► STARTING OVER Every morning. Every spring. Every return to this moment.

WHEN LIVES CHANGE, either suddenly or gradually, zazen is a refuge.

FIVE SENSES? Six? Or none? Zhaozhou and Roshi examine a newborn baby.

ZEN BOW

Z E N B O W

THE MIND OF THE ZEN ADEPT IS TAUT—READY, LIKE A DRAWN BOW

Spring 2018 | VOLUME XL, NUMBER ONE

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CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

All readers are encouraged to submit essays and images at any time and on any topic related to Zen practice. Articles may be of any length. Suggestions for articles and artwork are also welcome, as are "found objects" such as quotations, haiku, and/or excerpts from articles in other publications. Submission guidelines may be found on the *Zen Bow* page of the Center's website, rzc.org. For any and all questions and suggestions, please email Chris Pulleyn at zenbow@rzc.org.

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Soundings

SHUTTERSTOCK

THE BIRTHDAY PRESENT

IT WAS A LOVELY June day in 2008—bright sunlight—cool breezes off the ocean. My birthday. I prefer keeping birthdays quiet. Few people know. Usually I get a brief call or email from my brother or sister—that's it. A day of quietude and reflection.

Then it arrived—out of the blue. Out of the void. The email. Heading: "Impermanence." Message: "Happy Birthday, Phil… Bodhin." That was it. I was stunned. How had he known? How had he remembered? The rest of the day was like a strange dream. Memories poured out… more than a few tears were shed. Something profound had happened—something was stirring—reawakening.

A little background. In the fall of 1971, I was a young musician barely out of my teens. While studying at Tanglewood a year earlier, I had unexpectedly won a position as principal trombonist with the Miami Philharmonic, which was at that time quite a dynamic, up-and-coming orchestra. So, here I was in Miami, making a good living as a musician, and living what on the surface looked like a dream life. But beneath all that there was a deep discontent, questioning. "This is all there is?" Looking to answer that in the usual ways: relationships, drugs, achievements… all was coming up empty. As Hakuin said, "From dark path to dark path, we've wandered in darkness."

My brother Grant was at that time an undergraduate at Denison University in Ohio, at the beginning of a long journey to become a doctor. He told me in a conversation that autumn about a book he had read called *Three Pillars of Zen* by some guy named Philip Kapleau.

He said I should check it out. So I picked it up at a local store, started reading it, and, at that moment, life was about to move in a completely new direction.

In December 1971, I flew up to Rochester, and met Grant there for a workshop with this Philip Kapleau guy. Something happened that day—didn't know what at the time—but it was clear—"This is it." I was hooked. I came back in the summer of 1972 for several months, and returned again in the summer of 1973, attending my first four-day and seven-day sesshin. It was becoming increasingly clear that I needed to leave my "dream job" and move to Rochester.

By 1975, I was on the staff (part-time), sitting many hours every day, and going to every sesshin I could. Over the next decade, my life revolved around the Zen Center. Music continued, there was an unspoken sense that I would return to it, but for now it took a back seat to the training at 7 Arnold Park.

By the mid-eighties, it had become clear that it was time to return to the music. Music is my right livelihood, the way for me to live out what I have experienced in those years of training. So—off to Boston—starting up from scratch in a world I had left for over a decade. Felt a bit like Rip van Winkle. Lots of hard work, lots of ups and downs, but within a few years, I had gotten my doctorate, was teaching at a state university, and performing and recording regularly. During those years, I continued sitting daily. Life without sitting seemed unimaginable. I visited Rochester from time to time, but primarily to visit Roshi Kapleau. Bodhin, with whom I had trained for all of those ▶

"YOU CAN'T *go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending."* —C. S. LEWIS

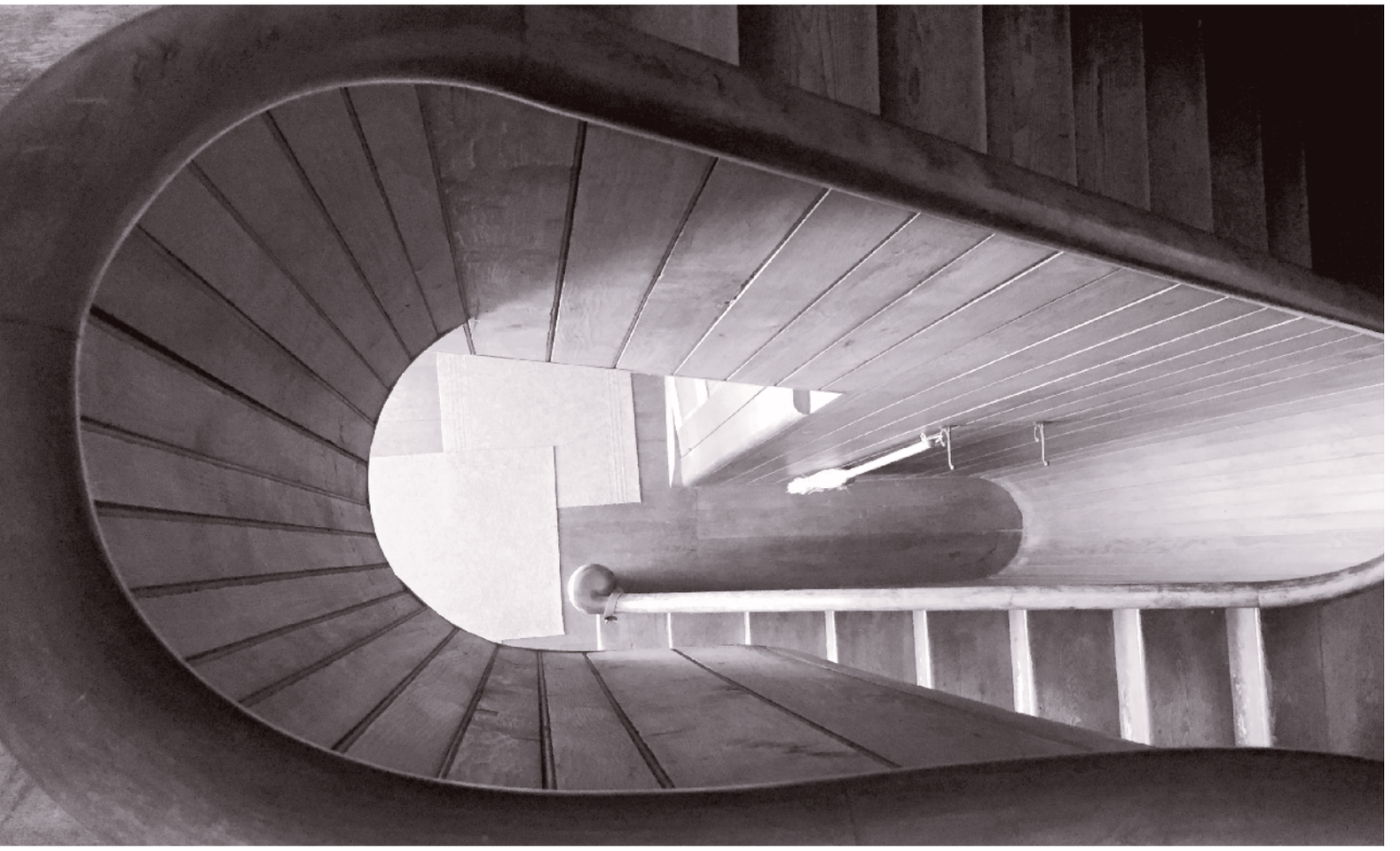
STARTING OVER

YES, FOR THOSE of you who are wondering, this is still *Zen Bow*. It's the same publication that was launched in 1969 under our late Roshi Philip Kapleau's watchful eye; however, we have reached the Dorothy-enters-Oz moment when a color magazine makes both aesthetic and financial sense. Thanks to advancements in printing technology, this new version of *Zen Bow* is less expensive to produce than its black-and-white predecessor.

You will notice some additions to content with this new format, many of which were gleaned from the recent reader survey (see page 22). Book and movie reviews, Q&A, short excerpts from articles from other publications, and shorter-than-feature-length submissions from readers are all fair game now. Our aim is that *Zen Bow* will continue to evolve while maintaining its focus on Zen practice.

The librarians among you may notice that this issue is Number One of Volume XL, which represents a reboot of *Zen Bow*'s numbering system. Beginning now, *Zen Bow* will be published quarterly in March, June, September, and December.

A deep bow to Donna Kowal, *Zen Bow*'s editor for the past 14 (!) years, as well as to Mark Argetsinger for its elegant black-and-white design. ///



▲ A stairway at Canterbury Shaker Village (2015)
PHOTOGRAPH BY DARYL WAKELEY

sangha \'säŋ(g)ə\ *n* [Sanskrit *saṃgha* 'community'] **1 :** the Buddhist community of monks, nuns, novices, and laity **2 :** the Buddhist monastic order

ZEN PRACTICE HAS always been based on a strong effort by the individual. The mission of the sangha is to help in that effort. By joining together, we're pooling our efforts with those of like-minded others. The more we participate in sittings and other Zen activities, the more support we draw from each other—and, just as important, the more we can provide support to them.

The aim is to enable people from every walk of life to strengthen their Zen practice, deepen their insight, and develop a zazen "temper of mind" that will carry through their daily lives, with greater energy, clarity, and responsiveness.

years, and with whom I had always felt a deep and warm connection, had become the teacher. Good choice! However, sesshin and extensive periods of zazen were no longer part of my life. That was about to change.

The title of the email from Bodhin hit the mark. Impermanence. I'd been through some very tough, emotionally wrenching times recently. I called him shortly after and asked if I could drive out and talk. "Of course, come on out, Phil." I hadn't had much contact with anyone from the Center for years, other than Roshi Kapleau, but when I arrived, I immediately felt as though I had come home. Again, Hakuin: "In coming and going, we never leave home." True enough. And yet—there is Sangha. There is the unseen, unspoken, power and support we receive from Sangha. It was time to come back.

Shortly after seeing Roshi, I started coming to sesshin again. I am fortunate at this point in my life to have the flexibility to come quite regularly to sesshin, and also to take part in the life of the Sangha—Buddha's birth, Jukai, picnics, and other events. Quite a well-worn path from Gloucester to Rochester over the past decade.

The effect on my life of reconnecting with the Center, and of a deepening commitment to practice has been profound. Long-standing, stubborn habit patterns losing their power. An openness, a stillness, a quiet joy arising naturally. The Buddha held up a flower—Mahakashyapa smiled.

A three-word email on a birthday. The seemingly most innocuous, insignificant word, gesture, or act can have enormous, unexpected ramifications. A great lesson in the law of causality. The mystery… a tiny spark can light or re-light a flame. Actually, the flame never goes out—how could it? It is this very nature, our deepest nature—no beginning, no end—that which brought us all to the Center, to the mat, to sesshin, to this very issue of *Zen Bow*.

"Life slips quickly by." These words on the han resonate ever more deeply….

See you in the zendo.—PHIL SWANSON

THE MEANING OF REBIRTH

IF ONE ACCEPTS the Buddhist idea of rebirth, there are basically three approaches that can be taken, all three common among the world's Buddhists. The most common approach is also in many ways the most natural: if we accept that our actions, thoughts, and feelings, our way of life, will affect our future, not only in this life but also in the next, the natural thing is to try to live the best life possible. If we live in a way that brings feelings of well-being and contentment, this will replicate itself in our next existence. And the best way to live well is to minimize one's selfishness and work for the benefit and happiness of people and other conscious beings in one's life. A happy person is a peaceful person, and selfishness, greed, and ill-will bring only anxiety and destructive habits. And nothing can be carried over to the next life besides this life's attitude, habits, and tendencies. If one cultivates good, constructive relations with committed practitioners of Dharma, perhaps these relationships can be renewed in the next life. The idea is that if you associate with good friends and have positive role models, this seed may sprout and give fruit in the next life.

The second approach, found primarily among Theravada Buddhists, is to regard the world and its suffering as something to be liberated from. The aim here is simply to break the chain of rebirth and thereby to attain Nirvana. In order to do this one must liberate oneself from everything that might arouse desire. Indeed, the craving for a continued existence and the self's self-partiality are what propel the wheel of rebirth. This is why monks and nuns are celibate, and attempt in every way to liberate themselves from all greed, ill-will, and the fundamental self-deception which leads to rebirth. This is a long and arduous path whose goal is to become what is called an Arhat; i.e., a condition which enables one at the last moment to let go and be liberated from the wheel of rebirth and its suffering.

The third approach comes from Mahayana Buddhism, and is called the bodhisattva ideal. Here the notion that it is possible to escape the chain of rebirth is seen as mistaken. The error is that, if one is really motivated by a wish to escape the wheel of rebirth and thereby to flee from the world, then this wish is a craving in itself. This view also tends to transfigure the world into a dark and hostile place—a place one would rather not be. One who wants to escape is therefore driven by negative thoughts and feelings instead of positive ones. These desires and negativity will propel one to rebirth after rebirth.

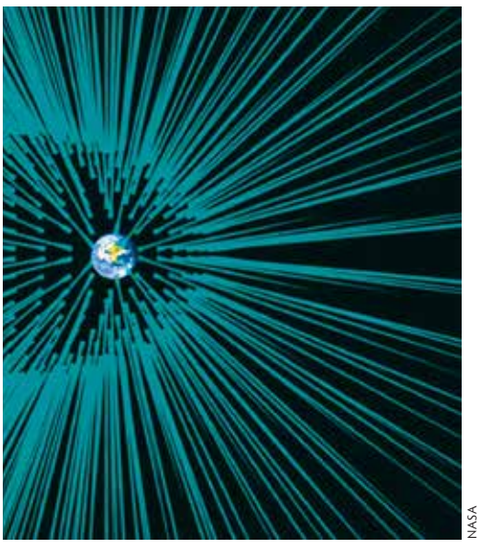
Better then to see the positive in life's events, and to take the compassion and love that dwell in the hearts of all conscious beings as a point of departure. The Mahayana Buddhist therefore takes a vow and this vow is to keep on being reborn so long as there are sentient beings suffering in the universe. One tries, in other words, to turn the whole situation around and find a positive desire that can drive the rebirths. This positive desire is the love, compassion, and the wish to help and support all who suffer in the world. Instead of being reborn by the selfish desire for continued existence, one wishes, in other words, to be reborn by the desire to help.

This is the bodhisattva ideal. A bodhisattva is one who vows to remain in the world and to illuminate it. The word come from *Bodhi*, which means enlightened consciousness, and *sattva*, which means hero or warrior. A bodhisattva is one who strives heroically to enlighten the world.

To relinquish all self-centeredness in this aspiration to aid others is also precisely what leads to freedom and joy according to many Buddhist traditions. What is revealed then is that this world, so often portrayed as samsara, the sorrowful site of the wheel of rebirth—is also Nirvana, the place where the wind of misery blows no more.—ROSHI SANTE POROMAA, *Zenbuddhistiska samfundet, from* The Net of Indra: Rebirth in Science and Buddhism *(2009)*

PANPSYCHISM AND THE QUESTION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

DAVID CHALMERS, a philosophy of mind professor at New York University, laid out the "hard problem of consciousness" in 1995, demonstrating that there was still no answer to the question of what causes consciousness. Traditionally, two dominant perspectives, materialism and dualism, have provided a framework for solving this problem. Both lead to seemingly intractable complications.



NASA

The materialist viewpoint states that consciousness is derived entirely from physical matter. It's unclear, though, exactly how this could work. "It's very hard to get consciousness out of non-consciousness," says Chalmers. "Physics is just structure. It can explain biology, but there's a gap: Consciousness." Dualism holds that consciousness is separate and distinct from physical matter—but that then raises the question of how consciousness interacts and has an effect on the physical world.

Panpsychism offers an attractive alternative solution: Consciousness is a fundamental feature of physical matter; every single particle in existence has an "unimaginably simple" form of consciousness, says Goff. These particles then come together to form more complex forms of consciousness, such as humans' subjective experiences. This isn't meant to imply that particles have a coherent worldview or actively think, merely that there's some inherent subjective experience of consciousness in even the tiniest particle.

Panpsychism doesn't necessarily imply that every inanimate object is conscious. "Panpsychists usually don't take tables and other artifacts to be conscious as a whole," writes Hedda Hassel Mørch, a philosophy researcher at New York University's Center for Mind, Brain, and Consciousness, in an email. "Rather, the table could be understood as a collection of particles that each have their own very simple form of consciousness."

But, then again, panpsychism could very well imply that conscious tables ▶

exist: One interpretation of the theory holds that "any system is conscious," says Chalmers. "Rocks will be conscious, spoons will be conscious, the Earth will be conscious. Any kind of aggregation gives you consciousness." —OLIVIA GOLDHILL, *in* Quartz, *January 27, 2018 (https://qz.com /1184574/the-idea-that-everything-from-spoons-to-stones-are-conscious-is-gaining-academic-credibility/)*

WIKIMEDIA

FRAGMENT 67

ὁ θεὸς ἡμέρη εὐφρόνη, χειμὼν θέρος, πόλεμος εἰρήνη, κόρος λιμός [τἀναντία ἅπαντα· οὗτος ὁ νοῦς], ἀλλοιοῦται δὲ ὅκωσπερ πῦρ, ὁπόταν συμμιγῇ θυώμασιν, ὀνομάζεται καθ' ἡδονὴν ἑκάστου

By cosmic rule
as day yields night,
so winter summer,
war peace, plenty famine.
All things change.
Fire penetrates the lump
of myrrh, until the joining
bodies die and rise again
in smoke called incense.

—HERACLITUS OF EPHESUS (c. 535 – c. 475 BC), translated by Brooks Haxton

Q&A

***I FEEL LIKE** every time I make an effort to get deeper into my practice, I just get in my own way. What can I do? I feel like I'm spinning my wheels.*

IT'S HARD TO think of Zen practice without thinking of effort. We're called on to make a strong effort in our practice and not to just sit and daydream or coast, but it's hard to get that right. I think that many people, those that I know anyway, struggle with how to make a strong effort and not trip over themselves, how not to get in their own way, because the minute we start thinking about making an effort, we start thinking about results. And the minute we start thinking about results, we're taking our eye off the ball.

The practice that we're assigned always has the purpose of bringing us into this present moment, thoroughly and completely. We're making this effort to unite with the practice—this breath—and we just want to put as much of our attention as we can, moment to moment, breath by breath, on the physical sensation of breathing. That means we're not trying to make it into anything. To be completely present, we have to be okay with the present. We can't be looking past it.

I'm always struck by the metaphor of someone at a party talking to another person, and they're stealthily looking over the other person's shoulder for someone else who might come into the room—somebody maybe a little more interesting, more rewarding. They're not giving their full attention to the person that's right in front of them. They're not fully present. And that's what we're trying to do—to give our attention. It really requires the acceptance of things as they are.

Sometimes the mind is full of thoughts. We don't have control over the weather; we don't have control over what's going on in the mind. Sometimes one thought follows another, and it seems like we never get any breathing room. But those times are actually excellent times for practice, because we have more opportunities to drop thoughts than normal... simply because we have so many.

It's important to know "what's my job" when we're sitting. My job is not to evaluate my practice. My job is not to create a certain state of concentration. I can't. That state of concentration comes, when it comes, despite my desires. It comes because I've given myself to things as they are. So it takes this resignation, this type of renunciation, and it takes faith. We can't really renounce results without having faith that, in the end, things will work out.

This practice works. It's just that we're not in charge of it. Everything else that we do, it seems like we're in charge of making sure that everything works out, rather like stage directors. But there's another way of working where we step back from that deluded role and just do this one little thing, just breathe. We open our mind to what's in front of us.

It's a relief to realize that we're not setting the agenda. It's actually a joy when we're just doing this simple task. Then let the chips fall where they may.—JOHN PULLEYN, *Head of Zendo*

DANCING IN THE PRESENT

RUMI WROTE: "We rarely hear the inward music, but we are dancing to it nevertheless."

The phrase 'starting over' is a conundrum. We don't actually do anything over. Our very practice teaches us this. We do, however, have the opportunity to choose.

Perhaps our desire to start over is a desire to be free, free of whatever compelled us to think there is a need for a new beginning or change. Upon reflection, many of my memories have given rise to feelings of regret—childhood, relationships, personal choices—all viewed from the vantage point of who I have become. Yet I know that all of the choices made have contributed to the person I now am. In such reflective moments, aren't we already starting over?

I spent years of my meditation practice dreaming of an experience recognized by myself and my teacher as enlightenment; one moment that would change me into a benevolent being devoid of any 'bad' thought, word or deed. And I have had experiences that were life-changing, thus increasing faith in practice. These experiences also led to thinking that I could expand upon them if I just did this, if I just changed that, then I would become fully enlightened—enlightened as I was conceptualizing it.

Now in the end years of my life, by way of age if nothing else, I understand a little about beginning, about the absolute truth of this very moment being all there is. Our past has become memory and the future a wish. Right now I am typing this in my

▲ Installation view from "The Happy Show" by Stefan Sagmeister at the ICA Philadelphia (2012)

kitchen, it is snowing, the furnace kicked on, and I am full.

There really is no goal.

Yet in our daily lives, within the societal paradigm in which we have been born and live, we are bound to schedules and plans, drawing upon our pasts as an education in conduct. Our modern world in tandem with our practice presents us with the opportunity, as the Tibetan Buddhist practice of Dzogchen teaches, to "perfect dualism."

Years ago I studied with H.E. Garchen Rinpoche, learning mantra recitation using a mala. Having been raised Roman Catholic I had prayed using a rosary. The activity of mala and rosary is the same, moving from one bead to another reciting a given set of words. Praying with a rosary had been penitent and beseeching for me, petitioning for a place in heaven. With Zen training, using a mala was quite different. Experiencing each bead along with the voice became a single sensation like water flowing over stones. But when I found my mind had wandered, frustration arose. A fellow practitioner once asked, "Why waste time with frustration. Just get on with it!" Like Roshi saying, "Just get back to the practice!"

We can write poetry, paint, come up with inspired sayings about awakening, yet none convey our actual experience of writing, painting, or extraordinary awareness. We may spark a sense of recognition. This can be encouraging, and encouragement is certainly beneficial. Sometimes these expressions and stories of saints, Zen masters, enlightened beings, gave rise to thoughts that I lacked some experience I perceived these beings as having. But in fact we are experiencing exactly what these beings experienced: this very moment. Just this!

Diligently practicing being in this moment… this moment… this moment may slow our heartbeat, relax our body/mind and still our recalcitrant ego. Anything we need to do, think, or say becomes clear. We become fearless. We experience "holding to nothing whatever" and "are freed of delusive hindrances."

I believe we are always starting over, always at the beginning, always dancing to the inward music nevertheless.—GRETCHEN TARGEE

One Tow in the Water

I FIRST ENCOUNTERED meditation when I was around 11 or 12 years old. I didn't know what it was, but I recognized it as something important.

I discovered it through an old Western that they used to re-run on Sunday afternoons called *Kung Fu*. Now, if you don't remember *Kung Fu*, it was a pretty simple premise. In the time of the "wild, wild West" a student, having returned from an exotic distant land where he had studied under a wizened "Sensei," would find himself involved in physically and ethically challenging dilemmas: a bar-room brawl, a bank robbery, or the chastisement of some poor widow's daughter by bootleggers and horse thieves. Having no gun to defend himself with, he would have to whip out the ol' Kung Fu on the assailants. At the end of the episode they would inevitably flash to some scene of the Kung Fu master, "Young Grasshopper," sitting quietly in meditation; having managed his external conflicts, he had now turned to the more contentious, deeper strain of sitting in this dark stillness. I didn't know what he was doing, but it seemed important. I wanted to know what was in there.

I didn't have any money at the time. I did not have any kind of steady income or an allowance to speak of. I shoplifted a book and cassette tape combination from a local bookstore that promised to teach me how to meditate. (This probably says as much about where I was in my life in those days as anything ever could.) I remember listening to it intently night after night, but not understanding what it meant to do when it

TEXT BY
Robert Veeder

ILLUSTRATION BY
patjm for iStock

sagely instructed me to "clear your mind of all of your thoughts...." There were other things on the B-side of the cassette that were maybe a little more useful. It included a couple of classic Zen stories and it was my first introduction to the phrase, "What is the sound of one hand clapping?" I have to confess, I still don't know the answer to this one.

I LATER GAVE UP on meditation; or rather, my life took multiple turns away from that path. Mainly, I discovered mood-altering drugs and alcohol which delivered the instantaneous relief that all of the other spiritual avenues I had explored seemed to be promising me. I didn't reject meditation whole-heartedly; I was largely indifferent to it. I had tried yoga on a few separate occasions. I recall one class taught by an older, rotund, fellow who sat in a rocking chair in the front of the class, instructing us through the various asanas. I was irritated through the roughly hour-long course. He pretended at being enlightened quite well. His students seemed to devour his acumen. I simply resented him and never returned. Later, through my own experiences with meditation I would come to see this as a rather fascinating personality trait that I have. I like to call it "getting in my own damn way!" It seems to be one thing that I am highly skilled at, a kind of natural ability.

INSTEAD OF FOLLOWING any path that he may have intended, I followed the only one that seemed real. I got high. Some people self-identify as cocaine addicts or alcoholics, or pot-heads, whatever; my drug of choice was "more." Honestly, I'd pretty much do anything that was put in front of me. I huffed dangerous aerosols and did too many hallucinogens. I'd take different colored pills and mix them up to see what would happen: truly, horrifying, dangerous stuff. There's a clinical term for this; it's called "poly-substance use," but we just referred to it as being a "trash-can junkie".

In my early thirties I had lost my house to foreclosure, I had lost my romantic relationship of nine years, my employer had told me that he had kind of had it with me and suggested that I get help, but I was sure that he had no idea what he was talking about even though I was homeless at the time. This was the second occasion in my life of being homeless. I even had a girlfriend who told me with exasperated frustration that she refused to be homeless with me. I got a different, more understanding girlfriend. Whatever I was doing just was not working.

And then the worst happened.

The very worst thing that could have ever happened... happened.

ON NOVEMBER 1, 2003 I was in a drinking and driving accident. Two cars had collided on highway 54 in Raleigh, North Carolina. A person had been pretty seriously injured in that initial accident and many people had stopped to help. They had pulled him into the road and were desperately waiting for help to arrive. My van had crested a hill, and there were all the people in the road, and I couldn't stop in time. I just could not stop in time. I tried swerving, tried to miss, but it was too late. And for that I will always be sorry.

Many people lost their lives that night. Because of me. It was my fault. It should have been different, but it wasn't.

I spent most of my thirties in a state prison, but there was nothing that I could say about that. They could lock me up forever; what could I possibly say?

I spent most of the first two years of my incarceration obsessing about suicide. Sometimes the very worst thing that can happen is that you have to wake up again to another day.

A friend of mine had sent me the book *We're All Doing Time* by Bo Lozoff. It teaches basic yoga and meditation techniques to people who are incarcerated. For me it was invaluable. The most important thing that it taught was that if I had some time to do in prison, I could turn it into a kind of monastic retreat. I started seeing myself less as a convict, and more as a monk. I still wasn't sure that I was doing meditation correctly. For one thing, everyone seemed to be having such a great time at it, but that wasn't my experience at all. I'd sit quietly and work on counting my breath. Then my face would start itching, or I'd get a cramp, or anxiety would set in. I couldn't figure out if I should count my breath in and out as "one" or just the in-breath as "one" and the out-breath as "two." Also, when I saw images of people doing meditation on television, or talk to other guys about meditation on the yard, they would all appear to be so into it. They'd talk about how relaxing they found it to be. Well, it wasn't relaxing to me; I had to be doing this wrong!

I KEPT AT IT. I have some great meditation stories to tell you. Some of them were profound, life-changing, realizations that I had through doing a full Rohatsu sesshin all by myself, while

In 2003 **ROBERT VEEDER** was responsible for a drinking and driving accident which cost six people their lives. Today he is focused on helping others find and embrace sobriety as an addiction therapist, while also speaking out publicly about the need for significant prison reform. Robert has been a member of the Center since 2012.

following the schedule of a local Zen center. But one of my favorite meditations happened when they decided to wax the floors of one of the dorms right in the middle of my daily 40-minute sit. "Bird," one of the guys that I was locked up with, had decided to use the industrial grade floor buffer around me rather than ask me to move, so I sat there quietly trying to count my breaths as I worried that his floor polisher would somehow catch my mat and send me flying, spinning across the cell block.

I spent one practice period with another inmate who was also interested in Zen, sitting in the phone room during the very early morning hours. We would tap a plastic coffee cup with a prison-grade spork three times to start and end our rounds.

We arranged to occasionally have all-day sits at the prison, with me and a few other guys, which even included a work schedule where we would voluntarily go and clean the yard. I'm sure the guards either loved us or thought we were nuts!

Eventually, I was moved to minimum custody. As I got closer to my release date the prison started letting me out with community volunteers. I had a regular practice of attending the Chapel Hill Zen Center in Hillsborough, North Carolina, and to me this was where my practice really began. I would be allowed to go two or three times per week for occasionally up to six hours. I'd frequent part of their all-day sits, and I'd occasionally have dokusan there. My wife and I were even married there, which again, is part of a much longer story, but it was such a healing part of my life. I had honestly thought that I would eventually get out and try to become a Buddhist priest or something like that. It was the path that I felt most drawn to at the time, and sometimes I still have the yearning to be a monastic, but this is not anywhere in my future at this time.

NOT LONG AFTER I was released I was back in school full-time. My wife, Kara, and I had moved to Rochester and in fact the Rochester Zen Center had played a pretty significant role in our decision to move here. She had a job opportunity here and Brockport had the degree path that I was pursuing in drug and alcohol counseling. We had investigated the city over a few days before making our decision to move here, and had gone to a Saturday morning service at the RZC. It was very different, but it had a lot of things that we both loved.

This is funny: the place where we had been practicing was in the Soto Zen tradition, so lots of bowing, eating with chopsticks, lots of Japanese *everything*. It was my biggest complaint about the practice at the time. I felt like I was always walking around pretending at being Japanese. Then we came to the Rochester Zen Center. Nobody bowed! We ate with forks! There was nothing Japanese about it, and all of my insides screamed "Heathens!" That's what helped me realize that nobody can win with me. This is my lifelong practice of getting in my own way. I can always find a reason why the way someone else is doing it is wrong.

Some people self-identify as cocaine addicts or alcoholics, or pot-heads, whatever, my drug of choice was "more."

My practice slipped away. I'd love to tell you it was finally having freedom, or my busy school schedule, or finding employment or something like that. The truth is that Kara and I had a child together, and from that point on we both have always been trying to squeeze our practice in around the edges, just trying to make it fit.

I'VE BEEN OUT for five years now. Our daughter just turned four last July. Kara and I have a nice little meditation spot in a guest room upstairs in our house and sometimes we manage to sit there pretty regularly for 10-15 minutes at night before we go to sleep. When we do, we both usually find that our meditation turns into a sitting nap, but it's okay. I don't push that away anymore. Sleepy zazen counts too for me these days.

I work as a Behavioral Health Therapist today. I actually am an addiction counselor, so I spend a lot of time talking to others about anxiety, stress, meditation and sober support meetings. I'm an addiction therapist in the middle of an opioid epidemic unlike this world has ever seen. It's something that I am very passionate about in part because of my own experiences, but honestly because my internal mantra through much of my incarceration and my ensuing education had been part of our vows: "Beings are numberless, I vow to save them." That became my practice: whenever things would get difficult or I would start to feel like I was overloaded, I would return to that particular line of our vows.

Going to school directly out of prison was just absolutely overwhelming. I didn't know how to do anything. I started school five days after I was released; classes had begun the previous week. My first day back to school was a disaster. Professors were speaking a foreign language. One of them said, "All of your assignments must be submitted through D2L on Dropbox." I didn't know what a D2L was or a Dropbox. I really didn't know how to use the internet. Most significantly, I didn't know how to tell the teachers *why* I didn't know how to

use the most basic of technologies. I went home that afternoon, burst into tears, and confessed defeat to my wife. "I can't do this. There's no way that I can do this." Then I would return to my vow, the only real practice I had left at the time: "Beings are numberless, I vow to save them." If I was going to help people with addictions, I simply would have to learn, and learn fast.

THEN WE HAD our daughter, Story. I remember about 48 hours after she was born some friends came over who had a long history of involvement with the Rochester Zen Center. They sat on our couch admiring this new person. I had innocently asked them how they managed to maintain a practice when their own daughter had been born many years ago. They didn't really answer, but rather, looked at each other knowingly, kind of shrugged.

That had been their answer.

Practice has been such a significant part of my life for so long now, but I honestly feel like I am always just trying to squeeze it in around the edges. I have meditation cushions at my office and a co-worker and I try to sit together for 20 minutes two times per week, but due to time constraints, meetings, and as I mentioned before, the opioid epidemic, it's just not always feasible. Sometimes I come in early and sit by myself, but sitting alone is hard. There's so much offered through the silent support of a Sangha.

ABOUT A YEAR AGO some friends of mine and I started a local Refuge Recovery meeting together. Refuge Recovery is not a 12-step meeting, but rather a Buddhist-inspired recovery meeting that explores the correlation between Buddhist teachings and the recovery process. We were looking for a location, and a friend of mine who had just moved into the Zen Center had stated that he would see if we could have our meeting there. Honestly, I wanted it to be anywhere else, mostly because I had been away so long that I was embarrassed to go back, but the Rochester Zen Center seemed to make the most sense. He discussed it with a few people and it was agreed.

When I walked back into Rochester Zen Center this time it felt different. Somehow in my absence those many months it had grown more familiar. I was happy to walk through its quiet walls. I had missed this, and hadn't even known it. I had initially renewed my membership so that I could feel comfortable having the codes to the doors, so that I could allow people in for the Refuge Recovery meeting, but it rapidly became more for me. I needed this back in my life, not just the heavy smells of many years of lingering incense, or the beauty of the back gardens. I needed the support of the Sangha. I bumped into familiar, but not too familiar faces, and everyone seemed happy to see me, which was nice and inviting. I went to a few early morning sits, and realized how much I missed our chants. My wife suggested that I sign up for a two-day sesshin at Chapin Mill, which is the only sesshin that I have done entirely outside of prison. I remember vividly one of my favorite conversations with Wayman during that sesshin. I shared some of my story with him and he looked at me familiarly and said, "Oh, you're like me. You *have* to sit. That's very lucky for you." But my legs hurt and I was feeling frustrated with my meditation, and I didn't feel very lucky at all, even though he was right.

Then we came to the RZC. Nobody bowed! They ate with forks! All of my insides screamed "Heathens!"

I'LL BE HONEST, I'd like my practice to be more rigid and structured than it is. If I could I would probably go to the morning services four to five times per week. I'd attend dokusan regularly, and have a great and familiar relationship with Roshi who would guide me easily in my practice. I might even talk him into calling me "Grasshopper" every once in a while. This isn't where I am. Not yet. I try to go at least once a week. I can't even commit to a regular day.

One morning as I was downstairs changing into my robes I started talking to a long-time member about his own practice. I see him at the Zen Center a lot. When I mentioned my daughter, he said that he didn't come for many years when he was raising his children. Somehow that gave me hope. He didn't sound like he was any less committed to his practice during those years, and somehow it made me see that through all of this, prison, my release, college, my career, I have been practicing all along. Maybe it is not the practice that I want, or envision for myself. Maybe it's not the time for that yet. Not yet. But it is there, and it is real, and I am committed to it, and I have been all along.

So, for me it is not so much that I am returning to practice. I have been practicing somehow all along. It's more like I have a foot in the water, and then I find a way to put another foot into the water, and someday I'll find a way to wade in a little deeper, and who knows, maybe someday, I'll take one deep breath and dive all the way under. Someday, I will go for a swim. ///

▷ SANGHA DIALOG: MEDITATION VACATION

A SMALL FRACTION of Zen Center members start out with residential training. For the rest of us, staff life is a mystery. What is it like to follow a tightly defined schedule? How stressful is living with others in a dormitory situation? And how on earth do they get up so early each day?

Recently, two long-time members spent a few weeks each in residential training. We caught up with them to ask them a few burning questions. Loretta Smith is a practicing attorney from Wilmington, Delaware, and Joe Carino is a local member who is retired from his career as a graphic designer.

ZEN BOW: How long did you stay at the Zen Center, following the staff schedule?

LORETTA: A very short 11 days.

JOE: So, since last fall, I've spent about nine weeks in residential training at the Center.

My first residential training period started in mid-October, 2017 and ended the evening of Great Jukai the following November, a period that included a seven-day sesshin. My second stint ("tour of duty" as John calls it) started the third week of January 2018 and ended with the 2-day sesshin the weekend of Feb. 24–25. I had planned to do this second training period as my winter Term Intensive commitment. I caught the flu, though, just before the TI began, and had to start a week later.

ZEN BOW: What made you decide to engage in residential training?

LORETTA: I was too sick to go to Rohatsu and wanted to make up for that. [*Ed: Catching the flu is not a prerequisite for residential training.*]

JOE: I'd always felt that this would be a great way to strengthen my practice. I had been seeing a counselor, and this came up during our sessions. My idea was to retire a little early, so I'd have more freedom to do this. With my job at the time, it was difficult to get to even one sesshin a year. And for me, after a long—or even a not-so-long—day's work, it was so easy just to come home and crash rather than go to a sitting. I was hesitant, especially about retiring early, but my counselor really encouraged me.

Actually, I did some residential training way back in the early '80s with Roshi Kapleau and remember what a great experience that was. They were called training programs back then. As I remember, they were 3- or 4-week periods, held certain times of the year, when you could live and work with the staff at the Center, following the staff schedule. The current setup is much more flexible. Basically, you can do a training period whenever it suits you and for any length of time—a day, a week, a month, whatever.

I retired from my job last year. I may go back to work at some time in the future, but right now I want to focus on doing more training.

ZEN BOW: What was your experience like?

LORETTA: I had lots of time by myself, which I wanted. And time to sit extra and decompress from everyday life. This was my first ever training period. I didn't know what to expect, but it was so rewarding. I came back home much more into my practice. Being able to go to dokusan: wow! What a treat. Made me push. One more thing: there's a committed group of sangha members who attend every morning sitting and they go to get a quick breakfast afterwards. I was invited one day to join them. And it was delightful, and just enough socializing time.

JOE: It was just long enough to experience what training would be like if I could stay for months, which would be a dream. The only surprise was how easy it was to adapt to the schedule, as I had expected the early mornings would be hard, but that wasn't the case. I loved being around Roshi and John, and sitting in the zendo. Now I often stream the sittings and I feel right back there.

LORETTA: But I must say, this experience has confirmed for me that sitting on my own or with Ingvar all these years has been just as important. I realized first hand that, while at home I don't sit the RZC schedule, I still sit a schedule nonetheless: sitting every day. And even without bells that call me from the outside, there is motivation from the inside, and I have developed a discipline about sitting that I bring to training. And that realization has given me the confidence that I can do the RZC schedule anytime I want.

ZEN BOW: Were there any surprises?

JOE: Surprises? Oh, yes, there were a few! For work, I expected (and hoped, really) to be cleaning toilets. But right away I was thrown into the kitchen, helping prepare meals. I cook at home, but I've never had to help prepare a meal for 15 or more people and have it ready on time. How does this stove work? Where do things go? What's the fastest way to chop 30 cloves of garlic? The kitchen can get hectic, but everyone on staff was really patient and helpful with me.

The workshop that was held during my first tour of duty was another eye-opener. I had no idea of the amount of work and planning that goes into them. There was a workshop held in November that had 30 people or so, and I thought that was a big crowd. But I was told there could be a lot more at some workshops. I was working in the kitchen, and everything went smoothly. It was really nice to come out at lunch and sit and chat with the people attending.

Finally, I was really struck by the number of people who regularly come to the morning sittings at the Center. Even on cold, dark winter mornings. That was very inspiring.

ZEN BOW: What would you tell other members about making time for training?

JOE: This is tricky. Everyone's life situation is different. I'm 65 and single, and I don't have many pressing family obligations. So I was in a pretty good position to do this. But for anyone, the choice will require some sacrifice. If you're at a period in your life where you can do this for any length of time and you feel the need, it's a great way to strengthen and deepen your practice. At the same time, you're helping to serve and support the Sangha.

LORETTA: *Do it!*

ZEN BOW: Anything else you want to add?

LORETTA: Finally, the food: what a treat.

JOE: If nothing else, come for the food! ///

Trans*cending,* Trans*gending*

FOR WHATEVER REASON, staring at the wall and counting your breath negates suffering. A dose of raw reality.

Growing up I always got along more with girls. I stayed just friends, didn't know why. I was a master at steering away from things that would make me confront my underlying gender stuff. I spent most of my childhood staring at screens playing every Nintendo game ever made and browsing the internet. There was a period at about age 11 or 12 of looking at myself in the mirror. I just saw this gross miserable thing. Raw reality. I was put on male growth hormone because I was diagnosed with some kind of dwarfism. Male puberty was terrible.

I'd often choose the female characters in video games. I spent a lot of time in elementary school playing Animal Crossing on my Gamecube. I could be myself in this cute little life simulator. Everyone called me gay. Now in 2018, everyone is gay and plays Animal Crossing.

AT AGE 15 I went on a trip to Japan. I was staying at the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo; there were kimonos in a drawer in my room. I put one on. As soon as the fabric hit my skin it was like an atom bomb went off. I didn't know clothing could feel this way.

TEXT BY *Rebecca Bird*

ILLUSTRATION TEMPLATE BY *Patchimals*

The wall began to crumble.

It was around this time I went to my first Phish concert, and more on that in a bit. I saw the movie "Scott Pilgrim vs. The World" in the theaters. Every time Ramona Flowers was on screen I'd get this feeling of wanting to be her and not with her. The manic pixie dream girl.

(The next year my English teacher looked like Katy Perry. Something was up. I didn't know what.)

WHEN I WAS 17, my family fell apart and my parents got divorced. I was browsing Reddit and saw a picture of a transwoman's transition timeline. I looked at it and just knew. You could see her get so much happier as time passed.

I experienced a feeling of joy, horror and "What the hell am I going to do now?". Raw reality. My life was headed in a completely different direction than I was expecting. The more I fell down the rabbit hole the more uncomfortable and disassociated I found myself with my own body.

Due to these difficult circumstances, I just became obsessed with seeing Phish as many times as possible each summer. They are like musical heroin. I got my friends hooked, much to the music teacher's dismay. We wouldn't shut up about it for the last few years of high school. I had found my freaks. The only times I was truly happy as a boy was at their shows.

At 19 after constantly begging for parental consent, I had an appointment scheduled with a therapist who would write me an approval letter so I could be prescribed estrogen by an endocrinologist. As I was presenting male at the time, within a few months people got confused by me. Someone at a show didn't believe it was me. I found a lot of joy in confusing people in that period of time. At the time this kind of thing wasn't on most people's radar.

I could feel the estrogen fill in my cheeks and chest. I could look at the mirror for once and smile at the person looking back at me.

AFTER A MENTAL BREAKDOWN in college I was diagnosed with Bipolar II. I moved back home and made friends on a dating site with a girl who is a theistic Satanist. This kicked off the spiritual exploration in my adult life. She is my best friend.

I started meditating for ten minutes a day. I experienced some stability for a time due to this. But I stopped doing it after three months. It wasn't until about a year later, while pulling yet another all-nighter, that I realized that meditation for longer periods would bring stability. I sat for 30 minutes, but that wasn't enough. One hour, two hours, I capped it at three. Went to an introduction to practice workshop hosted by Susan Rakow at the Cleveland Zen Group.

She told me I should check out the work retreat at Chapin Mill. I got to Rochester and I just knew. A month later I moved into the Rochester Zen Center as a resident.

I have been a resident at the Center for nearly six months now. Finally feel like I am healing. The world around me is getting FedExed to hell and that's okay.

A few weeks ago I returned from sesshin to find out that a transwoman who I looked up to in the Phish scene had passed away. She'd followed her dream even though people were mean to her about it. Then she beat them over the head with it. She had mastered the art of trolling—to the point that now that she's dead people think she faked her death. Someone said to me, "Wherever she is right now, she's laughing." She was my hope in high school—it was possible. The best troll is living well.

She killed herself. The transgender suicide attempt rate is way too high. It's estimated 32% to 50% of transgender people attempt suicide. Seems like even she had a breaking point, strong as she was. The reason for the high rate is social stigma, and the dread of knowing every goddamn cell in your body is wrong. I don't miss testosterone. Not feeling sweaty and gross anymore.

I THINK IF I had found Zen at a younger age I possibly could have found peace with the gender stuff without having to fall down the rabbit hole first. Now that I've had a taste of presenting as female and have been taking estrogen, I'm not turning back. Four years into estrogen and I can barely remember anything from before I was 19.

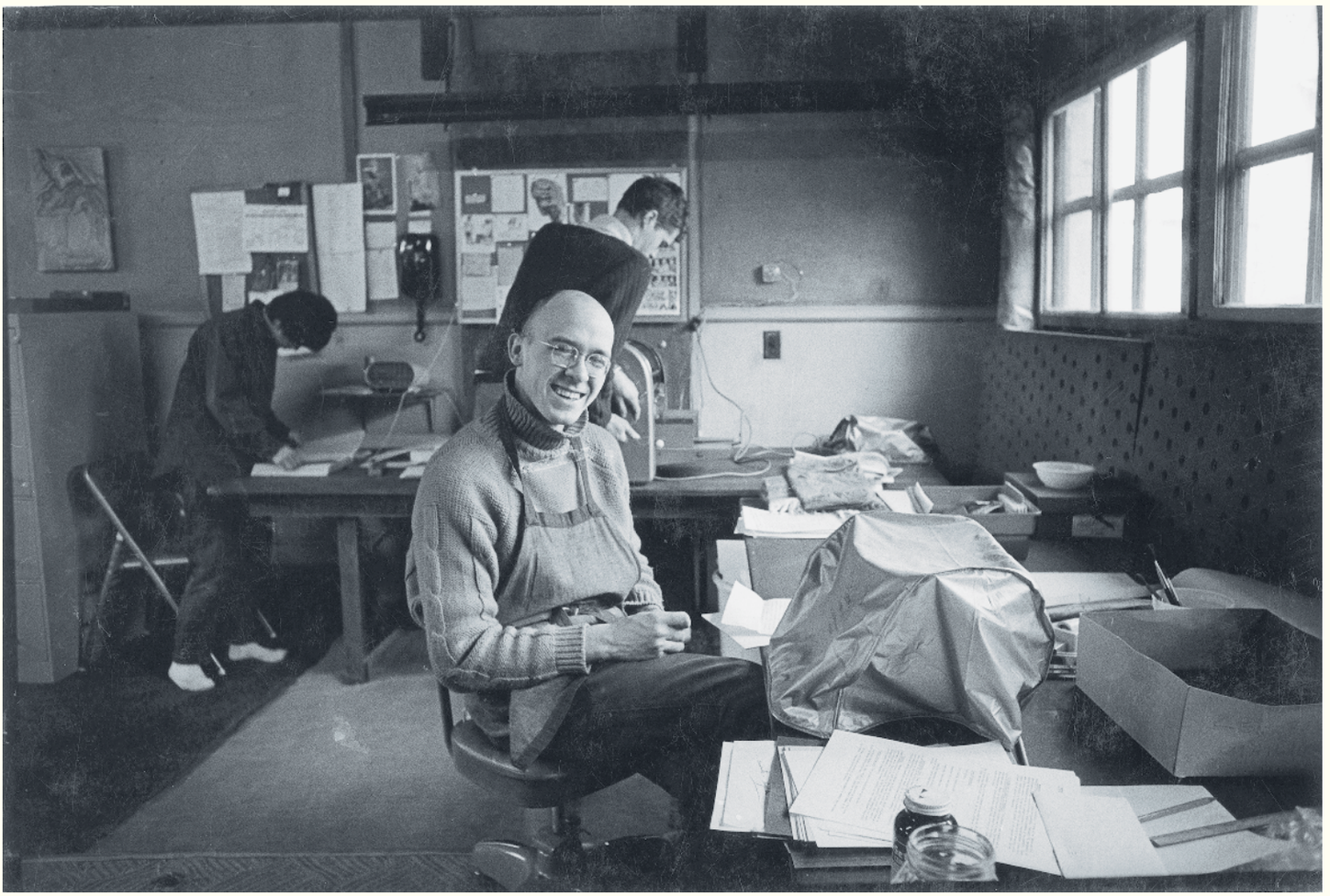
I recently changed to using a bench during sittings and I've been feeling a lot better without having to think about what's between my legs. Some days it's hard to get myself into the shower. I can feel like the nerve endings of what is supposed to be there but my body doesn't match up. I wouldn't wish this fate on my worst enemy.

It is my duty to teach those around me and also support others who walk this path. This is what a woman looks like in 2018 and we're not going away.

I have no doubt that Zen will over time, help me find peace with the circumstances of my birth.

And by themselves false views will go. ///

REBECCA BIRD is a current resident at the Rochester Zen Center. When not confusing old people with weird niche humor and pop culture references, she is often playing guitar or writing.



THIS EARLY ZEN CENTER office photo just might reflect some actual *Zen Bow* activity. In the foreground is Pat Simons, who was the first *Zen Bow* editor. To the left and behind Pat is Marci Wilcove, who was Roshi Kapleau's secretary, and partially hidden is Steve Nickerson. Lurking in the background, recognizable only by those of a Certain Age, is a mimeograph machine.

According to Pat, *Zen Bow* was first produced on this hand-cranked mimeo machine. (Subsequently, a friend of the Center offered the use of her technologically advanced automatic model.) The office shown in this photo is what current members may know variously as the garage, the women's dorm, or currently, the community room. The fact that the office had to be relocated out of 7 Arnold Park dates this photo to 1968 or 1969, after the first fire.

Marci noted. "My recollection is that Pat and Roshi worked closely together on content. [I] probably did some proofing. No doubt typed. I might have had some input (probably mostly ignored) about images—things to include and their placement."

So why is Pat wearing an apron? Marci's take: "I remember Pat working in the wood shop as well as the office, and I think I remember the wood shop guys wearing aprons." Pat's response: "It might have been a shop apron, but mimeos are messy and I might have worn it to keep ink off my other clothes."

Who took the photo? Pat: "Undoubtedly Alice Wells." Alice, who died in 1988, was an early member whose striking black-and-white photos of the Center's early days have become iconic. ///

▷ *A monk asked Zhaozhou, "Does a newborn baby possess the six senses or not?" Zhaozhou said, "It's like a ball bouncing on swift flowing water." A monk later asked Touzi, "What is the meaning of a ball bouncing on swift flowing water?" Touzi said, "Moment by moment it flows on without stopping."*

The Blue Cliff Record, number 80: Zhaozhou's "A Newborn Baby"

KOAN COMMENTARY BY *Roshi Bodhin Kjolhede*

ZHAOZHOU (778–897), ALSO KNOWN AS JOSHU, is one of the most famous of all the Chinese Chan masters, figuring in more koans than any other. He had his first kensho when he was 18 and reportedly reached full enlightenment when he was 56, but didn't begin teaching until he was 80. He then taught for 40 years until he died at the age of 120.

Zhaozhou was known for his amazing gift with words: people said at the time that when he spoke he "emitted light from his lips." An example: a monk asked him, "What is the principal concern of the one wearing Buddhist robes?" Zhaozhou said, "Not to deceive himself." This is a great teaching; it covers so much. The mind is cunning, and there are so many ways that we fool ourselves. We are largely unaware of what's really happening, what we are really doing, our motives and intentions, our shortcomings, and the way that the mind tries to dress up what we are doing or saying.

Through zazen, we come to see through these deceptions of the mind. This is absolutely essential for becoming a fully aware, whole human being. Yet these deceptions seem to be endlessly layered. As time goes on we see more and more of the devious ways that the ego works, the ways that we perpetuate this fiction that we are fundamentally different from other people. We think we are special, that we are either better than other people or worse than other people. As we continue to practice we get wise to the mind's machinations and how they obscure our true nature. But then, as one who has practiced a long time, I can say that we just keep running into new ones—more and more subtle. Zhaozhou goes right to that point with his simple answer: the principal concern is not to deceive yourself.

A monk once asked Zhaozhou, "I am a stupid person—floating, sinking, floating, sinking. How can I be released from the suffering of this world?" In response, Zhaozhou just kept sitting silently. The monk pressed, "Master, am I not sitting here appealing to you?" Zhaozhou replied, "Where on earth is it that you are floating and sinking?" We can suppose that this monk is captivated by his image of himself being buffeted about, rising and sinking in the Sea of Samsara. There is an element of melodrama in this question, and when he asks how he can be released, Zhaozhou refuses to feed that narrative. There's your answer, monk—silence. But this goes over his head and he appeals again: "Look, give me something, throw me a bone here." "Where on earth is it that you are floating and sinking?"

I REMEMBER GOING to dokusan after a few years of practice and realizing as never before how full my mind was with concepts and thoughts and I muttered to Roshi, "I can't believe how clogged my mind is." He was glancing through one of the koan books, and without looking up, just drily remarked, "Your mind is no different from anyone else's, Peter." He was right. I still tell people the same thing in dokusan. Everyone thinks that their mind has all these unique problems. When you're on a teacher's mat for a while, you hear variations on this theme all the time. And it's the same thing that I know through my personal experience.

A monk once asked, "What is the ultimate word?" Zhaozhou coughed. The monk exclaimed, "That's it, isn't it?" Zhaozhou said, "Alas, they won't even let me cough."

The other monk in the koan, Touzi (819–914), known in Japan as Tosu, left home as a young man. He studied sutras and meditation techniques under two teachers, coming to enlightenment with the second. He then roamed through China, eventually returning to his old home and settling on Mount Touzi. (Masters often took the name of the mountain that they were living on.) For more than 30 years Touzi remained in a thatched hut he built on the mountain, living in

BABY PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

obscurity until the great Zhaozhou came gunning for him. After their initial encounter, which is the heart of another koan, Zhaozhou said to Touzi, "I've long committed thievery, but you're worse than me."

This is high praise in Zen. You refer to a master teacher as a thief because he or she steals away your afflictions. (Actually, no one can take away our afflictions for us, but a teacher can help.) It's a good reminder that there's really nothing we need to acquire, that everything we do in practice is for the purpose of getting rid of what is not essential to us. We need to get rid of everything that obscures our essential nature, all those things that get in the way of our harmonious functioning in the world. There is a famous saying: "Zen is a practice of daily losing."

NOW, BACK TO the case. A monk asked Zhaozhou, "Does a newborn baby possess the six senses or not?" The six senses are part of basic Buddhist psychology. They include the five we are familiar with along with the sixth, which is thinking. In Buddhist doctrine this is considered a sense, like the other five. These are also sometimes called the six consciousnesses, and are followed by the seventh level of consciousness, which interprets the data of the senses.

Before going further into this scheme, let's tackle the Japanese word *nen*. It's a very important concept in Buddhism, rich in meaning but very difficult to translate into English. The assistant to the roshi of one of the temples I trained at in Japan, an American who interpreted for him in dokusan, came to me and said, "How do you guys translate *nen*?" and I was as much at a loss as she was. But let's take a stab at it. There is what we call the first *nen*, the second *nen*, and subsequent *nen*. The first *nen* is direct perception: the immediate experience of the six senses. The thought, the sound, the sight, taste, touch, and smell: just these directly. For example, there is the sound of the train. Just that. The second *nen* would be then to make something of that, to have a thought about the train—a memory or association, say. Now the immediate experience is once removed. The third *nen* is another thought form on top of the first two. And then the fourth,

fifth, and subsequent *nen* all pile on, forming a train of thoughts or *nen*. This sequence rushes by in nanoseconds—and ordinarily beneath our awareness.

Perhaps the shortest translation of *nen*, although still imprecise, is a "thought" or "thought moment." When we chant in the Kannon Sutra, "This moment arises from mind. This moment itself is mind," it's referring to *nen*. We used to translate it, "This thought arises from mind. This thought itself is mind." Both of them refer to *nen*, and neither quite captures the original meaning.

The legendary Chinese Zen master Linji (Rinzai) once declared, "Just learn to cut off successive *nen*, and this is worth more than ten years of pilgrimage." Learn—in the zendo—to leave the direct experience as it is: just the sound, just the feeling, and yes, just the thought. A thought, too, is part of human experience, and it poses no problem if we can refrain from stitching successive thoughts onto it.

The seventh level of consciousness is sometimes defined as the seat of the "I" concept. But it also connects us to that which is beyond the limitations of selfhood—undifferentiated Mind. It occupies a double role: mediating between self-consciousness and the Unconditioned, between the individual mind-body complex and capital-M Mind. The way in which we use the mind—our attention—determines the balance between these two aspects of our nature at any given time. The more we conceptualize direct experience, the more we nourish the self-concept, which only increases the number of thoughts that are self-referential: "I," "me," and "my."

The seventh level is a kind of fulcrum on which our karma tips. If we could refrain from layering thoughts onto experience—if we could cut off the successive *nen* obscuring the bare sense impression—we would not be marring our pure, luminous Self-nature. But otherwise we're just generating more vexatious karma.

The seventh consciousness, then, aggregates the data from our six senses: everything we see, hear, smell, taste, touch, and think. Then the synthesized data is deposited in the eighth level, the *alaya-vijnana*, the storehouse consciousness. There it lies as a karmic seed that will sprout into an action or reaction under certain causes and conditions. That's what karma literally means—action or reaction—so this points to how important it is to use our senses wisely. What we look at, what movies we see, what we read, what we listen to, what we touch, what we smell, what we eat, and how we use this human mind—all of these things determine our karma, our future. These experiences all go into the storehouse consciousness where they remain in a latent form, dormant until they emerge again as the effects of our actions.

WIKIMEDIA

Zhaozhou was known for his amazing gift with words: people said at the time that when he spoke he "emitted light from his lips."

SO WHEN A MONK asked Zhaozhou, "Does a newborn baby possess the six senses or not," we know that they do in some respects. I am no expert on newborn babies, but then how much can anyone know about the experience of a newborn baby? Certainly their senses aren't fully developed; for example, they can't quite focus their eyes at first. Likewise the mind, the intellect. A newborn baby does not have a developed sense of self, of course. It hasn't yet developed self-consciousness, but we can presume that since it does have some operation of the ordinary five senses, its sixth sense, its intellect, is not completely blank. We know that a newborn baby's brain is just sucking up all kinds of sensory data and developing the capacity to learn and then eventually to speak, and so forth. It's a human being, but not a developed one.

This monk is no beginner. He's raising a very intriguing question: does a newborn baby have human faculties? We know it has the equipment—it's got the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, skin, and brain—but that equipment has yet to be fully wired. It has the hardware, maybe, but not the software. Zhaozhou's answer, still reverberating down from the centuries: "It's like a ball bouncing on swift flowing water." The monk asked Touzi about it later, so this was working on him. Zhaozhou's answer didn't catch him in a way that he could appreciate and understand it, so he asked Touzi, "What is the meaning of a ball bouncing on swift flowing water?" Touzi said, "Moment by moment it flows on without stopping."

AWARENESS, FLOWING ON. But self-awareness? Not so much. Yuan Wu, one of the co-authors of the Blue Cliff Record, commented, "Although a newborn baby is equipped with the six consciousnesses, though its eyes can see and its ears can hear, he doesn't yet discriminate among the six sense objects. At this time he knows nothing of good and evil, long and short, right and wrong, or gain and loss. A person who studies, who practices the path, must become again like an infant. Then praise and blame, success and fame, unfavorable

circumstances and favorable circumstances, none of these can move him."

He then quotes an earlier master: "Though his eyes see form, he is the same as a blind man. Though his ears hear sound, he is the same as a deaf man." Yuan Wu then continues, "He is like a fool, like an idiot. His mind is motionless as Mount Sumeru. This is the place where patch-robed monks really and truly acquire power."

He is speaking here of samadhi: going beyond the realm of discrimination; beyond thoughts, concepts, words. In this realm we are not depositing seeds of karma in the storehouse consciousness. In fact, Hakuin, in his "Chant in Praise of Zazen," says, "One true samadhi extinguishes evil; it purifies karma, dissolving obstructions." When Yuan Wu says that we need to become again like an infant, of course he means in that sense. An infant has to be socialized and educated and civilized, and that happens through learning to discriminate.

We need to discriminate all the time. We're always discriminating. People who can't discriminate are psychotic. It's an ability that comes with normal human development. We learn to distinguish this from that, right from wrong, what's harmful from what's not harmful. We all have this equipment, and by normal adulthood it's all up and running just fine. We're not going to lose our ability to discriminate. We're not going to lose our sense of what's harmful and what's not harmful. We know right from wrong at a gut level. We've embodied it.

What we need do to lose is this incessant, unnecessary discriminating and judging, evaluating, categorizing, classifying. Yes, sometimes it's necessary but often it's not—the mind just churns away, discriminating all the time when it's not called for, and as a result we become separated from our life. The incredible gift of sense experience is contaminated by thought. The mind grays and we find ourselves in the state of dissatisfaction, *dukkha*.

YUAN WU CONTINUES his commentary by quoting an ancient who said, "My patched garment covering my head, myriad concerns cease. At this time, I don't understand anything at all." This means, of course, pure experience undiminished by conceptualization. Not having thoughts. Yuan Wu comments on that statement, "Only if you can be like this will you have a small share of attainment. Although an adept is like this, nevertheless he can't be fooled at all. As before, mountains are mountains and rivers are rivers. He is without artifice and without clinging thoughts. He is like the sun and moon moving through the sky without ever stopping. Moment by moment it flows on without stopping."

Going beyond the realm of discrimination; beyond thoughts, concepts, words; when Yuan Wu says that we need to become again like an infant, he means in that sense.

His phrase that "he is without artifice" describes a kind of childlike simplicity that is often seen in people with long training. A lack of guile. A later master, Master Shantao of the Stone Grotto, spoke to his monks about the responses of both Zhaozhou and Touzi: "Haven't you seen a little one when it's just emerged from the womb? Has a baby ever said, 'I know how to read the Sutras?' At that time, he does not know the meaning of having the Buddha nature or not having the Buddha nature. As he grows up he learns all sorts of knowledge, then he comes forth saying, 'I am able and I understand' without knowing that this is troubling over illusory dusts. Among the 16 meditation practices, the baby's practice is the best. When he's babbling, he symbolizes the person practicing the path with his detachment from the discriminating mind that grasps and rejects."

"That grasps and rejects" cuts right to the heart of it, this habit of liking and disliking, which we're warned about in Affirming Faith in Mind: "The Great Way is not difficult for those who do not pick and choose. When preferences are cast aside the Way stands clear and undisguised." Newborn babies haven't yet fallen into likes and dislikes. Yes, there are basic physical responses to warm and cold and hunger, but the baby doesn't conceptualize about would or could or should—"why does it have to be this way... I would prefer that... I don't like this...," and so forth. These are the germs of human misery. We do this to ourselves habitually. We have been doing it for lifetimes. It keeps running on its own its own power because of all those seeds that we have planted.

What zazen offers is a way to live with the immediacy of a newborn baby—with openness and simplicity. We come to see things simply and to respond simply. We don't indulge in hypothetical conjecture. We don't find fault with others. We don't find fault with ourselves. That happens less and less as we go on because every time we conceive of "I," "me," or "my," judge ourselves, find fault or praise ourselves, then we are stepping out of the stream. The stream of life, of movement, of flux that is reality. Every time we separate ourselves we are missing this rich, unfathomably marvelous present moment. ///

Sightings

NOTED

READERS' NOTES AND LETTERS TO *ZEN BOW*

¶ *Well, hello!* There aren't any yet. However, we thought that some of the comments from the *Zen Bow* readership survey—comments specifically related to reader engagement—could stand in their place. They include:

"Not enough dialog."

"I wonder if you might want to publish it in a manner that allows people to engage in a conversation about it and/or with the author. It has a sense of being 'at a distance.'"

"I wonder if it could be connected to online engagement?"

"[Would like] editorials and feedback on articles written in previous issues."

"Not even sure that print is the best medium these days."

Building on this theme, other comments included providing *Zen Bow* in an HTML format online, more ties to social media, and more online video.

This is not the first time that the issue of moving away from print in favor of a more robust online presence has been raised. In fact, I distinctly remember having this discussion in a development committee meeting more than 10 years ago. However, this is the first time that readers have had a chance to express this thought—unprompted—in the context of a formal survey.

Not surprisingly, the survey also elicited some comments by those who were firmly pro-print. Perhaps spooked by the references in the survey to hotlinks and podcasts, one reader begged, "Please keep it in paper form!" So: what is an editor to do?

For now, the answer is to find a middle way. We don't yet have the resources—or the digital-only readership—to publish exclusively online. However, we can up the ante significantly by augmenting each printed issue with additional online content: links to articles, music, videos, and other content that is mentioned in the issue as well as providing an online *Zen Bow* forum for readers to aim their questions and comments to the editor, art director, and authors.

The Center's website is currently going through a redesign process that will make it far easier to find what you're looking for as well as making it more mobile-friendly. The *Zen Bow* forum, however, starts now, within our existing site, and will morph along with the redesign as it unfolds. It will start small, but we hope that it will provide the entry point for an increasing amount of dialog among *Zen Bow* readers and contributors.

Check it out when you get a chance. And please don't hesitate to send us questions, comments, complaints, accolades, whatever moves you. It's easy: zenbow@rzc.org.

I look forward to hearing from you.—CHRIS PULLEYN, *Editor*

ON VIEW

THE MOVIE: *GROUNDHOG DAY* (1993)

¶ *What it's about:* A self-centered, cynical weatherman sent on his most-hated assignment—covering the annual Groundhog Day festival in Punxsutawney, PA—gets caught first in a snowstorm, and then in a mysterious loop of déjà vu....

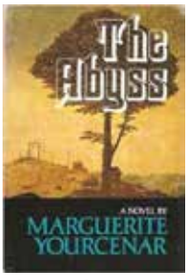
Why it's worthy: Bill Murray serves up the Dharma! Zen practitioner Danny Rubin's script presents one of the most sneakily eloquent—and undeniably hilarious—explications of karma and Bodhisattvic service ever put on film. Despite being a sutra in comic form, it's still a perfect popcorn flick for Zennies and non-Zennies alike. Directed by Harold Ramis, with Murray at his peak playing Phil Connors, the disgruntled weatherman. (Rated PG; free streaming with Starz subscription and rentable on all major streaming services.)—CECILY FUHR

IN PRINT

THE BOOK: *THE ABYSS* (L'ŒUVRE AU NOIR) BY MARGUERITE YOURCENAR (1968)

¶ *What it's about:* One of the three masterpieces by this great writer (the other two being *Memoirs of Hadrian* [*Mémoires d'Hadrien*, 1951] and the three-volume autobiography [*Le labyrinthe du monde*, 1974–1988] in which she herself barely figures), *The Abyss* tells the story of the life of Zeno, an alchemist-physician-philosopher of the mid-sixteenth century; his wanderings across Europe and beyond; the fates of others of his family; and his own death in Bruges, the city where he was born.

Why it's worthy: Zeno could be a tragic figure if he were more selfish or less aware of the forces that shape his life. His pursuit of knowledge and of alchemy's great goal—the separation, dissolution, and transformation of substance—finally for him takes the form of self-knowledge, self-transformation, "trials of the mind in discarding all forms of routine and prejudice." In a world itself undergoing multiple transformations—Reformation and Counter Reformation and their wars of religion, outbreaks of plague, the rise of capitalism, the first stirrings of modern science—Zeno looks inward and sees "stars burn below as on high; [...] the abyss was both beyond the celestial sphere and within the human skull. Everything seemed to be taking place within an infinite series of curves closing in on themselves." What he gains, finally, is the freedom of surrender.—DARYL WAKELEY



SANGHA ENGAGEMENT

SEEING THROUGH RACISM

¶ The Seeing Through Racism group meets once a month at the Center to deepen our understanding, from a Buddhist perspective, of the suffering caused by racism in America. We have been reading, seeing films, and attending local events related to

understanding the history of the current racial inequities.

We have been exploring issues such as:

- How to understand and address the persistence of inequity for black and brown people in the Rochester area, and beyond, across all areas of the common good: education, criminal justice, healthcare, housing, income and the environment.
- How to understand the small number of black and brown people who attend or stay connected to the majority of the western Buddhist Centers.

Following are some books and movies recommended by the group:

BOOKS

Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome, by Joy DeGruy

Being Black, by Angel Kyodo Williams

Radical Dharma by Angel Kyodo Williams, Lama Rod Owens, Jasmine Syedullah PhD

Mis-education of the Negro by Carter Godwin Woodson (1933)

The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander

The History of White People by Nell Irvin Painter

Waking Up White by Debby Irving

White Rage by Carol Anderson

FILMS

I Am Not Your Negro (2016)

13th (2016)—MARTHA HOWDEN

ON THE ROAD

KAPLEAU ARCHIVES GO TO DUKE ¶Roshi Philip Kapleau, the Center's founding abbot, had two callings. Primary, of course, was his devotion to the practice and teaching of Zen. But also close to his heart (as to his teaching) was his work as a writer. He wrote many articles and books—*The Three Pillars of Zen* remains a classic and the gateway that has led many westerners into Zen practice—and left behind a large archive of correspondence and other materials of interest to him.

◀ The first of 18 boxes of Roshi Kapleau's papers are carried into the Smith Warehouse, a block-long brick building that was built as a tobacco warehouse. Here the papers will be organized and scanned. *Left:* Richard Jaffe, Director of the Asian-Pacific Studies Institute and Associate Professor of Religious Studies. *Right:* RZC trustee Tom Roberts.

For years after the Roshi's passing, this material lay, for the most part unexamined, in storage at the Center. Fortuitously, it eventually caught the interest of Rebecca Mendelson, at the time a staff member at the Center and subsequently a graduate student specializing in the study of Zen in the Duke University Department of Religious Studies. Under the aegis of Associate Professor Richard Jaffe, Duke is assembling a significant collection of materials crucial to the history of Zen in America, including the archives of D.T. Suzuki, as a leading center for scholarly research. Rebecca proposed to Prof. Jaffe, her academic mentor, that Duke seek to acquire Roshi Kapleau's archive for its collection. He concurred, Rebecca took the proposal to the Center, and the Center was delighted to accept. This solved a problem that has been gnawing at Roshi Kjolhede and the Center's trustees practically since Roshi Kapleau's death: how to make these materials available to practitioners and scholars who could find them instructive and inspiring.

In preparation for the transfer, a group of four or five of Roshi Kapleau's old students spent an intensive week reviewing every page of the files, with two thoughts in mind: to weed out any material that might be personally sensitive to those who corresponded with Roshi Kapleau, and to highlight materials of historical or continuing interest to the Center for scanning to a database which we would maintain. It was wonderful work, bringing back for those involved Roshi Kapleau's vibrant personality and voice and reminding us, as though we needed it, how extraordinarily fortunate we were to have been able to know and work with him. The review completed, the more laborious task of scanning and titling each of the documents proceeded for over a year, thanks to the yeoman's service of several dedicated volunteers.

▼ Inside the Smith Warehouse, from left to right: Richard Jaffe; an archive assistant; J. Andrew Armacost, Head of Collection Development and Curator of Collections, Rubenstein Library; and Tom Roberts.

It's now accomplished. Chris Pulleyn and I drove a van full of Roshi Kapleau's files to Durham, NC, to the Duke archives in late February. We celebrated there with Rebecca, who was just back from an extended period of research in Japan, Prof. Jaffe, and others at Duke working in Buddhism, Zen, and American religion. There is no way to repay Roshi Kapleau's kindness to us all, but this journey provided a measure of satisfaction in that direction. And it was tremendously gratifying to hear how highly Roshi Kapleau is esteemed by academics in the religious studies field.—THOMAS ROBERTS

▲ The Duke University chapel. To the right is the building that houses the Department of Religious Studies.

▸ APRIL

1	2	3	4	5	6	7 ▸
8	9	10	11	12	13	14 ◂
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22 a dT	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

▸ MAY

		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17 SH DEADLINE	18	19 TRUSTEES MEETING
20 a TRUSTEES MEETING	21	22	23	24	25 TEMPLE NIGHT	26 BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY
27 ANNUAL MEETING	28 ⛔	29 ⛔ UNTIL 7 PM SITTING	30	31		

▸ JUNE

					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9 ▸
10	11	12	13	14	15	16 ◂
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 a	25	26 WORK RETREAT	27 WORK RETREAT	28 WORK RETREAT	29 WORK RETREAT	30 WORK RETREAT

Schedule subject to change. For the latest updates, please see www.rzc.org/calendar/

- A.M. EVENT
- P.M. EVENT
- ALL-DAY EVENT
- SESSHIN
- CENTER CLOSED
- a ALL-DAY SITTING
- BEGINNERS NIGHT
- CHANTING SERVICE
- DOKUSAN
- dT DHARMA TALK
- GROUP INSTRUCTION
- PRIVATE INSTRUCT.
- SANGHA MEETING
- SESSHIN
- TEISHO
- TERM INTENSIVE
- WORKSHOP
- FORMAL SITTING

▸ APRIL 1
SANGHA MEETING, 10:30 AM (Arnold Park)

▸ APRIL 7–14
SEVEN-DAY SESSHIN with Roshi (Chapin Mill)

▸ APRIL 22
ALL-DAY SITTING, 6:15 AM –3 PM (Arnold Park)

▸ APRIL 28
INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOP (Arnold Park)

▸ MAY 6
SANGHA MEETING, 10:30 AM (Arnold Park)

▸ MAY 17
APPLICATION DEADLINE for June seven-day sesshin

▸ MAY 19 & 20
TRUSTEES MEETING

▸ MAY 20
ALL-DAY SITTING, 6:15 AM –3 PM (Arnold Park) and TRUSTEES MEETING

▸ MAY 25
TEMPLE NIGHT and Precepts Ceremony 7–9:30 PM (Arnold Park)

▸ MAY 26
BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY celebration with parade, potluck, and Buddha Bazaar 11 AM–3 PM (Arnold Park)

▸ MAY 27
ANNUAL MEETING 9:30–11 AM (Arnold Park)

▸ MAY 28 & 29
CENTER CLOSED

▸ JUNE 3
SANGHA MEETING, 10:30 AM (Arnold Park)

▸ JUNE 9–16
SEVEN-DAY SESSHIN with Roshi (Chapin Mill)

▸ JUNE 23
INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOP (Arnold Park)

▸ JUNE 24
ALL-DAY SITTING, 6:15 AM –3 PM (Arnold Park)

▸ JUNE 26–30
WORK RETREAT (Chapin Mill)

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