

The Self as the Personal Scapegoat of Chinese and Japanese Buddhism:

A Comparative Analysis and Treatise on the

Universal Manifestation of the Christ Figure

The specific flavor of narrativity so often attributed to the self within the typical Westerner's reflective understanding of personhood can be traced back to the Judeo-Christian concept of the soul,¹ being some ethereal substance responsible for the *prima facie* enduring² quality of contiguous conscious experiences, that is nowhere to be found upon meditative deliberation in the ancient Eastern tradition of Buddhist philosophy. Instead of solidifying one's sense of soul through the phenomenology of prayer,³ or atheistically confirming one's sense of corporeal narrative personhood through self-referential internal dialogue, the Buddhist metaphysician⁴ aims to eradicate their sense of self-distinction, for they see its cause to be desire and its effect to be selfish action, which is the root of all unwholesomeness in the cosmos. In the following paper, I aim to enumerate my position on the scapegoat construct of religious mythos and the central role it plays in both Chinese and Japanese variations of Buddhist metaphysics and ritual⁵ practice, as well as the Western formulation of the Christ figure.

¹ The Judeo-Christian concept of the soul is not the only framework through which a metaphysically distinct spiritual substance responsible for one's sustained numerical identity can be conceived of, but it is the most common framework at least within the West more broadly. For a fascinating and unique African formulation of the *soul*, specifically that of the Akan tribe, read *The concept of mind with particular reference to the language and thought of the Akans* by Kwasi Wiredu, as well as *The Akan Concept of the Soul* by Sam K. Akesson.

² As opposed to perduring, where every contiguous conscious experience is qualified as a new self.

³ It is crucial here to note that prayer is a common practice within Buddhism as well as Christianity, only Buddhism forgoes the notion of a distinct *soul* that prays. Other Eastern traditions that do not hold the Doctrine of No-Self, such as Daoism, Confucianism, and Shinto, engage in forms of prayer nearly identical to the Christian practice, aside from their often polytheistic *pleroma*.

⁴ My use of the term metaphysician in this paper is very inclusive, as anyone who ponders and acts upon an ultimate understanding of the self, from the child to the practiced elder, could be properly considered a *metaphysician*.

⁵ Ritual is best defined as a specific and usually repeated complex quasi-language of paradigmatic words and actions related to an ultimately meaningful system of symbols (Dr. Dippmann).

I first encountered the scapegoat construct during a lecture delivered by Dr. Jeffrey Dippmann in the Chinese and Japanese Religions class he taught this winter, and it immediately became my favorite subject we had covered throughout the quarter. Originating in the Old Testament of the Bible, the term *scapegoat* can be found in Leviticus 16. This chapter recounts the ritual sacrifice Yahweh commands the Israelites to perform, with the dualistic goal of atoning for the sins of Aaron's sons, as well as the collective sins of the Israelites in general. Along with the slaying of a bull to account for Aaron and his family's sin specifically, two goats were acquired from the village and had lots cast to determine their fates. The first goat, along with the bull, was to be sacrificed⁶ to Yahweh as a sin offering, while the second goat is brought before the Israelites and imbued with "all [their] wickedness and rebellion" through the placing of Aaron's hands on its living head. The goat then "carr[ies] on itself all their sins to a remote place; and the man shall release it in the wilderness." All persons involved with the sacrifice, especially the practitioner appointed to release the scapegoat into the wild, are then divinely required to ablute themselves and their clothes to remove any remaining impurity (Leviticus 16.6-28).

This chapter of Leviticus serves as the earliest Biblical symbol of the Christ,⁷ the scapegoat construct of the New Testament that has remained the focal point of all Christian atonement ritual since his simultaneous sacrifice and departure from society replaced the Old Testament model of repetitive eye for an eye blood repentance. Crucial to the Christ figure is its dualistic representation of both Levitical goats, having his blood spilled to appease his retributive father, and being singled out, denuded, and eventually paraded out of the very world whose sins he painstakingly carried on his serrated back. Through the sacrifice and consequent banishment

⁶ This specific form of Old Testament sacrifice involved blood rituals, where the blood of the slain animals was ceremoniously sprinkled on holy devices such as the atonement cover and the alter (Leviticus 16, verses 15-20).

⁷ At least directly relating to Christ's sacrifice.

of his flesh, corporeal self, or vector of desire, impurity was dissolved, and his higher self was interplanarily⁸ realized.⁹ This picture of transcendence central to the Christ figure is present in the Buddhist practice of meditation, only the higher self that is realized in the process of meditation is no self at all. It is rather universal consciousness or pure awareness absent of content¹⁰ that the Buddhist idealizes in their ritual banishment of the narrative self,¹¹ as opposed to the transcendent¹² soul the Christian aims for in prayer. The specific element of self being scapegoated in the phenomenology of prayer is qualified as the lustful, greedy, and uncompassionate sector of the person, usually a segment within the tri-part division of soul traceable in the Western tradition all the way back to Plato, and aggrandized by the authors of the New Testament. Within Buddhist mythology, metaphysics, and ritual, the entire locus of conceptualized experience narratively construed as the self is the scapegoat to be sacrificed through asceticism and banished through the transcendence of conscious states. The Christ figure then, clearly defined, is one who actively scapegoats either an element of their self, or their self entirely, in order to transcend their sinful, impure, or profane nature.¹³

The Christ figure,¹⁴ or emblematic sage of core Buddhist mythology, is Siddhartha Gautama, the ideological founder of Buddhism and the first recorded monk to attain Nibbana.¹⁵

⁸ I'm taking the liberty here to create this word, as there is no good reason why it should not exist given the rules of English. "Interplanar" and "planar" are recognized separately, so I believe linguistic consistency to necessitate the existence of an adverb denoting an interplanar quality.

⁹ I am using the technical version of this word, meaning "made real."

¹⁰ These are two of the conscious states attainable through rigorous meditative procedure, the latter directly following the former in order of transcendence.

¹¹ Again, the self in question is specifically one's self-conception. The Buddhist maintains the distinction between their body and external objects, including the bodies of others.

¹² Transcendent of the corporeal realm, the profane sense-based existence, or the flesh.

¹³ A distinction here between these three terms is crucial, as Christ carried the world's sin despite being sinless himself, yet was both impure and profane on account of his humanity. Through the scapegoating of his corporeal self, his divine self was realized. Again, the divine self within Buddhism is no self at all.

¹⁴ The Buddha pre-dates Christ, so it may seem strange to refer to him as a *Christ-figure* and not the other way around, however, the goal of this paper is to secure the sacrificial scapegoat as a recurrent symbol that purveys both Christianity and Buddhism, and the scapegoat construct far predates both the Buddha and the Christ.

¹⁵ Pronounced in Sanskrit as *Nirvana*, Nibbana is the Pali word for the Buddhist state of ultimate consciousness, or enlightenment.

Since Gautama attained Nibbana in India, Buddhism's country of origin, and I am focusing on the Chinese and Japanese variations of Buddhist mythology and practice, I will pivot and instead identify the Christ-figure in Bodhidharma of the Chinese Chan or *Zen* Buddhism, and the Sokushinbutsu's of the Japanese Shugendō tradition, which is a syncretic mixture of Buddhism, Daoism, and Shinto.¹⁶ In one of his fascinating lectures, Dr. Dippmann explained that Bodhidharma was a largely mythological¹⁷ monk who traveled from South India to China where he established Zen Buddhism, a tradition focused on a form of sitting meditation called zazen. The legend proclaims that he sat in front of a wall engaged in meditation for nine years straight,¹⁸ eventually cutting off his own eyelids to maintain awareness, allowing his legs to become carrion due to lack of blood circulation and the effects of external weather. Dr. Dippmann also explained that Bodhidharma's nine years of steadfast meditation represent the nine months of pregnancy, and the red hood historically wrapped around his decaying body represents the caul. The implications of this pregnancy symbolism run deeper than the Arctic Ocean, from the rebirth of Buddhism to the birth of true self within Platonism,¹⁹ and even further when one recalls the childlike neuroplastic²⁰ state induced by the consumption of entheogenic substances, however, for the sake of brevity and subject continuity, I will dive no further down this rabbit hole.

Meandering back to the identification of the Christ figure in Buddhist religion, I will now provide the Japanese manifestation in the form of the Sokushinbutsus of the Shugendō tradition,

¹⁶ I will be focusing on its Buddhist elements in this paper.

¹⁷ There was likely a real monk named Bodhidharma, but similar to the characters of Socrates, Pythagoras, and Jesus Christ, the vast majority if not all of our accounts of their existence are coated in legend.

¹⁸ As with all mythology, this story becomes even more fascinating when its possible psychedelic interpretation is introduced, as the creator of this myth, whether they be the real Bodhidharma or otherwise, could have genuinely experienced a perceptually nine year meditation while under the influence of an entheogenic substance.

¹⁹ Christianity is included within the purview of Platonist philosophy, as the New Testament authors were undeniably influenced by Platonic metaphysics, at the very least in their tri-part conception of soul.

²⁰ Another word I am taking the liberty to use. It means: "possessing or inducing a quality of neuroplasticity."

who completed the excruciating sacrificial process of self-mummification for the spiritual well-being of their communities. According to Julia Shiota's elucidation of the mythological history of Japanese Buddhism, the first monk to practice self-mummification was Kōbō Daishi, the founder of Shingon Buddhism who had a heavy influence on the esoteric and mystical practices of Japanese Buddhist traditions, especially Shugendō. The Sokushinbutsus who followed after Kōbō Daishi maintained a grain-absent diet consisting of pine needles and rocks for thousands of days, eventually "entomb[ing] themselves in a stone chamber underground or in a coffin, chanting prayers until they passed on" (Shiota). The purposeful mummification of one's body, being the most intense and sacrificial form of asceticism physically possible, was carried out by most if not all of the Sokushinbutsus for the good of those around them. Tetsumonkai, one of the most illustrious Sokushinbutsus, offered himself up as the medicinal scapegoat for the Edo period's epidemic of eye disease, "purportedly goug[ing] out one of his own eyes as an offering to the Mount Yudano deities to save those suffering from the disease," and mummifying himself soon after (Shiota).

Trailing back to the caul-wrapped decaying sage, Bodhidharma is an exemplary manifestation of the inward-facing Christ figure, distinguished from the outward-facing Christ figures of the Sokushinbutsus by their disparate intentions in banishing their scapegoat selves. Although compassion²¹ was a consequence of Bodhidharma's personal scapegoating, his primary focus was on achieving idiosyncratic enlightenment through his transcendence of self, while the Sokushinbutsus engaged in complete physical sacrifice out of the compassionate urge to save others and alleviate their suffering. This categorical distinction between inward and outward-focused scapegoating is equally central to the practice of soul-based prayer as it is to soul-absent

²¹ Not only compassion understood as interactional humaneness, but more crucially for Bodhidharma, compassion was realized as evangelical or soteriological action.

meditation, as the supplicant can either invoke for personal transcendence like Bodhidharma or banish their profane sector of soul for the benefit of those around them as the Sokushinbutsus did.²² Having now sufficiently supported the existence of the scapegoat construct and Christ figure within Chinese and Japanese Buddhism, I will dig into the scapegoating rituals of these traditions and qualify the throughline of the Christ figure necessarily present in all self-sacrificing action.

In the interest of weaving the aforementioned connective line through the various guides on this pole of inquiry, I must first explicate the distinct motifs of profane selfishness within these traditions, for one must have a clear notion of what they are imbuing their scapegoat with in order for the ritual to have any psychological effect. Sufficiently exemplified in Leviticus 16, the Christian schema for unethical or impious action is sin, a spiritual act committed against Yahweh just as much as it is a physical act committed against flesh. As Leviticus so brutally displays, sin requires eye for an eye blood sacrifice, a method of atonement the Israelites were proud to maintain primarily with animals, as many of their pagan neighbors sacrificed humans much more frequently.²³ Jesus Christ would eventually become the half-divine scapegoat capable of harboring the totality of committed sin, instantiating the self-sacrificial Christ figure I am enumerating in this work. Negative psycho-spiritual components are conceptualized much differently in the East, although their rituals of transcendent purification share a high identical phenomenology with the transcendent forgiveness rituals of Christianity. As I briefly mentioned near the beginning of this ideological pilgrimage, the Buddhist schema for negative actions and mental states can be qualified as unwholesomeness or impurity, dependent on the tradition's

²² This outward-facing scapegoating is the typical spiritual disposition among Catholic and Christian saints, yet there were still many Christian monks who aimed for enlightenment over compassion as their primary goal.

²³ The Israelites still constantly sacrificed humans to Yahweh, but presented themselves as morally superior due to their primary focus on animal sacrifice. For instances of Yahweh commanded human sacrifice, see 2 Samuel 21 and Judges 11 for two examples of Israelites sacrificing their own people to Yahweh, yet there are numerous other places where they mercilessly sacrifice their enemies to their lord.

specific mythology. The Buddhist etiological evaluation of suffering places desire or craving as its primary cause, the vector of which is the default psychical state of narrative self-distinction, as all desires for external stimuli require a distinct subject who desires them. Because the destitution and fulfillment of craved objects both only breed pain and discontentment in the long term,²⁴ the Buddhist soteriology subsists in the annihilation of one's narrative self, consequently eliminating desires, which in turn removes the most crucial cog in the cyclical automaton of suffering. Within the Chinese context, this desire-born unwholesomeness is often qualified as anti-social action, antithetical to the ideal state of *ren*, or co-humaneness, societally ingrained through the social philosophy of Kong Fuzi²⁵ (*The Analects of Confucius: A Teaching Translation*, pg. 10). In Japan, the mythology of Izanagi and his sister Izanami further cements the anti-social nature of impurity, understood symbolically as pollution in Japan. Expertly relayed in Dr. Dippmann's lectures, the Japanese notion of impurity stems from the legend of these two Shinto Kamis,²⁶ and their breaching of social responsibilities. After giving birth to the incestuous Kami of fire, which incinerates her from the inside out, Izanami descends to the Japanese equivalent of hell, nominalized as The Land of Pollution. Naked and burned, she hides herself ashamedly behind a veil within her cavernous hospice of polluted refuge. Izanagi chases after his sister and finds her hidden in the cave behind the veil, where she begs him not to look at her rotting body. Desiring to see and retrieve his sister in an act of blatant disregard for her wishes for privacy, he uncovers the veil to the horrifying sight of her polluted and maggot-infested living corpse. Furious at this desire-born social infraction, Izanami chases her disgusted brother out of the underworld, leading Izanagi to roll a boulder in front of its liminal entrance,

²⁴ This is because privation of a desired object necessarily creates pain, at least realized as the absence of pleasure, whilst the attainment of a desired object produces brief and transient pleasure, only to be followed by greater pain in the wake of the desired object's passing.

²⁵ Latinized as *Confucius*.

²⁶ Japanese word for deity.

trapping his sister in The Land of Pollution and creating the diametric divide between profanity and sacredness within the Japanese conscious. Having successfully banished his impure female²⁷ counterpart, Izanagi realizes that he must wash his hands²⁸ of the pollution he'd been infected with, instantiating the ritual of misogi, or the physical act of water purification. This practice is analogous to Christian baptism in near totality, the only difference being the redemptive quality of baptism, as opposed to the personal cleansing experienced in misogi.

Now that I have exposed the varying psycho-mythological substances being imbued into the scapegoat through the hands of each tradition's respective practitioner, I can properly identify the unique methodologies of sacrificial banishment facilitated by the corresponding Christ figures of these religions. As I have already spilt considerable digital ink explaining the rituals of Christianity, and my primarily Western audience is likely to have been generously exposed to the routines of prayer, baptism, worship, and communion, I will only reference these rituals for their comparative value when analyzed alongside Eastern practices.²⁹ I will begin this venture by dissecting the procedure of meditation central to Zen Buddhism, a sect that originated in China, but quickly spread to Japan in the thirteenth century and experienced a mass resurgence following the insidiously violent end to World War II (Dr. Dippmann). Shunryu Suzuki, a Japanese master of Zen whose pedagogical dialectic was transcribed in the book *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*, details the practical ramifications of zazen, or sitting meditation. He explains the express purpose of zazen as the realization of unity between the practitioner's "beginner's mind" or "small mind" and the "big mind" of collective consciousness (pp. 1-6). Because Suzuki's goal is to make the rituals of Zen Buddhism broadly accessible to a beginning audience,

²⁷ The unfortunately misogynistic division between the pure male and the impure female is omnipresent within this myth.

²⁸ Another intriguing connection between the symbology of Christ and that of the Kamis.

²⁹ It is important to once again note here that prayer and worship are not exclusively Western rituals, but I am specifically tackling the self-related variations inherent to the scapegoat constructs of Christianity and Buddhism, that are distinguished by the active role of the self, or lack thereof, within each phenomenology.

he expertly avoids the technical metaphysical language that is usually inseparable from the doctrine of no-self, which I shall now attempt to discover within his teachings. When this Zen master says beginner's or small mind, I believe him to mean the desiring narrative self, which is "related to something outside itself" and makes enlightenment impossible due to its desire to direct meditative experience, "try[ing] to stop [one's] thinking" (pg. 7). The big mind then, the understanding of which is attained through continual zazen, can be qualified as the dissolution of self-distinction, evidenced by the following quote from Suzuki, "They [small mind and big mind] are the same thing, but the understanding is different, and your attitude towards your life will be different according to which understanding you have" (pg. 7). This transcendence of understanding from the narrative self to no-self, is the end result of the dualistic banishment and sacrifice of the Zen Buddhist scapegoat. The ritual identification of unwholesomeness and consequent banishment of the self³⁰ is realized as the rigorously regimented practice of zazen,³¹ while the sacrificial aspect of the scapegoat ritual can be found in the ascetic lifestyle necessarily embodied by the Buddhist Christ figure.

Continuing my enumeration of scapegoat ritualism within these heterogeneous Buddhist traditions, I shall now move on to the mountain-dwelling Shugendō practice of hiking meditation, a method that surely makes for a more physically capable monk, assuming that the Zen and Shugendō practitioners spend most of their time meditating according to the practical dichotomy I have drawn up. Approximately seventy percent of Japan's geography is mountainous, providing the Shugendō monk with an expansive and beautiful space to conduct their rituals within (Dr. Dippmann). During this arduous group exodus into the divine

³⁰ Tying the symbolism of scapegoat banishment back to its roots in Leviticus, the society that the self is being exiled from can be understood as the Buddhist practitioner's psyche, once stained by selfish impurity, now freed from craving as a self-less stream of materially congruent conscious experience. The term "self-less" used here indicates an absence of self and is distinct from the commonly used compassionate definition of "selfless."

³¹ I did not get into the rigid practical confines of zazen for the sake of brevity, but the interested reader will find a fascinating explanation of this in Suzuki's full paper, as well as the documentary titled *The Zen Mind*.

wilderness,³² the Shugendō meditator realizes their symbolic banishment of self through the act of physical travel, as opposed to the inward travel of zazen, yet both of these meditative styles are conducive to the transcendence of conscious states necessary for the atonement-adjacent end state of self-less enlightenment. Central to Zen Buddhism's zazen, as well as Shugendō Buddhism's hiking meditation and mortal asceticism, is the secondary ritual of sutra chanting.³³ Since Christian prayer aims to eliminate only the profane division of soul while strengthening the narrativity of the other two divisions, those being mind and spirit, and Buddhist sutras aim to extinguish all self-narrativity aside from their core mythology, these practices are equally capable of banishing and sacrificing their respective scapegoat constructs. In the film *Shugendō Now*, the documentary crew is privy to a Shugendō holiday celebration, wherein villagers light ceremonial bonfires to represent the burning away of attachment. This symbol of salvific commemoration is manifested as the taking of the Eucharist in Christianity, as the Christian in communion renews their personal scapegoat construct in remembrance of Christ's compassionate outward scapegoating, just as the Buddhist reminds themselves of their personal detachment in accordance with their preferred Buddha or Bodhisattva.³⁴ It is not only through these specific ritual acts that the religious practitioner maintains a steadfast awareness of their scapegoat construct, but religious symbology purveys nearly every facet of the religious life, especially in the field of aesthetics.³⁵

³² Shugendō tradition holds that the Kamis exist in the mountainous wilderness, revealing themselves through instances of particular aesthetic significance (Dr. Dippmann).

³³ Just like Christian prayer, sutras can be chanted internally or externally, with distinct effects.

³⁴ The Bodhisattva is an active practitioner who is far along the process of enlightenment, but has not yet reached Buddhahood.

³⁵ Think of the ever-present cross symbol and Gothic designs of Christian infrastructure, or the frequent appearances of Buddha symbology and the minimalist designs of Buddhist infrastructure.

Before I pull this inquiry together with a positive argument for the scapegoat construct's continued psychological precedence in a post-Nietzsche philosophical Giest,³⁶ I must thread my interpretive line through one last guide on this rod of discovery, that being the Japanese Hadaka Matsuri held every second day of the Lunar New Year. Roughly translated as *Naked Festival* or *Naked Man Festival*, the Hadaka Matsuri is a proctored yet nevertheless violent³⁷ re-enactment of a ritual human sacrifice enshrined in Japanese mythological history, where a village suffering a ruthless plague clubbed and kidnapped a random man who happened to be passing through, stripping him of his clothes and dragging him to the village shrine to be offered up to the Kami's as a scapegoat. In a vicious act that forewent even the courtesy of a trial that Christ was afforded, the man was slain for the collective psychological security of the village and is ceremoniously mimicked as an annual³⁸ purification method throughout modern-day Japan (Dr. Dippmann). Anyone familiar with the biblical book of Judges may have immediately noticed the striking similarity between the Hadaka Matsuri and the Israelite holiday commemorating the divinely ordained sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter, an equally tragic instance of the potential brutality of the scapegoat construct when actualized by scared and suffering individuals (Judges 11.9-40). Since the scapegoat construct originated as a divine command from the Old Testament god and was forced upon Jephthah's daughter by that same psycho-mythological conception, I deem those who force the scapegoat construct onto external and innocent beings *Yahweh figures*, as opposed to the Christ figure who scapegoats their self in either an internal or external fashion, with the end of attaining personal or collective transcendence respectively.

³⁶ Hegel's concept of a globally progressive self-consciousness. In this context, I mean the current state of the collectively progressing philosophical landscape, specifically after Darwin, Hegel, and Nietzsche's pronouncement of the death of God.

³⁷ The event is so painful that many places in Japan have recently cancelled the festival, due to a lack of new volunteers.

³⁸ Every Lunar New Year that is.

This potential misdirection of brutality is just one of the primary points of Nietzsche's critical analysis of and contempt for religion, a worldview he saw to be antithetical to the actualization of human flourishing for several books full of reasons. To be fair, he was much more worried about brutality towards the strong individual than he was about the sacrificed innocent, but he would see the slaughter of innocents in the name of the herd's atonement to be nearly as contemptible, albeit for different reasons. I generally agree with Nietzsche that the externally projected scapegoat construct responsible for the sacrifice of innocents³⁹ should be abandoned by anyone genuinely concerned with acting morally, whether within the confines of a religion or not, but I disagree with him that the Christ figure is of equal danger to the Super Man.⁴⁰ It appears to me that Nietzsche couldn't escape the Christ figure even in a mythological landscape where Jesus never walked on water, as he would have then been responsible for instantiating the Christ figure himself with his ideological creation of the Super Man. So long as our psyches narratively conceptualize our experiences,⁴¹ the scapegoat construct will continue being a necessary organizational tool, separating our existent negative qualities from the ideal positive qualities we aim our transcendent action towards. The process of identifying the qualities of self we wish to improve upon and forming habitual patterns of direct action with the goal of idealistic transcendence is Nietzsche's entire *modus operandum*. How is this any different from the creation of internal scapegoat constructs and consequent ritual banishment and sacrifice inherent to the Christ figure, aside from a purely semantic divide between atheist and theist linguistics? Our very need to mentally account for our suffering necessitates that blame will be attached to something, and whether that dartboard of admonishment is the self, another,

³⁹ Or the Yahweh figure.

⁴⁰ Nietzsche's ideal, godless formulation of the flourishing human.

⁴¹ I believe narrative conceptualization to be a psychological process inescapable by even the most self-less Buddhist, as their mode of narrative thought construction merely transitions from the personal to the mythological. I have yet to even mention how the distinction between Ultimate and Conventional reality supports this argument, but this is a topic for another paper.

or the divine, the construction and ritual management of scapegoats in alignment with either the Christ or Yahweh figure is carried out in the minds of the Christian, the Buddhist, and the atheist out of psychological necessity.

I simultaneously pray for and meditate on my reader's enjoyment of this paper, as it is one of my favorite works that I have yet had the pleasure to piece together, and hope that it was equally fulfilling to read. I want to thank Dr. Jeffrey Dippmann for the wonderful and informative quarter, as well as all past instructors and interlocutors who have strengthened my logical grasp on spirituality, Christian, Buddhist, or otherwise. It has been a joy to increase my perspective on the rich traditions of China and Japan, and I hope that I have translated this philosophical smile to the face of my reader.

With Peace,

-Asher

Ultimately Excluded but Memorable Quotes:

"We must forget ourselves in the effort we make. In this realm there is no subjectivity or objectivity" (*Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*, pg. 8).

"For us there is no fear of losing this [big] mind. There is nowhere to come or to go; there is no fear of death, no suffering from old age or sickness. Because we enjoy all aspects of life as an unfolding of big mind, we do not care for any excessive joy. So we have imperturbable composure, and it is with this imperturbable composure of big mind that we practice zazen" (*Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*, pg. 8).

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Links to Recommended but Unused Works in Order of Mention:

Wiredu: https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-94-009-3517-4_7

Akesson: <https://academic.oup.com/afraf/article-abstract/64/257/280/75680?redirectedFrom=PDF>

Diagram of Buddhist conscious planes:

<https://www.accesstoinight.org/ptf/dhamma/sagga/loka.html>

The Zen Mind: <https://videolibrarian.com/reviews/documentary/the-zen-mind/>