

# Is The Relational Mind? And, Psych Unit Psychiatry

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Draft 1.08

2019 May 22 – 2019 May 30

Zen Buddhism holds that the world, nondual, is Mind-only or Representation-only. It – and our perception of it – is One Mind, and there is nothing that resists: it is dependent arising.[1] This One Mind is the realized state and function, which we practice, not becoming attached to external form, but penetrating non-discriminating mind. This body is the body of the Buddha.[1.1][1.2]

Let me ask a question that may serve to clarify: Is the relational mind?

You can think of a room, the walls, the space, the floor, the ceiling, the windows and doors, the people, and the things within it. This is all infinite-relational. You can consider the adaptability that the walls and windows (the frame) provide; and the usefulness that the space (within) provides.[2]

The planet orbiting the star, the stars in the sky in the galaxy, the ant encountering the tree, the leaves playing in the breeze, two people encountering each other or doing their work, the interplay of the subjective and the objective (each no-thing providing and representing an objective space that is subjectively noticed and represented within, itself a no-thing, dependent arising) – all this is the relational.

When we attain dimension mind, we have then a mental space that we are and walk around with and perceive within (actually being neither perception nor no perception). When we realize non-discriminating mind, this sense is taken to a deep and profound level – and we are the in-walking/sitting/lying/standing-realization-of-this, and we realize this space (one space) that is we-and-the-world-mutually-co-arising. We are just this world; yet it is, in various viewpoints, not one, not two. Just one realized space, not the same, not separate.

When we attain dimension mind, we see that perception is relational, and thoughts are relational; yet the world is just the unfolding relative, which is this: things are relative to each other, and this unfolds in a continual and infinitesimal way, and includes both the integers and the real numbers. This has to be seen in one's own mind to fully appreciate. And it yields and is the present moment; and the present moment, scrutinized, along with the external world, yields it.

Add to this the insight, from the Diamond Sutra, where the Buddha states “material characteristics are not material characteristics...one who perceives that characteristics are, in fact, no-characteristics perceives the Tathagatha”. [3] I have a couple of pages of commentary for myself on this, but let me just say here that one could say that material characteristics are not material characteristics, they are no-characteristics: the relational; verb; function; effect; meaning; perception; no-thing; neither being nor non-being; trans-frame[4]; the-relational-of-atoms-molecules-and-subatomic-particles and the infinite point; design, function, and the non-intentional; etc., of which no-characteristics are the undefinable “it”.

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Then we see that the mind that we have, and have readily accessible, with the right effort, is just this relational. The world is just like this. So: Is the relational mind?

The world and our mind are interdependent.

We're accustomed in psychiatry to the neurobiogenetic reductionist viewpoint, *where even the content-and-relational of neurons is abandoned as relevant, and particularly when the individual has encountered, in the mind of the psychiatrist, an alleged permanent neurobiogenetic malfunction. (But has the psychiatrist ruled out the relational?)* But psych unit psychiatry is already an inverted world: it omits, rejects, contradicts, refutes, and sets aside 'all of the above', even this very world, as relevant – much less the mind itself. Once one becomes aware of the relational structure to the mind, one sees quite clearly that the question should be turned on its head: each thing in the world, from an electron to a tree to a sidewalk or path to a thought to an individual to a social-relational situation represents, projects, notices, and feels – an aspect of Absolute Subjectivity – and this is in the realization and function, no-characteristic.[5] If the relational is mind, then this is mind co-arising, no-characteristics, that yields this space just as it is, and unfolding! And each thing is the unfolding relative, and this becomes a no-thing space.

So psych unit psychiatrists should 1) admit the standpoint of the individual, and the individual as participant, along with equable consideration of the relational (thought-relational, social-relational, world-space), including all those connected or not connected directly to it, and work with 'all of the above'; 2) consider the mind, and the unfolding relational that it is, and the many ways to work with it; 3) consider perception, and mental space; 4) consider the world-space, and so much that is within it; 5) consider that the relational explains so much about us, and dependent arising, and dependent arising describes, and explains the relational; and this should be probed as a reality; and 6) consider representation ('a picture') – and Wittgenstein talks about representation in his book "Tractatus Logico Philosophicus", as well as the statement "logical space is infinite, and you can always insert a new point into logical space", and "each point in logical space has color".[6]

Philosophy, spirituality, psychology, speculation on how we think and why, and act, narrative, open dialogues, etc. are and become relevant.

This is what psychiatrists should consider. This, along with other material, opens up a domain of dimension, vocabulary, logic, reason, realism, description, the participant, and explanation.

## Footnotes

1. See also Dogen's wonderful essay "Zenki" or "All Function" in his work "Shobogenzo" translated by Nishijima (Book 2).

1.1. For Obaku's and Senzaki's comments on this One Mind, see the chapters "Obaku's Transmission Of Mind" in the book "Eloquent Silence" by Nyogen Senzaki.

- 1.2 For the Zen working-insight into this, see perhaps “Tozan’s Three Pounds Of Flax”, Case 18, in the book “The Gateless Barrier: Zen Comments On The Mumonkan” by Zenkei Shibayama. Shibayama presents kind instruction to the koan.
2. See the Tao Te Ching by Lao-Tzu translated by James Legge, chapter 11.
3. See “The Diamond Sutra And The Sutra Of Hui-neng” by A. F. Price and Wong Mou-lam.
4. See Marvin Minsky’s book “The Society Of Mind” for an elegant rendition of the ever-useful trans-frame.
5. See “The Gateless Barrier: Zen Comments On The Mumonkan” by Zenkei Shibayama.
6. One could, with all of this, carefully review and study the book “Six Theories Of Justice: Perspectives From Philosophical And Theological Ethics” by Karen Lebacqz. (I studied it at Messiah College, and intend to bring now a Zen, Wittgenstein, Minsky, and ‘all of the above’ dimension read to it, to re-visit it.)

## Endnote

One can consult not only Zen Buddhism, but “The Society Of Mind” and “The Emotion Machine” by Marvin Minsky. With the Zen no-thing space, it opens up even more deeply than he may have anticipated! His work in TSOM is so dynamic and he had been a careful student and practitioner of careful thought. What a wonderful teacher! Along with trans-frames and the other interpretational models of the mind, in TSOM he introduces what I term ‘combinatorial unfolding interconnected relational action-memes’ that are the triangles-based interconnected and mutually-dependent hierarchies (see the diagrams regarding agents and agencies – those mindless as-described that wake-state in continually unfolding patterns of perception, goals, tasks, sub-tasks, cross-connects, and this or that, *getting things done – or solving hard problems, or approaching things with lateral thinking, brainstorming, or meditation – and these should be considered, in a psych unit, as material as the selective use of meds*). Dynamite!

For more on non-discriminating mind, neither being nor non-being, the nondual, and Mind-only, see “The Lankavatara Sutra” translated by D. T. Suzuki.

For more on how open dialogues is used in the Open Dialogues construct, see “Open Dialogues And Anticipations: Respecting Otherness In The Present Moment” by Seikkula and Arnkil. Other books are available on the dialogic: [Open Dialogues UK Store](#), or by a web search.

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