

## *The Real Meaning of Zen*

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Master

According to science today, all phenomena in the universe are recognized through the relationship of the knower and the known (knower = the brain, known = the brain's knowledge). It is a relative relation between subject and object. The subject is the brain, or the knower. The object is the brain's knowledge, or the known.

All branches of knowledge from abstract concepts such as philosophy, theology, sociology to concrete sciences such as astronomy, physiology, economics etc., all are the objects of knowing — known by the subject brain.

All matters go through formation and decay. The nature of the brain is of matter — it is limited by the process of birth and death. When one (the knower) dies, the brain dies too. It then turns into dust. All the brain's knowledge will vanish upon death. Now, anything that can vanish or die has no real value. In Buddhism, real, or real value means eternal, not subject to change and decay.

Sakyamuni (the Buddha) wants to teach us a way to discover the reality in us that exists forever, which will never vanish — the real knowing that is complete and eternal.

This real, eternal knowing is without subject (the knower) and object (the known); it is the knowing of the real mind <sup>(1)</sup> .

On the other hand, the temporal, brain-acquired knowledge based on subject-object relation is the knowing of the illusory mind <sup>(2)</sup> .

We human beings, in our daily lives, believe only the illusory mind. We cannot see our real mind because it is covered up by all the cluttering knowledge and busy activities of the illusory mind. So, we always take the knowledge of the illusory mind to be real. Yet in reality, such knowledge has no real value to the knower because it will die and vanish in time.

The real mind is eternal. Even though it is concealed by the illusory mind, its functioning and knowing is always at work without interruption. Like the sun, when blocked by the clouds, the moon, or the earth, it still shines without interruption. To see the sunlight again, all we have to do is remove these blocking objects.

Our real mind works the same way. If we clear away all the mental blockages, meaning the illusory knowledge of the brain, the real mind will automatically appear. Like sun light, this real knowing reaches throughout all space and time, infinite and complete.

The Patriarch Zen <sup>(3)</sup> meditation taught by Sakyamuni aims at cleaning up the mental barriers that keep us from seeing our real mind. When these barriers are gone, the real mind naturally reveals itself, which is a happening called enlightenment <sup>(4)</sup>.

Like waking from a deep dream, the enlightened person finds that all the people and the world he knew of were not real. That life has been an open-eye dream much like our closed-eye dream, it disappears upon waking. Such realization in Buddhism is called "self-proven truth."

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Note:

(1) **Real mind :**

Also known as buddha-mind, buddha-nature, absolute-mind, one-mind.

(2) **Illusory mind :** All relative, subject-object, dualistic thinking.

(3) **Patriarch Zen :**

Patriarchs are grand masters who have awakened from the open-eye dream. Patriarch Zen is a meditation technique which uses the not-knowing side of the brain to clean up the brain's cognition, thinking, and memorization processes. It is taught by and passed down directly from patriarch to patriarch since the time of Buddha Sakyamuni.

(4) **Enlightenment :**

The transformation where our real mind takes control over the functioning of the brain (the illusory mind). The brain still functions the same except that it can no longer control us with its illusory creations; we are our own masters forever. The enlightened mind, or the real mind, cannot be discovered by anyone including the Buddha because it is absolute. If it is discovered it becomes an object of knowing, which falls in the relative field. The real mind knows itself and can be discovered only by itself.