



MIND MOON CIRCLE

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The main theme of this edition is the Circle or Enso, drawn by followers of the Way in the air, on the earth , on paper, in words. Enjoy! Jane Andino, editor.

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The topic for the next MMC issue is “death and life”, Editor Max Baker. Max writes: ‘Dealing in matters of “life and death” is often a grave affair. But what about “death and life”? If we invert the terms things can seem a lot lighter- even open.’ Please send contributions to max.baker@sydney.edu.au



SYDNEY
ZEN
CENTRE

Subhana Barzaghi *Enso*

SZC's New Logo
Lee Nutter

Over the last couple of years the board has spent quite a bit of time discussing how new members could be better introduced to practice, the various ways the Sydney Zen Centre could make itself more visible to those interested in Zen practice, and how we might help those who are more than just curious decide if the Sydney Zen Centre is an appropriate place for them to further their practice. In addition to our tried and true

methods of communication the board looked at our existing web presence, and how exploring various social networks and an otherwise expanded web presence might assist in these areas.

As part of this exploration the board looked into ways the Sydney Zen Centre might unify its visual identity to be more easily recognised across the various platforms and mediums, and found that our beautiful Waratah logo was not as flexible as we'd originally hoped. Despite various attempts at addressing the issues and several band aid fixes, when it came time to redesign the web site and install some signage at Annandale, it was decided it was time to refresh our existing logo and visual identity to enable a consistent and easily identifiable representation of the Sydney Zen Centre.

A logo needs to be flexible and adaptable. The Waratah logo was beautiful and detailed, and visually arresting when printed large. Unfortunately it became unrecognizable at smaller sizes. Logos have to be easily recognizable even when scaled down to sizes common on social media sites. A logo should be used consistently. Although the Waratah logo was used consistently across mediums, even when scaling permitted it to be recognized, the font used as logotype differed from place to place. A logo should also be timeless and appropriate. One of the primary reasons for the change was the great variety of ways the logo will be displayed in new media, but this is not an excuse for a cheesy 'Web 2.0' logo. The board wanted our logo to be relevant to the contemporary Australian context, but sensitive to its cultural and historical heritage.

Taking all this into account, and using the much loved Waratah logo as inspiration, it was decided to retain the emblematic enso as the basis of our visual identity. Not just any enso though, but an enso with specific proportions to enable scaling, drawn by our founding head teacher Subhana Barzaghi Roshi. Of course a logo usually includes logotype as well as an identifiable emblem. Our logotype is placed below the enso, giving the logo unique proportions reminiscent of many dharma seals (see the painting to the left of our Annandale altar for examples). The vertical orientation is also suggestive of Japanese script, which is often written top to bottom. The chosen font is based on Garamond, an elegant typeface that remains as stylish and relevant as it was when designed in the 1540s, and one of only four typefaces used by the famous Italian designer Massimo Vignelli.

The bow to our Zen heritage, consistent and classic logotype, and iconic enso gives the SZC logo a timelessness that will help carry the Sydney Zen Centre forward into the digital age and well beyond. In keeping with the design philosophy, the board has decided to honour the long standing, hardworking, symbolically significant, and visually impressive Waratah logo, original designed by Glenys Jackson, by sourcing and framing the original artwork and hanging it in a prominent position at Annandale.



Maggie Gluek *Leaf Enso*

O!

The circle is primal in human experience. From the beginning it has been contemplated and dreamed on in those primary illuminating bodies, the full moon and the disc of the sun. From the beginning the cyclical return of life has been recognised in their movement and imaged in their form, a completion that is at once finite and endless, flowing ever into itself. The beauty of the circle--its no-sharp-edges generosity, its fathomless interior--is universally known in innumerable natural manifestations. The microcosm of the eye, its pupil and orb. Water's concentric ripples. That very first gate, the dilated womb.

"It's perfect!" said the ancient Greek mathematicians of the circle. Perfect because it has only one side. And because in its ideal geometrical form all points on the circumference are equidistant from the centre. Take this further as a metaphor for divinity. There's a memorable, anonymous, and mystical, definition of God as a circle whose centre is everywhere whose circumference is nowhere.

What about π , the mathematical constant that is the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter. Irrational and transcendental (numerically speaking!), the number extends indefinitely. That noone has ever gotten to the bottom of it is in itself rather mystical. And that it's untidy in this way, not a neat fixed number, offers a reality principle. Life is messy!

*The caravan of digits that is pi
does not stop at the edge of the page,
but runs off the table and into the air,
over the wall, a leaf, a bird's nets, the clouds, straight into sky,
through all the bloatedness and bottomlessness.
Oh how short, all but mouse-like is the comet's tail! 1)*



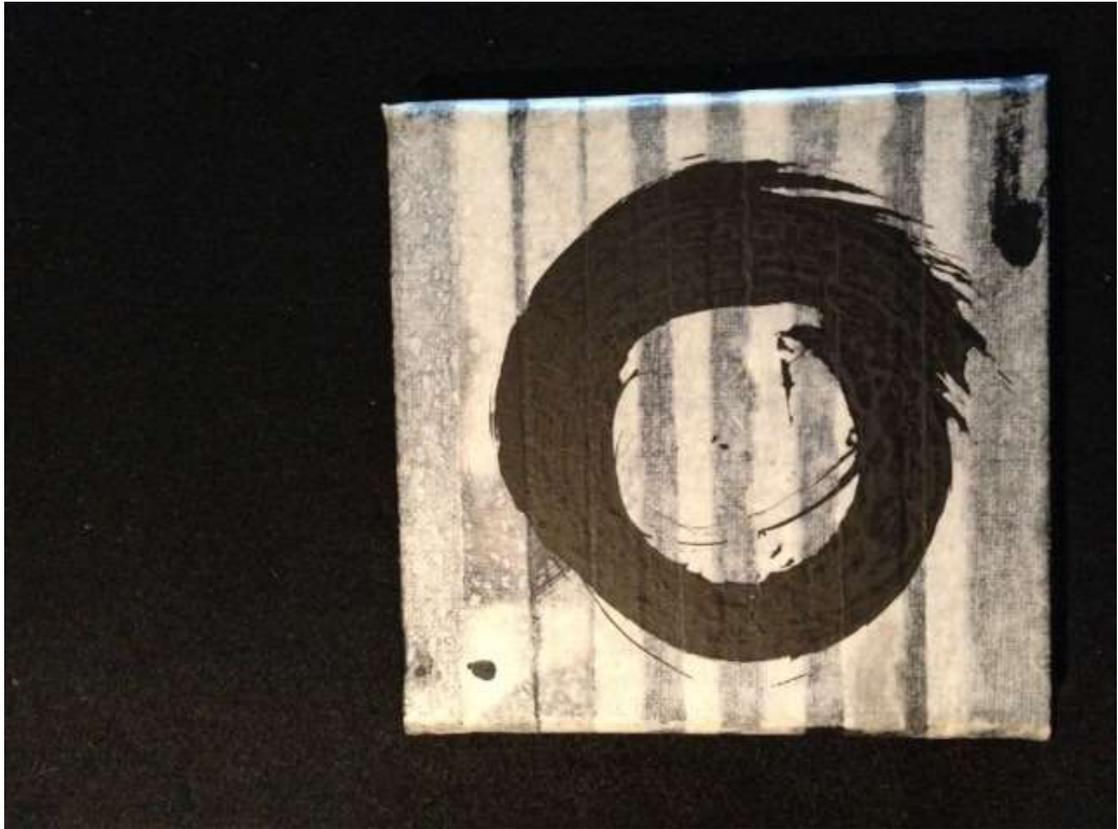
Glenys Jackson *Enso*, Chinese ink on rice paper

In Buddhism the circle is dynamic. Shakyamuni walked away from his seat under the bodhi tree, got up from blissful but static samadhi to participate in the world and share his insights. When he presented his teachings, the great wheel of the Dharma, the Dharmachakra, was set in motion. What keeps it turning? I should say, who keeps it turning? It's not someone else's responsibility. Each of us is challenged to follow in the Buddha's footsteps--to realise the world of no beginning and no end, no birth and no death, and to embody this in the world of coming and going. One step at a time is one step at a time. The only way to proceed.

Down the track Zen ancestors and interlocutors found a uniquely dynamic way to express the essence of the Dharma. Using an ancient, wordless symbol language they *drew* their intent in a single character. The circle--ensō in Japanese--featured prominently as a communication and endures as a Dharma practice, beloved of calligraphers. This circle is begun and finished in a single stroke. One breath. Drawn on paper, on the ground, in the air, as it is defined it gathers its centre. One continuous line realises the moment and what's at the heart of it. The mind's open window. Nothing is conveyed that is other than the presentation itself--the medium is the message. Like a cat's yawn, a child's smile. And naturally none of the above.

Sometimes the line of the ensō does not go all around, leaving a gap. Then there can be no tidy talk of "inside" and "empty." But finally broken or unbroken is beside the point. Every phenomenon arises uniquely. Ink, no ink, hands, tall, skinny, broad, bent, heavy, young, sick, brush, stick, laughter, wind, flower, moon, body--conditions incalculable, changing. And *here* it is! Perfection, and beauty, is no other than this particularity.

Circles can celebrate the full catastrophe, with its vivid detail. At my son's 21st birthday party we lifted voice and guitar in Joni Mitchell's big picture song. It captures the inexorable foreseen trajectory which gathers joys and sorrows along the way, while staying open to the as-yet unimagined.



Glenys Jackson *Enso* Chinese ink on rice paper

*Yesterday a child came out to wonder
Caught a dragonfly inside a jar
Fearful when the sky was full of thunder
And tearful at the falling of a star*

*Refrain: And the seasons they go round and round
And the painted ponies go up and down.
We're captive on a carousel of time
We can't return, we can only look behind from where we came
And go round and round and round in the circle game.*

*Then the child moved ten times round the seasons
Skated over ten clear frozen streams
Words like "When you're older" must appease him
And promises of someday make his dreams. (refrain)*

*Sixteen years and sixteen summers gone now
Cartwheels turn to car wheels in the town
And they tell him "Take your time, it won't be long now
Till you drag your feet to slow the circles down." (refrain)*

*Oh the years spin by and now the boy is twenty
Though his dreams have lost some grandeur coming true
There'll be new dreams, maybe better dreams, and plenty
Before the last revolving year is through. (refrain) 2)*

Being captive on the carousel of time sounds like samsara. Help! How do I get off? A kind of shadow of the dharmakaya (it's all in the perspective), samsara too is imagined as a wheel, a cycle of endless suffering and rebirth arising out of fundamental ignorance. An early teaching in delusion for me was the story of Pooh and Piglet and the Woozle. To recap...One snowy day Pooh Bear walks a few times mindlessly around a spinney, thinking of something else. When he sees two sets of pawprints in the snow, he jumps to the conclusion that a mysterious animal is in front of him. Piglet joins Pooh and they walk together in circles hunting the animal, now presumed a Woozle and a cause for some anxiety. And then soon they imagine *three* animals--perhaps a Wizzle has joined the Woozle. And then *four*. Until Christopher Robin sets them straight. There's nothing there after all!



Glenys Jackson *Leaf Enso*

"I see now" says Pooh. "I have been Foolish and Deluded," and said he, "I am a Bear of No Brain at All."

"You are the Best Bear in All the World," said Christopher Robin soothingly.

"Am I?" said Pooh hopefully. And then he brightened up suddenly.

"Anyhow," he said, "it is nearly Luncheon Time."

So he went home for it. 3)

This story rings true for self-created mental suffering. False assumptions, circular thinking, accumulated ideas that support the fantasy, troubling emotions that feed the drama. Who doesn't feel foolish at all the fuss caused for nothing? But this woozle hunt ends happily with a kind of big picture for Bears of No Brain everywhere: humor, love and the importance paying attention to what is actually taking place. Let's have lunch.

Before informal mealtimes at Annandale or Kodoji, those present hold hands in a circle to recite the thanksgiving, *We venerate the three treasures*. The group waits for those who are out of the room to arrive, opening and closing the circle, maybe several times, to bring them in. In the circle of buddha, dharma and sangha, there is always room. May we realise this in moment each of our lives, traceless and whole like that enṣō painted in the sky.

- 1) From *Pi* by Polish poet Wislawa Szymborska. Worth reading the whole poem!
- 2) Joni Mitchell, "The Circle Game" from *Ladies of the Canyon* album, 1970
- 3) A.A.Milne, *The World of Pooh* (New York, 1957), p. 44



At the Sanjusangen-do Temple in Kyoto there is a long narrow room dedicated to the 1001 statues of the 1000 armed Kannon. The largest Kannon statue sits in the middle of the room, flanked on either side by 500 smaller Kannon images, all neatly lined up in rows - radiant - covered in luminous gold leaf. A spectacular display.

This image is of a small wooden votive plaque of Kannon I bought in the temple gift shop. The idea being that you write on the back of the plaque your hopes and prayers.

..... Glenys Jackson

Geometries

Sally Hopkins

So many years going around in circles,
re-telling old woes,
searching for answers in the ruts
of my tracks, not seeing
my stories of me and my doings
left out the vast world.
We are notes in a song
with nothing repeated,
ungraspable flourishes
holding all just here.
In the night
Magpie warbles-
bright circles in the dark.

Full moon
in clear sky
The father holds the child's hand
The mother feeds the baby
The old man hobbles with his stick
The dog waves it's tail.
Full Moon
Clear sky.

Birth to death- the straight line.
Dawn Day Twilight Night-
Time's merry-go-round-
SpringSummerAutumnWinter-
but timeless this moment,
round O in the ocean.
"Foo was here" read
old graffiti -
"THIS", says Enso-
unmistakeable.
Hakuin speaks.



Amanda Hitchins *Autumn Leaves*

Haiku for the World

Daniel C. Menges

Golden woven sun
–Sitting in circle, sharing –
Threading worlds together

*

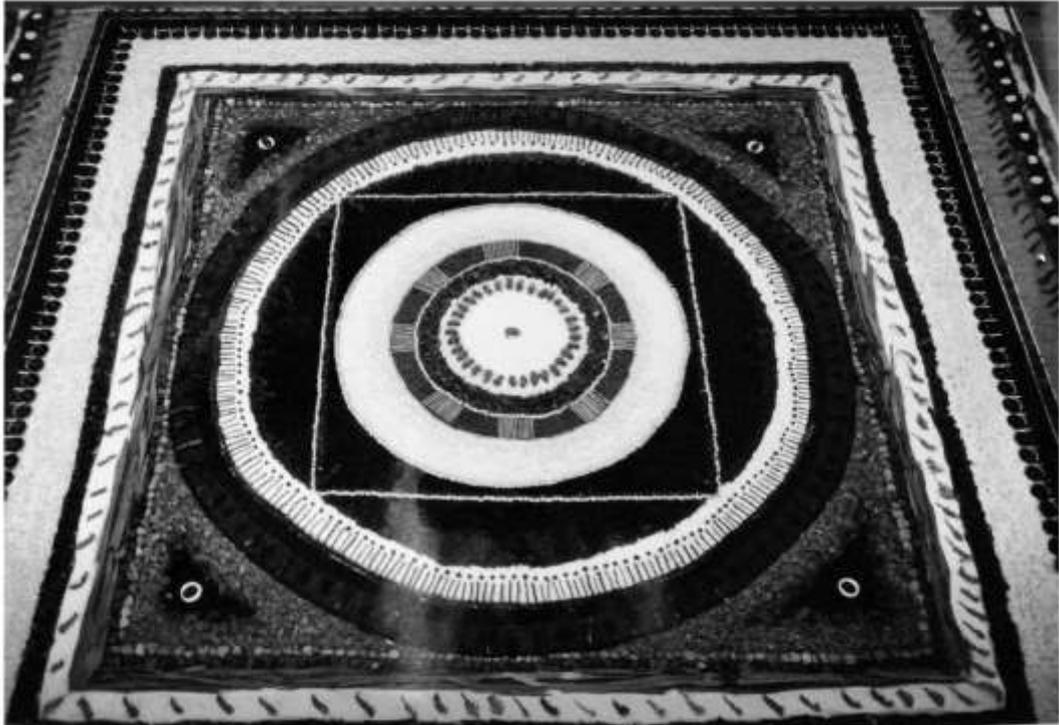
Neither empty nor
Full – just enough – watering
The mango trees too

*

The story's raw wound
Washed clean in its telling – sun
Open to the moon

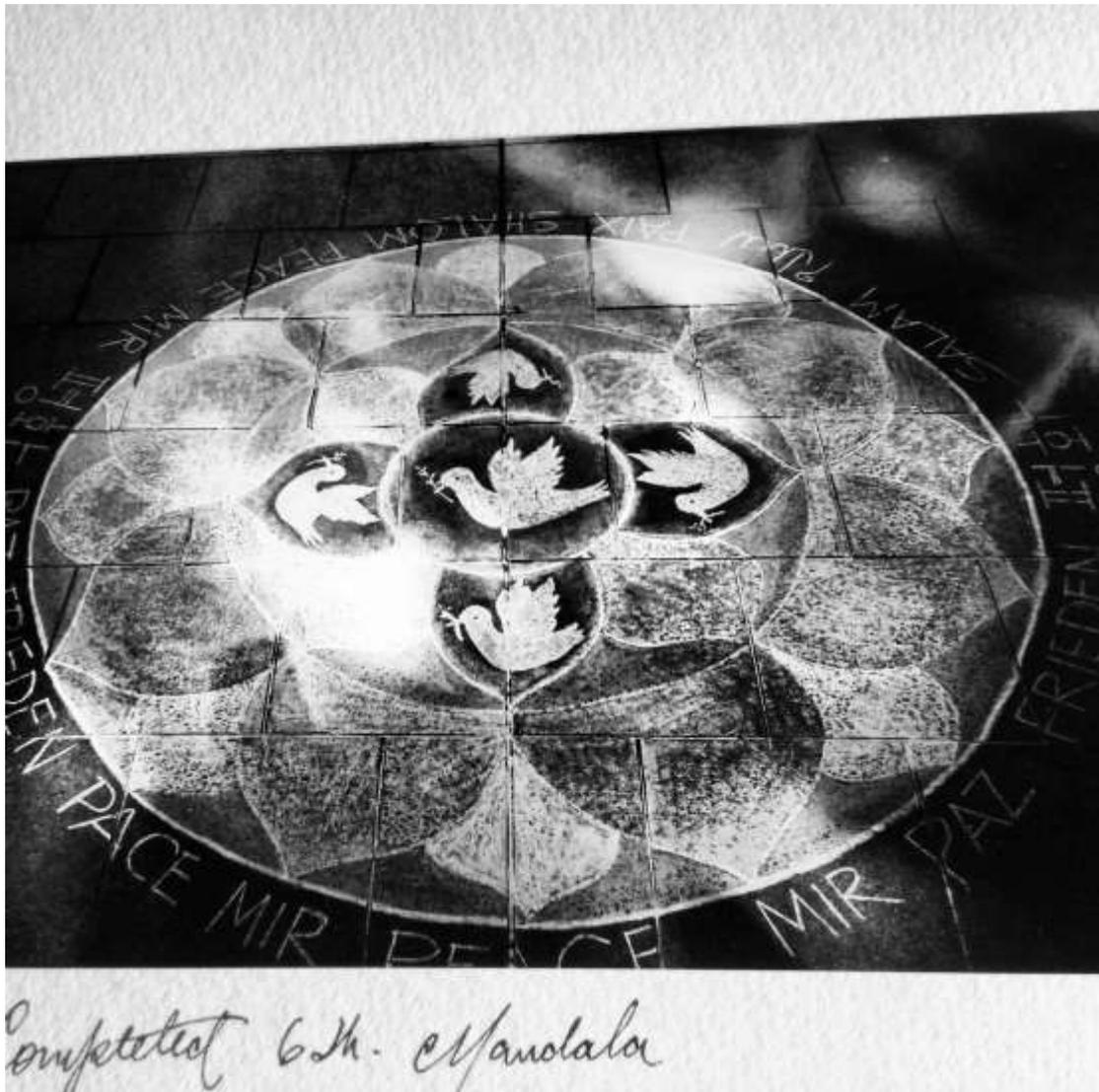
*

On the cliff edge, storm
With sunshine splitting through / you /
See / it lights the path



This peace mandala made by SZC members at an arts retreat at Kodoji, Gorricks Run in December 2001, was made entirely from bits and pieces from around the zendo. In the centre, and in a circle, are Christmas beetles, then seeds, sand, stones, leaves, sticks, nails, twigs, and beans and rice from the kitchen. Taking many hours of quiet concentration, but also a lot of fun.

Glenys Jackson



One of the many peace chalk mandalas created by friends and family in Hyde Park.

Glenys Jackson



Janet Selby *Moon Rise Over Gorricks*, ink and pastel

Haiku

Walking Shikoku
Footstep by footstep around
The empty circle

Allan Marett

Round sandy doorway
in the quiet road -
hullo ant!

Diana Levy

September 11th
Daniel C. Menges

Full moon, empty mind –
A bucket emptied
Of its polluted water

Nowhere to go, nothing
To do – the day
Like a circle, strung
Like a bow – released –

This work is perfect /
The activities and words flow
Once again

Make each day count –
One breath
One brush stroke
One paper / one forest –
As empty as we are full

Flowing in a circle



Creating one of many chalk peace mandalas with friends and family in Hyde Park, in protest just before the announcement of the war in Iraq.

Glenys Jackson

Poems for the World

Daniel C. Menges

Cities, flashes in blue
Red, yellow, Darjeeling
Ltd train / path
Through pain / conversations
Of ships,
Global passages

*

Rain drops off a
Palm / a man with
Little possessions – the light traveller –
Rests,
Sleeps
Under the high, open Balinese roof / sits watching
As people pass by
On bicycles and motorbikes, with dogs and chickens
In tow or racing behind / He
Lies down as incense,
Rice and flower
Smells waft up / even
As the city crumbles
Beneath
His people's feet

*

Empty mind
Clear as a bell
Sharp as a diamond

The diamond's light
Reflects everything
Echoes the moon and
Sun / eyes and fingers

Mind and body as dust
Stone
Water

Just before
Drowning
He remembers – a light –
The lantern hangs off the mast
Lit by the last dry match / lights

The whole world / the sea moving and seen
Kissing the shoreline,
Not 2 metres away

*

Born from the mud
Rooted from decay
The lotus grows

Resting on the surface of the water
Open to the sun

*

Within the fire of your heart
Held in a drop of rain

Within the sorrow in cups of tea and
The joy in sipping and sharing those gazes

Within the fear that burns
On the oil slick next to Paradise

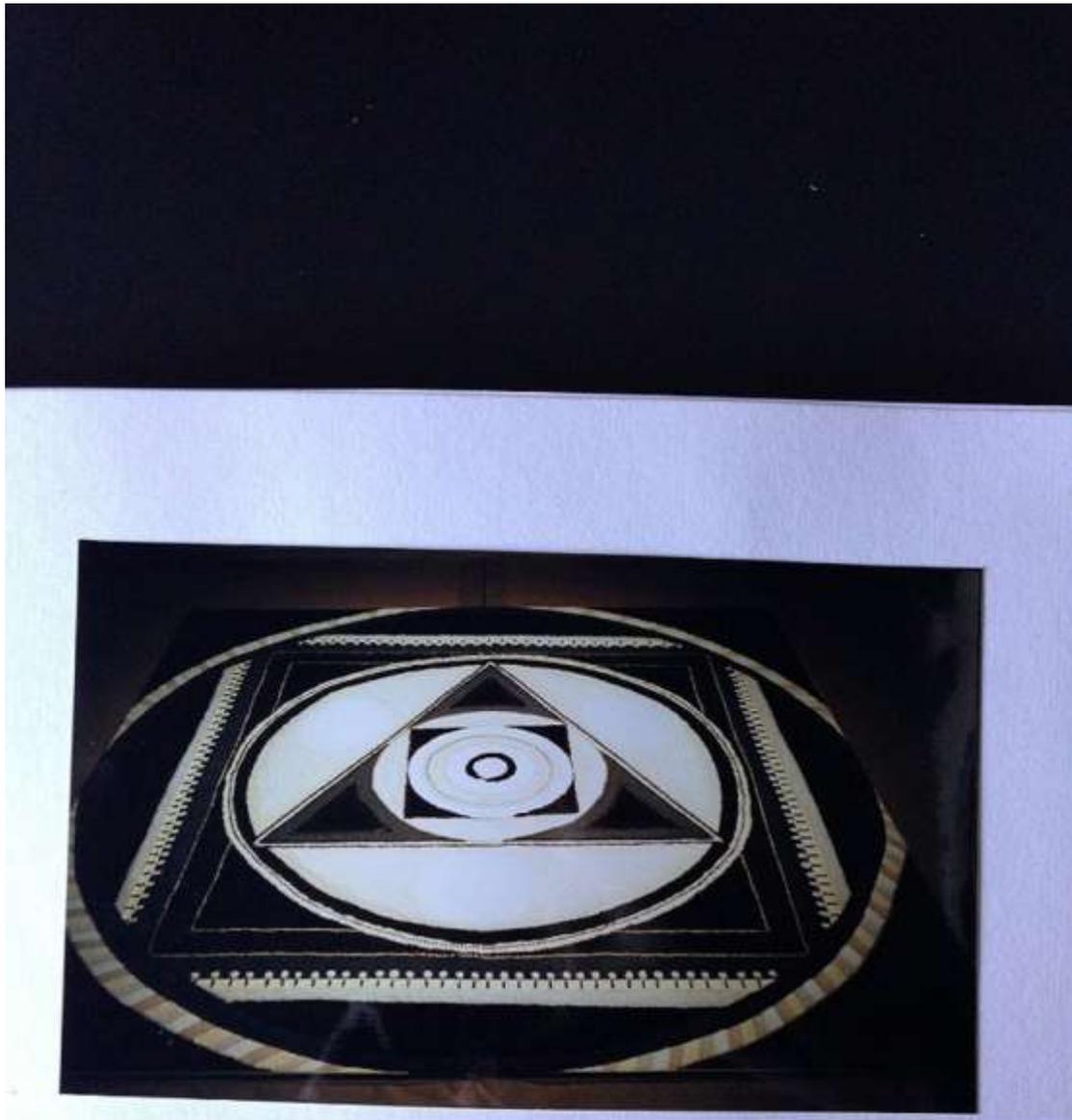
Within threads of silence / being woven /
Between a family's words and actions

Between the inner values and
The bottom line plan

Lies a space, still open /

Threading and weaving the colours of our words –
Red, black and yellow, which between us
Creates the whole world, all
Blue, white and green:

Further than one eye alone / can see
It is washed, woven and pressed together to form
The pages and stories
Which we all write



The 10,000 Things Mandala.

AGNSW. November 21 - 25th. 2001

The mandala was part of the Buddha Radiant Awakening exhibition.

This mandala, created by members of SZC was all made from black and white food; rice, barley, beans, coffee, tea, berries, lentils, spices, etc. etc.

It was a very intense five days, from 9am till 5pm. every day, but a most enjoyable experience. Of course the destruction of the mandala was an exciting highlight which we and a large audience all enjoyed.

Glenys Jackson

PHILOSOPHISING ZEN

Carl Hooper

(This is a talk given by Carl at the SZC on September 15, 2013)

Some questions: Is philosophy compatible with the practice of Zen? Could one engage in philosophy as a Zen practice? Could meditating on kōans be a form of philosophical investigation? How might a Western philosopher enter upon the Way of Zen? In an attempt to respond to some of these issues, let us begin by taking Case 32 of the *Mumonkan*. It reads like this:

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-honored 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 realize, to admire you so much?" The World-honored One replied, "A fine horse runs even at the shadow of the whip."

MUMON'S COMMENT Ananda was the Buddha's disciple, but his understanding was not equal to that of the non-Buddhist. I want to ask you, what difference is there between the Buddha's disciple and the non-Buddhist?

MUMON'S VERSE

On the edge of a sword,
Over the ridge of an iceberg,
With no steps, no ladders,
Climbing the cliffs without hands.

Next to our kōan about the non-Buddhist philosopher let us place the penultimate proposition of that classic of 20th century Western philosophy, namely, Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*. It reads like this:

My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them - as steps - to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it.)

He must transcend these propositions, and then he will see the world aright (*TLP*, §6.54).

With regard to the non-Buddhist philosopher in our kōan, we might ask: is this the case of a philosopher who, on encountering the Buddha's silence, finds that he has climbed the equivalent of Wittgenstein's ladder only to have it kicked away by the Buddha's 'just sitting there'? With the kicking away of the step-by-step ladder of philosophic propositions, our philosopher comes to realize for himself the truth that

finds such a neat expression in the final proposition of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, namely: 'What we speak about we must pass over in silence' (*TLP*, §7). Another version of this proposition is: 'Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent'. These words of Wittgenstein find a close parallel in the kōan that says: 'Stop! Stop! Don't try to expound it. The Dharma mysteriously transcends thinking!' (*MK*, Case 49)

But if the Dharma transcends thinking and, by implication, speaking, is the practice of Zen condemned to being a dumb practice? Must the Zen practitioner remain forever mute? Has he or she nothing to say in response to a philosophic inquiry? Let us note straight away that just because something cannot be expounded or said - in the very special meaning that Wittgenstein gives to the word 'say' - is not the end of the matter. This is demonstrated by the Buddha who 'just sat there', and the philosopher who saw what was shown in this silent sitting. And here we come to Wittgenstein's distinction between 'saying' and 'showing'. In Wittgenstein's language, 'saying' refers to the formulation of propositions, and a proposition is a statement that is either true or false, and such statements, according to Wittgenstein, can be made only in the context of the natural sciences. But when it comes to metaphysical issues, we can 'say' nothing, that is, formulate any propositions, that is, make statements that are either true or false. 'Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.' Yet this is not the end of the matter, either for Wittgenstein or the Buddha. Consider the following two propositions of the *Tractatus*: 'What *can* be shown, *cannot* be said' (*TLC*, §4.1212) and 'There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They *make themselves manifest*. They are what is mystical' (*TLP*, §6.522). And so it is that the Dharma is made manifest by the Buddha who 'just sat there', and by the enlightened Zen master 'On the edge of a sword,/ Over the ridge of an iceberg,/ With no steps, no ladders,/ Climbing the cliffs without hands'.

How might a philosopher enter upon the Way of Zen? Where would he or she begin? The problem of how to make a start, how to begin practising Zen, is the same for everyone. There is a story about a monk who went to a master and asked him: 'Oh Venerable Master, how can I enter the way?' The master replied with a question of his own: 'Do you hear the sound of the mountain stream? The monk answered, 'Yes, I do.' Then the master said, 'Enter there! Enter there!' (Davidson, 2005: 12). In the beginning of a Zen philosophical investigation we might find ourselves confronted by the problem of how to begin. And a master might say to us, 'Do you see the empty page before you? Begin there! Begin there!'

Assuming that it can be done, what would doing philosophy as a Zen practice look like? Let us consider what Wittgenstein describes as the only strictly correct method for doing philosophy. He writes:

The correct method in philosophy would really be the following: 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 had failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his propositions (*TLP*, §6.53).

Note that the injunction 'to say nothing except what can be said' seems to reduce philosophy to a natural science and yet Wittgenstein is quite clear in denying that this is the case. 'Philosophy,' he tells us, 'is not one of the natural sciences' (*TLP*, §4.111). So it would seem that the philosopher has just two jobs to do. One, to say what can only be said in the 'propositions of natural science' and, two, to demonstrate to anyone who tries to say something metaphysical 'that he had failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his propositions'.

Philosophy's proper role, on this Wittgensteinian view, would seem to be a policing one, namely, to police the boundary between what can, and what cannot, be said. Interestingly enough, Wittgenstein admits that this would not feel like doing philosophy (*TLP*, §6.53). But to some of us it might feel like doing Zen, especially if we have had the experience of trying to give a metaphysical or philosophical answer as a kōan response in *dokusan!* Which brings us back to the kōan, 'Stop! Stop! Don't try to expound it. The Dharma mysteriously transcends thinking!' Or to the image of the Buddha who 'just sat there' in response to the non-Buddhist philosopher's 'not asking'.

At this point we might start to wonder about the status of Wittgenstein's statement about the 'correct method'. Is it a proposition of natural science? And, if not, is it no more than a rung in the ladder that is to be climbed and then discarded as nonsensical? Or is it a demonstration of the irony that some commentators insist underlies Wittgenstein's view of philosophy and its method? And would this irony find common ground with the Buddha's silent response to the non-Buddhist philosopher? Or, again, could it be read as an example of Wittgenstein's readiness to use a 'metaphysical poison (nonsense/Unsinn) to end the explanatory metaphysical impulse' (Bearn, 1997: 58), as one commentator has put it. Here we might call to mind the Zen master's use of *upaya* or skillful means to cut off that very impulse and so bring the Zen student to realization.

Note the qualification in what Wittgenstein says about the 'correct method': 'The correct method in philosophy *would really be* the following'. This suggests an ideal to be aimed at, approximated to, but seldom, if ever, attained - perhaps because its use would not feel like doing philosophy. But the Zen master's consistent refusal to formulate metaphysical propositions is not put off by feelings about whether one is doing, or not doing, philosophy or Zen. Recall how the Buddha refused to explain to Ananda what the non-Buddhist philosopher realized, other than to tell him that 'A fine horse runs even at the shadow of the whip'.

The claim that kōan Zen represents a commitment to something like Wittgenstein's 'strictly correct method in philosophy' is based both on its refusal to speculate about metaphysical issues and its strategies for demonstrating the nonsensical character of all attempts to 'say' the metaphysical. Zen can be seen to represent an application of the policing role that Wittgenstein assigns to the philosopher. And if this is so, it would seem to follow that doctrinal speculations about Buddha nature, the One and the Many, reincarnation, etc., are not the business of the Zen master. But this does not mean that Zen is not interested in these matters about which it has nothing to *say*. On the contrary, it does have much to *show*, witness the many kōan collections. Note that the actions of *saying* and *showing* are taken here as disjunctive.

However, this need not mean that a *saying* cannot be a *showing*, only that when it is, what is *said* is less than, and different from, what is *shown*.

Some of us might find that there is something distasteful in ascribing a policing role to the philosopher and Zen master. But whether the image used is that of policing, or gate-keeping, or border control, it is in keeping with the rhetoric of Zen. See, for example, the following words of Mumon: 'In order to master Zen, you must pass the barrier of the patriarchs ... you must completely cut off the way of thinking' (*MK*, Case 1, Comment). Now, as Robert Aitken Roshi observes, the word 'barrier' here has the connotation of 'check point at a frontier' (Aitken, 1991: 11). He says further that 'in Zen Buddhist practice someone in a little house by the road will say: "Let me see your credentials. How do you stand with yourself? How do you stand with the world?" You present yourself and are told: "Okay, you may pass" or "No, you may not pass"' (Aitken, 1991:11). The 'someone in the little house by the road' is, of course, the Zen master in *dokusan* who tests the attainment of the disciple. The master is, in effect, policing the border between what can be said and what cannot be said, the border between the confused and ignorant attempt to say the unsayable, and the insightful recognition that all that is essential lies beyond the reach of propositional language and dualistic thought.

Although Wittgenstein formulates what he calls the only strictly correct method in doing philosophy, it is clear that he does not follow this method himself, as least for the major part of his *Tractatus*. As we have seen, he tells us that whoever understands him comes to recognize that the propositions of his book constitute a nonsensical ladder that once climbed has to be kicked away. But his book does express a metaphysical doctrine which can be sketched as follows:

Above the world that divides into contingent facts, there is a higher realm beyond being in which all the individuality of the world of facts sublimates. The higher source of facts is a unity that must be divided into facts. Division is appearance held in place by a unity beyond being, beyond thought (Bearn, 1997: 76).

This sketch of the Tractarian metaphysics, a sketch that has a Platonic resonance and which, at the same time, calls to mind Victor Sōgen Hori's account of the undifferentiated/differentiated world of Zen (Hori, 2003: 20-21), is based on a number of propositions found in the *Tractatus*. They are: 'Objects, the unalterable, and the subsistent are one' (§2.027); '(Ethics and aesthetics are one)' (§6.421); 'The world and life are one' (§5.621). Gordon Bearn, in presenting us with this sketch of the Tractarian metaphysics, comments: 'The metaphysics of the *Tractatus* are designed to be the last metaphysics, they are designed to destroy the impulse to speak what must not be spoken' (Bearn, 1997: 76).

What can be said about the Tractarian metaphysics could be applied to the Zen *kōans* in that it would seem that 'they are designed to destroy the impulse to speak what must not be spoken'. Yet, unlike the *Tractatus*, they do this without attempting to formulate a metaphysics. True to what, according to Wittgenstein, is the only strictly correct method in philosophy, they insist that the practitioner 'say nothing except what can be said' (*TLP*, §6.53). And, according to the Zen tradition, 'Stop! Stop! Don't try to expound it.'

Mumon used kōans, 'the cases of the ancient masters' (*MK*, Preface), as brickbats to batter the gate that seems to bar entry to the Way of Zen. This gate might be thought of as 'the impulse to speak what must not be spoken'. This impulse can be likened to what Mumon says is 'striking at the moon with a stick' or 'scratching a shoe, whereas it is the foot that itches' (*MK*, Preface). That is to say, in Zen there is a recognition of the incommensurability between the metaphysical impulse and what it seeks to express in the form of propositions of philosophy or, as Mumon would say, 'other people's words' (*MK*, Preface). Mumon warns his disciples not to confuse their 'own treasures' (*MK*, Preface) - their own realization of the metaphysical - with the 'things coming in through the gate' (*MK*, Preface), namely, the speculations of others. That is, he attempted, with the help of the cases of the ancient masters, to awaken his monks to the fact that nothing, nothing at all, stood in the way of their full possession of the present moment of their daily lives. This nothing-gate-barrier was no more than a picture, a figment of the imagination, a product of conventional habits of thought. He might have pointed out to them that they were held captive by nothing but a picture. As Wittgenstein would say: 'A picture held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably' (*PI*, §115). Might it not be the case that those who have difficulty in seeing that the practice of Zen is a philosophic practice are likewise held captive by a picture? And is this not a somewhat narrow and misleading picture of the nature and practice of philosophy, especially when viewed against the background of the whole history of Western philosophy? Here it would be instructive to recall the kōan that asks: 'Why is it that a man of great strength cannot lift his legs?' (*MK*, Case 20). Why instructive? Because an inability to respond appropriately here may very well indicate that the practitioner is held fast by the picture suggested in the kōan question of a strong man bound. What is exemplified in the failure to answer this question is the binding, and blinding, power of the image that it conjures up in the imagination of the practitioner. It is a perfect example of the captivating power of the picture that, says Wittgenstein, 'lay in our language'.

Have we made a start in either the Zen practice of philosophy, or the philosophical practice of Zen? Is it too early or too late to make such a start? Consider the following report by a veteran Zen practitioner of a dream he had on the opening night of what was for him 'yet another *sesshin*'. He writes:

In the middle of the night I woke up out of a very vivid dream. I dreamt that my eleven-year old son was, quite unexpectedly, doing *sesshin* with us. In my surprise at finding him here on *sesshin*, I asked him what he was doing. He replied that he was doing kōans. When I inquired what kōans he was working on, he said that he made up his own. At which I retorted, 'You can't make up your own!' My son, noticing that it was pointless trying to explain his practice to me, decided to tell me that his kōans were from a famous but by now almost forgotten collection that the great master (he mentioned a name that I don't remember) still used. When I asked for an example of what he was working on, he said, 'If you are twenty-five hundred years old, you can enter here. If you are twenty-five thousand years old, you can enter here'. Suddenly I found myself caught by his 'kōan'. I was totally focused on it. Losing all sensation of leg pain, all sense of someone sitting, I became aware of my son answering for me: 'Whether I am twenty-five hundred years old, or twenty-five thousand years old, I

enter here!' At these words I was dispersed among the waters rushing down the hill sides and pouring into the creeks that were flooding the bush all around my campsite (it was a night of storms, wind, and heavy rain, and I was sleeping in a small tent). At which point I woke up, pulsing with energy. I knew I would not get back to sleep that night (Hooper, 2006: 31).

In an inquiry of this sort, whatever is to hand - be it a story from the old masters, a bird call, a tree crashing in the bush in the middle of the night, a reprimand, a cup of cold water, a philosophical argument, a dream - can be used as a brickbat to strike at the gate that is no gate, and so gain entry to the path of Zen, a path that has neither beginning nor end.

It might be objected that the claim that anything can be used as a brickbat to batter the gate that is no gate cannot be reconciled with the identification of the Zen kōan with Wittgenstein's true method in philosophy. Surely, it will be pointed out, Wittgenstein's method does not envisage using just anything at all, but rather the precise identification of the misuse of a sign. However, at no point have we said that kōan practice and Wittgenstein's method are identical. Rather, we said that Zen 'can be likened to a commitment to something like Wittgenstein's correct method in philosophy'. The relationship, then, is not one of identification but of 'family resemblance' (to use Wittgenstein's language). The kōan method is both like and unlike Wittgenstein's true method. In that it serves to awaken the practitioner to both the realm of the metaphysical and to the impossibility of expressing the metaphysical in propositional language, it is true to the intent of Wittgenstein's true method. But if Wittgenstein's method requires the precise identification of the misuse of a sign, then the kōan as brickbat would be too blunt an instrument. This gives rise to the question: Does Wittgenstein's method demand a precise identification? The answer would seem to be in the negative in that Wittgenstein calls for a 'demonstration' that the would-be metaphysician has 'failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his propositions' (*TLP*, §6.53). There is no mention here of precision or exactly how the demonstration is to be carried out. In its family resemblance to Wittgenstein's 'only correct method in philosophy', the kōan method would seem to be more like than unlike.

Does the report of the dream provide such a demonstration? The dream suggests that the veteran practitioner was caught - held captive - both by his notion, or picture, of what constituted a 'true' kōan and by his notion of 'progress' in Zen. That is to say, he was preoccupied with ideas and theories. The role of his young son in the dream is twofold. Firstly, he symbolises the clarity of what in Zen is known as 'beginner's mind'. Secondly, he serves to remind the experienced meditator that in meditation all ideas must be dropped. In the actual practice of Zen meditation ideas are not only meaningless but also obstructive. With regard to all ideas the meditator, while actually engaged in the practice of meditation, must remain silent.

For as that other kōan says, 'Stop! Stop! Don't try to expound it. The Dharma mysteriously transcends thinking!' And so we find ourselves, like Mumon himself,
On the edge of a sword,
Over the ridge of an iceberg,
With no steps, no ladders,
Climbing the cliffs without hands.

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