

CHERRY BLOSSOMS

Spontaneous flowering of ideas

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I wish to continue reflecting and sharing about buddha-nature in Christ, this time focusing on the experience of enlightened awareness as it relates to Christ and the nature of God as I see it, through South Asian philosophical lenses that eschew substantialism.

First, the experience of enlightened awareness. From a relative limited perspective tinged with a degree of obscurity, we can say that the body and mind is composed not of atomic non-material substance but of processes. These are processes of sensing, feeling, perceiving, thinking, emoting, intending and knowing. All of them fluid dynamic events, devoid of unchanging substance or entityness. Upon the basis of these processes is imputed the labels “body” and “mind,” and by extension the so-called “self.” Mindfulness is a natural faculty of mind that with sustained training enables seeing and knowing with insight the processual nature of body, mind, and self. But for full enlightenment to be possible, one needs to go further. One needs to realize the empty luminosity of mind as naked awareness, the deepest dimension of “being” that is devoid of any inherency. Inherency is the fact of existing by way of its own nature independent of everything else, a self-powered autonomous existence and identity that is not related to anything else. Such inherency is false and the mind at its deepest level is empty luminous awareness that is pristine and immaculate. Complete, continual, and effortless abidance in this pristine awareness that lovingly and compassionately expresses itself in myriad activities of mind, body, relationship, and world is indeed enlightenment.

Second, this enlightened state is not the end though many may think it so. In Buddhist tradition as well as other Asian traditions, enlightenment as such is indeed the final goal. Yet, there is more. What is more is this: a gratuitous realization that enlightened awareness however sublime is merely a microcosmic reflection of the transcendent consciousness of God in Christ, the transcendent awareness that is plenitude of light, love, and life. Christ who is synonymous with Jesus is the incarnate *logos* (divine order of the cosmos) and second person of God the Trinity, Father-Son-Spirit. In Jesus Christ, the fullness of triune divinity dwells bodily and continues to live in resurrected and glorified form throughout eternity. It is precisely because of Jesus Christ as incarnate divinity who has taken on human nature

to the full and dealt fully with human sinfulness and resistance on the cross that all humanity can now awaken to their inner reflection of Christ consciousness within themselves, become sanctified and eventually enlightened, and ultimately participate in the perichoresis dance of love of triune God, Father-Son-Spirit. In this dance, enlightened awareness flows and outpours from the Son with whom it is united, into Father and Spirit, and recursively from Father into Son and Spirit and from Spirit into Father and Son, in spiralling dynamism *ad infinitum*. This is not an experience to be attained but to be received by grace, in God's divine timing.

When abiding as enlightened awareness, it is tempting to think that given the nondual expansive nature of one's enlightened experience, one has accomplished all there is to accomplish and there is nothing more beyond sheer awareness itself. But, by a current of grace it is possible for nondual awareness to awaken to its optical illusion of self-sufficiency and spiritual completion. It awakens to the presence of Presence beyond mere empty nondual awareness. It suddenly realizes the living Presence of Christ consciousness transcending all creation and sentient existence; Christ who is the *alpha* (source) and *omega* (destiny) of all humanity and indeed of all creation. This Christ, who is God, exists ineffably beyond all ideas and words, and yet can be articulated as empty of inherent existence, conventionally speaking.

Hence, God as I see him is *non-essentialist*—devoid of an inherency that makes God isolated, autonomous, and unable to evolve. God's nature as love that is luminous and aware can never change, but God as ceaseless process evolves from moment to moment in form and function. God is thus *processual* in his fluid, dynamic, and creative flow of being and non-being that is more a dance of love than a *static* substantial entity. God as "process" manifests spontaneously into all variegated phenomena without exhausting himself, maintaining his transcendent ineffable being as "mystery" beyond all conceptual grasping. This creative manifestation is made real by the self-contraction of God called *tzim-tzum*. Creation thus emerges from the post-contraction vacuum that is the non-being of God. God as such is *pan-meta-theistic* in nature, who creatively becomes all of creation (thus *pan-*) and yet transcends it as an ineffable mysterious being (thus *meta-*) who is radically and ontologically outside creation. God can be thus seen as *cosmotheandric*, intimately suffused with cosmos, biology, and humanity in an undivided nondual fabric of reality. Such a God can be seen as *amipotent* (maximally powerful by way of non-controlling egoless love) rather than omnipotent (all powerful through domination and control).

Enough for now. May God bless and keep us in these dark chaotic times as we journey towards him in faith that sees, love that heals, and wisdom that frees.

Ad majorem dei gloriam

✠ **Chris**