

# Hsin Hsin Ming and the Information Age

You have probably heard the rumor that we live in the information age. When you hear all the talk of “information overload” you really get the impression people are so connected and switched on to what is happening in the world. Then you discover things might not be, as they appear to be.

Check out Hans Rosling. He is a wizard at making information easily accessible and, naturally, is also interested in ignorance. He has his “chimp test.” Given a series of questions on any topic, the chimps will score correctly at least on a random basis. His work suggests that most of us, including academics, and particularly the media, do rather worse than the chimps most of the time. So much for all that information.

So, you won't be surprised to discover that so far only 74% of Americans have realized that the earth goes around the sun. We are used to the joke about American ignorance, but this time the proportion of Europeans who are up to speed on this particular bit of information is only 64%. In fact the Greeks knew about this nearly 20 centuries before the infallible Pope Urban VIII got his habits in a twist and had Galileo put under house arrest for supporting this view.

In reality, it seems the information age began about 50,000 years ago. Before that, for millions of years, our two-legged ancestors led relatively unchanging lives. Yes, people had stone tools, but they were the same stone tools they had been using for a million or so years! Imagine that great little stone gadget you love to use for cracking open those nuts. Sorry, sir. There is no upgrade. Support for that model is forever.

Then, as we pass that point, 50,000 years ago, everything starts to change with increasing speed. So here you are coveting your neighbor's iPhone that didn't even exist 10 minutes ago.

Between then and now there was another major development in the information revolution. About 10,000 years ago, maybe under what is now a bomb crater in modern Iraq, some smart woman realized she could grow food in one spot and

didn't have to spend all day wandering around looking for it! Intentional rather than accidental food production began.

Even 10,000 years is pretty hard to imagine. The Axial Revolution of Buddha, Socrates, Lao Tzu, Mahavira... was only 2,500 years ago. So four times as far back as that! Difficult to visualize... no wonder a million years is almost incomprehensible. Imagine *one thousand times* further back than Buddha. The mind boggles – but now imagine having to wait that long for an upgrade for your computer mouse! Or your sound system? Or your iPad? That was what it was like before the real information revolution began.

Prior to whatever kicked in 50,000 years ago, we were a pretty unimpressive species. Then, almost overnight, everything changes. In the one percent of our history since then, we have gone from a two-legged “animal” to super-animal: From amazing cave art to walking on the moon – here we are reading words typed thousands of miles away, delivered “electronically” to a gadget with a screen we can hold in our hands.

Then you look again and see another side of this amazing creature: the one that thinks he knows everything, who prides himself on all this “information,” who careens around blowing stuff up, chopping off heads, wiping out species, destroying the only planet he can call home – like a lunatic at the height of his insanity. He thinks he is superman and has forgotten he is only superanimal.

You know you read those scary stories of what might happen if weird intelligent robots were to take over the world? Well that is what is actually happening, right now.

All those contemporary neuroscientists who see the human mind as a supercomputer, as a mechanism, are correct. Almost all of them insist with equal certainty that there is no such thing as consciousness that is separate from this machine-like mind. There is no “ghost in the machine” as they like to put it. There is only “matter” these ultimate materialists insist. Everything has to be reducible to a point where this “mind” can understand it. In fact, there is only this “mind” they claim. Just a bio-computer, a bio-machine, running the whole show.

Who, one might dare to ask, is running the bio-computer? Is it simply our conditioned minds deciding how to respond to issues created by our conditioned minds? Are we caught on a loop that is spinning faster and faster, literally blindingly fast.

Is it intentional that millions, or is it billions – these zeros make you giddy – fall asleep hungry each night, have no clean water or toilets, while one plane load of people has the same wealth as over half the world's population? Is climate change intentional? Is the current major extinction event intentional? Did anyone intend to create all these nations and religions so that these smart humans would have an opportunity to practice using their killing machines?

Are you sure you are not watching one incredible accident happening right in front of your eyes? Have you noticed no one has a clue what to do? Everyone is looking at everyone else, like, *someone* must know what the hell is going on?

They don't. And they can't. Because we have handed the keys to the machine.

Enter Osho. Here he takes the hand of Sosan and together they dance to a beautiful poem, "Hsin Hsin Ming," from a mere sixteen centuries ago. Osho illuminates a precious moment when Buddhism and Tao, perhaps for the first time, played together in China,

Suddenly we see the difference between the accidental and the intentional. Immediately we can see the difference between mind and consciousness. In a moment it is obvious that without that consciousness, the mind will simple rage on, from one extreme to another, from one madness to another.... We are left with the amazing choice: No-mind, or no future.

"We will be entering the beautiful world of a Zen master's no-mind. Sosan is the third Zen patriarch. Nothing much is known about him – this is as it should be, because history records only violence. History does not record silence, it cannot record it. All records are of disturbance. Whenever someone becomes really silent, he disappears from all records, he is no longer a part of our madness. So it is as it should be....

“One thing I would like to say, and you have to remember it: Zen is a crossbreeding. And just as more beautiful flowers can come out of crossbreeding, and more beautiful children are born out of crossbreeding, the same has happened with Zen.

“Zen is a crossbreeding between Buddha’s thought and Lao Tzu’s thought. It is a great meeting, the greatest that ever took place. That’s why Zen is more beautiful than Buddha’s thought and more beautiful than Lao Tzu’s thought. It is a rare flowering of the highest peaks and the meeting of those peaks. Zen is neither Buddhist nor Taoist, but it carries both within it.”

**OSHO**

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