



**Tsung-Hung Su** is a PhD candidate in Department of Education Studies, the University of Warwick. And I taught PGT Module: Policy, Strategy and Resources in Education in Department of Education Studies in 2024, and Warwick Online Learning Certificate Programme during the pandemic period. Being an Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, I presented my pedagogy in University of Oxford Department of Education Conference 2021, as well as making a speech on the 18<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Teaching and Learning Chinese in Higher Education in July 2021. Besides, I was the Chair in the Session of Migration, ESRC Midlands Graduate School DTP Conference in 2021 and in the Session of Sociology of Education, British Sociological Association Annual Conference in 2024.


## **Seeing Is Believing, Seeing Is Not Believing, and Seeing Is Believing Again**

蘇宗鴻 Tsung-Hung (William) Su

### **Abstract:**

In the contemporary Eurasia, peace-making<sup>1</sup> interconnectedness between ‘antiwar sentiments in Ukraine’ and ‘antiwar sentiments in Gaza’ is still under construction. Since both Ukraine War and Gaza War have profound impacts on the entire global society, this article argues the controversial cleavage between ‘exclusive European affairs’ and ‘exclusive Asian affairs’ in such a geographically connected Eurasia. In order to bridge cultural heritages between Europe and Asia, it makes efforts to combine the Zen Master’s triple levels with Hegelian three-paragraph dialectics, presenting the correlations. In particular, three-level dialectical logic of mind mapping addresses each stage with the effect of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, respectively. Most importantly, I have provided conceptual visual aids as well as making examples of well-known incidents to assist the readers for a better understanding of the above ideas. Hopefully, it may bring new light on relevant studies for epochal oriental-occidental academic exchanges, especially on the feedback to the query ‘how are society and culture understood and experienced in the contemporary world?’ through my approach of dialectics-associated mindfulness.

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<sup>1</sup> The peace symbol  represents pacifism, which motivates this article’s presentation to the extent of resilience in the illustrated dialectics.

**Keywords: Zen Buddhism, Dialectical Logic, Peace Interconnectedness in Eurasia**

**Bio:**

I am a PhD candidate in *Department of Education Studies, the University of Warwick*. And I taught PGT Module IE904.30: Policy, Strategy and Resources in Education (mentored by Dr Pontso Moorosi) in *Department of Education Studies, the University of Warwick* in 2024, and *Warwick Online Learning Certificate (WOLC) Programme* during the pandemic period.

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## 1. Research Motivation/Aim:

The scenery of hippy tents of antiwar demonstration on campus (see Figure 1) caught my attention to launch a set of mindfulness understanding/experience for peace<sup>2</sup> in this piece of work. This article attempts to establish a conceptual framework of constructive thinking for contemporary scholarly exchanges between oriental philosophies<sup>3</sup> and occidental thoughts. On the one hand, it recalls the renaissance of Sinology in Zen Buddhism and Western idealism in dialectical logic. On the other hand, it integrates the given disciplines across Eurasia for an innovative interconnectedness – normality, inversion thinking, and resilience.

**Figure 1: Antiwar Demonstration Tents in the University of Warwick**



In addition, my argument is that both Ukraine War and Gaza War have profound

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<sup>2</sup> Peace here means peacebuilding, a *de facto* dynamic social construct, which transforms conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relations (Jones and Lühe (eds.), 2021, p. 38).

<sup>3</sup> For example, an ideological trio of Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism (釋道儒) was being authorised throughout the ancient Chinese history and taught in the cultivation education.

impacts on the entire global society. Therefore, peace-making is across Eurasia, rather than a controversial cleavage between exclusive European affairs and exclusive Asian affairs within geographically connected Eurasia. In detail, this study discusses three-paragraph Zen/dialectics linked to peaceful, contested, or reconciliated sentiments. One may find out the basic element (e.g., ying-yang)<sup>4</sup> in the dialectical level I, or the extent of reflexivity<sup>5</sup> in the dialectical level II, whilst one embraces the circulation of ‘back to spring again’<sup>6</sup> in the dialectical level III. And experiencing my three-paragraph dialectical journey is as same as the storyline of A-ha’s music video, ‘take on me’<sup>7</sup>.

## 2. Literature Review:

There is a conventional wisdom of conceptual integration, ‘Western education in practice, with the basis of Chinese pedagogy’ (中學為體, 西學為用 *chung-hsueh wei-t’i, hsi-hsueh wei-yung*), which was implemented on the late nineteenth century in China, as the stronghold of my research. Remarkably, this meaningful idea was found from a literature of Buddhism<sup>8</sup> which actually contributed cross-cultural communication and exchanges since the Han dynasty in China.

Here I focus on Zen Buddhist Mindfulness. Thus, I review the most famous gatha poem of Huineng (c. 633-713) who was the Sixth Patriarch of Zen Buddhism and founder of the School of Mindfulness with my Mandarin/English bilingual interpretation:

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<sup>4</sup> p. 27, Ames, R. T. and Hall, D. C. 2003. *Daodejing ‘Making This Life Significant’ – A Philosophical Translation*. New York: Ballantine Books. In the I-Ching, experience itself is simply a yin-yang succession (一陰一陽之謂道). The sum of merits needs one half and the other to complete our field experience which is made explicitly in the metaphorical cosmology of ying-yang (陰陽) and the five phrases (五行): taiji (太極), liangyi (兩儀) or so-called yin-yang (陰陽), sixiang (四象), and baqua (八卦).

<sup>5</sup> Bourdieu, P. 2004. *Science of Science and Reflexivity*. Oxford: Polity. French Bourdieu was the significant philosopher of reflexivity. Reflexivity here involves doubting one’s own taken for granted assumptions, and it requires openness and an acceptance which one is part of the whole.

<sup>6</sup> Back to spring again here refers to the seasons circulation but is alike back-to-school for a new study.

<sup>7</sup> The video of experiencing is shown on the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=djV11Xbc914>

<sup>8</sup> Heisig, J. W. and Maraldo, J. C. 1995. *Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School & the Question of Nationalism*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, p. 155.

*Neither is Bodhi-tree,  
Nor stand of a mirror bright.  
Since all is void,  
Where can the dust alight on and from?*

With the inner strength, Huineng endorsed the concept of enlightenment to be mindfulness through an in-depth understanding of natural laws to the extent of self-fulfilment, where dust finds no place to settle itself.<sup>9</sup> Regardless of sunny or rainy days in contemporary lives, this poem is to inspire us humankind to be open-minded about phenomenology whilst we are engaged in the beauty of nature (please see the main discussion section of this study).

### **3. Research Ontology, Epistemology, and Methodology:**

The ontology is ‘optimising’ as the progressive nature which exists in a focus of merits (‘de 德’) and its field (‘dao 道’)<sup>10</sup> (Ames & Hall, 2003). The epistemology adopts dialectical logic of Hegelianism after Kantianism linking dialectical logic of teacher Socrates and student Plato. Hegelian dialectics expresses itself in triad of thesis-antithesis-synthesis<sup>11</sup>, which emphasises concepts being developed from practical experience or empirical learning. Hence, the analyses mind-map Hegelian three-paragraph dialectics associated with the above Zen Buddhist enlightenment foundation in knowledge acquisition. And, the methodology is divided into macroscopic appraisal, microscopic evaluation, and holistic review, which *de facto* the triple levels I would like to illustrate below.

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<sup>9</sup> Gao, X. 2004. *Snow in August*. Translated by Gilbert C.F. Fong. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, p. viii.

<sup>10</sup> It is referred to Daoism as the philosophy (道家) rather than the religion (道教), which is based on a cosmological *Daodejing* (道德經) as ‘the classic of a focus of merits (‘de 德’) and its field (‘dao 道’)’.

<sup>11</sup> Waldman, T. 2019. *Science of Logic by G.W.F. Hegel*. Amenia, NY: Salem Press Biographical Encyclopedia.

#### 4. The Main Analyses and Discussions:

- The Level I of the Dialectical Logic:

In the first level of the dialectical logic, ‘seeing the mountain is the mountain, and seeing the water is the water’. So, ‘seeing is believing’ is the theme of the level I. This stage of self-awareness is subjectivity of ego but in a form of self-limitation. And this metaphor can be presented through the visual aid – a ping-pong ball exists in the bottom of an empty glass (see Figure 2):

**Figure 2: A ping-pong ball in the bottom of the empty glass**



- The Level II of the Dialectical Logic

In the second level of the dialectical logic, ‘seeing the mountain is no mountain, and seeing the water is no water’. So, ‘seeing is non-believing’ is the theme of the level II. This type of experiencing – one fully engages oneself with – varies from the law of self-proof.

This stage of self-awareness is self-negation, a subjectivity of non-ego, which presents a ping-pong ball on the top of a full glass of water and nearly utmost of the water (see Figure 3). While one has been through lengthy self-negation, a desire to breathe fresh air surges oneself to be emerged on the top of a full glass of water. Remarkably, at the outermost surface stage, one may think reversely to the extent of Zen Buddhist transcendent openness.



**Figure 3: A ping-pong ball on the outermost surface of a full glass of water**



- The Level III of the Dialectical Logic

An endless cycle in the dialectical level III is based on the conceptual trio of Confucianism (the *Zhou-I* 周易), Taoism (the *Book of Changes* 易經), and Buddhism (the *Zen* 禪). Due to the full glass of water, the marginalised ping-pong ball is easily blown to another empty glass of water (see Figure 4 and Figure 5). This stage of self-awareness is self-awakening, a subjectivity of neo-ego (a reflexive new epoch).

‘Tian-Xia’ (天下 i.e., Commonwealth) have been the orthodox view of the world throughout thousand years of Chinese history. Figure 4 illustrates the miracle of a turning point. At this turning point, the dainty transition makes one revival from seasons alike circulation (see Figure 5). In other words, when one has suffered self-denials to the full, their torn in transit brings about revolutionary dynamics. After having experienced the transition, one begins to see themselves from a new position. On this stage, the ego is being empowered and enhanced. Hence, this level of the dialectical logic is ‘seeing the mountain is the mountain again, and seeing the water is the water again’. But, seeing is renewal believing, as the theme of the level III.

**Figure 4: Preparation for the transition from a full glass of water**



**Figure 5: A ping-pong ball in the bottom of empty glass in the aftermath of the transition**



- The Significant Circle

Finally, a formula is created, as three-paragraph metaphors are disclosed on the different stages for a circulation. One is more likely to see through the tricks<sup>12</sup> when one believes in natural laws and lives up naturally, e.g. Zen living<sup>13</sup>. In short, the above images demonstrate a renewal of the essences of Zen Buddhist mindfulness. On the one hand, it talks about an in-depth metaphysical awakening for a ‘sacred’ vision. On the other hand, it links to easing one’s mind in ‘secular’ comfort zone.

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<sup>12</sup> Heisig, J. W. and Maraldo, J. C. 1995. *Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School & the Question of Nationalism*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, pp. 322-325.

<sup>13</sup> see p.55, Humphreys, C. 1996. *Zen Buddhism*. London: Diamond Books. The cover of Christmas Humphreys’ Book, *Zen Buddhism* perfectly denotes its research theme: the duo concept of null-full.



Last but not least, there are two practices for peace-making in the contemporary world: non-violent measures and peacekeeping forces.

### **Non-violent Measures**

‘Wuwei’ (無為) means doing nothing (or non-coercive actions) which is a form of null in accordance with the particular focus ‘de’ (德), a focus of merits. Nevertheless, this type of non-coercive actions may be effortlessly resulted into non-contentious efficacy. For instance, one who takes non-violent measures (e.g., hunger strike) in the dialectical level II may render ‘those who are good at waging war are not belligerent’ cited from the *Daodejing* (Ames & Hall, 2003) towards a successful peaceful revolution. Thus, mindfulness with natural laws or in nature (as this study denoted) may bring to new light upon and be equally considered to situate oneself from the disputed hotspots.

The well-known cases include US-USSR (Russia) *Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty*, *Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty*, *Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms*, and *Alliance of Peace* (579 BC and 546 BC) during the Period of Spring and Autumn in China.

### **Peacekeeping Force**

Apostles of contradictory *Bodhisattva Disciplines* (菩薩道), however, may suggest monks/nuns to produce merits of greater compassion through killing scoundrels so as to rescue more victims during the Sino-Japanese War I & II (c.1894-1895, 1937-1945). It could be viewed as alternative salvation or religious altruism, reducing the sum of depravities made by the villains through terminating their lives earlier. Ones who believe in contemporary factitious regimes (e.g., governments, religions) transform themselves in the dialectical level II to join the force for peacekeeping, e.g., UN Peacekeeping Force integrating power to increase the impact on collective security (Jones and Lühe (eds.), 2021, p. 37).

This study of oriental philosophy is associated with occidental interpretation to construct the analytic framework on perceptions of visual effects and implications of

major Eurasian disputes. Whether violent or non-violent by means, resilience would be shown in the dialectical level III in the aftermath of a required self-transformation for the protest or the combat. Hopefully, world peace<sup>14</sup> in Eurasia may come back instead of concurrent conflicts, i.e., Ukraine War and Gaza War. Indeed, the prospective resilience here (see Figure 5, the third level of dialectics) is aliasing with a British conventional wisdom, ‘keep calm and carry on (寧靜致遠)’.

## 5. Conclusion:

In Eurasia, Europe and Asia are geographically connected. So are many shared beliefs. This study addresses twin beliefs or philosophies, which could be viewed as the implication of butterfly effect from this end of Asia to that end of Europe. Along with my visual aids, I address sayings of Zen Master Weisin (惟信) - Seeing is Believing, Seeing is not Believing, and Seeing is Believing again – on three stages of the dialectic logic. In addition, the essences of scared/secular mindfulness are unveiled through the conceptual images.

Furthermore, I conclude Zen Buddhist Mindfulness with melody/rhythm below:

I: Gatha poem of Shenxiu (c. 606-706) (Gao, 2004) with my bilingual interpretation:

*Bodhi tree is the body,*

*Mirror is the mind.*

*Cleansing frequently,*

*So that no dust alights on.*

Alongside the musical song, *Edelweiss* from *the Sound of Music*<sup>15</sup> which illustrates one’s national sentiments of homesick with ego of self-limitation, Shenxiu’s gatha poem presents the dialectic level I to understand/experience societal and cultural incidents in the contemporary world.

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<sup>14</sup> My ‘world peace’ tone is after *War and Peace* written by Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy (c. 1828-1910).

<sup>15</sup> *Edelweiss* reveals one’s national sentiments for the homeland against genocide and any form of war. Its video link goes below: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8bL2BCiFkTk>

II: Gatha poem of Huineng (c. 633-713):

*Neither is Bodhi-tree,*

*Nor stand of a mirror bright.*

*Since all is void,*

*Where can the dust alight on and from?*

Alongside the folk song, *Where Have All the Flowers Gone?*<sup>16</sup> which illustrates haunting grief-stricken sentiments of the devastation of war with non-ego of lengthy self-negation, Huineng's gatha poem presents the dialectic level II to understand/experience societal and cultural incidents in the contemporary world.

III: The Aftermath of War, and Peace in a Promising Land to K.C.C.O.<sup>17</sup>:

*A flower dreams himself/herself/themselves a black cat, so he/she/they never walk(s) across himself/herself/themselves –*

*A good luck.*

*A cat dresses himself/herself/themselves up with flowers, but he/she/they walk(s) into a catfight –*

*A bad romance.*

*A loss, no bad thing or a blessing in disguise (得失心別太重) – Mum is always right!*

Alongside my own songwriting with neo-ego with self-awakening, the poem/lyrics presents the dialectic level III to understand/experience societal and cultural incidents in the contemporary world.

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<sup>16</sup> *Where Have All the Flowers Gone?* was written by American singer-songwriter Pete Seeger in 1955. This haunting song explored the devastation of war. Its link goes as the following:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbWFL\\_F2fjo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbWFL_F2fjo)

<sup>17</sup> K.C.C.O. is referred to 'Keep Calm & Carry On'.

Knowledge is power, especially the above knowledge for peace. In sum, normality, reflexivity, and resilience are the strongholds of my three-paragraph understanding of profound emotional intelligence. Hopefully, this article will bring new light on relevant studies for oriental-occidental academic exchanges – an experiential exploration both in society and culture of the contemporary world.

**6. Note:**

*Beans are boiled to make broth,*

*Pulses are filtered to extract juice.*

*Under the pot the Beanstalks are burnt,*

*In the Pot the Beans weep,*

***Since the twain from one root,***

***Why shall we grow so hot?*** (Seven Steps Verse/ Cao Zhi c.192-232)

Last but not least, I write a note as the interconnectedness between Cao Zhi's Seven Steps Verse and my piece of work for peace, no war:

***Since humans are one kind as humankind,***

***Why shall we treat each other unkind?***

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