



Review Article

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# Zen: A Tool That Beyond Experiencing It's Possible to Understand and Explain

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## Abstract

In an increasingly interdependent world where communications are not only easy, but also faster, economical, and agile, the increasingly obvious and pressing problems of acculturation must deserve our attention. But understanding the others and their edging in frames of reference foreign to what we are used to is not easy. Zen, in addition to being a tool for our efficient integration into today's world, is a good example for the ways we must open new paths and their difficulties and conditionings.

## The Context

In a world where the ability to communicate and interact increases explosively, problems of acculturation, and even the relationship between natural persons and singular cases, can no longer be ignored. Dialectics demand that understanding and explaining (which is the objective of science, although it is an objective that it shares with other protagonists, which implies better skills in mutual understanding) gain new forms and strategies, since it is not only the available resources that increase, but it is also the challenges and scopes that change. Man as a whole, and the individuals that constitute this group in their idiosyncrasies, gain importance and autonomies, because, strange as it may seem, centripetal and centrifugal tendencies do not contradict each other, but reinforce each other. Efficiency gains even more relevance [note: see in references more articles where we develop this subject].

## The Object-Zen

### Much Has Been Said and Written About Zen

However, when we want to understand what Zen is, we hardly find answers with any content. With origin in the East, moving the concept of Zen to a Western framework becomes difficult. It goes through religion, philosophy, way of being, conception of life, ..., its expression is kept under a veil of esotericism, closed, therefore,

where expressions, classic, such as "those who speak do not know, those who know do not speak", defend the experiential and the empirical as a way of seeking to bridge the inability to understand and explain. "Experimenting/making mistakes" and seeking to learn from mistakes is a way to progress, although with very high costs, or overly short gains (see-notion of yield-a benefit/cost ratio), even when "strokes of luck" can help in the short term.

Today, however, we consider it possible and desirable, with the tools that provides us with the exponential knowledge growth (in quantity, perhaps not development, quality) to take strides towards esoterism (in an open way) that, once served by science (with a frank and open debate, which does not reject the existence of secrets), with the ability to collect and treat data that we increasingly possess, with the increasingly precise instruments we have, with the ability to communicate and confront positions (often misused), with all the tools and means (although with objectives and guidelines not always well defined-because they are vague or unhelpful), we can certainly do more and better if, but only if, we know how to choose the paths and target the appropriate goals (concerns and often sloppy intentions, because we entertain ourselves with the "new toys", transforming them into "ends" and forgetting that they are only tools, means to perform the work and not the work itself) [1].



Zen is a wealth of wisdom, accumulated over many centuries and at sometimes very high costs (death often sanctioned error when used in extreme contexts). Thus, it is justified to seek to open doors to an analysis of the realities offered by Zen, that is, for the eventual realization of the potentialities that are made available, showing that speaking and knowledge can complement, if, and of course only if, more than drawing teachings from the experienced, from the expression of the empirical, we are able to define coherent and focused strategies on the basis of the field of knowledge which, because expressed and organized can be refuted and, where appropriate, reformulated and transmitted objectively. That's what we're going to try to do here.

## Concretizing Zen

### Mission Impossible? Maybe Not

The world has changed in some tens of years, the capacities and potentials that have become available are assets that we cannot ignore, because life has tight limits and respect for the individual (what it produces and makes available and what it can enjoy) does not authorize waste. In the case of situations where we must consider 1-the before, 2-the during and 3-the after, without forgetting the side effects that even if they do not directly influence the situation, will condition it indirectly. All this, of course, considering the limits we have to deal with their knowledge, limits that have been exponentially expanded, as we have pointed out above, in the last tens of years (following centuries, even millennia, in which it has been increasing), which obviously influences all these situations. Situations that, in their sum are what we can call "*the life of the individual*". An individual, an entity, functional unit not divisible in parts, but also not integrable as entity and identity, in broader frameworks without losing its characteristic of the "*self*", although it can negotiate relationships (parasitizing, symbiosis, association, ...), with individuals or things with other characters or natures, with other origins (pasts, presents and, of course, future).

[Note: The risk of being misinterpreted in the course of this article is great, see points 1), 2) and 3) below, because seeking to leave the usual reference frame the tendency of the reader and the possibilities of interpreting what we try to say in the way we can do it, will, of course, have a pendor more linked to the beliefs of those who interpret than to the beliefs of those who express themselves. Thus, an attempt at enlightenment is needed-each of us is different from all the others, even the monozygotic twins, despite the many similarities that they may have-that is, each has a past/ a present/ a different future. That is, a different functionality, although it may be useful to group together to facilitate process management-for example, the customization of a drug to everyone would have costs-costs again in relation to the possible benefits-unbearable, for the resources we have today. This individualization is fundamental to grasp the "*dynamic balance*", see below, which is at the foundation sofa of Zen.]

A before/during/after that we will analyze in some situations, after presenting some of the conditionings to meet to realize the

meaning of what we present and that constitute beacons (some of the many existing beacons-let us not ignore that accuracy depends on the number of beacons/conditionings used, which means a cost, and that here, in the framework of an article, let's look for a restricted cost) for the path we're going to try to follow.

## Some of the Tools (Conceptual) For Operationalization

The knowledge, all knowledge, and tools (conceptual or material) is valid (and in a special way for refutation), but when we seek to operationalize, we must select the instruments that we can use efficiently (cost/benefit ratio, again). In this way, we have considered three parameters that guide our presentation, considering the need to be succinct and incisive [2].

### The Word and Communication

One of the difficulties we have to deal with the concept of Zen and its operational capabilities, as we briefly exposed in the framing of this work, is the need to translate what is experienced into words, in order to be able to organize and transmit it. Without entering the vast scope of linguistics and related sciences, in the long journey they have made since, for example, the work of Ferdinand Saussure in the creation of its foundations, we cannot fail to raise the problems upraised by the widespread misunderstanding of the limits and conditionings of the word tool, in this case aggravated by the relations and acculturations in the East/West links (past/present/future, different and individualized). Because the word has, namely, besides a meaning, a signifier, a signified, the side effects that influence it and the side effects it will provoke.

Everyone, with their own characteristics (which translate an evolutionary process of their ancestors-from microorganisms, let us not ignore) is a set of life and learning. It is, as we say above, a particular and unique case, an entity and an identity. Communicating thus means converting different knowledge into a common language, through a translation, however close the world of receiver and sender may be. The message therefore has, at best, an approximate value, but is often interpreted as an absolute value. Mutual understanding is always vague, which allows the above-mentioned classic phrase of "those who speak do not know, those who know do not speak" can be synonymous with "*they do not know what they are talking about, they do not say what they know*".

### Accuracy in Measure

The ability to measure, in less than a century, has increased exponentially not only in the details obtained, in the reduction of costs (financial, labor, registration and accumulation of data, etc.) when carried on and also in the capacities to treat, transmit and relate their results obtained, and consequently, the depth and acuity of the conclusions that we can draw from them.

[Note: In science, as in factories making sausages, or chorizos if you want to be more typical, some (many) insist on filling "*the casing*" manually, when robotization already allows "*the pig enters on one side of the machine and the sausages come out ready and*

*packed on the other.*" Think about the cost/benefit ratio, yield again, and imagine if it wouldn't be more profitable for some (many), instead of "wasting reagents" in the laboratory, to go "to the beach".]

As we will see below, this ability to measure allows us to complement (not ignore) what we can detect through an experience of extreme situations (close to the limits).

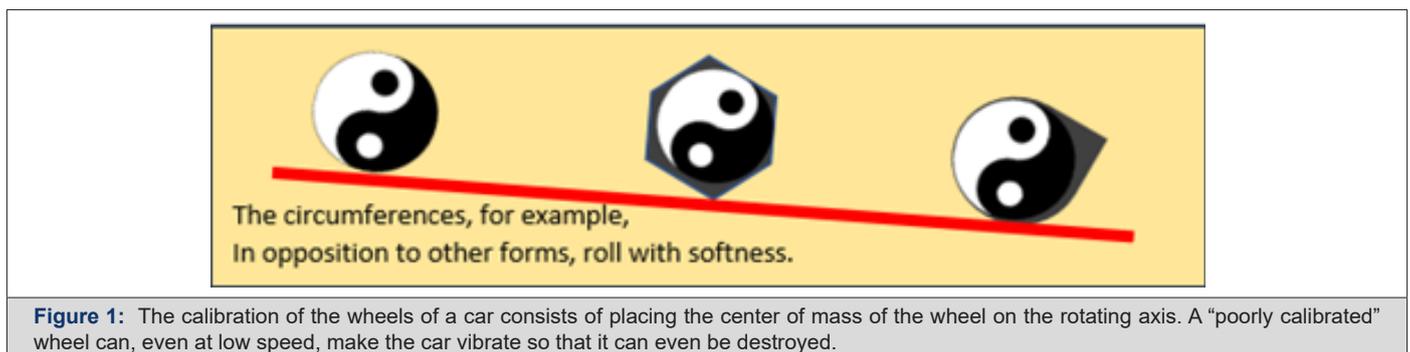
### A Dynamic Framework and A Dialectical Strategy

A more difficult picture to grasp because positions with a static perspective still prevail (the world seen as a 'present' rather than a 'future trajectory'). The transition takes place slowly, as appropriate tools must be deconstructed, reconstructed and deployed (see Ian Hacking) suitable to another conceptual framework (see Schumpeter, 1883/2050, and "creative destruction"; attention to the dates, which show the times of the changes). We are used to regard as consistent and robust, solid in common language, and we are frightened when we see the flexibility of the wings of an airplane that gives it resistance. We have difficulty accepting that castles (or the Maginot Line!) are a weakness for preventing maneuvering, movement, and that the balance on a bike is much more "solid" (see?), easier on the move than stopped. If doubts still existed from this vision of our culture, we could see the "the three

*little pigs*" fable that tells us since we were children, that the stone house is praised as the example to follow.

The ☯ image is considered as typifying Zen in the feeling of movement that seeks to convey, either in the movement/flow of the "whales", the black and white (the *yin* and the *yang* in complementarity), or in the fractal represented by the "eyes", in which this image may be no more than an "eye" of a larger image, images that can go to infinity "further away, or" with increasingly small and smaller sets further this way.

We, therefore, have a flow (such as the flow of a stream of water) that "rotates" in a more or less fluid way (from fluid, liquid, plasma or gaseous-substances that deform continuously to adapt to the stresses to which they are subjected, which facilitates, yields, its flow), with whirlin that result from the obstacles encountered or even from the variations in the homogeneity of the fluid. Therefore, flowing, the efficiency of the act of flowing, the possible torrent, is a function of dynamic balances, found, of the adaptation of what flows to the context, where "smoothly" is an indicator of the efficiency obtained (benefits and costs, again). In the form of an image (more efficient than words, but with the costs of freeing the reader from eventually useful delimitations and being able to lead to more divergences that are not easily identified) [3,4] (Figure1).



## Example Situations of the Zen Operationalization

### The Importance of "Infimum Times" in Sport

[Note: Sport is not a bunch of rules that one must follow. Sport is a set of situations where the sportsman pursues the immediate objectives (sports results), and, simultaneously, activating his body, that is, calls for transformations (the mediate objectives) what constitute adaptation phenomena to improve his performance. Adaptations that can be induced (i.e., become permanent). This concomitance between immediate objectives, which motivate effort, and the mediate objectives that generate adaptation/transformation phenomena is one of the great advantages of sport] [5].

**Football-The Goalkeeper:** As we can see in Figure 2 for the hand to get to the ball (defend) it would have to be advanced a few milliseconds. Being often close to the limits of the individual, the

player, not only allows to evaluate their performance, but is also a motivation to overcome and to be able to focus on the variables that influence their performance, without distractions and without losing even if it is a few thousandths of a second [6] (Figure 2).

For this, players must select the essential of their skills and variables (which have been developed in training, requesting development through the appropriate exercises, which more than have some similarities with the situations for which the training is done should act on the "active principles" and has the appropriate dosage for the competitions for which it prepares (should prepare), that will seek to mobilize at the time, abstracting everything else (concentration and focus-a global balance of the individual that is the goal of Zen).

It is not enough just to try to increase the speed (it is not enough "more muscles" as in a car it is not enough to increase the engine power to be a faster car), it is necessary to find and

mobilize the variables that can contribute to dynamic balance and improve performance. The flow (the become “fluid” as we presented above), avoiding shocks and upheaves by understanding as early as possible the team partners and opponents by reading

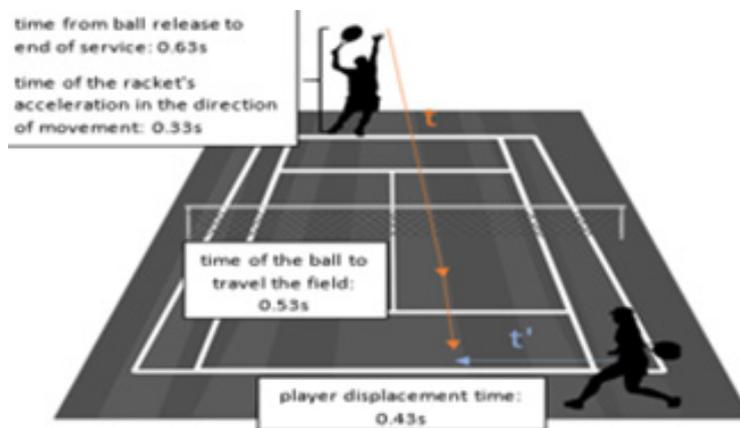
their functional variables (such as the relationship of their centers of mass/support bases, their fears, their tendencies, and failures, etc.-[see the taxonomy of sports activities proposed by Fernando Almada [5].



**Figure 2:** Infimum Times Football.

**Tennis:** In tennis it's similar but being a sport of “direct confrontation” and not a “collective sport” (such as football, for example) the model to be used is different (see the taxonomy of sports activities proposed by Fernando Almada [5]. In this case the

public is conditioned to also aim to read the game and therefore also from the ‘infimum times’, since it must remain silent. It's a different kind of integration into dynamic balance 🧠[Figure 3].



**Figure 3:** Take attention to the times in question in tennis.

### Another Type of Variables That Influence Dynamic Balance 🧠

**Fall Asleep:** The duplicity of the coordinating centers (which some think of as control centers) in the nervous system (cortex/diencephalon; or, if you prefer, sympathetic and parasympathetic), even if one does not think of the influences (or impositions?) of microbiomes, DNA, etc., and the multiple channels of communication that information about the functionality of the individual uses, create a complex network that, more than being supervised, it has to have a sense and a management.

When we want to fall *asleep* “compulsively” (“I have to fall asleep because tomorrow...”), more than “counting sheep”-a distraction from the problems that allows to fall asleep, implies creating a harmony, a dynamic balance, so that the articulation, coordination, can take place.

**Sex:** A performance in which more importance is given to the results obtained than to the union and complementarity? Like the sportsmen mentioned above who waste time looking at the spectators on the bench, and the fears of possible or imaginary criticism and as in falling asleep the generation of conflicts between

the cortex and the diencephalon, of shocks and whirlwind that prevent the flow of the process [7].

### Focus And Concentration as A Learning Tool

**School Achievement:** Learn (more than being taught or even trained). With all the information available today and the “torrents” of knowledge still to come, require (even oblige) an ability to select that is not moved by the situation of those who have been lost on the web (on the webs?).

Without a focus and an ability to seek objectively, the richness of the powerful knowledge supports is nothing more than distractions that, which ship aimlessly, even if they do not meet the picks where they will be lost, lead to simplifications that only find answers in memorization and in the corresponding erudition (erudition = ability to debit information). The pleasure of knowledge lies in the ability to “play with it” and not in the stored amount. To play it is necessary to integrate it and give it a use in successive dynamic balances that lead to the path that is more wisdom than knowing [8].

**In Health:** Health as a state of global equilibrium has been defended by the World Health Organization officially since at least the 1940s. But it’s not enough to want it. The paradigm shift (see Kuhn) is not easy. One must have the necessary tools (see Ian Hacking). Zen could bring good indications for the transformations needed to make the change. In order to understand man as a whole with a dynamic balance, made up of the dialectics of its functionalities and medicine as an operative framework that acts on these features and not in “adding what is missing and cutting what is the most” (see, also, the problems in the operationalization of “internal medicine”).

### Other Performances That Can also Benefit from A Zen Attitude

**Car Driving:** The use of the mobile phone and the enormous publicization of the evils that occur therefrom is a good indicator of the difficulties in finding and adjusting the dynamic balances needed. Difficulties in concentration and focus or the habit of thinking and seeing “everything in slices”? [9].

### Zen in a Global Vision

**Life:** State of global equilibrium. An individual, an entity has a stability and continuity that is not commendable with permanent adjustments (or instabilities). A group, a team, is more permissible in its identity and as an entity. Sometimes it takes small influences to trigger “mass phenomena” that “no one would expect to be possible with those people!” [10].

### Conclusions

Homeostasis is a state of balance of the individual, that is, it respects the limits of functional capacities that are never fixed because any variable (so they are called variables) oscillates between values that does not unbalance the whole. A whole that

is a flow (the goal aimed at Zen) resulting from dialectics that are established in its constituents (not in its parts-fragments). A whole that, of course, establishes dialectical relationships with the contexts with which it comes into contact (which does not have to be material). A “self”, an individuality, an entity-with a past, a present and... a future. Harmony (see its definition in music) is an integrative, unifying concept. Chaos and setbacks, such as silences in discourse and representation, are part of a whole of its meaning, significant and signifying.

Zen seeks and worries about a harmony that we can empirically try to grasp, feel. Perhaps hearing is a more incisive sense than the view that is considered the privileged way of man to relate to (in) context. We will, however, hear the roar of a battery and the ability we have to unravel the harmonies and their flaws and then we will understand the acuity of this sense in the sense of the dynamic balances (and therefore also imbalances) that occur in milliseconds and the possibilities that we have to register them [11,12].

BUT THIS IS ANOTHER WORLD

### THE HISTORY OF THE MASTER OF THE TEA CEREMONY

Once upon a time, in Japan, a master of the tea ceremony, who had never handled weapons, was attacked by a ronin. He asked the ronin to let him go because he had promised to hold a tea ceremony and he didn’t want to miss his word. The next day he would return.

Having performed the promised tea ceremony, he went to talk to a samurai to see if he could teach him any way to defend himself.

The samurai accessed, if in return he held a tea ceremony.

After this ceremony, the samurai said - There is nothing I can teach you; you know you’re going to die tomorrow, but you get the concentration need, to flawlessly hold this ceremony. All you have to do is act the same way tomorrow and perform the sword with all your energy focused on the ronin. It’s impossible to defend a hit like that.

That’s how it happened.

### Acknowledgements

None.

### Conflict of Interest

None.

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