because every object ultimately is I. The looking for 'I' as an object is the looking that is all looking for all objects; so is the not-looking for 'I' as an object the not-looking for any object whatever.

But it is the looker, rather than the object, that neither is nor is-not. Always, always, in every case and context.<sup>1</sup> Therefore it is only when you (I) cease looking that the total *absence* of the looking you (I) can be *present*—and that is the '180 degree turn'.

Who is looking? As long as a 'who' looks, objects can be seen only as objects, and a looking 'who' cannot be

<sup>1</sup> The object also, of course, which phenomenally either is or is-not, noumenally neither is nor is-not, but only because it is integral in its subject.

replaced by WHO? which neither is nor is-not, as long as he is looking.

Only in the absence of both looking and not-looking can a looking, which neither is nor is-not looking, be present. And such presence is you ('I').

Is not that the message of the Diamond and Heart Sutras?

## II

Not clear enough? Let's look at it like this:

No object as such is *either* good *or* not good, which are attributes in the cognising of which by split mind there arises the supposition of a cogniser and of some thing cognised.

But there has never been a cogniser, and there has never been any thing cognised, object or attribute of object, which are split aspects of the *prajñāic* functioning which we are calling *cognising*.

Once one has been pulled, pushed or wheedled out of the notion that objects as such, and their attributes, are as we sensorially perceive and intellectually interpret them, and has apperceived that their objective existence, as well as ours, is entirely visionary, surely one can understand that all they are is their source?

What is a little more difficult to apprehend is that their source as such, subjectively, is all that even objectively they are.

Then, all that remains is to apperceive that what we are looking for is this which is looking.

## II

*In Nineteen Plain Words*

EVERYTHING COGNISED is just what is called 'mind',  
And what is called 'mind' is just the cognising of everything.

Who done it? No Jack-in-the-box anywhere!  
So what is there left to write about?

*Note:* (1) Two very simple little statements, even rather obvious? But don't let us be deceived by their simplicity. Perhaps if one were to look into them deeply enough the dawn itself might break?

*Note:* (2) Huang Po on this subject, *cassant* as usual:

'Therefore it is said 'Perceiving a phenomenon is perceiving Universal Nature, since phenomena and Mind are one and the same.' (p. 118)

'Those who in their single-minded attempt to reach Buddhahood, detest the sentient world, thereby blaspheme all the Buddhas of the Universe.' (p. 130)

'My advice to you is to rid yourselves of all your previous ideas about *studying* Mind or *perceiving* it.' (p. 130)

'On no account make a distinction between the Absolute and the sentient world.' (p. 130)

4. *What is Mind?*

## III

## 'Champagne Charlie'

THIS GLASS of champagne, I see its colour, I hear its sparkle, I inhale its bouquet, I taste its savour, I feel its coolness and formlessness, and I know its quality. In fact I completely cognise it.

What have I cognised? Champagne. But what is that? A concept, champagne-concept. What could that be apart from the cognising of it? Surely it is no thing whatever *apart from the cognising of it*? What else could there be for it to be? If it were something else, how could I know that it was something else, or what that was? Only by cognising. Have I any other way of knowing anything?

Then what cognised it? An indefinable concept called 'mind' cognised it. What is this indefinable concept? Being a concept, it too is cognising—'cognising' cognising 'cognising'?

It is THIS which cognises? What else could it be? And if it were something else, how could I ever know that it is something else, or what that is? What else could there be to know that or anything whatever?

So 'mind' is what cognises, and what is cognised is 'mind'. And they are 'this'—this which cognises and that which is cognised.

Where do I come in? I must be 'this and that', subject and object! Evidently, inevitably I must be *this* 'mind' which appears to be the cogniser, and *that* champagne which appears to be the cognised, the cogniser and the cognised, both and neither, all and no thing.

'I' am Champagne Charlie!

*Note:* What are you saying? It is wine, made from grapes, dextrose and levulose transformed by ferments into alcohol, acid, carbonic acid gas, etc., etc.? Is it indeed? And how do you know that? Memory? And what is all that? Concepts. Results of cognition, what is termed 'knowledge'. 'Cognising' cognising—'cognising'.

*Dialectically*

CHAPTERS 10-14



### 10. *Apperceiving the Identity of all Opposites*

JUST AS by the superimposition of positive and negative in photographic films the opposing elements of light and shade complement one another, thereby producing mutual annihilation, so is it with all interdependent counterparts, negative and positive concepts, sometimes called opposites or complementaries.

It matters not whether we are making concepts about *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, object and subject, phenomenon and noumenon, other and self, presence and absence, for all represent aspects of the division of mind in the process of conceptualisation which is termed dualism. The absence of this process—non-dualism, *advaita*,—which implies pre-conceptualisation, mind upstream of all conceptualising—is a return to wholeness of mind, which is called ‘the truth of Ch’an’. That implies disidentification with a phenomenal object, a psyche-soma, which is picturesquely referred to as ‘enlightenment’, or liberation from the supposed bondage which appears to result from that identification.

Such identification entails a conceptual splitting of whole *prajñāic* apperceiving into a pseudo-subject cognising a pseudo-object, and that process results in the apparent condition of bondage. Therein the subjective element is always the negative, and the objective always the positive; *nirvāṇa*, noumenon, self, absence, being negative, and *samsāra*, phenomenon, other, presence, the positive; and in every case their assimilation results in a mutual negation which abolishes each as either, and leaves a situation which is void of any conceptual element except voidness itself.

It is not different if we seek to conceptualise the self-contradictory opposites such as non-being and being, non-manifestation and manifestation, non-acting and acting, and so on *ad infinitum*: the former are negative, their counterparts positive, and their assimilation results in the mutual cancellation of each. It should be noted, however, that in no case are two thoughts united, for no such operation is psychologically possible; mutually contradictory concepts just negate and so abolish one another in a third concept of voidness, so that wholeness results only from the cancellation

of a conceptual division, and such wholeness is conceptually a void. There is clearly no 'middle path' here, and that absurd and pedantic translation is a misleading obnubilation of the process which has just been described.

However, we are still left with a concept holding us 'bound'—that of 'voidness'. Let us take two examples.

When presence and absence as such are assimilated, there is no longer either presence or absence, for each counteracts the nature of the other and annihilates it.

The essential negation, however, is the absence of that resultant absence. This further negation, or double absence, is the absence of (that sort of absence which is) the absence of presence. And that alone is what is implied by 'Suchness'.<sup>1</sup>

So many great Masters have assured us that the complete apprehension of this initial identity of conceptual opposites, even of any one such pair, is itself liberation, saying that to 'see' one is to 'see' all, that we should not fail to recognise the importance of this apperception. Its perfect apprehension, we are told, should result in im-mediate disidentification with the pseudo (phenomenal) subject of pseudo (phenomenal) objects, both of which are just concepts devoid of 'ens', whose mutual abolition reveals the *prajñāic* functioning which is all suchness.

*Note:* Since authority is reassuring to some people, the above will be found to be a discursive application of the principle of the double negative of Shen Hui, and of what has been so clearly and repeatedly told us by the most familiar and best-translated Masters, such as Huang Po and Hui Hai, and should be a statement in current language of the burden of the Diamond and Heart Sutras of the *Prajñāpāramitā*.

<sup>1</sup> It might seem to be simpler just to say that the essential negation is that of whatever is conceptualising these absences, but the Masters sometimes considered it helpful to carry on logical or dialectic negation to its limit.

*Non-dialectically*

CHAPTERS 15-17



*15. Prajnā and the Sage*

ALL THE sage is—is *prajnā*;  
All the sage was, before he became a sage, *was prajnā*,  
Split into subject and object.

However, there is no *prajnā*,  
And there is no sage.  
There is not either the one or the other,  
Either both, or neither:  
Just a luminous absence.

But light is a concept of divided mind,  
And absence is absence of presence.  
Whatever they are not, whatever they are,  
Cannot be known by whatever they are  
Or by whatever they are not,  
For there is no knower to know anything,  
Nor any thing to be known.

## PART II

### SELF AND OTHER

Every sentient being, speaking as I, may say to his phenomenal self, 'Be still! and know that I am God!'

21. *The Big Joke*

## I

As LONG as there is a 'you' doing or not-doing anything, thinking or not-thinking, 'meditating' or 'not-meditating', *you* are no nearer home than the day *you* were 'born'.

However many years *you* may have been at it, and whatever *you* have understood or have not-understood, *you* have not yet started if there is a 'you' that is still in the saddle.

As long as *you* do anything as from a 'you', *you* are in 'bondage'.

Here the word *you* stands for any object that appears to act or not to act, that is any phenomenon as such. 'You' stands for any such object which believes that it acts volitionally as an autonomous entity, and is thereby bound by identification with a phenomenon.

Let us say it again: as long as there is a pseudo-entity apparently doing or not-doing anything, thinking or not-thinking, meditating or not-meditating, that phenomenon is no nearer home than the day it was apparently born.

However many years a phenomenon may have been at it, and whatever it has understood or not-understood, it has not yet started if there is a pseudo-entity that is still in the saddle.

As long as a phenomenon does anything *as from* a pseudo-entity, it is in 'bondage'.

The difference is between what you are and what you think you are but are not, 'bondage' being identification of the former with the latter.

Again: the difference is between This which every phenomenon is and That which no phenomenon is, 'bondage' being identification of the former with the latter.

That, in very simple language, is the pseudo-mystery, the so-called insoluble problem, the joke that made Lazarus Laugh.

## II

TREATING THIS matter in the first person singular, it becomes a question of what we mean when we say 'I'.

If in saying 'I' we speak as from a psycho-somatic phenomenon that believes itself to be an independent entity acting or not-acting autonomously as a result of its own volition, then no matter what we may know or ignore, what we may have practised or not-practised, we are well and truly in bondage.

If in saying 'I'—although we may speak as from a phenomenon that appears to act or not to act (as observed by other phenomena and by 'itself')—we do not regard that phenomenon as possessing of its own right and nature any autonomy or volition, and so is properly to be regarded not as 'I' but as 'it', then since such phenomenon is not 'in the saddle' I am not identified with it, and I am not in bondage.

In this latter case the word 'I' is subjective only, as the word 'Je' in French, and for the accusative (or objective) case the word 'me' is necessary, as is 'moi' in French, even after the verb 'to be', for 'I' have no objective quality whatever, and all that could be called 'me' can never in any circumstances have any subjective quality, so that what I am as 'I' is purely noumenal and what I appear to be as 'me' is exclusively phenomenal. So that in saying 'I', if we speak or act as from what we are—from impersonal noumenality, with the spontaneity that is called 'Tao', there is no longer any question of bondage, for there is *no longer any supposed entity to be bound*.

## III

THERE IS a further stage of fulfilment, in which complete reintegration takes place. Therein 'I' and 'it', 'I' and 'you', subject and object, lose all elements of difference. Of this stage only the fully integrated can be qualified to speak with authority, for herein no differentiation any longer is possible.

I am you, you are I, subject is object, and object subject, each is either and either is both, for phenomena are noumenon and noumenon is phenomena.

---

This is the end of the big joke, the final peal of laughter, for it, too, is so simple and obvious that only the blindfold should fail to see it, or could see it in any other manner.

Said as we say it, however that may be, it can never be true; said as the integrated say it, however that may be—even in the self-same words—it cannot be false: for what is neither false nor true cannot be false as it cannot be true. It is what it is—and whatever it be called, that it can never be.

PART III

NON-OBJECTIVE RELATION

I dream the Universe  
And all that I dream is I,  
I who am not.

I dream the Universe,  
And you perceive it.

*41. Thought as Action*

ACTION is a demonstration of thought.

Action, being the exterioration of thought,

Dualistic thought demonstrates as volitional action.

Action that is the exterioration of thought is volitional action. Such thought, and its demonstration in action, are effects of split-mind and they confirm bondage.

'Pure' thought is reflected in 'pure' action.

'Pure' thought (*wu nien*) and non-volitional action (*wu wei*) are directly noumenal. Their apparent difference is phenomenal.

## PART IV

### TIME

As long as one accepts 'time' tacitly as such  
he is dreaming a dream, not living a life.



### 61. *Definitions*

'*Passing-time*' implies sequential duration.

'*Time*' is a generic name for all forms of temporality including the measurement of motion in space.

*Duration* designates the essential aspect of all categories of temporality, mutable and immutable.

*Intemporality* and *eternity* seek to imply total absence of a time concept, as well as the concept of infinite or circular duration.

This terminology reveals (*a*) the vagueness with which temporal concepts are surrounded and (*b*) the fact that we are not capable of conceiving the total absence of time. This latter applies also to space, for 'infinity' implies unending continuity of space in a time context, as 'intemporality' and 'eternity' imply an unending continuity of time in a space context. It will appear that time is an interpretation of a measurement of space that is not within the limitations of sensory perception, so that the physical concept of space-time is justifiable also metaphysically.

## PART V

# ABSENCE

Each apparent individual may recognise that what he is can only be his absence as subject—as the total absence of his phenomenal subjectivity.

Is that not in fact the ultimate degree of understanding?

### 81. *The 'Tenth Man' Story*

YOU KNOW the quaint story of the ten monks travelling together from one Master to another, in search of the enlightenment they had failed to obtain? Crossing a river in flood, they were separated by the swift current, and when they reached the other shore, they reassembled and one counted the others to make sure that all were safely across. Alas, he was only able to count nine brothers.

Each in turn counted the others, and each could only count nine. As they were weeping and bewailing their drowned brother, a passing traveller on his way to the nearest town, asked what their trouble was and, having counted them, assured them that all ten were present. But each counted again, and the traveller being unable to persuade them, left them and went on his way.

Let us continue the story:

Then one monk went to the river-side in order to wash his tear-stained face. As he leant over a rock above a clear pool he started back and, rushing to his nine fellow-monks, he announced that he had found their poor drowned brother at the bottom of a pool. So each in turn went over to the rock in question and, leaning over, looked into the depths of the pool.

When all had seen their poor drowned brother, whom, owing to the depth of the pool, they could not reach, they celebrated a funeral service in his memory.

The passing traveller, returning from the town, asked them what they were doing and, when he was told, pointed out to them, and assured them, that since each had celebrated his own decease, and since all had celebrated the decease of each, one and all they were well and truly dead. On learning this each monk was instantly awakened, and ten fully enlightened monks returned to their monastery to the intense delight of their grandmotherly old Master.

*Note:* Each monk had found the answer to the *Open Secret*, which the Traveller had missed because he did not know that it was a secret.

The Tenth Man is the only man: there is no other.

88. *Who Are You?*

WHO ARE YOU?

*What I am is absence.*

Absence of what?

*Absence of myself.*

So *that* absence, that *kind* of absence, is what you are?

No. *What I am is total absence.*

What do you mean by total absence?

*Absence of the notion or cognition of absence-of-myself.*

Why so?

*Because cognition of my absence would imply presence of the cognition of my non-absence—which is not what-I-am.*

So that you are then still present?

*So that there would still remain 'myself' to be present or to be absent.*

What, then, is your total absence?

*Absence of the presence of absence-of-myself.*

And who is there to cognise that?

*There being nothing to be cognised, there cannot be a cogniser.*

And yet there is that cognition so expressed.

*There was a cognising, but no cogniser and no cognition cognised.*

*Can you cognise that?*

I can, but who, then, am I to do it?

*You are not at all, either. It is on account of total absence of absence that cognising can appear to occur. If there were any presence, even of absence, there could not be any cognising, or any phenomenon soever, for only out of absence as such can presence seem to be.*

So that the Absolute, Tao, Buddha-mind, Godhead, Suchness, etc. are one and all just absence?

*Each necessarily implies Absolute Absence, utter absence of absence as of presence, which is why anything at all can appear to exist.*



Concepts, then, all concepts are total absence? But are the conceivers of concepts total absence also?

*The conceivers of concepts are 'themselves' concepts, and nothing whatever but concepts.*

So that total absence implies total absence of conceptuality?  
*Which necessarily requires the total absence of a conceiver of concepts.*

Which I am?

*Which you are not.*

Which, as *what-I-am*, I neither am nor am not?

*Yes, because the conceived is just the conceiver, and the conceiver is just the conceived.*

Which objectively is no 'thing'?

*Because subjectively it is no 'thing'.*

So that is all that can be said?

*What need could there be to say anything? The obvious needs no saying.*

So that utter absence is obvious?

*The utter absence of the source of conceptuality which is what all appearance is, is surely obvious? Patent, evident, inevitable?*



And I am that?

*What you are can only be such and, being such, you are not.*

And such is all that 'things' are, or can be said to be?

*Is that not the final truth concerning what is neither true nor untrue, since no 'thing', true or untrue, has ever been or ever will be?*



*Note: Phenomenally regarded, what I am is totally absent as appearance, since it is noumenal, and an absence comports also the absence of the subject of the absent object. Therefore my only presence is as all objective phenomena as such.*

But, '*noumenally regarded*', what I am can neither be present nor absent, since nothing can have conceptual existence therein and so could not be

cognised as either. But since noumenon cannot manifest directly as absence, direct noumenal manifestation must necessarily appear to be positive—and then it is presence, not a sensorially perceptible presence such as that of objective phenomena, but an immanent presence, ubiquitous and intemporal, total and absolute; and what-I-am, though phenomenally absent, is nevertheless absolute Presence.

It follows that total phenomenal absence is absolute noumenal presence, which is 'what-you-are'. And what is termed 'enlightenment' therefore, is *living* as what-you-are.

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See also Contents. References are to the numbered sections. Certain terms such as noumenon and phenomena, subject and object, self and other, etc. which occur very frequently in the text will not be found in the Index. The aim of this Index is to enable readers to find a chapter in which they remember some technical term or other feature.

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*Some Reviews*

## THE TENTH MAN

The contents of the book are perhaps as enigmatic as the title. They consist of short dialogues and aphoristic meditations which are by no means easy reading; but which nevertheless deserve careful study. Perhaps the book should be more often on the knee than in the hand. The one fundamental thought which recurs throughout the book and its predecessor volumes, *All Else is Bondage* and *The Open Secret*, is best expressed in one of the short meditations contained in the latter volume.

What is the use of looking outside,  
All you will see is objects! Turn round and look within.  
Shall I then see subject instead?  
If you did you would be looking at an object.  
An object is such in whatever direction you look.  
Shall I not see myself?

You cannot see what is not there!

What, then, shall I see?

Perhaps you may see the absence of yourself,

Which is what is looking. It has been called "the Void." *Aryan Path*

... the author of this remarkable collection of aphorisms and dialogues stretches the mind of the reader till it begins to snap and he is ready to join Wei Wu Wei in his crusade "to attend our own funeral". *Vedanta Kerari*

*Reprinted 1971—xii + 234 pages, paper cover, HK\$30*

## POSTHUMOUS PIECES

... Wei Wu Wei has not left us. Happily his empirical self will continue to compose last works and his essential self never having been born can hardly die. His brilliant intuitions, however, once expressed are for ever embalmed in print.

That is not to say that his ideas will remain fossilised. Just as we can catch the idea of freedom from our fathers, Wei Wu Wei's words can spring to life in our minds. Many of us owe a great deal to the author. His inspirations have often been like sparks flashing from the wheels of a great express; the cause of uncontrollable fires, all consuming, and capable of transmuting even ignorance into understanding.

*The Middle Way*

Here is another fine book by a noted writer on a difficult subject—Zen.

According to the author these pieces are called Posthumous, "Not because I am dead; Unborn that is forever impossible, but because they are, which is inevitable. They are tombstones, a record of living intuitions which, embalmed in relative terminology are well and truly dead."

This is a difficult book, one to be mulled over and relished. Like most such literature it initially reads like a piece of Lewis Carolian nonsense that only yields to profundity when meditated over in the silence. The nonsense of Wei Wu Wei is the sense of the infinite.

*Sunday Standard, Bombay*

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