

Intellectuals and Zen

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1968

1.

The Buddha renounced his worldly circumstance of birth as well as the maintenance of that lifestyle. He also exhorted the now world-renowned teaching of attaining perfect enlightenment by means of criticism and purification. There are individuals called “friends who lead one to Buddhism by means of teaching” (kaylana-mitra) and the Buddha is seen as the epitome of this by intellectuals. According to intellectuals, the renunciation of his social position and its constraints on thought and ways of life allowed him to alter his views of self and society, remaking and purifying it down to its base point, discovering true reality (眞) in wisdom (prajna).

Hisamatsu Shin'ichi and Nishitani Kenji, 2 Phd's representing the FAS Zen Institute, are the epitome of modern intellectual organizations. On the 8th of April, 1963, this organization published “An Appeal for an Ethic of All Mankind”, pointing out the origin of “egoism” in groups ready to pounce during times of nations being at war, ethnic conflicts, and people's liberation struggles and besides, and of these groups the presence of morally and intellectually balanced persons (zenjin), using zenjin like ethics zenjinly for zenjin purposes to establish zenjin like political systems, demanding all of these groups to “look at your feet”¹. This appeal addresses the most important issues of the day, among them, the harsh realities of the Sino-Soviet split, the American invasion of Vietnam, and the USSR's invasion of Czechoslovakia, with no reconciliation in sight. However, the philosopher Mr. Yanagida Kenjuuro has a criticism of this declaration. (“Zen and its Criticisms” published by Sobunsha, in the collection Criticism of Modern Religion). To put it very simply, it is a negative criticism of the effectiveness of FAS methods to oppose modern evils. “The present society's class system must be immediately left behind, that is, class egoism must be gotten rid of, furthermore, this utopian socialism is just that, a utopian fantasy.” (Cited in the text, page 52)

However, this does not take into consideration the point of view of the practice of the Bodhisattva's path on the existence-or-nonexistence-of-all-shapes-and-sizes' (眞々々) effects. The base of the Bodhisattva vow is the unmixed, fundamental, firm matter of life, “cause and non-cause, what is the purpose of arguing it?”² In regards to this, the point of Yanagida's criticism seems to be a little off the mark; this is probably the result of asking for the impossible. Be that as it may, in this way doesn't this communist philosopher seem to assert a process of Zen ethics criticism, depending on circumstances? He seems to have the perspective of “the quick establishment of

political institutions” by means of a Zen social ethic (likewise the chanting of Buddhist hymns (☒☒)). Reaching the mark (the treasure place☒☒) and the middle mark (the phantom city ☒☒) and its logic of a series of discontinuities seems to not be conceived of in this case.

2.

For another viewpoint, let us recall the Russian-speaking Intelligentsia. The word “intelligentsia” was propagated by the 1860’s author P.D. Boborykin over a 19-20 year period in Russia specifying active intellectual groups of the society’s upper/middle classes, attempting to become revolutionary groups in order to repudiate the existing political institutions by means of inspiring class consciousness. The Decembrists and the Narodniks are an example of this. The former being a secret society and its sympathizers that led a revolt on December 14th, 1825, the day of Nikolas I’s enthronement ceremony, in the capital city of St. Petersburg. It was mostly young aristocrats and officers trying to apply French Revolutionary theory in Russia; returning in failure, the five ringleaders were executed, the others exiled to Siberia. Without destroying anything or establishing anything. However, what remained behind was the revolutionary intelligentsia continuing to encourage the “Dekabrist myth.” The Narodniks were an attempt by the intellectual class, to make use of the chance afforded by the 1861 order to emancipate the serfs; and because peasant resistance flourished in that time, started the “V Narod” (To the People) peasant revolution in order to overthrow the imperial government. Bakunin, Gersten and Lavrov were the leaders. Bakunin, originally a member of the landed nobility, while in a stay in Paris, was deeply influenced by his acquaintance with Proudhon and Marx. This was the period when Marx published “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844” “Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right”, and the joint work with Hegel “The German Ideology.” In 1848 “The Communist Manifesto” was published and Bakunin and Marx bid farewell and left Paris. Marx also originated from the bourgeois, intellectual class, plotting revolution. The intelligentsia have the following peculiar characteristics:

- a. Coming from the upper/middle societal stratum.
- b. Attempt to reject one’s ways of thinking and living within this societal stratum.
- c. To aim to change the established order.
- d. In such a way that at least the proletariat are not needy.
- e. And in such a way that the middle men must become aware of the constant recurrence of the danger of their class ethos and ideology, and must necessarily struggle against that temptation in order to remain self-conscious. (Of these conditions it was a time of an excessive inferiority complex of the intelligentsia, resulting in an idolization of the proletariat.)

Incidentally, an ideal type of close examination of this kind of the intelligentsia’s fate and their task’s structural logic, titled “Intellectuals”, was published in previous years when Sartre was visiting Japan. Accordingly, to modern scholars, thinkers, authors, and religious leaders of the masses, there is not much that hasn’t already been said about this man’s “Intellectuals”. Sartre’s “Intellectuals”’s features’ appear to be:

- a. Intellectuals were torn to pieces because they were full of contradictions, were torn to pieces because they are witness to and were born from a society full of contradictions.
- b. They are isolated (☒☒). From whom, they do not accept any proxy (☒☒☒). Are increasingly hostile towards the establishment, regarding it with suspicion and as a snake in one's bosom. From the manual laborer class those who are of the lonely, moderate and petit-bourgeois backgrounds are regarded with suspicion. Those who are specialists are considered a nuisance when intervening in problems outside of their scope of expertise. They are one who is a perpetually banished isolated person (☒☒☒). Their fates (☒☒) consequently, are of those who are truly able to get involved, and at the same time, in self denial are able to get involved through the manual laborer class. Now intellectuals have a cursed glory.
- c. They consistently forget to mercilessly self-criticize, will stop being a contesteer at the very moment of going against themselves, they fall down in their original homes, completely ceasing to be an intellectual. — In this way, intellectuals are being torn to shreds by becoming full of contradictions, in opposition to both self and society, repeatedly becoming witness to society's contradictory nature being torn to shreds. Not so are so-called intellectuals called specialized technicians.

3.

Marx and Sartre are identical on the subject of the restoration of the manual laborer meditating for their goods, working hours and production of relative and absolute surplus value, as well as from the alienation of the capitalist private ownership of the means of production and distribution.

Comment. To address the problem of people's alienation, we may assume that a condition of human nature is to not be alienated, but Feuerbach goes against this, existential philosophy carries a retreat from the criticism "Orthodox Marxism" has. However, I consider this orthodox opinion to flatten and reduce Marx to mere an economic critic. A person finds the disproof of this orthodox opinion by looking out from the middle of the field, i.e not just works like "The Communist Manifesto", "Critique of the Gotha Programme", "Critique of Political Economy", as well as "Das Kapital".

I believe people see the existential horizontal dimension together with the vertical dimension with regards to this societal existential self-alienation. With regards to the vertical axis of people's self alienation, within the teachings of Christ, a person's freedom, namely sin, is all abandoned in the name of God (Verlassenheit), while in Buddhist teachings, it is that we depart from the arrogant distinction in the self's true reality (the inseparability between a subject's intrinsic nature and non-nature) while mired in samsara. Hints concerning this problem come flying from P. Tillich's "Systematic Theology, II" as well as E. Fromm and Marx's "Concept of Man".

Comment. An introspective understanding of samsaric life's "all-dukkha" (☒☒☒) is the above mentioned perspective regarding Marx's so-called "universal suffering" (universelles Leiden) and to cross swords with mathematics, I borrow the technical term of "origin" regarding the mortal path (☒☒☒) as humanism because I would like to create a provisional term, "origin humanism." Please reference my humble book "Zen and Contemporary Philosophy" (☒☒☒☒☒☒) (published by Tokuma Shoten). Please also reference my humble argument, "Universal Suffering" (☒☒☒☒☒), the 55th part of "Zen Studies Investigation" (☒☒☒☒☒).

To the FAS intellectuals' logic and ethics, along with sartre-esque intellectuals' logic and ethics, regarding the intelligentsia of the Narodniks, it is seen, in many cases, that the rural village opposes the city, or the farm worker opposes the intellectual who hold the former in conscious indebtedness. Indeed they are different things, mutually there isn't any relation, it must surely be thought. To that degree as well as Yanagida's criticism of the points of FAS Zen, seem to hold true. This closely resembled circumstance is perhaps seen in Eugen Herrigel's "Zen in the Art of Archer", in political evils such as Auschwitz, and even in between them. Nevertheless, with regards to the place of "origin humanism", isn't it not possible that it could be maintained as a point of contact for either side in some way for the time being? Isn't it not so that that point of contact must eventually be formed in Sunya Anarchist Communism?

Comment: With regard to SAC, please reference my humble work "The Problems of Buddhist Socialism in Japan" (printed in "Japanese Religions" vol. 5 No.4 by the Doshisha University's theology department NCC Institute of Religion)

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