

“*svacitta-dṛśya-mātram*” in Hakuin Ekaku’s Zen

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The present paper is an attempt to make sure if the essential viewpoint of the *Laṅkāvatāra sūtra* constitutes that of Zen in Japan advocated by Hakuin Ekaku (白隠慧鶴 1685–1768), in his main work written in Chinese, *Sokkōroku-kaiyen Fusetsu* (息耕録開筵普說 “A Universal Argument on the Authentic Practice of Zen, presented on the occasion of lecturing on the *Recorded Sayings of Master Xutang Zhiyu*”). Master Xutang Zhiyu (虛堂智愚 1185–1269) called himself Old man Xutang (Kidō-sō) or Old man Xigeng (Sok-kō-sō). Hakuin preferred calling him Sokkō (“Resting from Ploughing”).

(1) The *svacitta-dṛśya-mātram* of the *Laṅkāvatāra sūtra* :

The term *svacitta-dṛśya-mātram*, while unique to the *Laṅkāvatāra sūtra*, occupies a central position in the thought of this scripture, which states (Nanjo edition, p. 112⁶⁻⁷ Chapter 2) :

tatra yathābhūta-avasthāna-darśanaṁ mahāmate sarva-dharmāṇāṁ yad-uta svacitta-dṛśya-mātra-avatāraḥ /

When the scripture mentions the term *svacitta-dṛśya-mātram*, it does not mean either affirmation of the subjective mind nor negation of the objective world. It means the Awakening that is free from being anything, the true “formless Self” (the late Dr. Shin’ichi Hisamatsu’s term). The ordinary translation of the term *svacittam*, “one’s own mind,” does not fit in the context of this scripture, which states (N 104⁷⁻⁸, 2) :

asmin-sati-idaṁ bruvato grāhya-grāhaka-abhāvāt-svacitta-dṛśya-mātra-avabodhāt /

Emancipation takes place through the realization of *svacitta-dṛśya-mātram*. The *sūtra* states (N 233¹⁴⁻¹⁶, 6) :

anādikāla-prapañca-dauṣṭhulya-vikalpa-vāsanā-hetu-vinivṛttir-mahāmate svacitta-dṛśya-bāhya-artha-parijñānād-vikalpasya-āśraya-parāvṛttir-mahāmate mokṣo

na nāśah /

It has another statement (N 234²⁻⁴, 6) :

jñāna-jñeya-vivikṭa hi mahāmate sarva-dharmāḥ / anyatra svacitta-vikalpa aparī-jñānād-vikalpaḥ pravartate tad-avabodhān-nivartate ||

Then, what does the term *svacitta-dṛśya-mātram* mean? The *Laṅkāva-tāra sūtra* divides *viñāna* into three kinds: 1) *pravṛtti* (working), 2) *karma* (work-causing), and 3) *jāti* or *svajāti* (its own, its original, its true) form (N 37¹³, 2). The third of the three kinds or forms is equivalent in expression to *dharma-kāya* as the true mode of being of *ālayaviñāna* (N 43¹⁸, 44¹). This same scripture gives *tathāgata-garbha* as an equivalent to *dharma-kāya* (N 222¹⁴⁻¹⁵, 6) :

tathāgata-garbha-ālayaviñāna-gocaraḥ

According to the scripture, *ālayaviñāna* from the beginningless time keeps originating self-afflicting passions (*kleśa*) and defiled acts (*karma*). However, this is the nature adventitious and temporary, far from being its original, true one. To the practitioner of deep thought as the functioning of Awakening (*tāthāgatam dhyānam*), the true mode of *ālayaviñāna*, that is, functioning as *tathāgata-garbha*, is eternally present in everyone regardless of the distinction between awakened and unawaked; the practitioner sees this as clearly as he sees an *āmaraka* fruit in his palm (N 222¹⁶⁻¹⁷, 6).

This does not preclude the necessity of attaining Awakening; to the contrary, without the realization of *tāthāgatam dhyānam* through the turning over of *ālaya-viñāna* as the abode of consciousness, no such insight will ever be possible.

The practitioner of tathagatas' dhyana attains freedom with regard to what is external (*dharma-nairātmyam*) because to him nothing remains as external.

Thus the term *svacitta-dṛśya-mātram* means the authentic mode of everything, which is free from externality as well as from subjectivity, and which is the Awakening of formless Self. The scripture suggests three moments of this Awakening (N 49¹⁶⁻⁷¹, 2) : 1) being *nirābhāsa* (formless), *sarva-buddha-sva-praṇidhāna-adhiṣṭhāna* (abiding in all the Awakened

ones' own vow), and *pratyātma-ārya-jñāna-gati* (attaining the Awakened one's realization). Where there is attainment of the realization of *svacitta-dṛśya-mātram*, there without fail is compassion at work to have unawakened beings awake to their original Self. Hence the advocacy of *svacitta-dṛśya-mātram*.

(2) *svacitta-dṛśya-mātram* in Chan (Zen) :

The *Laṅkāvatāra sūtra* has three Chinese versions : Guṇabhadra's four-volume version translated in A. D. 443 in Liu Song, Bodhiruci's ten-volume version tr. in A. D. 513 in Northern Wei, and Śikṣānanda's seven-volume version tr. in Tang in 700-4. The *Taishō Tripitaka* Vol. 16 contains them with the scriptural numbers in order : 670, 671, and 672. The term *svacitta-dṛśya-mātram* has its Chinese renderings peculiar to the respective version : No. 670 has 自心現量, No. 671, 唯自心見, No. 672, 唯心所現 (for *svacittamātra*, p. 599, 自心量之所現). Among these, the Guṇabhadra rendering is so outstanding that when we meet the expression in Chan (Zen) texts, we know its source unmistakably.

(2a) The text named 二入四行論 (“Treatise on Two Approaches with For Practices”) is considered Bodhidharma's teaching written down by his disciples, Huike and Tanlin. It gives the Guṇabhadra rendering as follows (Yanagida Seizan : *DARUMA no GOROKU, Zen no Goroku* series Vol. 1, Chikuma-shobō 1969, pp. 103-4) :

If you practise according to the ultimate three treasures, you will be free from discriminations like good and evil, fair and ugly, cause and effect, right and wrong, moral and immoral. If anyone be involved in comparison and measurement, like this, that is all due to his ignorance of 自心現量, i.e., what is seen as something external coming from him himself. Should anyone know that nothing exists, the same truth will be applied ; they do not realize 自心現量, and discriminate right from wrong. If one admires the Awakened one's wisdom as something superior to his, the same will be true ; the admirer forms being and nonbeing whereby he suffers from delusion. The scripture (unidentified...tr.) states :

If you rely on the ultimate Buddha in your practice, you will not take sentient beings to be either illusory or substantial.

Hence the ultimate equality and freedom from gain and loss of all of the world.

By "two approaches" Bodhidharma meant approach through true reality and approach through practice. Approach through true reality constitutes the ultimate principle of practice or practice itself. It is called 壁觀 (wall-contemplation). The text goes as follows (*DARUMA no GOROKU* pp. 31-32):

By approach through true reality I mean, through temporarily referring to scriptural teaching, one's attaining to the ultimate truth. Have deep conviction that every living being, either unawakened or awakened, is the same in their true nature, and that unawakened ones are unable to reveal it only because their adventitious delusion falsely covers it. If you want to forsake delusion to return to truth, intently abide in wall-contemplation, where you and others, unawakened and awakened ones, are one and the same. You should firmly abide in this; do not shift from it. Do not follow scriptural teachings. Then you will be in accord with true reality unawares, free from discrimination, perturbation, and artifice. This is called approach through true reality.

From this we know that Bodhidharma applies the scriptural teaching of *svacitta-dṛśya-mātram* to practice in the form of intently abiding in wall-contemplation. Here the practitioner realizes himself to be a wall, to whom everything external is nothing but he himself.

(2b) Mazu Daoyi (馬祖道一 709-88) regards the teaching of *svacittam* (自心) of the *Laṅkāvatāra sūtra* as essential to anyone who wants emancipation. He refers to the *tāthāgatam dhyānam* in the Chinese rendering (如來清淨禪) as ultimate practice, which is free from practice (四家語錄 1, p. 9). He states (*ibid.*, p. 5):

Everyone of you, do be convinced that you yourselves are Buddhas. This Self is the Awakened one. Great Master Bodhidharma left southern India and came to China, to transmit the truth, the ultimate vehicle, this single Self, so as to let you attain Awakening. He also quoted from the *Laṅkāvatāra sūtra* in verifying the truth that every sentient being is Awakened.

Mazu Daoyi can be called a faithful disciple of Bodhidharma in principle. The term 平常心 which he advocates as *dao* is equal to Bodhidharma's 壁觀. Mazu states (*ibid.*, pp. 7-8):

The Way (*dao*) needs no practice. You just need not to defile it. What is defile-

ment? Only because of our life-death being we do artifice, driven in this direction or that. All this is defilement. If you want directly to realize this Way, then your ordinary calm being (平常心) is the Way. What is our ordinary calm being? Being free from artifice, from right and wrong, from accepting and rejecting, from impermanence and permanence, from unawakened and awakened. The *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa sūtra* states :

Neither the practice of the unawakened nor that of saints or sages...that is the practice of bodhisattvas.

Thus, our present way of being, that is, walking, staying, sitting, and lying, acting in accordance with occasions and meeting others...all this is the Way. The Way is the Awakened mode of the world. Nothing, even up to the wonderful work of rivers and grains, goes beyond the Awakened mode of the world.

(2c) Shitou Xiqian (石頭希遷 700-91) also uses the term *svacitta-dṛśya-mātram* in a Chinese rendering (唯自心現), though not in the *Guṇabhadra* one. Shito states (景德伝灯録 14) :

“*cittam*,” “*buddhaḥ*,” “*sattvaḥ*,” and “*kleśaḥ*” are different in names, but one in themselves. You should know this : we ourselves are free from impermanence and permanence ; in nature we are free from defilement and purity. We are deep and complete in nature, which is the same for both the unawakened and the awakened. We work in response to needs, not knowing how. We are free from mind and ego-consciousness. Our triple world and the sixfold mode of life-and-death are *svacitta-dṛśya-mātram*.

(3) *svacitta-dṛśya-mātram* in Hakuin :

In a chronicle of Hakuin’s life, we see that Hakuin used the Chinese rendering of *svacitta-dṛśya-mātram* when he retrospectively explained his experience on Iwataki Hill at the age of 31 in 1715, to his students. In a place remote from other people’s residence, in the stillness of nights, he felt he had echoes of some sound remain in his ears.

One night during *dhyāna* practice I had a fear, and could hardly go outdoors. I asked of myself : What do you fear? I said : Some goblin’s evil face might stick out. I asked again : What will be a goblin’s face ultimately? He may be a goblin, and you are a goblin, too. A goblin facing another goblin, what is fear for? You are a Buddha, and he also is a Buddha. A Buddha facing another Bud-

dha, there is no place for awe. *svacitta-dṛśya-mātram* (自心現量) is the universal mode of the dharma world. Here Maras and Buddhas are of one body; evil and right are not two. Here what do you call 'he' and what do you call 'I'?

When I had this view, I had my body and mind empty of themselves, and realized great fearlessness. (*HAKUIN-OSHO ZENSHU* Vol. 1, pp. 34, 35)

This is an indirect source. We do not see the scriptural term used in his *Sikkōroku-kaiyen Fusetsu*. Instead, we see the way of thinking expressed by the term at work in Hakuin's own lecture. Toward the end of the text Hakuin states (*Ibid.* Vol. 2, p. 441):

If you want to arrive at the attainment of the masters who have appeared up to now, you should first attend to the case of *koan* on the Awakened nature of a dog. If you go through months and years with it without hesitation, you will necessarily have an attainment. Then, forsake the attainment and proceed to attend to some other case of *koan* far harder to penetrate. Without fail you will see that attainment of our predecessors does not lie in intellectual understanding.

In the case of *koan* on the Awakened nature of a dog, to the question: "Is a dog Awakened?" Master Zhaozhou Congshen (趙州從諗 778-897) said: "No." To this kind of question no answer will do...neither "yes" nor "no". Zhaozhou's answer represents the true Self to whom no answer, either affirmative or negative, will do. There cannot be any reason that such an ultimate position will have to be abandoned. However, based on his own struggle under the critical eyes of Old man Shōju (正受老人 Dōkyō Etan 道鏡慧端 1642-1721) Hakuin realized that his attainment with this *koan* imprisoned him in the dark cave of *ālayavijñāna*, rather than opening him to the world. He resumed long struggle with cases of *koan* harder to penetrate. In terms of Indian Buddhism Hakuin became very cautious not to fall into the false tranquillity of *pudgala-nairātmyam*; he wanted to direct his practice toward *dharma-nairātmyam*.

Hakuin gives a *mondō* between Ganfeng of Yuezhou (越州乾峯 dates unknown, fifth dharma-heir in the Qingyuan lineage) and Yunmen Wenyan (雲門文偃 d. unknown, sixth dharma-heir in the same lineage) on the *dharma-kāya* suffering from diseases (*ibid.*, p. 381):

Ganfeng : “The *dharma-kāya* suffers from threefold disease with twofold hindrance of light. Do all of you know this actually?”

Then, Yunmen came out from the assembly and said : “Why does the one inside not know affairs outside?”

Ganfeng laughed loudly. Yunmen said : “Still that remains doubtful to me.”

Ganfeng : “What do you mean?” Yunmen : “You also must know it well.”

Ganfeng : “Only when that’s your case, can you be stable in your practice.”

To this *mondō* Hakuin gives his comment :

If you want to see the recorded sayings of Master Sökkō, you must first attend to this case. When you penetrate the two masters’ talks clear enough, I shall admit that you have personally seen the Old man Sökkō; you can call yourself a monk who has attained to the profound truth. Otherwise, even if you could recite secrets of the five branches or seven currents of the Zen school and have penetrated 1,700 pieces of deep truth, they will be idle delusion and lifeless knowledge. What end could they serve?

The problem lying here is that if the *dharma-kāya*, that is expected to be free from any hindrance, should reject the hindrance as something unrelated to itself, then it will lose its ultimacy; it will cease to be *dharma-kāya*. Our *dharma-kāya* obtains only where we attain to *svacitta-dṛśya-mātram*.

Paying deep respect to two masters in Japan, Hakuin introduces their remarks as appropriate pieces of *koan* for us to tackle, to attain *svacitta-dṛśya-mātram* (ibid., pp. 441-2) :

Great Master Shūhō Myōchō (宗峯妙超 1282-1337) said : “In the morning I look with your eyes, and in the evening I dress on your shoulders. What do I look like?”

Daijō-shōō *kokushi* (Kanzan Egen 関山慧玄 1277-1360) said : “The talk of *bai* tree has a depriving function.”

Kanzan refers to Zhaozhou’s response to a question : “What has been the aim and meaning of Bodhidharma coming from the west?” Master Zhaozhou, when the questioner complained by saying, “Please do not answer my question with anything objective,” repeated the same answer: “The *bai* tree in front of the pavilion (or “in the garden”).”

〈Key Words〉 Hakuin, *svacittadṛśyamātram*.

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