

# Open Dialogues And Sound Zen Buddhist Basis

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Draft 1.02

2019 March 5 – 2019 March 6

See what you make of this. It results from my own reflections and dynamic work with Zen Buddhism the past few years. I've also consulted the Open Dialogues idea the past few years, and it is strong and well-explained; it is something that I feel also must be a lived experience.

Not only have Seikkula and team got evidence (working experiential and natural studies) that Open Dialogues is fruitful, with positive outcomes, but I've hit on another set of insights as to why from the Zen Buddhist standpoint it has sound basis. Here are some initial notes, and I'll likely explicate further in a future draft of this paper. I wanted to get something on the table.

## ITEM

Open Dialogues.

polyphony.

the unfolding social- and meaning- relational.

not oneness and otherness

but the unfolding (neither being nor non-being) and inter-relational.

not being and non-being

but neither being nor non-being.

and...

## ITEM

in Open Dialogues, it's impossible to fully know the other.

Absolute Subjectivity.

each thing (everything is like this) represents, projects, feels, and notices – subjectively, as a subject.

there is no objectivity: one cannot penetrate this 'from the outside' by objectivity. (One might use the term to denote 'working with or viewing an object' – but what is 'no-thing' space, referred to in Zen, and the subjectivity reflected in and of the object? One might use the term to denote 'taking equably into account', and that's reasonable – but how can one do so without being aware of the subjective space, one responds to it even in being objective (and even here it's 1) the fusion of the abstract and the concrete where we see reality; and 2) it's the interplay of the subjective and the objective, the objective always projected or represented or felt subjectively) – and the same applies to 'seeing what's actually there' – and again, here the space of neither being nor non-being. One might use the term as 'unbiased', but that's open to debate on the subjective view, and further to be unbiased in the first place one must be participant and observing-within (the same space, as the subject – the subjective). Sometimes we say, scientific

instruments are objective: they record what's actually there, unbiased, as an object – but the scientific instrument records its subject (pesky word) subjectively, and the scientist must be aware of 'appropriate scientific instrument', and adjust accordingly!) As can be seen, it may be useful to say, in various meanings 'objective', but note the underlying – it's Absolute Subjectivity. But there is no such thing as 'objectivity', much as one might challenge the notion, 'good and evil' – unless perhaps one incorporates the relational and relative. one can see manifestations, and one can see the mystery – by being participant, nondual, and with non-discriminating mind.

there is the interplay of the subjective and the objective.

if the external world is nondual and Absolute Subjectivity, then to penetrate it, one must be nondual (in mind, and mind-form-being) and with nondiscriminating mind; and aware of Absolute Subjectivity and Representation, Projection, Feeling, and Noticing. This is Mind-only (Zen). But it is nevertheless the thing or individual who represents, projects, feels, and notices – and is mind (and form, citing no-form).

#### FOOTNOTE

The above material cites Seikkula and Arnkil in "Open Dialogues And Anticipations: Respecting Otherness In The Present Moment", The Buddha in "The Lankavatara Sutra" translated by D. T. Suzuki, Shibayama in "The Gateless Barrier: Zen Comments On The Mumonkan", and Nagarjuna in "Fundamental Wisdom Of The Middle Way" translated by Nishijima. And key is my own direct experience with and practice of Zen, and working with the material; some of the expression here is my own, and one could validate every point, from all these and my own view.

"Open Dialogues And Anticipations: Respecting Otherness In The Present Moment" was a key book for me, as well as the other texts, other influences, and my own Zen practice. See Open Dialogues UK Store.

Open Dialogues was developed and used in a region in Finland; and has expanded to representation elsewhere, including the Parachute program in NYC. It is a different way of doing crisis (psych unit) psychiatry; and the authors of the book say it must be adapted to the local context (it's not a checkbox-method; one must grasp its meaning). It uses polyphony in open dialogues: there are no preconditions, each of those involved including the individual is respected and heard, each voice speaks in their own timing and each voice is respected, there is no beginning to the dialogue (it goes to beginningless time), there is present moment awareness, and the psych team does not speak behind the individual's back.

There's no Wikipedia entry for Open Dialogues yet. A Web search might yield results.

An Endnote From The Tao Te Ching

“Tao Te Ching” by Lao Tzu translated by Stephen Mitchell

In one place, it reads: “Free from desire, you realize the mystery. Caught in desire, you see only the manifestations.” In another place it reads: “Treat the world as an object and you’ll lose it.”