

# Universal Suffering

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**Translator’s Note:** After seeing a humble comrade putting a note on a Tsuji Jun piece, I was inspired to follow suit. This is an amateur translation. I put months of effort into making it as easy a read as possible but it is a decently heady philosophy piece so I apologise if some passages are a little funky. All translated quotes in English from languages other than Japanese were found by me. If a quote is not in English I either couldn’t find an English translation or was not comfortable doing it myself. I humbly encourage any interested to sharpen this piece up further, and will provide source material in the source portion of the Anarchist Library post. Much Love!

## 1.

In my humble piece “The Problem of Freedom in Zen” (“Thought” present year [1964], January) I left aside several points of discussion that I would like to think over. My piece proposes a perspective that is yet to be completed.

“Freedom is something of different dimensions, heterogenous, ‘the freedom of becoming master over everything’ and ‘becoming one’s own master’. ...The above mentioned, by-and large, mutually contradict each other; ‘becoming master over everything’ as intelligence and action and ‘becoming one’s own master’ as understanding and practice; these original ideas, in more modern form, take the shape of ‘ideas in action’ or ‘the inseparability of the going phase (☒) and the returning phase (☒)’.

However this is an exceedingly broad composition comprising this problem. By chance, this sketch resembles closely the following summary of the Kyoto Buddhist Conference Meeting Senmon Committee’s compilation (☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒) “Buddhist Life Reader”’s (☒☒☒☒) “Buddhist and Modern Living” (☒☒☒☒☒) section (of which I am not a contributor).

“From Buddhist knowledge to seek for foundational countermeasures to modern life’s greatest fault, that of “commodification”; how it came to happen, to determine insight from the science of power, and to reconstruct those mechanisms. When it comes to that reconstruction, it seems that the truth of liberty lies with the fact that people must completely establish themselves as the protagonist of their own lives. There is a Zen saying that goes ‘becoming master over everything’ that means, only after one bases their practice on knowledge, can one then express the true value of it.”

This is an even more simplified form; the Buddhist conference’s social practice is outlined on a single part of a page; however this problem is not dealt with so easily. At the point of the establishment of this new society, both “becoming one’s own protagonist” and “becoming master over everything” are understood to be one thing within the “truth of liberty.” Still however, these two things as one, from understanding it to it taking form, whether or not it is desirable, and whether or not it is feasible still, has not become clear.

Comment. “Speaking of this “original one”(☒☒☒), and as far as attaining agreement within it; there are intricate contradictions in the real world within this “original one” that are not unified, aren’t they? Such is what I think.” (From a private letter from Professor of Waseda University, Roshi Gen’ichi (☒☒))

## 2.

People “become their own protagonist” via, “The life-process of society, which is based on the process of material production, does not strip off its mystical veil until it is treated as production by freely associated men, and is consciously regulated by them in accordance with a settled plan.”<sup>1</sup> This is to be referred to as the situation regarding history taking form, for “becoming master over everything”, this kind of social-revolutionary praxis sees to “create hell karma” (Rinzai), concerning the prajna of empty wisdom it is the wonder of non-creation. For the former, the wage-laborer, liberty to them is to become conscious of and then to reject the social reality of their class as being objectified for commodities and to try regain their autonomy via implementing a communally based praxis; the latter is that of a master of and one and a half divine nature, and liberty is unconditionally independent of circumstances. Dogen asserts the root of Tiantong Rujing that “A lifetime of studying the great matter does not end”<sup>2</sup> is the “body-mind being shed, shedding body-mind”’s great unhinderedness continually entering nirvana. Now when it comes to finishing a lifetime of study of the great matter, it signifies the movements independent of circumstances of a Zen master, as well as that of the working masses’ social revolutionary praxis of “becoming master of oneself”, though in unrelated fields and perspectives, as already completely finished things. In this case, Dogen recites Rujing’s instructions as follows:

“Life in the village does not disturb the city. Ministers near the center do not disturb the king. By simply sitting among the deep mountain valleys, the one and a half is received, one’s source is not severed, nor can be.” (Kenzokuki) (XXXX)

Both “becoming one’s own protagonist” is the “truth of liberty” and “becoming master over everything” is the “truth of liberty”, as things are then, neither one is either able to resolve each other, nor able to unify; liberty is something that is heterogeneous. For the sake of rescuing an understanding of this thing, let us look at the “Buddhist Social Ideals” (XXXXX) chapter of “Living Reader” (XXXX):

“... of a pure society... that “purity” has two aspects to it. Namely, the two aspects are, principally, the material aspect, of which there must be no lacking (Purity Of The World (XXXXX)) and, the absence of impurity of that material being used by the aspect of people’s minds (Purity Of All Beings In The World (XXXXXX)). These societal ideals express that such a society based around both aspects of matter and mind is unable to be perfected. If the people simply living their lives do not have the correct frame of mind, as well as readily established and perfectly equipped physical institutions, then a praiseworthy society will not come about. However not, because if the residing people’s frame of mind are praiseworthy, it seems that the mental and physical aspects still appear, despite scrupulous institutions and organisations not being made available for them. There is a Buddhist teaching of the Vimalakirti Sutra, ‘a pure mind leads to a pure land.’”

This deepening passage as well suffers from “Reader”-esque limitations as a slightly hasty explanation and summary. Let us look to supplement what portions were left out. The explanation for this slightly hasty leap can be seen in the summarisation of the relational process of developing to completeness the two senses of Purity Of The World (physical circumstances in a society) and the Purity Of All Living Beings In The World regarding society and both sides of matter and mind, by means of the “Vimalakirti Sutra, Buddha’s Kingdom”’s “the pure mind leads precisely to the pure land” being elevated. To explain the “Treatise on the Mahaprajnaparamita”, the Buddha has a name, (literally) “Wordly Solution” (XXX), which signifies two things, namely, knowledge of the worlds of sentient beings and non-sentient beings, and of the ultimate reality

(空) of the world, “knowing purity as well as indestructibility become one as empty-space. This is to know and become the name of the world.”<sup>3</sup> This case of the use of language around “purity” exceeding discrimination between clean/unclean (delusion) is known from the teachings where it is readily repeated, “there is no permanence and there is no impermanence...there is no leaving and there is no not-leaving, this likeness of aspects is too without writing.” The meaning of the two-worlds-purity is not the commonplace one, nor is it a meaning that can be attained over the course of someone’s career. The beginning gatha of this “treatise” attends to the boundaries of prajna saying, “The Buddha’s explanation of the concept that all things and phenomena reflect the truth (真) completely destroys the forked road of existence or nonexistence.” The “Vimalakirti Sutra” too is not different in this respect. Because “the pure mind leads precisely to the pure land” is neither an idealistic attainment of something, nor is it the fruit of a so-called historical development. The Buddha addresses Sariputra’s commonplace doubt, and from this explanation, he (Sariputra) comes to know. [Buddha] says “Sariputra, one’s this-land (Saha/世) is pure. Thus thou do not see.” Then by means of metaphor; “the sun and moon is by no means impure, yet a blind person does not see it.” Here again the distinction of the explainer; “Thou, in your heart there is rise and fall, the Buddha-Wisdom sees no such impurity in this-land.” Yet Sariputra still objects, saying “I see in this world hills and pits, brambles, gravel, mountains of earth and stone full of filth and evil.” Namely, that the reality of the world is that it is barren and yet decaying further to absurdity. Sengzhaos’s (僧肇) “Commentary on the Vimalakirti Sutra” (《维摩诘经疏》) provides a near-identical commentary to “Abiding in the pure mind, leads to the Buddha’s pure land”, it being “《维摩诘经疏》,《维摩诘经疏》” Vol.1). Being inseparable, the pair relationship of the master and companion logically occurs simultaneously, which time-wise are co-arising. “What is referred to as the reason is ‘the true meaning of the purity of our mind is that the historical reality of the world, over time, changes peacefully into or rather, is originally the space of the pure land.’”<sup>4</sup> Regarding the pure minds of all sentient beings, the root standpoint of the Vimalakirti Sutra is that both the purity of all beings in the world and the purity of the world perfect themselves at the same time. In the same way with “liberty” and “unhinderedness”, the enlightened person’s “purity” is their independent movements regardless of circumstances. That is rather, there is an aspect of “liberty” and “unhinderedness” that has a different expression; regarding our projection (Entwurf) of societal existence, how the relation between person and thing and the relation between person and person is mediated; how the relation between person and person and the relation between person and thing is mediated; does not add up to an agenda for the molding and putting into place a new societal system and formation in a historical period of cultivating society. Such a dimension, domain, step is still not progressing. There is a similar circumstance in the “Faith-Mind Inscription” (《信心铭》) which says “If a single mind does not arise, the 10,000 dharmas are blameless.” In the quote “When one becomes master over everything, they establish their true authority” the terms “everywhere” and “establishing-authority” are used to demonstrate — “since a single mind already does not exist, liberation is in everything” — though prajna has a mysterious effect on one’s state of mind, it is not an objective praxis regarding a social revolution. As was seen in the “Vimalakirti Sutra”, prajna’s balance is not between how one arrives to how one ought to be and how to arrive to how a society’s material environment ought to be. The problem lies with how to be, not what to do.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, what we call “truth” (真) is not some mere distinction on the borderline between truth/delusion and good/evil (真善). At present the purity of the world is the material environment being reflected in the bodhisattva’s insight of the transitive emptiness of the two

attachments of self and dharma — as for the previously mentioned “if one mind does not arise” and “the 10,000 dharmas are blameless”, it is not something that constitutes a sequence of cause and effect over time. — Then, out of the life of the Zen master, one’s person interweaves with one’s mundane, personal, material environment; this does not create a historical praxis leading to the “realm of freedom” (Marx, Engels), leading the masses of people to adopt a behavior of “becoming master over oneself”. Founder of Eigenji temple, Jakushitsu Genko (1290–1367) in his last cautionary testament (㊦), said “In order to have your spirit overflow with joy... one must only recite the common Surangama holy mantra. The period thereafter, the viceroy relieves his grip and is sent back to his garden retreat (㊦), on grant of the Takano elder, everyone scatters and leaves.” indicating that if the Zen master as well as the disciple are made to understand the purity of the world in their physical environment, then the world as one of instruments (㊦), together with the death of the master, are demolished. “Therefore, all things stand on the root which is baseless” (Vimalakirti Sutra) — a distinction is made between the so-called “each person’s freedom becoming the 10’000 people’s freedom” and the exploitationless classless “realm of freedom”; the act of creating the Buddha-land out of the existing society with it’s terrible affair of restriction from the top and from the center, and the Zen master follows according to the way, being made to use the essential system. Regarding the separation between the two concerning dimension, principle, and method, “drawing a line” of distinction across the same plane can not be done. The act of creating the Buddha Land allowed free people under the mysterious effect to escape from the restrictions of their “karma”, whereas a social revolution is the secular folk’s samsaric transmigration of the world. “Without surpassing the history of the world half way, the so-called karma of the world cannot help but be unchanged from beginning to end.”<sup>6</sup>

A pure heart (㊦) creates the Buddha Land and realises all sentient beings. (Vimalakirti Sutra, Bodhisattva section, number 4) A pure heart is one mind (㊦), pure and unadulterated (㊦). In the emptiness of self clinging and dharma clinging (㊦). The “60 Scroll Avatamsaka Sutra” (Scroll 33, The Practice of Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, #31) explains the 10 types of a pure-heart, the basic tone of which is not transformation. There is a Zen saying related to unadulterated wholeheartedness, if “the whole land of the Ganges is swallowed, it won’t swallow me”<sup>7</sup>, even if the cognitive objects (㊦) conform to “the sound of raindrops in the empty hall” (㊦), a person develops to become “everywhere one’s own master” (㊦). Before attachment’s origin, there is wisdom in the emptiness of cognitive objects and people — “If you listen to the mindless person, you will forever be on the eaves of Yushui (㊦)” (Dogen)- the human realm becomes a place free from obstacles and without inherent nature, an unproduced (㊦) mind’s freedom is volitional, enlightened, and in the sentimental lives the demerit of attachment. Here we can see that emptiness (sunyata/㊦) = all existing things, formed and formless, lacking intrinsic nature (self is empty, the self’s place is empty) = equality = freedom from obstacles (㊦) = freedom (㊦) = mutual compatibility (㊦) = the great compassion of many aspects (㊦). So that an understanding based on experience (㊦) or an active intuition is seeing the world, a Buddha Realm or The Lotus Treasure World (㊦) is creating the world. Such as well, it seems that the conception of Marx’s “Fully developed Naturalism = Humanism; Fully developed Humanism = Naturalism”<sup>8</sup> (vollendeter Naturalismus = Humanismus; vollendeter Humanismus = Naturalismus) or the point of view of his “human society or societal humanity” (die menschliche Gesellschaft oder die gesellschaftliche Menschheit)<sup>9</sup> are clearly not the same in principle as well as method. Marx’s logic is consequently that proletarian class struggle is taken as the mediation of a homocentric historical creation. Furthermore, buddhist “equality” (㊦) from the unseparated subject and object (㊦), matter and

mind as one (☒☒☒) to the nature of all sentient beings (☒☒) = the metaphysical equality of the dimension of the buddha nature, and in addition, it is the closed society of the sangha's "equality of the four (hindu) castes (☒☒☒); if it is possible to rephrase it, we must hold in our minds that the negation of class distinctions by means of real-equality (☒☒☒☒) is not implied by the demand of "equality"'s (☒) logic and morals.

### 3.

We can, up to now, circle the problem at issue in regards to the perspective of "purity of the world" and "everywhere one's own master", tying together both conventional knowledge and historical reality of place, to hopefully evoke what might not be evident; however, in my view, this isn't an insignificant problem. With regards to the two groups of conditions/knowledge; sunyata – non-duality – freedom from obstacles- freedom – non-objection (☒) – unity – the middle way; and the other of the reality of international, intranational, and class antagonism and strife, there is a commonality in the fact that the former is bound by self-attachment and egoistic "karma" and the latter is caused by this binding, and it seems that in order to transcend (☒) them, this must be highlighted. We thus arrive at the necessity of a thorough examination into the metaphysical basis of the matter of human existence – that within the nation, class distinctions are ignored- which inevitably will lead to critique and appeals. By means of equalising fundamental and transcendental wisdom, a fair criticism/appeal can be considered with regards to these antagonisms which have little common ground.

Incidentally, between national independence or people's liberation struggles, both do not escape from the bindings of group egoism and its prescriptions; the criticism being that both sides go to war but are non-autonomous via their collective power, that autonomy being "everywhere becoming one's own master", as both sides are exploited by the hierarchical ruling statuses of their groups; it seems this is one thing of significance they can agree on. The present system of government lives peacefully in fact because of this refusal to struggle against the ruling class itself. The basis for criticism of people's existence of this false and untrue outlook (☒☒☒☒) reveals that deviating, factionalist nature, either in spite of or in consequence of the depth of severity, or in spite of or in consequence of justice and fairness. A critic's awareness of fairness must not exclude the social reality of favoritism. Of this, the question lies with how the reality/function/tendency of favoritism of this factionalist nature exists. If it is possible to say regarding the false and untrue nature of group egoism, its role is either in preventing or prompting national, people's, or mankind's liberation. An impartial standpoint with regards to the realities for class-based society does not exist. Supposing that fundamental wisdom judges history, if the viewpoint of capitalist logic is false and untrue, moreover that it refutes totally, then it is actually the social outlook of a hermit, and capitalist logic must not affirm anything.<sup>10</sup> Capitalist logic has one pretext for "esteem", religion, not only the coercive exploitative kind but also the genuine. With regards to this relation, "surpassing the seat of history" or some such thing does not exist in reality. It is undeniably clear that "surpassing the viewpoint of history", in class based society as a "super-historical viewpoint", deeply penetrates into the formation of that viewpoint and concurrently, the center of history, and realises the present regime's approval of that societal function. In this case, in J.P. Sartre's essay "The Ghost of Stalin" he discusses the point of a thinker's attitude with regards to the Hungary incident, becoming a kind of suggestion.

“Even for the sake of understanding, to participate in the movement to establish socialism, if one is not called to adopt that purpose, then certainly it is something of a point of privilege. In a word, despite the criticism regarding the making of the establishment of socialism, the reason is to evaluate that purpose of prestige, its establishment apart from the entirety of business, and that to negate it, makes light of this refusal. Such privilege becomes an explanation of another type of privilege. In other words — in the east and the west — only people participating in the socialist movement are able to criticise it and in fact should be the ones to criticise it.”

It seems that this opinion of Sartre’s serves as an instance of a material evolution of an attained position.

And yet there is still a problem here.

#### 4.

Sartre’s claim on the way thinkers regard the Hungary incident’s reality might be an appropriate critique, but does a prevailing view of such a thing even exist? (e.g. from the standpoint of “objectivity” merlot and ponte are the same”) It seems to be an overstatement that not participating in the socialist movement means that one’s criticisms are without qualification. If it is possible for this writing to carry out this restriction, then the result would be everybody in the socialist movement would be sluggish, and the way to be allowed to participate would be shut off, right? It is however this assertive doubt and/or criticism that allows the chance for this movement to combine from. I think it should go without saying that the criticism of people who are not involved in the socialist movement is entirely worthless. (the preceding section regarding a personal opinion of a super-historical critique will probably be revised.) From the standpoint of a socialist the words of Christ and Shinran are of the hearts of a paragon, probably not even trying to make a spirit of nourishment. Dr. Risaku Mutai (XXXX) sees existentialism to fracture the basis of the humanising function of the socialist movement. Social reform is not only not directly cooperative, rather it seems to prevent the bestowal of such a reform with depth and delicacy, resulting in a paradoxical relation being held. It seems even from a deep study of nihilism there is a revolutionary spirit. It is necessary for a reform group to try to have such an “open mind”.

Comment: This is especially not related to the personal; by means of delving into our own internal thoughts, we become self aware of an internal foundation of inner authority, also unyielding footing to an outer authority. This point does not touch the self-questioning within the concluding part’s foreword of my humble piece “Buddhist War Experiences”, which is still insufficient.

The existence of our societal freedom is taking form as both a structural and an operative relation concurrently, with the external/macroscopic nature of the problem as well as its internal/microscopic nature. Firstly, “becoming one’s own master” is personal and is essential to the microscopic world’s natural beauty, where “becoming master over everything” freedom is the collective praxis of the macroscopic world of matter. People’s reality consists of these two types of dimensional branches, as the macroscopic horizontal versus the microscopic vertical, though these two branches are also tied together, as mutually checking. In the socialist movement there is constantly occurring friction — from communism v. anarchism, to sectionalism, individual worship, authoritarianism, and so on — and most of the people involved know that this is not by any means simply a matter of a difference of opinion. The difficult adjustment of opinions



are many, that sustains a depth of awareness of not just those involved experience-system of difference; also the facts as a mutually interactive, reciprocity of difficult characteristics come together with the habitual body of facts; both this fact and the indivisibility of form result in taking down deeply rooted individual or collective egotism and egoism. Regarding this reality of mutual identification and criticism, it seems to be repeating the name of humanism, for example proletarian humanism. For the health and growth of the movement, it is a necessary and natural process. Furthermore, in the case of criticising both the scientific and the humanistic, using such criticism to gauge both as well, makes the disappearance of both side's egotism/egoism not a rare thing. Identifying a gauge to criticise the other party of egoism, cannot but by chance disclose oneself's egoism's unconscious camouflaged projection in another. The significance of this reality lays bare the conflict of the subject's restrictive nature being equal to a non-autonomous nature. Let it be seen that an existent ego is there in the basis of humanism. Let it be seen that a closed felt nature does not hold, from the non-base reality of the world to its beginning. That origin of the non-base is not from its creation, it is half-created; that freedom is not from such a non-base, and it seems it is an existent freedom (for instance, Sartre's nothing as freedom). Jakob Böhme (1575–1624) writes as such on free will. "Der frei Wille ist aus keinem Anfange, auch aus keinem Grunden nichts gefasst, oder durch etwas geformet ... Sein rechter Urstand ist im Nichts."<sup>11</sup>

A socialist activist should thoroughly deepen one's self questioning if possible with regards to egotism and egoism; along the lines of Shinran's "Speaking on a Gutaku's Anguish" one can see such a severe self-reflection that is not intended to undermine oneself. And yet, such a way of thinking and self introspection is not an abandonment or renouncing of the socialist movement<sup>12</sup>, but rather, to facilitate the necessary restoration of it. The socialist movement in the west has its origin in christianity, and christianity is not some bygone affair; isn't it necessary to restore our grasp of the root of our societal existence?<sup>13</sup> And now, this essay is just a beginning to express this conception and hope to make it clear. I would like to ponder over the mingling of both people's horizontal dimension with "becoming one's own master" and the vertical dimension with "becoming master over anything" with egotism/egoism as an inverse mediation. (unfinished manuscript January 27<sup>th</sup>)

## **Appendices:**

1. The title "Universal Suffering" refers to the introduction of Marx's "Hegel's Critique of Philosophy of Right", in which it speaks of the proletariat's "universal suffering" (universelles leiden); There is also an aspect of the doctrine of the Four Noble Truths that speak of "universal suffering" so to speak, and both pieces instruct on that. In the late Dr. Sakamoto Seichi's "Introduction to Zen Studies" he touches on scientific socialism, in that a "study of social law" based on social reform "at the same time liquidates and considers [people's] life's anxiety as well as suffering", "confuse[s] livelihood anxiety and life anxiety" and can absolutely be "an unknowingly naive irresponsible theory of optimism that serves as an insufficient cover for people's real existence." ("Zen Culture" #30–31, page 62–3) — I too in past years thought over such things. — As far as I can tell, the Sakamoto theory, between Zen and religion, is correct. As far as I can tell, marxism is not relevant here. When Marx says "universal suffering" it is that "livelihood anxiety" is not a common sense verdict of the world. Looking from the angle of Marx's remolding into a perfect populace, it can be

called “liquidation of livelihood anxiety”, but in the end, Marxism is not a social theory of welfare. Sakamoto’s theory grasps Marx’s as a category of materialism. However Marx’s materialist philosophy attempts to surmount materialist ideology.

2. This paper did not reach an expansion on the meaning of “purity of the world” as spoken in the “Buddhist Life Reader”. I also did not arrive at an answer to the honorable professors’ identification at Waseda University.
3. This humble argument of mine, “Universal Suffering”, did not change the theme of “The Problem of Freedom in Zen” but rather was a continuation of and refining of it. It is planned to be published in “Thought” magazine this coming autumn.

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