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**Gillian Coote, Sally Hopkins Editors**

Cover photo, from Fifty Views of Japan, 1905, Frank Lloyd Wright

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**Allan Marett, editor of the Winter Issue** writes, ‘Accounts of Buddhism in India are full of magical and mysterious happenings—magical fungi, mysterious dragons and the like. Chinese Ch’an seems to have had little time for such things, Japanese Zen even less and Western Zen less again. And yet that which lies at the heart of our practice is mysterious and unknowable, and perhaps even magical. Contributions (articles, poetry, drawings, calligraphy, songs) exploring the role of magic, mystery and the unknowable, can be sent to: [allan.marett@usyd.edu.au](mailto:allan.marett@usyd.edu.au) by **May 17, 2010**

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## DANA: THE WAY TO BEGIN

Robert Aitken

*When someone brings me a flower  
I vow with all beings  
to renew my practice of dana,  
the gift, the way to begin.*

This is a gatha I included in The Dragon Who Never Sleeps. (1) The idea that dana, or giving, is the way to begin your practice, is not original with me, but is found in the earliest literature:

A monk asked Hui-hai, "By what means can the gateway of our school be entered?"

Hui-Hai said, "By means of the Dana Paramita."

The monk said, "According to the Buddha, the Bodhisattva Path comprises six Paramitas. Why have you mentioned only the one? Please explain why this one alone provides a sufficient means for us to enter."

Hui-hai said, "Deluded people fail to understand that the other five all proceed from the Dana Paramita and that by its practice all the others are fulfilled."

The monk asked, "Why is it called the Dana Paramita?"

Hui-hai said, "'Dana' means 'relinquishment.'"

The monk asked, "Relinquishment of what?"

Hui-hai said, "Relinquishment of the dualism of opposites, which means relinquishment of ideas as to the dual nature of good and bad, being and non-being, void and non-void, pure and impure, and so on." (2)

Hui-hai does not include the dualism of self and other in his list of dichotomies we must relinquish, but it is clear that he intends that it be included, for he goes on to say, "By a single act of relinquishment, everything is relinquished..I exhort you students to practice the way of relinquishment and nothing else, for it brings to perfection not only the other five Paramitas but also myriads of other (practices)." (3)

This total relinquishment is the self forgotten, the dropped-away body and mind. This act of dropping away is dana, out-flowing as food and housing and clothing and money, and dana, out-flowing as the Buddha's teaching of wisdom and compassion. It is not giving money or food in order to receive the teaching. It is not teaching in order to gain sustenance. The two acts arise as pratitya-samutpada, mutual co-arising. (4)

Thus dana is not obligation; it is not sacrifice; it is not compassion. I think it is an expression of gratitude. The English word gratitude is related to grace. It is the enjoyment of receiving as expressed in giving., It is a living, vivid mirror, in which giving and receiving form a dynamic practice of interaction. For receiving, too, is a practice. Look at the word arigato, Japanese for 'thank you'. It means literally, "I have difficulty". In other words, "Your kindness makes it hard for me to respond with equal grace." Yet the practice of gift-

giving lies at the heart of Japanese culture. The word arigato expresses the practice of receiving.

Pratitya-samutpada, is the fundamental phenomenon that the Buddha clarified in his teaching, *This is because that is. This arises when that arises.* When you smile, everyone smiles. When you are sad, everyone is sad. When you give, everyone gives, including the teacher, including our ancestors. Taking part in this primordial Tao, your contribution brings everyone's contribution. Quoting from my essay on money:

Kuan-yin distils the dana of primal society, of circulating the gift that nurtures families and clans. At a single festival, a necklace of precious shells becomes two dozen precious pendants. At a single market holiday, a knife becomes salt and salt becomes a colt. The honour of a new chief is spread by blankets far and wide. Of course, Mara blows his smoke through these exchanges. Did the primal peoples know Mara from Kuan-yin? They never heard of either, of course, but they knew greed when they saw it and so do we as well." (5)

In early Buddhist society, the Tao of dana made the teaching possible. The fundamental needs of monks for food, housing, clothing, and medicine were met by lay followers, who were in turn sustained by the Dharma. This is the simultaneous circulation of the gift that brings forth the Dharma to our own time and place.

Greed can motivate the circulation too, so fundamentally it is as a gift of self that dana brightens and clarifies the Dharma, the Buddha Way, and with continued unfolding it brings natural authority for more brightening and clarifying. You see its power in those who are acknowledged as leaders in traditional societies. In American history, it is the authority of John Quincy Adams, who accepted his defeat as a candidate for a second term as President with good grace and served selflessly in the House of Representatives for the last seventeen years of his long career of public service. In Buddhist history, it is Tou-shuai relinquishing his role of master and returning to practice as a monk. (6) In relinquishing conventional power, Adams and Tou-shuai found the authority of the timeless. They pass it on to us, and with each gift of empowerment the strength of dana in the world is enhanced. The Wheel of the Dharma turns accordingly.

Mu-chou, a disciple of the great Huang-po, became a great teacher in turn. However, he did not spend all his time in formal teaching. Between visitors, he occupied himself with making straw sandals of the kind worn by monks on pilgrimage. Such sandals are carefully crafted, but they wear out. So Mu-chou would weave them in various sizes and put them beside the highway. Monks would come along and say, "Oh, look at those nice sandals. I wonder where they came from? Let's see now, here's my size." And they would go on, with feelings of great gratitude. For a long time, nobody knew who was making the sandals until finally Mu-chou was found out and became known as the "Sandal Monk."

Mu-chou practiced in his hut by the road, teaching and crafting sandals – and we practice in our own circumstances. Dana is simply remembering what we

are, avatars of the Buddha, and practising our giving where we are. There is no need to call it Dana Paramita. You and I are perfecting our out-flowing selves, saving the many beings as we greet one another and encourage one another.



Photo: Glenys Jackson

Dogen Zenji said that giving a single phrase or verse of the teaching becomes a good seed in this life and other lives:

When one learns well, being born and dying are both giving. All productive labour is fundamentally giving. Entrusting flowers to the wind, birds to the season, also must be meritorious acts of giving ...It is not only a matter of exerting physical effort: one should not miss the right opportunity. (7)

Birth and death are both ultimate forms of giving, but the key to the practice of dana is Dogen's observation that will and aspiration are its roots. Bodhichitta, the endeavour and hope for Buddhahood, is the fundamental motive. This is not merely endeavour and hope for personal realisation. I return so often to the words of Hui-neng about the first of the "Great Vows for All", the four Bodhisattva Vows: "The many beings are numberless: I vow to save them". This, Hui-neng said, is a matter of saving them in my own mind. (8) There are many ways to understand this. One would be, "I vow to cultivate an attitude of saving others, which is no other than the attitude of giving". This can be far more than charity. It can be the gift of body and mind, the experience of the "Great Death" in Zen Buddhist terms.

Yet there is no need to wait for any kind of experience. You and I can practice the dana of trust and respect just as we are, as if it were perfected – and thus it is indeed perfected. With our own personalities and character traits, wearing our clothes and eating our meals, Shakyamuni and Kanzeon practice “as if” we were Buddhas and Bodhisattvas – in our smallest acts of catching the bus and answering the telephone. The will to practice is the only requisite.

#### Notes

1. Robert Aitken, The Dragon Who Never Sleeps: Verses for Zen Buddhist Practice (Berkeley, CA: Parallax, 1992), p.16
2. John Blofield, trans., The Zen Teaching of Instantaneous Awakening: Being the Teaching of the Zen Master Hui Hai, Known as the Great Pearl (Leicester: Buddhist Publishing Group, 1987), pp.25-26. I cite this in my study, The Practice of Perfection: The Paramitas from a Zen Buddhist Perspective (Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 1997), pp.6-7, and draw much of this essay from the chapter “Giving” in that book, pp 3-21.
3. Ibid., p.27
4. Walpola Rahula, What the Buddha Taught (New York: Grove, 1959), pp. 52-54.
5. Robert Aitken, Original Dwelling Place: Zen Buddhist Essays (Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 1996), p. 172.  
Robert Aitken, The Gateless Barrier: The Wu-men kuan (Mumonkan) (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1990), p. 279.
6. Dogen Kigen, Bodaisatta Shishobo, Thomas Cleary, Shobogenzo: Zen Essays by Dogen (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), p. 118.
7. Some commentators reject “within the mind” as superfluous, though I do not. See Philip B. Yampolsky, The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch: The Text of the Tun-huang Manuscript (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), p. 143, fn. 96. See Chapter 8 in Aitken, The Practice of Perfection, for the Prāṇidhāna Paramita, the Perfection of Aspiration, pp. 147-164

#### **Being born and dying.... - Dogen**

How like us all, the Emperor who asked:  
 “I’ve built. I’ve given. I’ve supported.  
 What merit?”  
 No merit, he was told.  
 “But surely? I’ve practiced. I’ve helped.  
 I’ve given....”  
 But thus it is.  
 Separated out, dividing everything up,  
 I’m a shag on a pole  
 surveying the world  
 from my own tiny foothold  
 of “I” giving  
 “I” doing  
 “I” holding what’s mine,  
 missing all the abundance and glory of  
 living.  
 Letting go of my post, reborn in the  
 moment,  
 its ocean freely diving,  
 experiencing the wonder of  
 true giving-receiving.

#### **Entrusting flowers to the wind, birds to the season... - Dogen**

Doing zazen - -  
 like a flower in the field.  
 Just opening to How Things Are,  
 the stream naturally flows outwards:  
 inevitably flowers bloom.  
 No need to call it ‘Dana’.  
 But  
 giving up fences, shut doors,  
 safe rooms, special views?  
 Not so easy- not so easy at all!  
 Yet  
 imprisoned in my skin, in my strongly  
 held ideas,  
 how can I truly know  
 that the more we live ‘not separate’  
 the more precious, the more marvellous  
 is each and every thing.

*Sally Hopkins*





the birds are singing right outside  
but I miss them.

too wrapped up in my self  
involved thoughts to appreciate  
the gift they are giving to anyone  
who cares enough to receive it.

for a moment I'm back with the birds,  
but before long,  
an even bigger bird brings me back again.

see,

I disappear sometimes  
but for the most part  
I'm just not here.

but at least  
all it takes,  
to bring me back,  
is dual jet engines.

they had shared their last smile  
and then just let go  
hoping to join  
their brothers and sisters  
in a nameless offering  
to future generations

but the spider had other ideas

a strategically placed web  
would break the flowers fall  
and prolong the bloom  
for a few hours more

too effective the web  
when days and nights later  
the once beautiful flowers  
now wilted and dead.

hung by the tenant.

*Lee Nutter*



**Lotus flowers – Glenys Jackson**

## An Iron Boats Floats on Water

Gillian Coote

I remember being shown how to float in the surf at Terrigal. Just lie on your back, Pa said, and held me with just one hand lightly supporting my back. Don't let go, don't let go, I implored. It's all right, he said, just lie there. I'll sink. I'll drown. Don't let go. Trust me, he said.

Eventually I realised his supporting hand had gone, but I wasn't sinking. I was being held by the water. That experience of being held, of relaxing and being open to the ocean and the sky, was profound. Small waves would wash up against my face and the water move all around me but I could lie there in the midst of this turbulence and be held, eyes closed, face to the sun. Even more profound was that when trust ran out and anxiety rushed in and I stiffened up, I'd start to sink. No more vast sky, no more mother ocean holding me. Just flailing, floundering and water up my nose, everything in jeopardy.

Over that summer, having learnt that floating begins by letting go of doubt and fear, arranging the body like a starfish, face up, and trusting the ocean - I floated every day. I still love floating. Thanks, Pa. Thanks, ocean.



*Better than knowing the body is knowing the mind in peace.  
When the mind is realised, the body is no longer anxious.  
When both body and mind are fully realised,  
the saintly hermit declines appointment to the nobility.*

Floating, body and mind in peace, is what many people who come to Annandale are looking for. *I seek a peaceful mind, will you show me how to control my mind, my thoughts and emotions?* This is essentially the First Noble Truth - there is suffering, there is unease and there is a way out of suffering. Contemporary seekers are basically no different from Hui-k'o, with his question to Bodhidharma in Case 41 of the Wu-men Kuan. "My mind has no peace as yet! I beg you, please pacify my mind!" He has been standing outside Bodhidharma's place all night in the snow and, according to myth, cuts off his arm to show his sincerity for the Way.

Newcomers these days are as sincere as Hui-k'o, seeking control of their minds so their lives can be directed towards what they want to attain or achieve, and so they can avoid being beset by difficult emotions like irritability and anxiety - those scratchy, just below the surface, feelings, the experience of uneasy anticipation or expectation of something up ahead, of being on the rack. Because when we chafe, fret, vex and worry ourselves sick, life is an ordeal.

Letting go of doubt and the fear of life, of this moment, this breath, and learning to trust and have faith in the Way, can be immediately clear for some people, and for others, a constant struggle. Looking into the Oxford Dictionary for the root of the word *anxiety*, I find it comes from the Latin verb *angere*, to strangle, to choke. That's an extreme expression, but interesting because it suggests that one can't actually get enough air to breath, that the natural flow is restricted by anxiety. Which is what anxiety does. Life's responsibility is all on *our* shoulders, it's all up to *us* and so we soldier on like automatons - moving mechanical devices resembling human beings - with deadened spirit, deadened emotions, and little joy. One does what one has to do, one is efficient and capable, one goes through the motions, shut away in one's body from the world out there, cut off from the flow of life. No floating here.

This oppressed state of mind is ripe for irritation - *noli irritare leones* - don't annoy the lions, (especially if they haven't been sleeping well.) How to pacify, to calm the mind? Bodhidharma replied to Hui-k'o, "Bring your mind here and I will pacify it for you." Hui-k'o said, "I have searched for my mind and I cannot take hold of it." "Now your mind is pacified." Bodhidharma said. Dwelling nowhere, come forth from there. When you are feeling depressed, irritable and negative, the moment when you see that, there's no need to wallow. Just let go of the focus on the feelings and accompanying judgemental thoughts, and pay attention to the breeze, the birdcall, to the matter at hand.

Our lives might be less fraught if we *could* make sure of our future and control our life, (perhaps the pull of the clairvoyant). But these words, life and control, cancel each other out - life is just this! moment by moment! beyond control. It is possible, with steady Zen practice, to see what the mind is more clearly, and be less impressed, less overwhelmed, to experience the anxious and irritable mind as one small element in the vastness, one small dharma gate. And although people come to Zen practice to relieve themselves of their irritation and anxiety, once and for all - *if only I can practise hard enough, earnestly enough* - it doesn't work like that. Irritation and anxiety don't necessarily go away with practice, just as envy and sadness and other problematic feelings don't necessarily go away. How could they? The small anxious mind is the self-centred mind, the small self *and* there is an infinitely capacious mind, as vast as the universe. *May we retain this mind and extend it throughout the world, so that we and all beings become mature in Buddha's wisdom.*

When the mind's as is, circumstances also are as is;  
There's no real and also no unreal.  
Giving no heed to existence,  
And holding not to nonexistence -  
You're neither saint nor sage, just  
An ordinary person who has settled their affairs.

Easy, so easy!  
These very five skandhas make true wisdom.  
The ten directions of the universe are the same One Vehicle.  
How can the formless Dharmakaya be two!  
If you cast off the passions to enter Bodhi,  
Where will any Buddha-lands be?

To preserve your life you must destroy it;  
Having completely destroyed it you dwell at ease.  
When you attain the inmost meaning of this,  
An iron boat floats upon water.

*Layman P'ang*, transl. by Ruth Fuller Sasaki, Yoshitaka Iriya and Dana R. Fraser.

## Pilgrimage in Shikoku: challenges and renunciations<sup>1</sup>

Allan Marett



Entering Daihoji

The Master T'ien P'ing visited Hsi Yuan while on pilgrimage. He was always saying, "Don't say you have understood Buddhism. There is no one who can make a *mondo* with me and examine me."

One day Hsi Yuan saw him at a distance and called to him, "Come here Ts'ung Yi." [Ts'ung Yi was T'ien P'ing's personal name.] T'ien P'ing raised his head.

Hsi Yuan said, "Wrong." P'ing went on for two or three steps.

Hsi Yuan again said, "Wrong." P'ing turned and came closer.

Hsi Yuan said, "I have just said 'wrong' twice. Is it I who is wrong, or is it you?"

T'ien P'ing said, "It is I."

Yuan said, "Wrong." P'ing was silent.

Hsi Yuan said, "Stay here for the summer retreat and I'll examine this matter of two wrongs with you." T'ien P'ing, however, departed.

Years later, when T'ien P'ing became an abbot, he addressed his assembly and said, "Once in my days of pilgrimage I visited Hsi Yuan by chance, and he twice said, "Wrong." He advised me to stay with him for the summer retreat to examine this matter of two wrongs with him. I don't say I was wrong then, but when I left for the south, I realized for the first time that I had completed saying "Wrong."

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As I wrote in the previous issue of *Mind, Moon Circle*, last year I undertook a pilgrimage in Shikoku, the smallest of the four main islands of Japan. The two most common names for this pilgrimage are the *Shikoku Hachijuhakkasho* or the *Shikoku Henro (michi)*. The former means the '88 Sacred Places of Shikoku' and refers to the 88 temples that the pilgrim visits; the name draws attention to the 88 points of arrival and departure, where the pilgrim carries out various rituals. The latter simply means the Shikoku Pilgrimage (or Pilgrim's path); its focus is the path that connects the 88 temples. The pilgrim path is a 1200km circumambulation of

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<sup>1</sup> This is an edited version of a *dharma* talk given at the December *zazen* at Annandale. It is slightly reframed to take account of the theme of this volume

the island, and is normally done in a clockwise direction. The temples are numbered 1 to 88, reflecting the order that they have conventionally been visited since C18th, beginning at Ryôzenji, the nearest temple to Naruto, the port at which in the C18th pilgrims arrived from the mainland. One can, however, begin and end at any point. My intention was to complete the whole pilgrimage starting at Temple 1 and finishing at 88, but as it turned out, I abandoned the pilgrimage at Temple 64.

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Before I say any more about the pilgrimage and my experience of it, however, let me return to the story about Hsi Yuan and T'ien P'ing: this is Case 98 from Blue Cliff Record (*Pi Yen Lu/Hekiganroku*), the collection of *kôans* compiled by the eminent Sung master Hsueh Tou Ch'ung Hsien (980-1052). The two protagonists are Master Ts'ung Yi of T'ien P'ing and Master Ssu Ming of Hsi Yuan. We can perceive almost immediately that T'ien P'ing is rather arrogant and scornful: "He was always saying, 'don't say you have understood Buddhism. There is no one who can make a *mondo* with me and examine me.'" Hs'ueh T'ou's poem on this case points to T'ien P'ing's shortcomings:

Followers of the Ch'an [Zen] house  
like to be scornful,  
having studied until their bellies are full they cannot put it to use.  
How lamentable, laughable old T'ien P'ing.'

Yuan Wu K'e Ch'an (1063-1135) is not more forgiving, commenting as follows. "If you say, 'I understand, other do not understand,' carrying a bundle of Ch'an around the country, when you are tried by clear eyed people, you won't be able to use it at all."

So here we have poor old T'ien P'ing rocking up to Ssu Ming's temple at Hsi Yuan. Ssu Ming sees him coming and calls out to him. The moment T'ien P'ing raises his head, Ssu Ming says, "Wrong." What does T'ien P'ing do? He ignores him and continues walking. Before he can take more than a couple of steps, Ssu Ming calls out again, "Wrong." Ssu Ming's compassion is boundless. He puts himself out even further when he asks T'ien P'ing who is 'wrong,' himself or T'ien P'ing, T'ien P'ing replies, "it is I who am wrong." Oh dear! He's completely missed the point, completely failing to grasp the wonderful generosity of Ssu Ming, who is not just tilting at his prideful sense of knowing it all but aiming to cut out the root of delusion entirely. Just this: "Wrong!" Even when Ssu Ming in his generosity invites him to stay for the summer training period, he rejects him and at the end of his life, we find him still justifying himself.

When we go on pilgrimage, we can be sure of one thing—that the challenges thrown up by the pilgrimage will be precisely those that we need to meet. In the case of T'ien P'ing spiritual pride that needed to be challenged, and Ssu Ming provided a challenge that would have brought the whole edifice crashing down, but T'ien P'ing could not respond. How sad! It is only by responding to such challenges that we can begin to see what it is that we need to renounce.

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Let me tell you about some of the encounters I had on my pilgrimage. There was the encounter with an elderly man called Moroshima Taduô fairly early in my pilgrimage – between Temples 10 and 11 in fact. We were walking along a road that at that point ran between rice paddies, as it so often does. There is a photo of Mr Moroshima in the previous *Mind, Moon, Circle*. We both wore the large sedge hat and white coat that are the traditional clothes of pilgrims and we both carried staffs adorned with bells that jingled as we struck the ground. On my staff was written the characters: *dôgyô ninen*, which means, "one practice, two people". This refers to the belief that each pilgrim is accompanied on his journey by the spirit of Kôbô Daishi, the founder of the Shingon Sect of Buddhism: indeed pilgrims often

regard the staff as embodying Kôbô Daishi. Kôbô Daishi was born on Shikoku in 774 and he died in 835 AD. He undertook his early training on Shikoku before going to China to study esoteric Buddhism. On his return he founded the great temple complex at Mt Kôya. Kôbô Daishi is a huge figure in Japanese culture, and in Shikoku folklore. It is he who is believed to have first walked the pilgrimage and the route is dotted with sites of his miracles.

Mr Moroshima and I had been talking about this and that, including the Heart Sutra, which we recited at least twice at every temple and Shingon ritual, which we had encountered at some temples. I turned to Mr Moroshima and said, “what does *dôgyô ninen* mean to you. He said, it means, “ I am walking with Kôbô Daishi.” I said, “Is there any separation between you and Kôbô Daishi?” He stopped in his tracks and pointed to the paddy field and said “Kôbô Daishi.” I responded by banging my staff on the ground, making the bells jingle. We beamed at each other. I think we both felt we had had a real encounter. Perhaps one of us should then have said ‘wrong’ —we wouldn’t want to be getting too pleased with ourselves, would we? As Yuan Wu said, “if you say, “I understand, other do not understand,” carrying a bundle of Zen around the country, when you are tried by clear eyed people, you won’t be able to use it at all.”

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Why do we go on pilgrimage then? When I set out, I really had very few aims. After I retired, I decided to do a long walk, mainly to rid myself of the accumulated stresses and strains that had made up the last years of my career at Sydney University. I wanted to get well and fit and I’d initially chosen this pilgrimage rather than, say, the Camino di Santiago because it was a Buddhist, rather than a Christian pilgrimage and because I speak Japanese, but not Spanish. But I didn’t feel that I was taking any specific questions into the pilgrimage. How wrong I was! As Ian Reader tells us in his book *Making Pilgrimages: Meaning and Practice in Shikoku*, most people who undertake the Shikoku Pilgrimages are not adherents to Shingon Buddhism. Indeed they may not even be Buddhist. But like me, they put on pilgrims clothes and prepare to embrace the walk and whatever it throws up. There is a lovely poem, a *shidai*, that begins the Noh play Takasago:

*Ima-o hajime no tabi goromo*  
*Ima-o hajime no tabi goromo*  
*Hi-mo yukusue zo hisashiki*

Now we put on pilgrims’ clothes  
Now we put on pilgrims’ clothes  
Both the threads and the way ahead are long.

I should say, however, that although almost all pilgrims wear the white coat *hakui* and carry the staff, nowadays the vast majority, about 95% they reckon, travel not on foot, but in buses or private cars. So when walking pilgrims like me arrive sweaty and dirty at the temples, they will nearly always be outnumbered by scores of bus- or car-pilgrims, all absolutely pristine in their perfect white coats, with their beautifully lacquered hats and an almost holiday air about them. But let me say that the bus-pilgrims were always lovely to us dirty, tired and smelly walking pilgrims. Always greeting us, asking about our travels, feeding us fruit and cool drinks.

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When I was staying at a *ryôkan* in Tosa-Kure, about two or three weeks into the walk, I came downstairs for breakfast to find a Korean monk holding forth to a very polite group of middle-aged female pilgrims. It turned out that he was a Zen monk who had sat for some time at Bodhidharma’s temple Shaolin in China. What he was saying was, “I have no time for the rituals that you people do at the temples. All this praying for things. You are as bad as those

Christian football players who cross themselves before a big match expecting God to grant them a win. And as for going to the temple office and collecting stamps and calligraphy. Buddhism is not about collecting things”, he said, “it’s about throwing things away”. For “throwing away” we might understand “renunciation”.

This encounter had quite a profound effect on me. It encouraged me to continue the pilgrimage as a Zen practice, and to let go my anxieties about how much I needed to engage with Shingon. Of the 88 temples, 80 are Shingon, 4 Tendai, 2 Rinzai Zen, 1 Sôtô Zen and 1 Jishû. From then on I practiced just bowing at the gate, just offering incense, just chanting the Heart Sutra, just letting go. But despite the monk’s objections, I did keep going to the temple office for the stamps and calligraphy – not because I wanted to acquire them (I would have happily thrown away my *nôkyôcho* stamp book—it was extra weight) but because it gave me a point of contact with the priests or officials of the temples, and opened up innumerable interesting conversations.

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A couple of months before I set off on the pilgrimage, I was in Hawaii for a conference and a sesshin. Aitken Rôshi was in hospital, and Ginger Ikenberry, the Temple Keeper at Palolo kindly drove me down to see him straight after sesshin. I told him that I was going to do the Shikoku pilgrimage and asked him about it in relationship to Yamamoto Gempô Rôshi.

You may remember that when we chant the full sutra service, we dedicate the chanting of Tôrei Zenji’s Bodhisattva’s vows and the Emmei Jikku Kannon Gyô to Gempô Rôshi: Hannya Gempô Daiôshô.

Yamamoto Gempô was born almost totally blind. Because of this he was abandoned as a baby and brought up in poverty by a very poor family of farmers. When he was in his late teens, he decided to set out on the Shikoku pilgrimage and vowed to continue walking until his sight was restored. As I think I have intimated, miracles are part of the folklore associated with the pilgrimage. On his third circuit he fell down, utterly exhausted and ill, outside one of the three Zen temples on the pilgrimage, Temple 33 Sekkeiji. The abbot of the temple took him in and nursed him back to health. When he had recovered, he asked the abbot if he could be ordained. The abbot agreed, adding, “you won’t be an ordinary monk.” And indeed he wasn’t. He went on to become Abbot of Ryûtakuji, near Shizuôka, and it was to this temple that Aitken Rôshi went to study when he was a young man. So I had this lovely connection to this temple, via Aitken Rôshi and Gempô Rôshi. When I visited the temple, I told the priest of this connection and asked if I could do zazen there. He told me that unfortunately Sekkeiji was no longer a working Zen temple – there was no regular zazen practice – but he gave me rosary beads, which I am wearing now.

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Finally let me talk a little about some of the most difficult but also the most powerful aspects of the pilgrimage for me. As happened with Master T’ien P’ing, the pilgrimage threw up precisely that which I needed to face in my life, and ultimately what I needed to renounce. It’s still quite hard to talk about this and so please forgive me if I am a little vague about some of the circumstances.

I said earlier that I didn’t feel that I was carrying any particular issue into the pilgrimage, but there was a certain unhappiness about how I was leading my life. From time to time I did things that caused me shame, things that I didn’t want other people to know about. We probably all do this to a greater or lesser extent. So habituated was I to this way of living that I had become almost unaware of it: it was more of a dull ache than a screaming pain.

Through a series of encounters—some delightful, some painful—these matters began to come to a head, to a point where I had no option but face the fact that regaining and maintaining the integrity that I was seeking through my practice of pilgrimage was going to involve acknowledging and owning some painful truths about myself. Could I find a way to step forward into my life without this burden of shame? This was the question that I carried through the last weeks of my pilgrimage. It was immensely draining. I was stricken by a host of contradictory emotions—fear of the future, grief at my own past actions mixed strangely with joy and gratitude that these things that had been quietly blighting my life had finally stepped forth from the shadows.

As I walked in this confusion of emotions, some extraordinary but disturbing events began to occur, and these mingled with my inner conflicts. At the end of one very long difficult day I arrived in a village seeking my lodgings. I asked a local woman if she knew where my *ryōkan* was and she pointed out the building. But then added, “you must not stay there!” My god, I thought, this is like something from a fairy tale or a myth. I asked her several times what the problem was. She steadfastly refused to say until in the end I asked her, “is it that they are bad people.” She gave a tiny nod and walked away. Now I had a problem. I was already booked into the *ryōkan* and it was bad form to just not turn up. I also knew that there were no other places to stay closer than a couple of hours walk, but it was already too late in the day for that and anyway I was pretty exhausted. In the end I decided I had no option but to stay, so I presented myself at what was, in fact, a rather dirty sake shop with a few miserable rooms above.

The woman who ran the place seemed friendly enough, though, as we sat in the shop drinking tea and talking about the path ahead and its various temples. Then suddenly the room burst into flames – she had left oil on the stove and it had ignited. With its paper walls the room quickly caught alight and the blaze spread with astonishing speed. The woman called out to her husband, who ran to get the fire extinguisher from their car. I grabbed my pack, hat and staff and rushed into the street. In the end the husband managed to put the fire out, but I and my gear, and the *ryōkan* were covered in chemical foam and stank of smoke and charred wood. I clearly couldn’t stay there and told the woman so. She immediately became abusive: “pilgrims are scum,” she said, “they’re always booking and cancelling leaving me with uneaten food. They say will arrive at a certain time and then turn up late. And foreign pilgrims are worse of all!”

I was so shaken that I could barely speak – my Japanese almost deserted me. I asked for their help to find somewhere else to stay – they had a car and could have taken me to another lodging. The refused point blank, however, to help. In the end I was able to hitch a ride with a workman back down the long hill I had spent the day toiling up and find refuge in an inn attached to a tofu shop. Gradually other pilgrims arrived, but nobody seemed particularly surprised at my adventure. The Japanese pilgrims had already been warned. The word had got about – don’t stay at that place!

The following day I set out for the next temple, Temple 44, Daihōji. Somehow I got it into my head that it was a barrier temple or *sekisho* – one of those temples where pilgrims with impure hearts meet disasters that prevent them from completing the walk. To give you an example of the sort of thing that can happen at a barrier temple, in 1803 a woman called Okyō murdered her husband and ran away with her lover to Shikoku and together they undertook the pilgrimage. When they came to Temple 19, Tatsueji, which is indeed a barrier temple, her hair became entangled in the bell rope. She was so terrified that confessed her crime to the priest, who then released her, but not without her hair and scalp becoming detached from her head – and you can see them hanging to right of the Daishidō at Tatsueji.

In fact I later learned that Temple 44 wasn’t technically a barrier temple, but it certainly was me. The following afternoon I was sitting in a small shelter in the temple car park having a

drink when a gust of wind caught my hat and blew it off. I stood up and made a grab for the hat thereby neatly impaling my arm on a rusty nail sticking out of the one of the beams of the shelter. Tug as I may, I couldn't get myself free. I was stuck, it hurt and I was beginning to panic. Finally, gritting my teeth, I gave an enormous tug and managed to wrench my arm off the nail. There was a stream of blood. The sleeve of my white pilgrims coat was soon crimson. The band aids that I had in my pack were not up to the job, so finally I staunched the wound with the Heart Sutra scarf that I normally wore on my head. Then I thought about tetanus shots.

The next day, wearing a new *hakui* and scarf, (was this symbolic of something?) I walked to perhaps the most beautiful temple on the whole walk, the remote Iwayaji (Temple 45), a temple that hangs off a cliff.



Iwayaji Temple

As I walked the mountain path to the temple, my heart began to lighten somewhat. Then, coming down off the mountain into the temple grounds, I encountered the most enormous, crimson Fudô Myô-ô. Fudô (literally the unmoveable one) is one of the emanations of Mahavairochana, the Cosmic Buddha, and as such is an ubiquitous figure on the pilgrimage—you meet him at most temples on the pilgrimage. For many years I had felt a special affinity for this Myô-ô, or mysterious king, who stands in the midst of the flames of passion, one hand holding a sling, with which he snares delusive thoughts, and the other holding a sword,

with which he cuts them off. As I approached the figure fixed me with his severe but kindly gaze. I was transfixed. I literally could not move. And then he spoke to me. I heard his voice, and he said, “It’s not easy is it, this passionate way that you and I have chosen?”



The Fudo Myo-o who spoke to me.

Hearing this, something in me melted. It was OK. My life was not an aberration after all. My practice, imperfect though it was, was not a mockery. The path is as it is, now clear, now obscure, now pure, now tainted: it teaches us the lessons we need to learn, we make changes to our lives, or not, as the case may be.

After this I went on for just over a week before falling down several times on the path from Temple 64, the high mountain temple, Yokomineji. This temple is known as a *henro korogashi*, a place where pilgrims fall down—oddly, one of my pilgrim friends had reminded me of this the previous night by text. “Be careful. Yokomineji is a *henro korogashi*. Don’t fall down.” Yokomineji is the third highest temple on the pilgrimage and has clearly been the nemesis of many pilgrims, indeed, quite a number have actually died on this section of the path. Although I was able to pick myself up and walk for another day, in the end I could not go on. It was partly exhaustion and partly that I had decided that I needed to return to Australia and begin setting my life straight. To become true to myself and those close to me. To renounce those ways of living that were causing me pain. To speak the truth, however painful that might be. After so many weeks of mindful walking, I had found my own ground,

and it was a ground that demanded integrity. And let us remember that integrity means oneness, wholeness. And the ground of our being not only *demands* that we embrace this wholeness, but *is, intrinsically*, itself this wholeness.



Yokomineji Temple

This sequence of events, the emergence into the light of the very things I needed to face, the resultant pain and confusion, the various accidents, Fudô's words, and falling down at Yokomineji, were dramatic and powerful manifestations of the Way that shook me to my core and began a process of transformation. Today I no longer carry that burden of shame. I have put it down. No longer do I have to hide who I am from myself, my nearest and dearest, or indeed, anyone. What a relief! Suddenly life is much simpler and the way forward is so much clearer.

Poor T'ien P'ing! How sad that he could not grasp what was offered to him. And in saying that, I don't want to suggest that my experiences and their resolution set me above T'ien P'ing in any way. That really would be "wrong!" I would be indulging in precisely the sort of hubris that plagued T'ien Ping. But when I re-read that story from the Blue Cliff Record, I understood that while there is nothing intrinsically magical about pilgrimage (for all the talk of miracles that you encounter on the path) it nonetheless has the power to miraculously transform your life. Precisely how depends on you, on the clear eyed people you fall in with, and your loving friends and family members at home who support you as you walk the path. And it doesn't stop when the pilgrimage stops. The pilgrims' road, like the Hobbit's, goes on and on, and it will always have its fair share of stumbles and barriers and its fair share of stuff that needs to be thrown away.

Let me conclude by singing you the first chorus of my new, as yet incomplete, Noh play, Oppenheimer.

Those who take the pilgrim path, know not where it leads  
Those who take the pilgrim path, know not where it leads  
Now open, now closed, the way, unfolds like this.

## A Small Field Sue Bidwell

*Journeying through the world  
To and fro, to and fro  
Cultivating a small field.*

For some time now, I've been absorbed in this haiku by Basho. It speaks of such simplicity, such vastness yet such ordinariness, such a message of responsibility and care. There are times when it seems to encompass all the truths I need to live by.

Day by day, what I do and achieve can seem so essential and significant, yet even the most momentous of these happenings, feelings and actions will be forgotten within a month, a week or even sooner. The sum of it all is in fact nothing other than to-ing and fro-ing! How pointless it would all be if it weren't for the fact of Basho's last line – his bottom line. Because it's **how** I 'to and fro', and the intention behind it all, that is the cultivation or neglect of that small field. So the choices I make, and what I do, day by day, moment by moment are what become my small field as I journey along. As Thich Nhat Hanh has said "My actions are my true belongings. They are the ground on which I stand."

And in being aware of my small mind-field –a mine-field at times! - not beating myself up for shortcomings, but rather just being aware of its creation, I find, inexplicably, that I'm somehow detached from wanting to 'be' a certain way. In fact it seems that the more I live intimately with my field, knowing that I'm the sole person who is cultivating it and can't blame anyone else for not doing a good job of it, the less judgemental I am of other people and the less I look for approval or recognition from them. The upshot of all this is that I find myself being more completely open to others, really **being** with them, without me getting in the way. And this freedom to wholeheartedly engage with others, this spontaneous giving, free of self-consciousness (when I allow it to happen!) feels like a true form of dana.

Another aspect of relinquishment and giving which this amazing haiku has brought to light - and I know I'll find more as I continue to explore it - relates to how I manage my to-ing and fro-ing time. Time seems such a precious commodity, with all the intrusions that are now part of our daily lives. And I'm inclined to be protective of it, clinging in my mind to schedules and time-frames, regardless of whether or not they can be shifted when someone else's needs present themselves.

Yet the intrusions are connections with other people in one form or another, so for what purpose am I giving priority to those action plans which are self-imposed and can be altered in order to respond to someone else? As David Steindl-Rast and Sharon LeBell said in *Music of Silence*, 'in almost every situation we have a choice; we can be niggardly or generous. ... (we can) respond wholeheartedly, authentically, or wimp out and betray our true self.'<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Brother David Steindl-Rast & Sharon LeBell, *Music of Silence* (Ulysses Press, Berkeley, CA, 2002), p 51

When in fact I do unequivocally drop non-essential tasks to respond to another's needs (as opposed to offering to help but planning silently how I can bring the interruption to a quick close), then the connection is genuine and honest – it has such a different flavour and lightness to it, without underlying feelings of impatience.

Dana has a place in conversation too. And I can surpass myself with self-indulgence in this department! Having grown up in a family where it was assumed that everyone would have an opinion and would therefore relish the opportunity to express it, my natural tendency is to feel that silences in conversation need to be filled wherever possible to avoid awkwardness or to make sure that I'm noticed. Yet silences can create openings, as Chogyam Trungpa explains in *Cutting through Material Spiritualism*. In his words, 'the process of communication can be beautiful, if we see it in terms of simplicity and precision. Every pause made in the process of speaking becomes a kind of punctuation. Speak, allow space, speak, allow space. Space is as important in communicating to another person as talking. You do not have to overload the other person with words and ideas and smiles all at once. You don't have to be self-conscious and rigid about allowing space; just feel the natural flow of it.'<sup>3</sup>

And I find that when I let go of my need to fill spaces and instead give space to the other person, there's a sense of showing respect, and a trust that they can find their own way of expression, without any prompting or interference from me! A quotation attributed to people from various spiritual traditions, including Buddhists, Hindus and Quakers, goes along these lines: 'Before you speak, ask yourself: Is it kind, is it true, is it necessary, does it improve upon the silence?' – a very useful prompt for people with my tendencies...

As I continue my journey through the world, with its moment by moment to-ing and fro-ing, I'm increasingly aware of a tightening of my heart, a little miserable knot, when I close myself off from natural generosity. On the other hand, when I am aware to the depth of me that it is my intentions and my actions which are the cultivation of my field, I feel a spontaneous, happy openness to dana and this, in turn, nourishes that small field.

### Postscript

When quietly prompted to contribute to Mind, Moon, Circle I felt a sense of guilt, knowing that it only survives because others are prepared to give of themselves and make the effort to put pen to paper or, more accurately, fingers to the keyboard. Over the past several weeks I've amended, altered and revised what I've written numerous times - and have only stopped now as the date for submission is nigh. What I've found is that the process has been invaluable in urging me to nut out my thoughts and there's been a real shift in my understanding of what I mean. To quote E.M.Forster "How do I know what I think until I see what I say?" What a great gift we're given in this opportunity for expression of our thoughts and feelings and practice.

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<sup>3</sup> Chogyam Trungpa, *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism* (Shambhala, Boston, 1972) p. 156

## The Practice of Dana and Clay: Notes from a Clay and Meditation Workshop

Janet Selby



**Giving bowls before firing**

Giving and receiving come from the heart, are at the heart of our practice. Giving and receiving create a circle, a mandala of compassionate interdependence. We let everything flow through, not grasping, practising dana moment by moment. As we recognise the barriers that arise as symptoms of our greed, hatred and ignorance and of our fear, we vow to abandon them, and this is our ongoing practice, right to the last breath. *Gillian Coote*

*Dana* is the spirit and act of generosity. It is the act of relinquishment of dualism of opposites: good/bad; void/non-void; pure/impure; self/other. It is the total relinquishment of self. Traditionally, *Dana* is the principle of donating or giving something we value to others that helps alleviate their suffering and purify our minds of one of the three poisons – greed. Spending time just being with other people, sharing a moment is sharing the precious gift of mindfulness and suchness, sharing silence together and enjoying the sensations of nature around us. Giving without seeking something in return reduces acquisitive impulses that ultimately lead to further suffering.

### **Clay and giving**

*Making a giving bowl —holding your goodwill to share with others.*

Our two cupped hands are already the basis of a vessel. Together they create a loving gesture of sharing and holding. We make a bowl in this shape to symbolise the offering of goodwill, and the receiving of acceptance.

*I enjoy making pinch pots. I like the process; I like the fact that my fingers leave marks on the pot, you can feel the process that went into making it. Because pinch pots tend to be small, they can be held in the palm of my hand – they are personal pots and each bears my imprint.* Vicki Grima, editor, Australian Ceramics

Participants hold a ball of clay in the palm of their hand and open it up with the thumb pressing into its centre. By doing this with eyes closed, they relinquish their expectations of a final result. It doesn't matter what it looks like - we are exploring our sensations and extending our touch into the clay. This is an experience of the moment. We are relinquishing your expectations of a final piece, of whether it will be good or not, or whether we can do it or not. This is a form of giving, of *dana*. And by letting go of notions of ability, we are giving ourselves to the moment, to the extension of ourselves into the clay.

After this initial introductory experience, we explore the characteristics of the clay more fully, and follow the form it takes as an equal in the process. To be mindfully focused on the reaction of the medium helps us control the action of our hands. The pressure and rhythm of pinching is established. Then the shape, texture, walls, rim, body and base all emerge, as an intimate relationship is formed between you and the clay.



Giving bowls after firing

**We are always living out life that is connected  
to everything in the universe. -Uchiyama**

This breath:  
seventy sextillion silent stars  
through the telescope;  
traces of all that has ever lived  
on the wind;  
children crying in the street,  
loud swearing and laughter;  
crickets and cool rain  
in the frangipani- scented dark.  
Who gives? Who receives?  
Who not grateful? Who not awed?  
How can a heart stay closed?

***Sally Hopkins***

## GIVING THE SELF

Phillip Long

One of the things we are constantly working with in the practice is attachment or clinging. Our small self will cling to anything which it considers to be itself or its own, even its own suffering. This is mine and you will not take it away from me, or.....or I will die, cease to be. Strangely enough this very attachment has another side: we are ashamed of our suffering and repelled by it - another reason to cling to it so that it will not reach the light of day and really hurt us or be judged by others. It can even be said that the small self is constructed of the fear of suffering. Sloughing off this skin of fear and settling in the heart of the true Self, the authentic Self, is our task for life.

When as children we would complain of some pain or other my mother would often say: "Offer it up to God." As a child this injunction seemed incomprehensible and unfair. I was reminded of this saying of hers recently when in trying to deal with a difficult emotional state I found myself mentally putting my feelings in an offering dish and determining to offer them up to my therapist at my next visit. Of course my therapist is not God? It is just that at the time therapy seemed to be a safe place to offer the suffering up to God, to relinquish it, to give it over, where it would be accepted without the judgement. In the absence of the therapist we can still offer up our suffering. When I am experiencing a lot of fear, I find myself sometimes feeling I can do nothing to alleviate it until I just let go and go on without knowing where I am going, into the uncertainty of the unknown: that usually works out for the best and the unknown turns out to be quite ordinary and non-threatening.

As a child I was fascinated with the case of my aunt who I felt to be a very unhappy person. Her marriage had been annulled on the grounds that her husband had been unable to consummate the marriage. He subsequently married and had five children. I had the feeling that she kept everything close to her, that having been hurt early in life she was unable to truly give. She was some kind of negative example for me on what not to do. Of course in my naïveté I thought of myself as not falling into the same error.

It seems to me that dana, or giving, begins here – in our addressing, coming to terms with and healing our suffering. When we are holding on to our suffering, for whatever reason, it is indeed hard to give of ourselves or even to give in the ordinary sense. The holding on seems to develop a sort of halo effect so that we will cling to almost anything and feel a loss of self in giving it.

Without an immediate connection with the true Self we can nonetheless give and feel the extraordinary sense of joy and release this gives. It can become a practice, that is to say a way of gaining access to the true Self which gives "without loss, without gain", spontaneously and even without a thought of giving. For the true Self is conscious of reality as gift and grace:

*That the self comes forth  
and confirms the ten thousand things  
is called delusion.  
That the ten thousand things come forth  
and confirm the self  
is called enlightenment.*

*Dogen Zenji.*

Thus nothing is owned and nothing is given; giving is the true Self itself.

There is, though, pernicious giving – giving to gain status, giving with an expectation of a return or reward, giving to boost one’s ego, etc. This kind of giving carries bad karma and can even be harmful. The best kind of giving is accompanied by complete relinquishment and leaves no trace.

What is it that underpins true giving? What do we encounter when we slough off the ego skin and sink into the heart of hearts? It is love, only love - the sort of love Subhana spoke of in her article in the last Mind Moon Circle:

‘Metta is a love that is free from sensual desire, it is a love and veneration for all life that knows no bounds, it is an unconditional love.’

This is the love which is the substantial/insubstantial nature of our being and even the world itself and which is not distinguished from knowing or being. This is the love that is ultimate release - self is released, love is released, release is released.

Recently, I have been working on a response to Richard Dawkins’ book, “The God Delusion”. Dawkins addresses the question of where we get our moral authority from, if the God who reveals himself in the Bible and acts as judge, rewarding good behaviour and punishing bad behaviour, does not, as Dawkins claims, exist. He suggests two sources – the current moral Zeitgeist and our genes for compassion which he is prepared to accede to without any current scientific evidence.

My suggestion is that if we forget for a moment about this image of God and look to the love, the mystery, the unknown that is the true ground and nature of the universe for the basis of our morality then atheists, western liberalists and religionists can share this as the ground of morality. For this ground is not sectarian or biased in favour of any person, group or view. This moral ground includes of course the perfection of giving, dana paramita, giving as an act of unconditional love, giving without giving.



## FROM DISGUISED NONSENSE TO PATENT NONSENSE: SOME REMARKS ON ZEN IN WITTGENSTEIN.

Carl Hooper

A non-Buddhist philosopher said to the Buddha, 'I do not ask for words; I do not ask for non-words.' The Buddha just sat there.

The philosopher said admiringly, 'The World-honoured One, with his great mercy, has blown away the clouds of my illusion and enabled me to enter the Way.' And after making bows, he took his leave. Then Ananda asked the Buddha, 'What did he realise, to admire you so much?' The World-honoured One replied, 'A fine horse runs even at the shadow of the whip'.

(Case 32 of the *Wu-men Kuan*)

To the best of my knowledge, no one has ever put a name to this 'non-Buddhist philosopher'. Perhaps this is because, as some translations have it, he was 'an outsider' and remained such all his life. So today, with all the authority that goes with being someone who lacks either status or rank, I take the liberty of naming him Ludwig Wittgenstein.

If you are innocent of academic philosophy you might immediately ask 'who?' If you have some background in philosophy you might ask 'which?' Pointers to how these questions are to be answered should emerge in the course of my remarks.

Please note that what I am offering here is a series of remarks. I make no attempt to fashion a smooth, still less a grand, narrative. Think of Wu-men's koan collection which, he freely admits, 'was written down not according to any scheme' (*MK*, Preface). Think also of Wittgenstein's posthumously published book *Philosophical Investigations* which consists of, as he says, 'remarks, short paragraphs, of which there is sometimes a fairly long chain about the same subject, while ... sometimes ... [there is] a sudden change, jumping from one topic to another' (*PI*, Preface). Jumps in my account will serve the purpose, I hope, of a Zen 'wake-up' device.

These remarks are meant to be open-ended and are meant to stimulate further inquiry, not close it off. I approach my topic from different directions and offer a variety of viewpoints. I propose to read Zen in Wittgenstein, not Zen into Wittgenstein. There are many authorities on the philosophy of Wittgenstein who would dismiss this project as so much 'nonsense'.

Discourse about Zen always runs the risk of missing, or at least blunting, the sharp point of Zen. For talk about Zen can so easily collapse into the nonsense of an empty verbiage. Now this is exactly what happens in the discourse of philosophy, at least in Wittgenstein's view. He sees it as so much 'disguised nonsense' which he sets out to expose. He writes: 'My aim is: to teach you to pass from a piece of disguised nonsense to something that is patent nonsense' (*PI*, 464). Nevertheless, we must not be deterred by the danger of talking nonsense. As Wittgenstein wrote to a friend: 'Don't, *for heaven's sake*, be afraid of talking nonsense! Only don't fail to pay attention to your nonsense' (Wittgenstein, 1980: 64) – advice that has a nice Zen feel to it, I think. In Zen, however, the movement seems to be not so much from the 'disguised nonsense' of philosophical discourse as from the 'patent nonsense' of the

koan. Yet the results, I suggest, are the same. As Wittgenstein puts it: ‘The results of philosophy are the uncovering of one or another piece of plain nonsense and of bumps that the understanding has got by running its head up against the limits of language. These bumps make us see the value of the discovery’ (*PI*, 119). Whack! Whack! Oh, so that’s it!

Let us return to the patent nonsense of Case 32 of the *Wu-men Kuan* and notice that Ananda was puzzled by the same gap in the narrative (like the missing punch line in a joke) that no doubt has perplexed many of us, namely, ‘What did he realise?’ I hope that this series of remarks will open up a number of such gaps which I have no intention of filling. For here I attempt to follow Wittgenstein who said: ‘I should not like my writing to spare other people the trouble of thinking. But, if possible, to stimulate someone to thoughts of his own’ (*PI*, Preface). Perhaps I should modify that to read: ‘to stimulate someone to non-thoughts of his or her own’.

Let us also return to what some may think of as my outrageous claim that here in Case 32 we meet Wittgenstein. Now it seems to me to be beyond dispute that Wittgenstein was ‘a non-Buddhist philosopher’. And yet there seems to be something ‘Buddhist’ about him such that the bibliography of writings about Wittgenstein includes at least one book with the title *Wittgenstein and Buddhism*, a book by the philosopher Chris Gudmunsen, as well as a number of papers published in respected philosophical journals that explore this theme. These include Paul Wienpahl’s ‘Zen and the work of Wittgenstein’, John Canfield’s ‘Wittgenstein and Zen’, D.Z. Phillips’ ‘On Wanting to Compare Wittgenstein and Zen’ and Rupert Read’s ‘Wittgenstein and Zen Buddhism: One Practice, No Dogma’. What is my point in mentioning these texts? I simply want to point out that the Buddhist-Wittgenstein connection has been noticed by others. When I see Wittgenstein questioning the Buddha in Case 32 of the *Mumonkan* it is not just a case of me giving free rein to the fantasy of a mountain monk’s ego (*Shodoka*).

A brief review of what some philosophers have said of the Wittgenstein/Buddhist connection: according to Wienpahl, Wittgenstein ‘had attained a state of mind resembling that which the Zen master calls *satori* and he had worked out a method of inducing it in others which resembles the methods of the mondos and koans’ (Wienpahl, 1958:69); Canfield attempts to establish an overlap between the Zen Buddhist ideal of ‘just doing’ and what Wittgenstein calls ‘practice’ (Canfield, 1975: 383); Gudmunsen finds close ties between Wittgenstein and ‘the Perfection of Wisdom (*Prajnaparamita*) texts culminating in the *Madhyamika* school of Nagarjuna’ (Gudmunsen, 1977: 483) especially in the realisation ‘that thoughts do not exist, in the sense that there are no private objects on which we can privately confer names’ (Gudmunsen, 1977: 484); Phillips argues against drawing too close a comparison between Wittgenstein and Zen but concedes that ‘one can see how what Wittgenstein shows ... would be consistent with Zen teaching’ (Phillips, 1977: 343); Read argues that Wittgenstein writes ‘in a spirit of Kierkegaardian irony [and] in the manner of a Zen master’ (Read, 2009:18) and that he is a practitioner of a kind of ‘Zen pedagogy’ (Read, 2009: 18).

Wittgenstein was ‘an outsider’ which, you will recall, is the alternate translation for ‘a non-Buddhist philosopher’ in this koan. Wittgenstein was in many ways an outsider. He was an outsider, first of all, with regard to the philosophical schools and

fashionable movements in thought of his day. Indeed in his view, the philosopher must be an outsider. He wrote: 'The philosopher is not the citizen of any community of ideas. That is what makes him a philosopher' (Kenny, 1980: 1).

Not only in thought but also in much of his life, Wittgenstein seems to have been an outsider. Born in Vienna in 1889 to a wealthy and artistic family of Jewish descent, he was baptised and raised a Catholic only to be argued out of his faith by an older sister while he was still a young boy. He seems never to have returned to the church though he received the Last Rites on his deathbed in 1951 from a Catholic priest. Setting out to be an aeronautical engineer, he enrolled as a research student in engineering at Manchester University in England in 1908. But troubled by what might constitute the basis of mathematical knowledge, he went to Cambridge in 1912 to study the foundations of mathematics and logic for five terms with Bertrand Russell. He then went off to Norway, built himself a hut, and pursued his philosophical researches in solitude. When the First World War broke out he behaved very differently from his teacher Bertrand Russell, a professed pacifist who went to jail for his views. Wittgenstein took the opposite course and enlisted as a volunteer in the Austrian army. The authorities tried to give him a safe job behind the lines but he managed to join a mountain artillery unit and acted as a forward spotter for artillery on the Eastern Front and then in the Southern Tyrol where he was eventually taken prisoner by the Italian army in November 1918.

A highly decorated soldier, Wittgenstein came out of the war a changed man. From his prisoner-of-war camp at Monte Cassino, he sent a draft of a philosophy manuscript, written while on active service, to Russell. In it he believed he had 'found, on all essential points, the final solution of the problems [of philosophy]' (*TLP*, Preface). And so now, apart from arranging for the publication of his book, he gave up philosophy and resolved to become a monk. For though he had been an atheist at Cambridge, in the army he became known as 'the man with the gospels', for he was seen to read and re-read Tolstoy's version of the gospels which he carried with him in his knapsack. He gave away his inherited wealth and spent a short time in a Catholic monastery where he was advised that he wouldn't find what he was looking for there. He then became a schoolteacher and taught in village schools in Austria for several years. He was profoundly unhappy.

The German text of his book appeared in 1921, with a German/English version coming out the following year with the rather daunting title *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. This very short book of only twenty thousand words was the only philosophy book he published during his life and was the basis of his reputation. And though Wittgenstein had given up philosophy, philosophers sought him out to discuss his work. Eventually he agreed to meet with members of the Vienna Circle who thought of him as a logical positivist like them. Imagine their dismay when he insisted not only on reading them poetry but did so with his back to the audience.

In 1929 Wittgenstein returned to Cambridge where he again took up his philosophical researches and did some teaching. Here he published a paper on logical form which, together with his book, was all that he published during his lifetime. How would he have got on in modern academia with its culture of 'publish or perish'?

Students who attended his lectures soon began to let it be known that Wittgenstein's philosophy had gone off in a completely different direction from what he had presented in his *Tractatus*. This new direction was not made known to the general public until the publication of his *Philosophical Investigations* in 1953, two years after his death. So the question arises as to which Wittgenstein I am here talking about. Is it the so-called early Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, or the later Wittgenstein of the *Philosophical Investigations*? Some insist that with the early and later 'Wittgensteins' we have two very different philosophies. For my purposes here I emphasise the continuity between the early and later Wittgenstein.

Koan Zen, I want to say, can be likened to a commitment to something like what Wittgenstein suggests should be the only correct method in philosophy, which is 'to say nothing except what can be said, i.e. propositions of natural science – i.e. something that has nothing to do with philosophy – and then, whenever someone else wanted to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he has failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his propositions' (*TLP*, §6.53). Note that Wittgenstein is not against 'saying' as such, that is, the making of factual statements (statements that can be shown to be true or false), but against attempts to formulate propositions about what pertains to the metaphysical realm. With regard to questions about the metaphysical Wittgenstein, like the Buddha, maintained a noble silence. He wrote: 'Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent' (*TLP*, §7).

Wittgenstein's silence, like the noble silence of the Buddha, is not dumb. And so he makes a distinction between 'saying' and 'showing'. He writes: 'What *can* be shown, *cannot* be said' (*TLP*, §4.1212). Recall that in our koan 'The Buddha just sat there'. Wittgenstein writes further: 'There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They *make themselves manifest*. They are what is mystical' (*TLP*, §6.522). And what is the mystical? 'It is not *how* things are in the world that is mystical, but *that* it exists' (*TLP*, §6.44).

Wittgenstein's philosophy has nothing to say. 'Philosophy', he writes, 'is not a body of doctrine but an activity' (*TLP*, §4.112). And this activity is therapeutic in that 'The philosopher's treatment of a question is like the treatment of an illness' (*PI*, §255). And what is the illness? It is the experience of being caught in a philosophical confusion. Here we are 'like a man in a room who wants to get out but doesn't know how. He tries the window but it is too high. He tries the chimney but it is too narrow. And if he would only *turn around*, he would see that the door has been open all the time!' (Malcolm, 1958: 51). 'What is your aim in philosophy?' asks Wittgenstein. He answers: 'To shew the fly the way out of the fly-bottle' (*PI*, §309). How does Wittgenstein show the fly the way out of the fly-bottle? How does the man caught in a philosophical confusion manage to turn around so that he can see the open door? Is the showing, or the turning, to be achieved by means of the logical clarification of thoughts? Or is it through the complete analysis of propositions? Both the logical clarification of thoughts and the analysis of propositions entail intellectual work. But the real difficulty in doing philosophy, Wittgenstein suggests, is not with the intellect but with the will. What is required to show the fly how to escape, or to get the man to turn around, is 'a change of attitude' (Wittgenstein, 1993: 161). And herein lies the difficulty, says Wittgenstein (Wittgenstein, 1993: 161). You might ask at this point: why is a change of attitude a matter of will rather than a matter of insight? And I

might answer: just think of St Augustine's rather sad but famous prayer: 'Lord, make me chaste, but not just yet!'

Wittgenstein's attempt to articulate his aim in philosophy by the fly-in-the-jar image seems at odds with his earlier stated programme, a programme directed towards the 'logical clarification of thoughts' (*TLP*, §4.112). An image, of course, is open to a variety of interpretations. Yet this image is not only vivid, it also can be interpreted, when placed in the context of other remarks by Wittgenstein, as a clear statement of his view of philosophy, its task, and his purpose in doing it. Thus the fly-bottle can be seen to represent the trap of language, and elsewhere Wittgenstein has described philosophy as 'a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language' (*PI*, §109). The 'fly', of course, is everyone. Wittgenstein writes: 'Language contains the same traps for everyone; the immense network of well kept ... false paths. And thus we see one person after another walking the same paths and we know already where he will make a turn, where he will keep on going straight ahead without noticing the turn, etc., etc. Therefore wherever false paths branch off I should put up signs which help one get by the dangerous places' (Wittgenstein, 1993: 185). Here the suggestion is that in doing philosophy Wittgenstein is concerned with what cannot be said but only shown. This extensive use of metaphoric language contrasts strongly with the language that speaks in terms of clarifying propositions. Rather, it points us in the direction of mystery, the mystery that surrounds the deepest problems of philosophy ('We feel that even when all *possible* scientific questions have been answered, the problems of life remain completely untouched' (*TLP*, §6.52)). For these questions constitute 'deep disquietudes' (*PI*, §111) whose 'significance is as great as the importance of our language' (*PI*, §111). So Wittgenstein's use of the fly-in-the-bottle image represents, not a slip from philosophy into 'poetry' or 'Zen', but an opening of philosophical inquiry to that realm of mysterious silence where poetry and Zen are at home.

For Wittgenstein, the practice of philosophy is not to be equated with academic or professional philosophy. For him it is existential or it is nothing. One commentator puts it like this: 'Wittgenstein was not thinking of what he was doing as correcting mistakes. It was not mistakes, but an urge, a bewitchment, a fascination, a deep disquietude, a captivity, a disorientation, illusions, confusions – these, the troubles of the mixed up intelligence, that Wittgenstein sought to relieve ... [His] interest was not in any particular problem but in the bothered individual, particularly in the hot and bothered. (Is this perhaps what distinguished Wittgenstein as a European, a Viennese, a man who read Kierkegaard and Dostoevski?) He sought to bring relief, control, quiet, peace, release, certain powers, the skill required to show one who is lost in the labyrinth the way to go home' (Bouwsma, 1982: 28). All this resonates with Wittgenstein's view that '[A] philosophical problem has the form "I don't know my way about"' (*PI*, §123). Another writer adds: 'And if this is how Wittgenstein conceived philosophical problems, then philosophical solutions would have to resolve the anxiety, restore the peace, lead us home again. Wittgenstein's existential investigations aim to convince us that the way to find our way back home is to follow the trail of our language. Not to force on "knowledge," "belief," "love," "responsibility," "action," some sublime – probably scientific – model of explanation, discovering essences hidden beneath the surface. The trail back home is difficult to find. The birds have eaten the breadcrumbs. We are in the wild – bewildered – and bewildered, we find ourselves bewitched by science (*PI*, par.109). But there is a way

home (*PI*, par. 116)' (Bearn, 1997: 200-201). The way home indicated here requires that we 'bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use' (*PI*, §116).

The Buddha offered the non-Buddhist philosopher neither words nor non-words. He just sat there. The philosopher saw what was shown in this silent sitting and so entered the Way. It is as the Buddha told Ananda: 'A fine horse runs even at the shadow of the whip'. But did you, Ananda, make sense of the wordless 'non-sense' that passed between the Buddha and the non-Buddhist philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein? And if not, why not?

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**the unfortunate human disorder  
a palate that's never weary  
of steamed piglet with garlic sauce  
roast duck with pepper and salt  
deboned raw fish mince  
unskinned cooked pork cheek  
unaware of the bitterness of others' lives  
as long as their own are sweet**

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