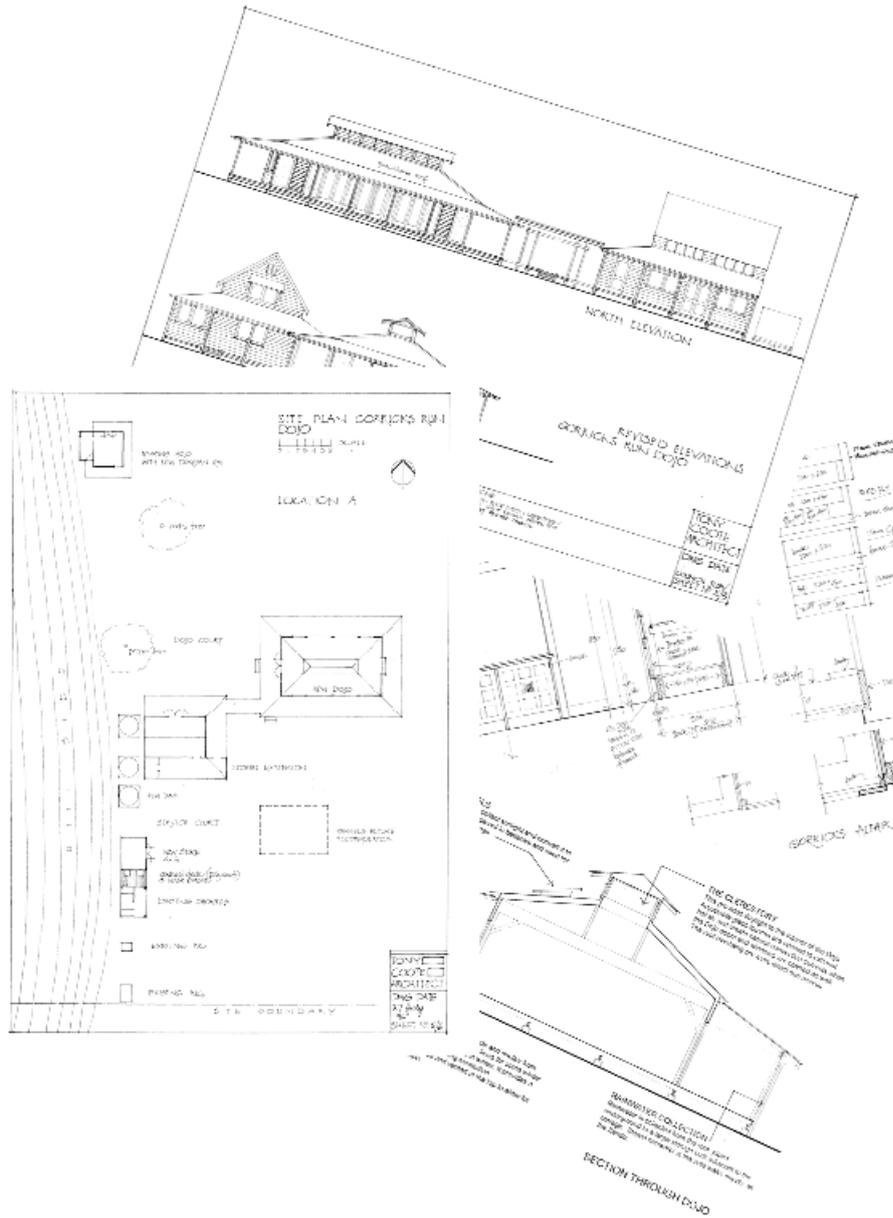


MIND MOON CIRCLE

SUMMER 2011 ~ 2012



Journal of the Sydney Zen Centre

SUMMER 2011 ~ 2012

Imagination

Contents:

Robert Aitken <i>On Books and Reading for the Zen Student</i>	3
Glenys Jackson <i>Spring Wind</i>	5
Sally Hopkins <i>In the Haze</i>	6
Gordon Waters <i>Fog</i>	6
Kerry Stewart <i>Garden Imagination</i>	7
Gillian Coote <i>A Samadhi of Frolic and Play</i>	11
Gordon Waters <i>Pumpkin Buddha and Bodhi tree</i>	15
Janet Selby <i>Kanzeon Embodied in Clay</i>	15
Gordon Waters <i>Candle Buddha and Imagine my Imagination</i>	19
Brendon Stewart <i>An empty boat will volunteer for anything</i>	20
Glenys Jackson <i>(after the rain) perfume of the flowers are in the raindrops</i>	24
Sue Bidwell <i>How Amazing....that</i>	25
Glenys Jackson <i>Cloud coming and going, water flowing</i>	25
Britta Biedermann <i>Imagine all the people...</i>	26
Glenys Jackson <i>Walk amongst the flowers and the perfume permeates your garments</i>	27
Maggie Gluek <i>A curious essay</i>	28
Tony Coote <i>I'm not sure really what imagination is but ...</i>	32
Gail Burrell-Davis <i>Zen and Art</i>	34

Cover: Tony Coote's Architectural drawings for Kodiji temple

Editor: Brendon Stewart

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On Books and Reading for the Zen Student

Robert Aitken¹

My life as a Zen Buddhist began with a good book, in a civilian internment camp in Kobe, Japan. One evening during the second winter of the Pacific War, a guard entered my dorm, waving a book, and mumbling drunkenly, “This book, my English teacher, ...” Rising involuntarily from my bed, I boldly took it from his hand – and never gave it back. It was R.H. Blyth’s *Zen in English Literature and Oriental Classics*, then recently published.

The world had been readying me for a long time. Until then, my preferred camp reading had been Miyamori’s *Haiku, Ancient and Modern*, but the path of my preparation ran all the way back through my young adulthood in Honolulu to evenings as a small child, sitting on a carpet at my grandfather’s feet with my brother and little cousins, absorbing a range of poems by Heine, Goethe, Burns, Longfellow and Walter de la Mare.

I was probably also readied by the state of the world at war and by my own health – freezing cold had exacerbated my chronic asthma. In any case, when I got back in my bunk, opened the plain cover of Blyth’s book, I had been searching for it all my life without knowing its title, its author, or its subject. As I read Blyth’s words over and over, new and marvelous vistas of culture and thought opened for me. I felt that I was uncovering primordial configurations of myself. Now as I look at the book, its flaws and mistakes jump out at me, but at the time it was the communiqué I was unconsciously awaiting.

The great mystery of that encounter with Mr. Blyth’s words has recurred many times in the ensuing half-century. Again and again, books have opened my eyes to the Dharma, shaken me out of superficial views and commonplace understanding, and even led me to good teachers. These experiences put the lie to the commonly heard notion that reading and study are at odds with Zen practice and with religious life generally.

Among the sources of this misunderstanding are the warnings given by Ch’an and Zen teachers themselves, past and present. Muso Soseki, the early Japanese master whose work has an honored place declared his Admonitions:

I have three sorts of disciples. The best are those who resolutely give up all worldly relationships and devote themselves wholly to seeking and realizing their own true natures. The middle sort are not really earnest in Zen practice, and in order to find distraction from it prefer to read about it in books. The lowest are those who eclipse the light of their true self-nature and do nothing but lick up the Buddha’s spit.

Regrettably, Zen Buddhist teachers in Asia – and in the Americas and Europe as well – consider that books *as such* encourage a preoccupation with “the Buddha’s spit”. They advised their students to be single-minded in their practice and not read

¹ This *Forward* to the publication “The Roaring Stream. A New Zen Reader” is reprinted with kind permission from the Estate of Aitken Roshi with copyright approval.

anything at all. This is an egregious corruption of Muso's message and an abuse of his eminent teachers, colleagues and successors, all of whom, as we know from their writings, were teachers and writers at a high level, thoroughly immersed in their religious, and indeed their literary traditions.

Admittedly, there may come a point in Zen study when reading should be indeed set aside. The classic case is Hsiang-yen, a former student of Pai-chang, who was confronted with a tough question by his new teacher, Kuei-shan. He ransacked all the notes he had made of Pai-chang's talks, but couldn't come up with anything remotely suitable. Finally, with Kue-shan's help, he realized that a secondhand understanding would never satisfy his hunger for realization. Exclaiming "A painting of cakes won't fill the belly!" he went off to face his question in solitude.

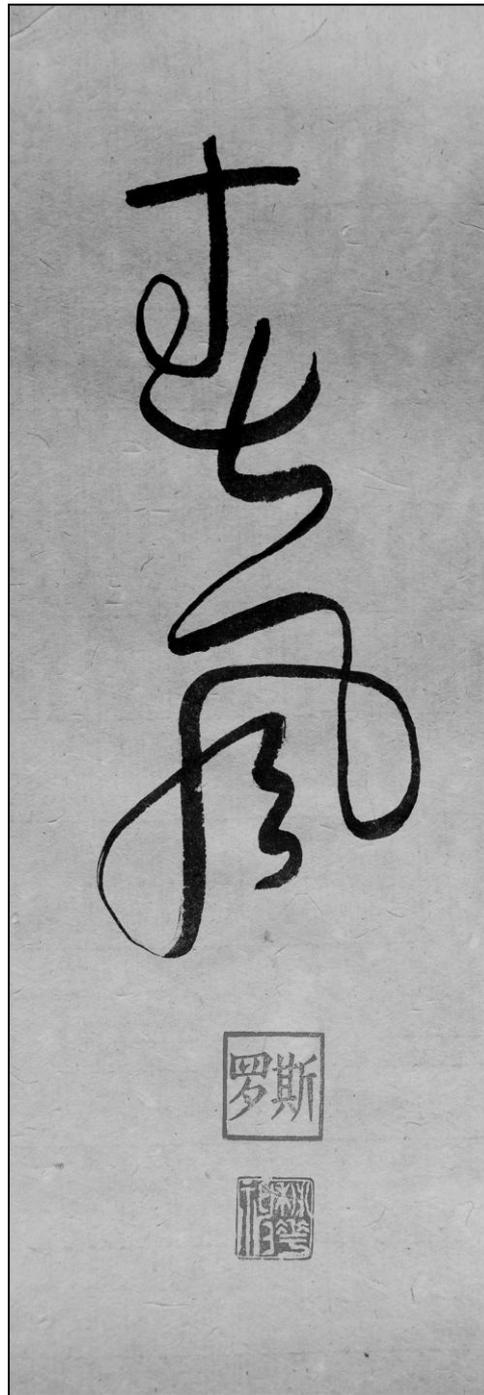
Except for such crucial, usually quite brief intervals, it is generally very important for Zen students to read. Since our needs as readers vary widely from individual to individual and from one point in life to another, when students ask me what to read, I give them a current bibliography, but I also tell them, "Follow your nose." Go to the library or bookstore, pull down books and look at them. Trust yourself to discover the right one. Perhaps it will be a book that will awaken you to *bodhichitta*, the imperative for realization and compassion, but next year, when you revisit the same library or bookstore, you will discover books that you passed over the first time.

In the years when I was establishing my Zen practice, the need for a portable compendium of Ch'an and Zen literature was met by D. T. Suzuki's *Manual of Zen Buddhism*, which I read in my internment-camp days. Though it included relatively few translations and was even then quite archaic in its English style, it served us well, and it was an important resource for thinkers of that period. Aldous Huxley placed it on his list of ten books he would take to a desert island.

Today, however, the *Manual* and books of its era are quite dated. In the past thirty years, translators, historians, and Zen teachers and students have rendered an astonishingly large portion of the original literature into English. Back in the early 1950s, even those bookshops that specialized in Asian books offered only half a shelf of Mahayana Buddhist titles, with important traditions not represented at all. Now the situation is reversed, and we find a formidable array, more books, it seems, than we can possibly read. This great corpus gives us variety and detail, as well as important perspectives that were not evident earlier. For example, such key figures as Bodhidharma and Hui-neg shift to some degree from history to the edges of misty folklore, and yet at the same time their teachings become clarified, and we learn the importance of folklore itself – to our practice and to our spiritual maturity.

The Roaring Stream puts the fruits of these great labors in our hands. It brings together a wealth of material already published, but never before available in a single volume, plus a few translations appearing for the first time. You can dip into the waters of this stream, again and again, at any point finding refreshment and perspective on Ch'an and Zen as practice, as presentation of the Main Fact, and as a culture and tradition. A year from now you can dip again and find treasures that were not at all evident the first time.

Moreover, you can get acquainted with the old teachers as individuals. The advisor to the emperor and the poet in a cave are very different fellows. Their words differ, their manner differs and their social views differ. Yet read side by side in this volume, their intimate kinship in the Buddha-Dharma becomes evident, their intimate kinship with us in our own living rooms today becomes clear, and our understanding of the Buddha-Dharma itself is vastly enriched.



Glenys Jackson **Spring Wind**

IN THE HAZE

Sally Hopkins

Years searching for truth
in my Separate Self,
in view/out of sight/
on show, the mysteries of
memory, habit, emotional
trauma, peter out, fade,
no more peeling onions,
though greed, hatred and ignorance
flow endlessly through.
Suddenly just breathing.
Just breathing.
Just here yet inexplicable.
Science says all we see
is what our brain creates
from sparks the eyes see.
Jigsaws forever:
thus all our sensations,
so what is REALITY?
Certainly - certainly? -
certainly not just what we think,
despite all our stories concocted
so cleverly, the clear paths
laid straight, the shored up walls
protecting-
- protecting what?
what is there to protect?
HERE I AM
full of doves in the box tree,
breakfast laid on the table,
an itch in the left side,
tearful news from afar;
breathing in, breathing out,
I am kookaburras' laughter;
a flowing for ever, a song without
words.
I'm a ONCE ONLY WORLD in the
heart of a cloud,
ungraspable/just ordinary.
Who could have imagined?
The Bell rings its teisho
LISTEN LISTEN
EMBODY EMBODY EMBODY



Gordon Waters Fog

Garden Imagination

Kerry Stewart

My imagination is sparked when I look at or play with gardens. And I say sparked because for me imagination is like a spark. It's a sudden flash that briefly sheds light on another way of perceiving. But not all gardens catch my imagination and certainly not the endless hedges of *Murraya paniculata* so popular in many suburban gardens today. It's only the gardens where you can sense the designer's touch and feel their love of plants, soil, seasons and creatures.

When we visited Japan, in the late summer and early autumn of 2010, many gardens inspired me. Looking back over my diary I realise that there are a number of reasons why.

Refined simplicity - Monday 13th September

Train to Matsushima on the north east coast. Here is a classic Japanese land and seascape just as I have seen, many times, in paintings and photographs. There are several small islands connected to the mainland by red lacquer bridges. One island has a botanical garden – a wild forest of red Cyprus, Japanese maple, cedars, camellias, wisteria and other plants unknown to me. Oshima Island was the home of several Zen Buddhist masters. We sit on Zen Master Ungo's wooden meditation hut built in 1637. It says in the tourist pamphlet that he didn't like splendour but loved refined simplicity.

Rain drips from pine
Sitting on the Master's hut
No time has passed

Ingenuity - Wednesday 15th September

So many beautiful features in the Kenrokuen garden in Kanazawa: Ganko-bashi (flying geese bridge) – red stones laid in the formation of flying geese; oldest fountain in Japan using natural water pressure; and the most amazing ancient pine. The seed of this Karasaki pine was supposedly planted way back in the 13th century. Now the tree's enormous branches, that spread out over the lake, have to be supported by huge wooden crutches. In winter an intricate web of ropes and poles hold the branches from the top, like a large circus tent, to stop them breaking under the weight of the snow. Those people who look after this venerable tree must know and love it deeply.

No yesterday or tomorrow
The Karasaki pine
just lives.

Play - Tuesday 5th October

Walked to Heian Jingu Shrine garden in Kyoto. Cherry trees have bamboo structures to hold the branches up when heavily laden with fruit. In spring they must look like the parasols Geishas carry along the narrow cobblestone streets of Gion. In Kanazawa

I bought a bright pink umbrella so that cherry blossoms, on wet November days in Sydney, can mingle, in my imagination, with Jacaranda flowers.

Bright pink parasol
reminds the grey autumn sky
of cherry blossoms

There's a large lake with stepping stones across it.

Lake's stepping stones
encourage serious faced people
to play like children

A covered wooden bridge spans the narrower end of the lake. We sit quietly for a moment, until an American teacher gives her fish-out-of-water students a lesson on writing haiku. They laugh and chat.

The shallow water
creates a perfect mirror
for the young poets.

The weather starts to turn...

A cool breeze springs up
promising red and gold leaves
in Heian garden

Glimpse of oneness - Saturday 9th October

Raining. Train to Ryoanji temple. What an expansive green walk to the temple – huge lake with lotus, lilies, islands and mandarin ducks. Along the shore is the most beautiful woodland walk. Finally we come to the garden I have been waiting for years to see. I have imagined sitting on the verandah of the temple overlooking the famous stone garden – raked white stones and 15 large rocks – but it was more extraordinary than I could imagine. The pamphlet tells me “It is up to each visitor to find out for himself what this unique garden signifies. The longer you gaze at it, the more varied your imagination becomes. The walls are made of clay boiled in oil. As time went by, the peculiar design was made of itself by the oil that seeped out.” Over time patterns of sunsets, buildings, trees ... the whole universe has emerged making the garden of stones seem endless. An important part of the dry stone garden, that I had no idea about, is that it has a moist twin. Around the corner of the temple verandah there is a verdant moss garden: both dry and wet, white and green, sea and land, barren and fertile exist together.

Rain deters tourists
at Ryoanji stone garden
Only me and mu....

The tearoom's washbasin, tsukubai, has an interesting inscription: “I learn only to be contented”.

Wildness - Wednesday 13th October

Kyoto central station to activate our JR rail passes and book tickets to Takamatsu. Walk to Higashi-Honganji temple – Pure Land Sect. Their brochure claims that it’s the biggest wooden temple in the world (so does Todaiji in Nara). The Amida Hall is completely covered by a modern building, protecting it while it’s restored. Walk across the road to Shosei-en garden which is classically designed but rather wild. I don’t know if the wildness is from neglect or lack of funds but I prefer it to strictly manicured gardens. We pick camellia sinensis leaves outside the teahouse. There are old wooden bridges, a ceremonial gate, a large pond, irregular shapes in a huge stonewall – magnificent design. Will play with more stones in our garden at home.



Stories - Saturday 16th October

We have a lovely woman as a volunteer guide to show us around Nanzenji temple in Kyoto. What a great service they provide! The Hojo garden is named “Toranoko watashi” – young tigers crossing the water. She tells the story of a mother tiger crossing a river with her 3 cubs. The problem is one of the cubs is bad tempered and could hurt or kill the other cubs if left alone. How does she get the cubs across if she can only carry one at a time? I love the idea of gardens being built around a story.

Unpredictability - Thursday 21st October

Hiroshima Castle has been reconstructed. We walk up wooden stairs to the top and look over the landscape. All that remains from before the A-bomb are a couple of trees. One Aussie battler was only 740 metres from the epicenter.

What survived the bomb?
The land, the river,
And a Eucalyptus tree
We bow with deep humility.

The Hidden - Wednesday 27th October

Cloudy with light showers. Lovely bus ride around Mt Fuji to Lake Kawaguchi on the other side from where we're staying. Trees are turning gold and shades of red, the air is crisp, the soil is basalt, and volcanic rocks are used to make walls and paving. We can't see any part of the mountain, so we walk around part of the lake hoping for the clouds to clear. Over the bridge, which divides the lake in two, is a small Buddhist shrine. We walk up a set of steep stone stairs and sit on the edge of a little rocky promontory.

Clouds and Fuji-san
play a game of hide and seek.
We sit quietly
with the shrine across the lake.

Wild wisteria, rose and white chrysanthemum
Watch and wait with us.
The clouds break,
for a brief moment,
revealing the ancient peak
and the depth of imagination itself.

When we return to Australia, I go to my hometown of Forster on the north coast to collect some smooth oval stones from Pebbly beach. They are now laid with pieces of sandstone making a textured path at the back of our garden. It makes reference to some of the beautiful paths in Japan but doesn't have a name yet. Grandson Maxi and I leap like tigers from one flat piece to another, and as we do a story has begun.



A Samadhi of Frolic and Play

Gillian Coote

*Waking up in the morning
I vow with all beings
to be ready for sparks of the Dharma
from flowers or children or birds. (1)*

Harper hides around the side of the house after his mum has rung our front door bell. Some afternoons he's a pirate, others Batman, Spiderman or Superman– whichever it is, he leaps out at us, eyes blazing, fiercely strong. 'Hey Batman', the game goes, after some feinting on encountering the scary superhero, 'where's Harper?' and he leaps up in the air cackling, "It's me! It's me!" His sister shows other preferences. Over the years, Imogen's been a puppy, a princess, a mermaid, a ballerina and a lady in mum's stilettos, staying in character for hours on end, reminding me kindly when I forget she's a puppy that needs water in its bowl. With or without dress-ups, our grandchildren play out fantasies of living under water, weaving a vast sticky web, flying from the tallest building and rescuing people, waving a magic wand, or wearing a collar and lead, whimpering to be taken for a walk; I'm reminded me of my younger sister's imaginary friend sitting with her around the family table and their muffled (one-way) conversations.

There's a word in Japanese – *rosho-no-memmoku* – (which literally means the countenance of a newborn girl), an expression describing that state of childlike innocence, the 'first naturalness', generally lost in the course of a person's life - the state of wonder and mystery, of unselfconsciousness and the freedom to play. (2)

Self-consciousness, embarrassment and shame arrive all too soon. For most people, the process of setting the unfettered, wild mind to one side begins early. For a while there's drawing and dancing and dressing up; by secondary school, gazing out the window and de-clutching the mind is discouraged, play becomes team sports. Space and time still open over up the long summer holidays for day-dreams and mystery, for living in the imagination, but then the new school year begins, and doodles and daydreaming. Because, inimical to swooping flights of the imagination are lives tightly lived, hemmed in by roles, lists, duties, routines and the tendency to obey 'shoulds'. As we fledge into adults there is even less time and space for imagination, frolic and play, unless we find ways to align our imaginations with our work, like some writers.

Virginia Woolf: "I used to feel this as a child – once I remember I couldn't step across a puddle, for thinking – 'how strange, what am I. What is it? And shall I die before I find it? Then (as I was walking through Russell Sq. last night) I see the mountains in the sky: the great clouds: & the moon which is risen over Persia; I have a great & astonishing sense of something there, which is 'it'. It is not exactly beauty that I mean. It is, that the thing is in itself enough: satisfactory; achieved. A sense of my own strangeness, walking on the earth is there too: of the infinite oddity of the human position: trotting along Russell Sq. with the moon up there, & those mountain clouds. Who am I, what am I & so on: these questions are always floating about in me: & then I bump against some exact fact – a letter, a person, & come to them again with a great sense of freshness. And so it goes on. But, on this showing which is true, I think,

I do fairly frequently come upon “it”; & then feel quite at rest.” (3) But for those whose lives are experienced as arid prisons, who wish and dream of a far better life, imaginary lives can be enticing, either virtual lives via Second Life, or home-grown fantasies, which don’t require a computer.

One of fiction’s supreme fantasists is Walter Mitty a whimsical character created by James Thurber, the New Yorker cartoonist. (4) (The book became a film called “The Secret Life of Walter Mitty”, made in 1947 and starring Danny Kaye, Virginia Mayo and Boris Karloff). Mitty’s mundane life is constantly interrupted by escapist fantasies in which he’s scared of nothing and admired by everybody, unlike his much less pleasant interactions with real people, including his wife. (Thurber’s women are often menacing creatures perched atop bookshelves.) Though none of the fantasies end with Mitty actually winning through - the first four dangerous situations are interrupted - the fifth ends with Mitty facing the firing squad “inscrutable to the last”.

Hubert Benoit: “I see the imagination as being simultaneously the screen which separates us from objective reality, spiritual and material, and the compensatory mechanism which alone makes tolerable the life of unregenerate humanity. If we lacked our compensatory fancies, we should be so completely overcome by the misery of our condition that we should either go mad or put an end to our existence. And yet it is because of these compensatory and life-saving fancies that we are incapable of seeing into reality as it is. What is ultimately our worst enemy is proximately our best friend.” (5)

Alan Ball, the TV scriptwriter of *Six Feet Under*, recently interviewed on why he turned to Buddhism, said: “Life is suffering. We have desires and expectations and egos and we compare the reality we have, which is miraculous and wondrous, with this reality we desire. That somehow distances us from actually taking part fully with the reality we do have and that creates suffering.” (6)

Sometimes the desires spring out of nowhere. Here’s Spalding Gray, writing about his first Zen sesshin: ‘During the first two and a half days, I diligently counted my breaths. Then, on the afternoon of the third day, the black-and-white porn movies began. I had no sense that I was creating them. It was as though they were being projected on the wall, and for a while I wondered if the people sitting on either side of me could see them too. Here on the zendo wall were giant disembodied erect cocks with balls and little fluttering wings like butterfly wings growing out of them. These cocks were flying and diving all over the place, soaring on the white plaster walls of this Pocono zendo, and I didn't know what to make of them. I couldn't figure out who was making them up. I didn't feel like I was doing it. And the more I tried not to hold onto them (sure that they were small-mind ephemera), the more baroque the images became. Soon the wall was also full of vaginas that looked like fleshy butterflies in flight. They were deliciously swollen, pink, puckering vaginas with a little edge of black hair around them. They would fly and then stop and flutter and pose and then start flying again all around the zooming cocks. The whole wall became a film of a springtime meadow of cocks soaring and diving into the butterfly vaginas.’”

Gray continued to suffer these makyo until the fifth day of sesshin, when “everything suddenly broke and went clear—just as clear as that time I had seen the stars on LSD. Suddenly there was no “me” observing. There was only the room and bare essential

presence. It was as though I was the whole room and the whole room was me, and we were all sitting breathing together. The room had breath, everyone had breath, it was one big swelling breath, and we were all one with it. There was no boundary, and as I breathed, I could feel the whole room breathe and expand with breath so that now the room was breathing and there was hardly any "me" left, only breath and a room and all of us breathing together. And at the same time there was just enough awareness left in me to feel the magnificence of it all, the magnificence and beatitude of what I guess was big mind, and my God, how sweet it was. It couldn't have been very long, maybe a few seconds, and then it burst, just like a precious soap bubble.

It was broken by some grasping analytic mind in me that leaped on it, ripping and tearing. This beast of analysis leaped upon the precious moment and tore it to bits: "What was that? How do I name that? How do I explain it to anyone? How do I tell its story?" (7)

*When I'm tempted to lay it out clearly
I vow with all beings
to remember the words of my betters:
'Explanation leads only to doubt.'* (8)

Soen Roshi danced the Dharma with schoolchildren at the drop of a hat. Aitken wrote gathas like these ones. Those familiar dojo words, 'Just this!' don't for a moment obliterate the imagination. Indeed, the imaginative challenge is to live *as* the vast Net of Indra, *as* mu. How do we describe Mu to a baby? How do we nurture the Three Treasures?

Stephen Batchelor: "...we struggle to find concepts, images, ideas through which to express the awesome inexpressibility of reality in authentic speech and acts. This unformed vision strives for form through imagination. Awakening does not provide us with a set of ready-made ideas or images. By its very nature, it is free from the constraints of preconceived ideas, images and doctrines. It offers no answers, only the possibility of new beginnings. Ideas and words emerge through the very process of expressing them to an actual or implied audience. They arise from an unrepeatable matrix of contingencies: the authenticity of our own vision and compassion in that moment, the needs of others in a particular time and place, our skill in using available technical and cultural resources. Dharma practice is more akin to artistic creation than technical problem solving. The technical dimension of practice is comparable to the technical skills a potter must learn to become proficient in her craft. Both may require many years of discipline and hard work. Yet for both, such expertise is only a means, not an end in itself. The art of Dharma practice requires commitment, technical accomplishment and imagination. As with all arts, we will fail to realize its full potential if any of these three is lacking." Stephen Batchelor also notes that 'in classical Buddhist languages, "the terms 'imagination' and 'creativity' lack exact equivalents.'" (9)

Wu-men's Cautions include: 'To be alert and never unclear is to wear chains and an iron yoke.' Aitken Roshi responds: 'I dropped off those fetters long ago, thank goodness! I find it so pleasant to go to the beach, to look at the clouds, to gossip with children! In a dim state of mind I rise and wash. Sitting in the interview room I lose track of time. Now I must go to the dojo. Let's see, where is my stick? Ah! Here it is, right here in my hand!' (10)

And here's Wu-men again: "At the very cliff edge of birth-and-death, you find the Great Freedom. In the Six Worlds and the Four Modes of Birth, you enjoy a samadhi of frolic and play." (11)

The Great Freedom of which Wu-men speaks is vastly different from the 'first naturalness' of a child which is inevitably lost as we mature into adults. This freedom appears in the Japanese term – *mosshoseki* – a person who has realised Buddha-Nature to the extent of no longer leaving any trace behind, who has won through to a new innocence, to a 'second naturalness'.(12) Someone who enjoys 'a samadhi of frolic and play' which is possible where freedom from self-centred obsession becomes freedom to realise the possibilities of the world for others.



Sengai Gibon (1750-1837), **Hotei**

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Gordon Waters. **Pumpkin Buddha**



Gordon Waters. **Bodhi tree**

Kanzeon Embodied in Clay

Janet Selby

During the Mountains and Rivers Sesshin in June 2011, Allan Marett led us on a walk in the rain up a trail called Jack's Track. It led us towards a 300 metre mountain called Mt Kief, to the south of Gorricks Run. On this trip we were not to venture as far as that trig point, and turned around after lunch, rather soggy. On the path back I found some clay. The rain made it become apparent due to its slippery nature. I filled my empty sandwich bag and intended to use it to make a statue on my return home.

Allan gave me the idea to make a Kuan Yin (Kannon, Kanzeon, Avalokiteshvara). The mountain to the south is traditionally the abode of Kuan Yin. In China the four sacred mountains relate to four bodhisattvas. I didn't know where to start with such a vast array of styles and characters. On Allan's advice I looked at 7th Century Japanese wooden sculptures carved in Korean style. I liked the calm, soft feel of the drapery and grace in the expression. I needed the proportions to be large enough to create the grace and elegance I required, but I didn't have enough clay. After preparing the sample clay by removing the large pebbles and debris, I used it to laminate onto the basic form made from white commercial clay. During the modelling, some of the white clay came through the brown giving it a mottled, natural effect. I made the halo as in the historic images I studied. It was a separate piece of clay and I had set it aside very carefully as it had some lovely carvings engraved on it. However, I put it in such a good place so the cat wouldn't jump on it, that I couldn't find it when it was time to go into the kiln. I still can't find it.



So I suppose it means that it was not meant to be. I wanted an Australian, local version of Kuan Yin, with real meaning and relevance to our own practice. The halo is not in my understanding. The finished piece was fired once, and finished with polished wax.

This larger version was too good to leave up on a remote mountain. It needed to be seen by more than the snakes and wombats. So a pocket size, less elaborate version was made, and painted with the leftovers of collected clay watered down into slurry. Its surface after firing was left unglazed. I didn't quite know how to finish it, and

reasoned that its final surface would be developed by the elements, by the earth where it would reside.

After the little statue was made, we needed to organise getting it in place on the mountain. A walk was arranged to reconnoitre a passage through the bush onto a fire trail, the Woomera Range Fire Trail, which would join up with Jack's Track from the other direction. The previous walk was from the St Albans end, and this walk began directly from the hill behind Gorricks Run Hojo - much longer and rougher route, yet more closely relevant to our sangha.

Allan's map of the planned route showed a turn off to the trig point at the top of Mount Kief. As we took that turnoff, Allan called out to announce "Kuan Yin! We are here! Show yourself!" With a complimentary clap of my hands, we turned the corner and were stunned. There in front of us was a rocky outcrop, as if a sculptor had carefully placed some boulders on top of each other, like the Stone Buddha in the field at Kodoji arranged by Brendon Stewart. The top boulder had split in half, and sat balancing on the shoulders of other sturdy rocks. This top rock showed a face in profile distinctly feline. It looked like a lion grinning at us. It reminded us of Manjusri's lion, and I noted that it was as if Manjusri, as the incarnation of Wisdom, was waiting for his pair, Kuan Yin, the incarnation of Compassion.



We did continue up the path to the top trig point, but it seemed featureless and unimportant compared to this monument. So we lit a small piece of incense and placed it in the seemingly purpose built sandy alcove at the base of the rocky outcrop. This little cave with soft sandy base was perfect to house the little statue. She was duly placed there with a gassho, and we chanted Kanzeon together. Manjusri and Kuan Yin together again. A great feeling of gratitude emerged.

Back at Gorricks, after we had recovered from becoming temporarily lost on the way home in the sweltering heat, we sat in zazen in the Dojo. Allan chanted a special dedication: "We dedicate our chanting and our little retreat to you, Kanzeon Bosatsu, who with your thousand arms helps those in need, thus fulfilling your bodhisattva vow to save all beings. We hold you in our hearts as you sit there upon Mt Kief, opening your heart to birdsong and breezes, diamond pythons and exhausted walkers,

thus fulfilling your bodhisattva vow to save all beings. And we particularly thank you for bringing us home safe from our walk.”



Pictures in order:

Janet Selby, pen and watercolour *View from Jack's track over Upper Macdonald Valley.*

Janet Selby, 2011 *Koori Kuan Yin* Collected clay, before the halo was lost.

Kokuzo Bosatsu, 7th century Japanese, Horuyuji Temple, Nara, wood

Small Kuan Yin in her alcove with incense Photo Lee Nutter

Janet Selby, *Manjusri Rock, Mt Kief* Pastel and watercolour



Gordon Waters **Candle Buddha**

Imagine *my* imagination

Gordon Waters

A visit to a playground.

First a turn on the swing, the movement back and forth above the ground exhilarating and refreshing; below me Kilimanjaro and Victoria Falls, the Mojave.

Then the trip to the slippery dip. Climbing to the top and looking down upon the gentle but precipitous slope of the slide. How fast might I go and how long will it take for me to reach the end, and most of all, where will I land? On the earth or in a pool of stars?

The playhouse? Splendid! Up the pole to the first level and across the chain link to the other side or, if I am very accomplished, if I have imagined many things, swing with great ease upon the monkey bars into a fertile rainforest on the other side.

I will be tired after all this. A rest will keep my imagination imaginative. So I will find the world's biggest tree, which will be underneath the bluest sky and the whitest cloud and filled with every beautiful bird on the planet. I will sit there very, very still, with my legs crossed and my eyes closed and I will breathe the entire world. In and out and in and out. Just breathe, just the world. Imagine that!

**An empty boat
will volunteer for anything.²**

Brendon Stewart

It has been raining for some days and the washing hangs forlornly on a thin line that stretches along the length of the back verandah. Joey sleeps, nothing strange in that, he sleeps there on the Ikea couch gradually turning a corner into the colour and smell of dog. He is full to the fur with Mu. Sensing me, hoping for a *walk*, an eye opens, a single wag of the tail, then back to sleep, to the dog dream world. When he's awake he's so awake, no slow warm water dance of thinking about doing.

Ricky Gervais when asked how he imagined he would be able to embrace the character of a dog, which he was to voice in a new movie, thought for a moment. Then he said that he planned to sleep for eighteen hours a day on a warm couch and later shit and piss in the garden. The dog he dreams doesn't seem to be struggling here for a life more fulfilled, more abundant and meaningful. Does the dog glimpse its Buddha nature?

Does a dog, which dog, my dog ... have Buddha nature? Sleep on it. In Japan dogs are sometimes eaten and their hides may then be stretched over the belly of a Shamisen, the elegantly stringed musical instruments so favoured by the Geisha.

The geisha
I point ... inappropriate.
Her silent white face
No distraction
The black limousine glides by

Dogs are also pushed along in prams and dressed beautifully in bonnets and matching waistcoats. I had never seen a dog pram before, just as I had never seen a real dog in a waistcoat. There was so much I had never seen before until I visited Japan. Standing on the platform waiting for our connection when a Shinkansen appears out of the greyness that is a Japanese city. It appears so fast, so overwhelmingly fast and then it's gone, slowing momentarily to pass through the station at just over 200 km/hr.

What was that ...?

Shinkansen is a phenomenon, it's not simply a very fast train; it is the Bullet Train! These trains have been operating all over Japan for more than 50 years, more than 50 years, that's half a century! And in all that time never a serious accident, not even recently when the tsunami swept away much of northeast Japan.

We have a samurai sword at home. It isn't really a wartime relic, but I can imagine that it might have been. It belongs to my family: swords belong to families. In a small brown diary that my father kept during his wartime service he notes all the train stops on the way north. It begins *Left Greta 8.30pm Thursday 28/5/'42*. What follows is a

² While staying in Kyoto we came across the poetry of Jim Harrison. He thinks that it's not possible to write Haiku using the English language, so he chooses not to call his poems by that name. This essay is obliged to acknowledge many of his ideas.

list of country towns: Glen Innes, Wallangarra, Warwick, Toowoomba, Gympie, Maryborough, Bundaberg, Gladstone, Rockhampton, Mackay, Proserpine, Bowen, Home Hill eventually arriving in Townsville on 31/5/'42. This was the journey north to the battlefields of the Pacific War for my father. The dates drop away after this to be replaced with a day-by-day log of the voyage and his stay in New Guinea. Each new day is identified together with a brief note: *Saturday out on fighting patrol near Eilogo. Big rubber plantation. Had swim in Eilogo river. No Japs.*

No Japs!!! And yet the Japs live on in my imagination.

Dad's troop train was considerably slower than our Shinkansen Hikari 556, (eight car) Star Rail Super Express that carried us along at 270 kms/hour between Kokura and Nagasaki. Or it might have done, if there was a direct rail link between Kokura and Nagasaki. And if so, it probably would have covered that distance in about the same time it took Captain Charles W. Sweeney and his flight crew on board *Bocks Car*, the B 29 heavy bomber as he turn from the Kokura target back towards Nagasaki. The early months of autumn in Japan can bring misty humid cloud and on the morning of August 9 1945, Sweeney and his crew couldn't be certain where the industrial area of Kokura was. He circled the city three times before deciding to abandon the mission and return via Nagasaki. As it happened, the clouds had lifted over Nagasaki and he flew straight without making a navigational reconnaissance, arbitrarily lining up the Urakami Cathedral and dropped *Fat Boy*, the first and last (so far) Plutonium bomb used in war. About 500m above ground level at 11.02 am, it exploded.



From the Black Japan series: *1pm Urakami Cathedral August 9, 1945*

In Kamila Shamsie's novel *Burnt Shadows* the heroine, Hiroko Tanaka steps out onto her veranda wrapped in a kimono around which three black cranes swoop and from

behind the delicate wooden shutters she watches her lover walk away from their night together. She struggles to explain in words; some things have no words, the full queerness of the moment when the cathedral towers seemed to transform from solid to something more like jelly swaying there before her eyes, seemingly for an eternity. Her lover disappeared leaving only a shadow along a wall. She stands unaware that her kimono too has disappeared leaving now, deep in her skin the shadow of the cranes that once glided about her beauty.

In the museum nearby 'ground zero' there is a wall of photographs. All of them are of shadows where once a person was going about whatever business occupied their day; like walking away from a lover's arms. Within days and weeks after August 9 1945 the people who remained in Nagasaki had begun to rebuild, first their gardens then homes and schools and hospitals and life went on. It wasn't Armageddon - as it so often isn't. Still the atomic arsenal around the world continues to grow becoming even more sophisticated. People are prepared to risk war as they so often do.

At the other end of Japan there was a jazz festival happening on the Sunday we arrived in Sendai. We ate Onimichi yaki, a type of omelette cooked at your table. It goes well with sake, known euphemistically to many Zen Monks as *hannya-to*, 'delicious hot water of transcendental wisdom'. Sendai is a provincial city on the north east coast of Honshu Island. Not far away is the small seaside town of Matsushima, home on occasion to the haiku master Matsuo Basho. A poet's walk takes a pilgrim out to a necklace of islands connected beautifully by red lacquered bridges. Basho seems to have walked almost everywhere in Japan.

On Zen master Ungo's
Narrow, venerable verandah
Matsushima's waters
Are flat and grey.



Some of the bridges of Matsushima survived the tsunami early in 2011; Sendai wasn't so lucky.

Hakuin Ekaku spoke of how we want good fortune and wealth to be long lasting, but life itself, he supposedly said will be long enough in the long run. The poet Jim Harrison has something to say on this when he considered that he'd used up more than 20,000 days waiting to see what the next would bring. Even on a pilgrimage the next day looms.

Be here now. Be someplace else later. Is that so complicated? I suppose not really but I do spend a good deal of my time preparing to be someplace else later. I pack my ideas and plans together in such a seductive way that I find myself caught by the awe of *when I get there*. When I get there, like to Nara for instance I find that the great Vairocana Buddha sitting on his lotus flower in the Todai-ji temple is so huge I can't begin to describe him. He is big beyond good sense. And also on getting to Nara we learn that the largest wooden building in the world, (one of the many for which this claim is made) this very same Todai-ji temple isn't as big as it once upon o'time was. What a conundrum to be not as big as you may have been but still to remain the biggest in the entire known universe.

On page 188 of the venerable book The Roaring Stream ... footnote 4 has Yen-yang ask Chao-chou *what should one do when one does not take up a single thing?* And Chao-chou replies, *put it down*. To this Yen-yang says *when you do not take anything, how can you put it down?* Chao-chou replied, *then carry it with you*.

Here, if ever, is a traveller's koan!

It's not just our suitcases that we pack with things taken up, and of course the bottomless storage of digital cameras or iphones make the prospect of dinner parties with family and friends a potentially long night. But experiences, especially adventures of religious experience, are hard to put down easily and seduce one into carrying them on. This is exactly how the gift of our imagination works with us. Chao-chou had picked up a great number of single things, even thinking about not picking up a single thing is a pick up line if ever there was one and together with Yen-yang this story has been carried along all the way from China. Koans work: imaginatively.

The English child psychologist D.W. Winnicott describes our living as a task-orientated process that *collects together details of the experience of aliveness*. For Winnicott it is not a question of what is real about our humanness, but what for each person *gives the feeling of real*. Feeling that life is real is not a trick of the imagination but rather it's the way imagination plays out with our greed, hatred and ignorance and all the other flights of fancy that are collected together as we go about the day by dayness of living.

Only today
I heard
The river
Within the river

Other people's imagination that have helped:

An empty boat ...

Only Today...

(Poetry by Jim Harrison)

Full to the fur of Mu

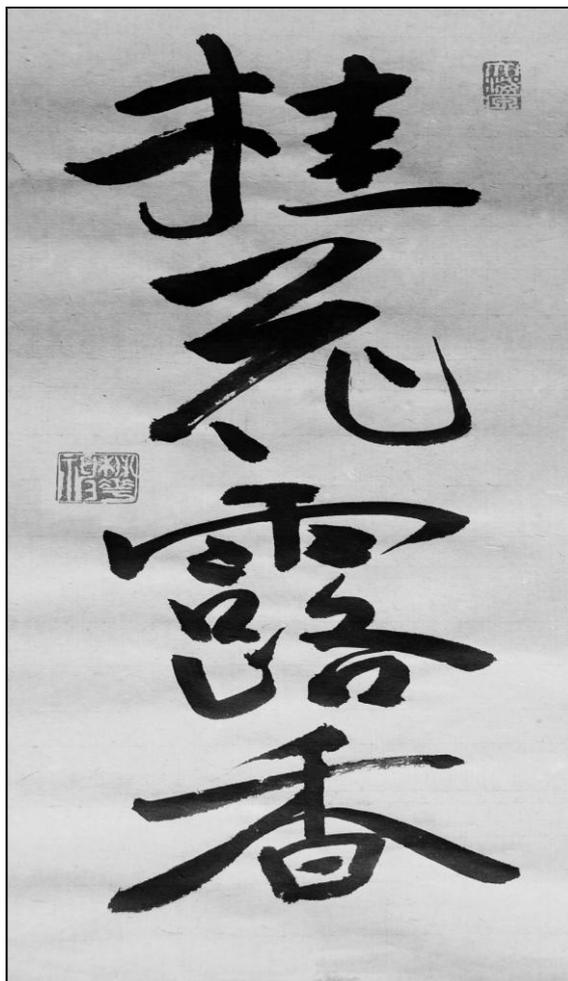
20,000 days ...

(Ideas by Jim Harrison)

Phillips, Adam 2007. *Winnicott*, Penguin Books London.

Nelson Foster and Jack Shoemaker. 1996. *The Roaring Scream. A New Zen Reader.*
The Ecco Press New Jersey.

John Stevens 2008. *Zen Brush. Zen Mind.* Art Gallery of New South Wales.



Glenys Jackson *(after the rain) perfume of the flowers are in the raindrops*

How Amazing that...

Roses are red, violets are blue
Joy arises and falls away
Suffering arises and falls away
Music makes the heart sing
Koans can dispel doubt
Creative leaps occur
The universe keeps expanding
“I” exist right here, now
“I” won’t exist anymore, one day
The number of unanswerable questions is infinite...
How wonder-ful
How mysterious!

Sue Bidwell



Glenys Jackson *Cloud coming and going, water flowing*

Imagine all the people...

Britta Biedermann

What is *imagination*? The dictionary tells me: **noun**. *The faculty or action of forming new ideas, images, or concepts of external objects not present to the senses. The ability of the mind to be creative or resourceful. The part of the mind that imagines things.* Aha! (I think after reading this enlightening definition), it's that part of the mind that can trick you. How does that happen? Does it mean your brain shoots those marvellous neurotransmitters into different areas of your brain making you hallucinate creating situations that are not real? Does it mean your experiences are not real?

You are only imagining that is a common phrase, when people think you are making things up, or are paranoid. Even so often we get this negative connotation about 'imagining', but imagination is the food to move forward, to invent, to question, to create. Creativity emerges from our imagination. Would we call John Lennon's song grandiose when he sang: "Imagine all the people, living life in peace"? I don't believe we would.

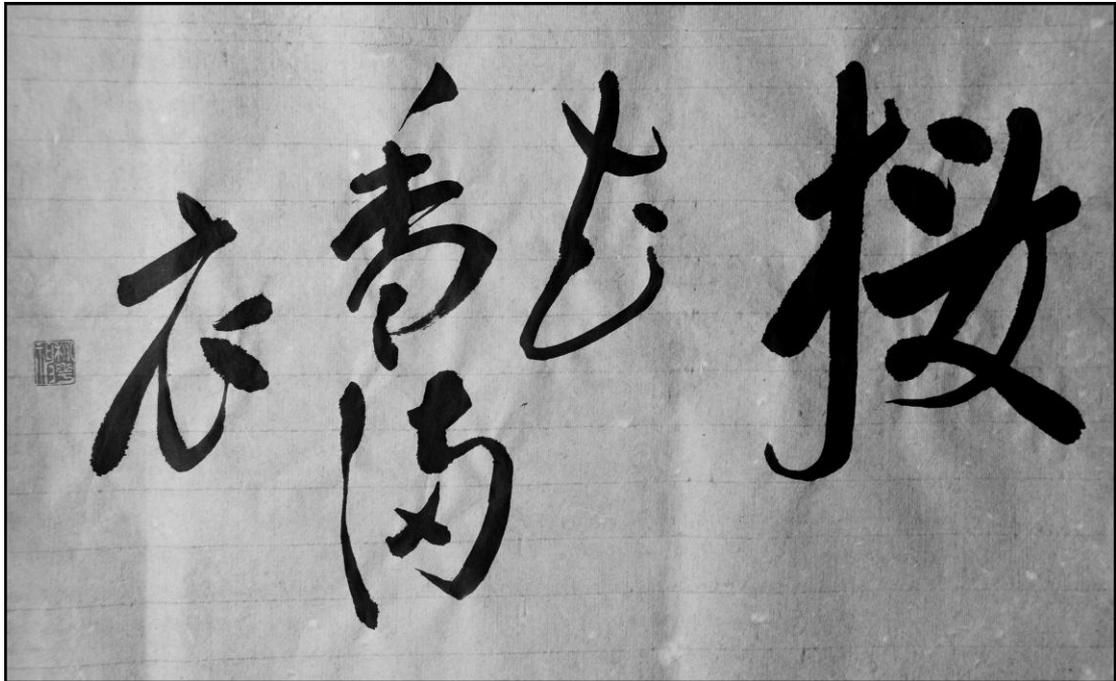
I explore the mind for my living. My definition or concept of *imagination* is associated with the brain, the brain that can switch between perspectives and perceptions. There is a simple experiment, everyone can try at home, where three people stand in line, the first one just stands, the second one has her eyes closed, and taps the person in front in a regular rhythm on their nose. The last person taps the person in the middle on her nose. The person in the middle is the only one, who has their eyes closed, and *is* tapping and *is being* tapped at the same time. The outcome is a sensation for the person in the middle: the feeling of having an extended (Pinocchio) nose. The body boundaries are temporarily tricked

Visual phenomena like '*the magic eye*' are probably familiar to all of us. Here a random pattern can turn (after intense focussing) into a 3-dimensional meaningful image. It takes time, concentration, energy and effort to *see* these new perspectives or perceptions in the beginning, but then the newly gained perspective becomes accessible with less and less effort (if we practice it). Sesshin may be something like this too. We sit together in a room to practice this new/different perspective, which eventually (hopefully) becomes ingrained in our every day action.

In my professional life, *imagining* refers to our senses such as vision and smell. I guess for an artist it means to make a movement with a paint brush in a unique but not necessarily new way. An architect might create forms and combine old forms in a new way. For a political scientist *imagining* might mean to develop concepts of community that have not been lived before. All have in common to think outside 'the box' by not necessarily inventing the wheel anew, but maybe more subtlety, by combining it freshly. So is imagination due to a switch in the brain that allows you to see new concepts, shapes and forms? A new angle that allows you to change perspective like practicing Zen mind - beginners mind is fully compatible with the concept of getting out of our own thinking boxes and emerging with this majestic interconnected space. Let the birds in, the wind, and the sound of the rain. The bird orchestra in the morning and in the early evening present an ever returning vehicle for this perspective change. We just need to decide to ride with it. Maybe that is what imagination is too, a type of courage to activate its power.

This essay was inspired by a samu at Gorricks, where I had a conversation with Gilly about imagination, and a quote came to mind, Anne Buescher gave to me once:

“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes.” (Marcel Proust)



Glenys Jackson **Walk amongst the flowers and the perfume permeates your garments**

A curious essay

Maggie Gluek

I'd like to offer some reflections on a helpful quality of mind for the work that Zen practice entails--curiosity. I tend to think that it is suffering which brings not a few people to the practice and keeps them here. That may be true and continue to be true--something to do with finding a way out of the *prison* of delusion maintained by greed, hatred and ignorance, and uncovering the *prism* of self-nature, the multifaceted jewel that contains and reflects all beings. But curiosity is equally a legitimate motivator for this endeavour. Just as it fuels any authentic investigation, so too does it invigorate the investigation of the mind. *To study Buddhism is to study the self.*

In my experience curiosity is an entirely different position to fear: they are almost mutually exclusive. The sensation of fear is powerful enough to shut everything down. Do you remember the mantra from in science-fiction classic, *Dune*? "Fear is the mind killer." Out of fear one's impulse is to stay in a "comfort zone," not venturing far into the unknown--which may be precisely the object of fear! "Don't ask questions!" As a thought, fear is strongly identified with agency. What will happen to *me*?

Curiosity, on the other hand, is the natural quality of the child before she has learned to be afraid, before there are thoughts about a self that needs to be protected--when there are no barriers to engagement with the world, to intimacy. Not knowing what it is, not knowing what's going to happen. Wide open! In Zen it's called *beginner's mind*.

Young animals are curious too, likewise never having learned any need to be wary. I remember years ago when my family was camping and a baby kookaburra kept visiting our campsite. We knew it was a baby because it had that fluffy look of immature birds and it would make strangulated little attempts at the *kookaburra* call. One morning when we woke up it had the handle of my son's metal compass in its beak and was banging the compass on the table, practicing kookaburra behavior--one day the compass would be a lizard--and maybe just wanting to know what this strange object *was*.

At a recent sesshin, participants delighted in having two wallabies as companions through the week. You'd come out from dokusan and there they were. *Oh, Hello!* One night during supper they hopped--*thump*--up on the verandah to look in. Curious indeed! Gail later confirmed that they were a pair of young male *wallaroes* which had been released by a wildlife rescue organisation.

Emotions are quite neutralised in curiosity, it seems. The investigation becomes the thing. One can be absorbed in the wondering. And there's a willingness to take risks in order to understand... "What is it?" Like a 3 yr old child, curiosity loves the question. *Why?* And stays with it. That's instructive for Zen students. The question comes to full maturity and sophistication in our particular tradition, which nominates Great Doubt as one of its three essentials. This is doubt that moves beyond self-doubt, beyond the often inflexible stories about me and my incapacities. It is "Great" because it asks for every single bit of you and your life. *To study the self is to forget the self.*

Great Doubt embodies the inquiry that fuels practice, with the intention to resolve that which needs resolving in your heart, what has brought you here in the first place. Great Doubt is in the question that embraces essential nature--who am I? What is it?--and it is fundamentally being willing not to know. It appears famously in Wu men's instructions for working with the primary koan *Mu*. *Is there anyone who would not want to pass this barrier? So, then, make your whole body a mass of doubt, and with your three hundred and sixty bones and joints and your eighty-four thousand hair follicles concentrate on this one word Mu*. Everything is thrown open, every pore! Everything is engaged! Your whole body. Nothing presumed, nothing assumed.

Back to curiosity, which I won't dismiss as "mere." Can't it be an antidote for the train of thought that clangs around unhelpfully? A door to opening--and to courage! So that the world can come in.

The word has an interesting etymology, coming from the Latin *curiosus*, which means diligent, as well as inquisitive. This in turn from *cura*, for care, as in taking care. And then there's that nowadays less often used meaning of curious as strange, singular, odd, novel, characterising the object of curiosity as well as the subject. Who can hear curious used in this way and not think of Alice and her adventures in upside down and backwards worlds, filled with marvellous people, things, events which get curiouser and curiouser.

In 2006 Tony and I spent 4 ½ months on a sabbatical in Oxford, its own strange and magical universe and which has nurtured wide-ranging imaginations. It has been home to discoverers of the fantastical, hitherto unknown realms, gardens of delight and their dark alternatives: writers like CS Lewis, JRR Tolkien, Kenneth Grahame, Philip Pullman. And of course home to the Reverend Charles Dodgson, aka Lewis Carroll, who was educated at Christ Church college and stayed on to teach mathematics there for 40 years. The "real" Alice was Alice Liddell, daughter of the dean of Christ Church. This is the biggest and most powerful of all the colleges, supposedly built on the site of a convent belonging to St Frideswide. It was established by Cardinal Wolsey in the early 16th c. and then later taken over by Henry the VIII. They like to say that its founders were a cardinal, a king and a saint. It's the undergraduate home to many British MPs and PMs, and a popular tourist point these days thanks to a star turn as Hogwarts Academy in the Harry Potter films.

Oxford is full of nooks and crannies, layers on layers of history, lore, much to intrigue. College courtyards that open to courtyards that open to hidden gardens, the secret heart behind the magnificent stone structures. We decided that the gardeners were the unsung heroes of the university; as well as being guardians of beautiful spaces, those we spoke to possessed depths of quirky knowledge. You can marvel at the Tradescants' Cabinet of Curiosities--objects natural and manmade, from Chinese shoes to a blowfish, brought together as a means of discovering divine creation in early 17th c.--which became the basis of the Ashmolean Museum. And the Victorian temple to science that is the Science Museum, where T.H. Huxley and Samuel Wilberforce were the first to debate Darwin's theory of evolution in 1860. And where, incidentally, were housed the remains of a Dodo, who comes into the Caucus race in *Alice in Wonderland*. Dodo was Dodgson's name for himself. As a stutterer he became Do-do-dodgson.

I was interested in the evidence for the religious life in Oxford, strong and personal. And sometimes met in unexpected places. Engraved on a stone on Addison's walk along the river behind Magdalen College is a poem by CS Lewis::

What the Bird Said Early in the Year

*I heard in Addison's Walk a bird sing clear
This year the summer will come true. This year. This year.
Winds will not strip the blossoms from the apple trees
This year, nor want of rain destroy the peas.*

*This year time's nature will no more defeat you,
Nor all the promised moments in their passing cheat you.
This time they will not lead you round and back
To autumn, one year older, by the well-worn track.*

*This year, this year, as all these flowers foretell,
We shall escape the circle and undo the spell.
often deceived, yet open once again your heart,
Quick, quick, quick, quick!-the gates are drawn apart.*

A wide variety of Christian movements, orthodox and unorthodox have thrived in that lively intellectual climate. We lived just a few doors down from the Oxford Quaker Meeting, and practiced silent worship with the Friends. George Fox, founder of the Quakers, said "*Live in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars.*" The extent to which the Quakers express their truth in a social justice activity is impressive. This Meeting, as they call the individual chapter, had a wide range of subgroups, affinity groups...one related to sustainability, another to peacework, another to the homeless.

We also sat with a Soto Zen group that met in the Quaker premises. The young woman who is lay priest and convenes the group saw to our posture, straightening out my crookedness. During kinhin they hold palms facing down and with left fist underneath right palm, joint of thumb in solar plexus, so afterwards only a neat flip over of the hands is required to take them into zazen mudra. And they walk VERY VERY slowly. Tony and I couldn't help ourselves and kept coming right up against the person in front. The instruction we received when we first arrived was clean and rather refreshingly minimal. "We try to be present and aware. If you find you are thinking, realise it and come back."

That was a long detour back to Alice. *Burning with curiosity*, she sees the white rabbit disappear down his hole and never considering how she'll get out, she follows him. From then it's on...one strange door after another, one strange situation after another, into this nook, through that cranny, and though often challenged and sometimes discouraged, she is never deterred. It's too interesting. Nothing is predictable. Conventional understandings are thrown into doubt. In the dream universe, the rules keep changing. Questions come from all directions.

(smoking hookah) Who are YOU? said the caterpillar. This was not an encouraging opening for a conversation. Alice replied, rather shyly, "I hardly know, Sir, just at present--at least I know who I was when I got up this morning, but I think I must have

changed several times since then. "What do you mean by that?" said the Caterpillar sternly. "Explain yourself!" "I can't explain myself, Sir, because I'm not myself you see." "I don't see," said the Caterpillar." And the conversation continues, as its ground keeps giving way. This doesn't sound unfamiliar if you've spent any time with Zen koan literature, where the dialogues start out sounding innocent enough--"Where do you come from?"--and then proceed to take most unexpected turns.

The real connection is, of course, play. Lewis Carroll celebrates the mind of play, the open wide world of imagination, and it is in imaginative play, as Aitken Roshi puts it, "that Zen students celebrate as one the substantial teaching of all the Buddhas and its empty content."

Playing with puns and inversions of logic, Carroll releases words from their straitjackets: Persistently curious Alice asks the Mock Turtle about his song: *"If I'd been the whiting," said Alice, whose thoughts were still running on the song, "I'd have said to the porpoise, 'Keep back, please. We don't want you with us!'" "They were obliged to have him with them," the Mock Turtle said. "No wise fish would go anywhere without a porpoise."* *"Wouldn't it really?" said Alice, in a tone of great surprise.* *"Of course not," said the Mock Turtle. "Why if a fish came to me and told me he was going on a journey, I should say 'With what porpoise?'" "Don't you mean 'purpose'?" said Alice.* *"I mean what I say," the Mock Turtle replied in an offended tone.*

Dogen, says Hee Jin Kim, regarded words and symbols as holding the possibility of opening rather than circumscribing reality. Just so non-sense poses liberating limits to where reason can take us. *"Why is a raven like a writing desk?"* asks the Mad Hatter. Though many "answers" have been proffered to his riddle, in fact originally none was intended. The question stands for itself.

And the Looking Glass adventure ends with an existential question...was Alice a figure in the Red King's Dream or was he a figure in hers? Who dreamt it? What is real? What is a dream? It's a mystery. *Chuang Tzu dreamed he was a butterfly, flitting around in the sky, then awoke. And wondered: "Am I a man who dreamt of being a butterfly or am I a butterfly dreaming that I am a man?"*

In any case, it's right here, the magical universe. *Dharma gates are countless I vow to wake to them.* Don't miss the opportunity. Right now, the gates are drawn!

The great Thai forest master, Ajaan Cha had this to say: "As you practice, your mind will get quieter and quieter, like a still forest pool. Many wonderful and rare animals love to drink at this pool but you will be still. This is the happiness of the Buddha."

I'm not sure really what imagination is but ...

Tony Coote

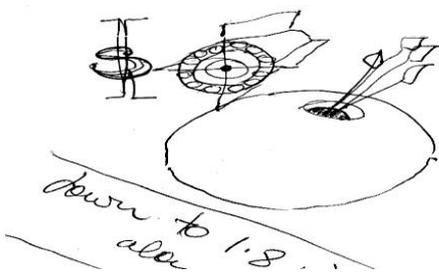
I'm not sure really what imagination is but when I was a kid I was accused of having too much of it. I was also castigated for not paying proper attention in class and for being forever "lost in a daydream". At school from the very first day my lack of attention was evident in the doodles that covered my textbooks. These tended to be drawings of little cartoon people (mostly gangster types with broken noses) together with various squiggles.

Other subjects for the doodle included British and German fighter planes engaged in desperate dogfights. The pages of my exercise books were criss-crossed with the tracery of bullets, little puffs of smoke appeared around the wing-mounted cannons of Messerschmitts and Spitfires and palls of smoke billowed from stricken aircraft as they plummeted to the ground. Little stick men hooked up to parachutes floated gaily amongst the battle scene.



The planes were identified with either a target - the insignia of the RAF or the swastika for the Luftwaffe. This latter symbol was clearly a pointer to my later involvement with Buddhism.

I still doodle while waiting on the phone or during meetings although not nearly so comprehensively as when I was at school and university. I found, particularly at uni, that the activity of doodling worked quite well in preventing me from falling asleep during lectures.



hole and the linear objects that have been inserted in it.

Here's a recent example, which is scanned off the back of an envelope that was by the phone. I understand there are therapists who use doodle analysis as a key tool in psychological diagnosis. In this particular doodle, the dollar sign with its strange extended verticals with attached serifs is no doubt significant, as is the round, decidedly female, form with its deep

Clearly the word "image" has something to do with "imagination" and as an architect, part of my job is to make images on paper to represent something that will eventually become a building. I really do make the lines on paper using pen and pencil because,

in the modern world of CAD (computer aided design), I remain a dinosaur who still uses the ancient tools instead of the keyboard and monitor.

These little lines on paper will be mostly at a scale of 1% of the actual structure and will form patterns, which are in “orthographic projection”. This is a particular way of representing an imagined three-dimensional object in two dimensions. *“It is a form of parallel projection where the projection lines are orthogonal to the projection plane, resulting in every plane of the scene appearing in affine transformation on the viewing surface”*, to quote Wikipedia.

Amazing – a detailed description of what I do that is totally unintelligible to me!

I will sometimes do little three dimensional sketches to help visualise (imagine) how various elements will come together – when considering how a joint in a piece of furniture should function for example. But mostly I use the orthographic projection to describe a building.

This consists of three elements:

a plan, which is a drawing of a horizontal slice through the building,
a section, which is a drawing of a vertical slice through the building and,
an elevation, which illustrates the external surface of the building. If a building has a simple rectangular shape it will have four elevations – north, south, east and west.

Generally this is the way most buildings are described and builders and tradespeople need to be able to “read” a plan in order to construct the building. It takes training and a certain flight of the imagination to be able do this.

The impact of the computer on this process has been dramatic and now very complex buildings are able to be much more readily described and virtual three-dimensional imaging is commonplace.



It turns out that this new style has a name – *parametricism*, which, according to Wikipedia, is an emerging style that is based on advanced computational design and digital animation techniques to create digital visualisations and designs. This has a real down side however. A striving for individuality, gratuitous

complexity and the “wow-factor” has superseded an older aesthetic, which looked to buildings being respectful of their context and privileged reticence and restraint.

Frank Gehry’s design for the School of Management on the UTS Broadway campus is a classic example of the new aesthetic.

I can hear my primary school teacher Miss Abbot’s admonition: *“Too much imagination!”*

Zen and Art

Gail Burrell-Davis (working name Gail McCall)

Zen and Art. Art and Zen. What is my practice? This blank sheet of paper is a look into the void. What to pull out and set in concrete? Is this my art manifesto? Will it be news to me? As moment by moment I fill this blank will it be true and if it is true now will it be true tomorrow, next week or next year.

In my art I have made a practice of not knowing. It could just be a laziness not planning but I call it a practice. My zazen could be an excuse for not thinking but I call it Zen practice. I practice not knowing and yet I have themes that I repeat over and over, I know the pattern, though each time I repeat it the result is different I definitely want the end result to be a surprise to me, the work then becomes something separate from me it comes out of me but is its own thing and I can admire it and I am happy to let it go. Yet there are a couple of works that I am attached to. One "Blanket Gift" a white woolen blanket with the Typhoid bacteria embroidered all over it and the image of a human being in the centre painted on with a clay and acrylic emulsifier. The other is "Text Messages"- a word landscape with the words in fleece felted into a cotton fabric with machine stitching and embroidery.



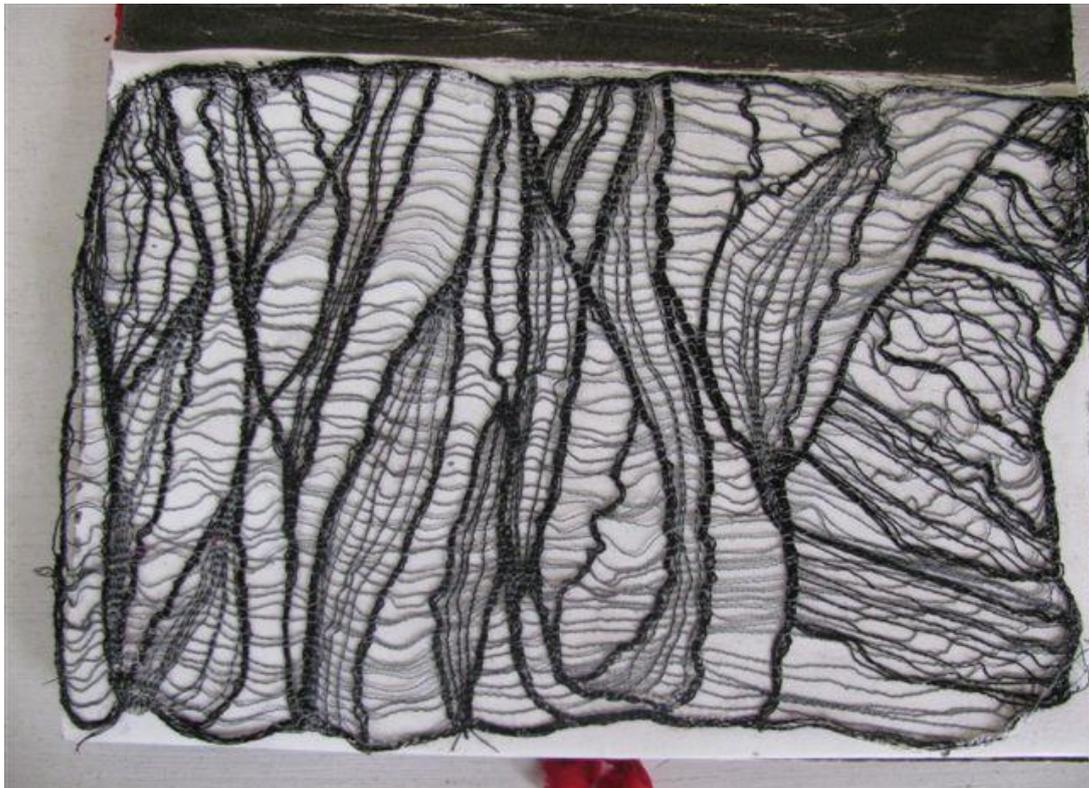
In my Bachelor of Fine Art course at Newcastle University when we are given a project I pose the question to my mind and then wait until an answer pops out. I always go with my first thought. I see other students agonizing over what to do and then planning meticulous work with amazing results.

The work that you see in the Hojo was a university project for which we had to make a pattern so what popped out my mind was the pattern of life with the vermilion thread of desire running through it.

In the early days of my felt making I came across a scarf for sale in a gallery it looked just like something I would have made I was so discouraged thinking all beginners make something like this until I discovered the gallery owner had bought it from an exhibition where my work had been, it was mine and so I felt OK again, my individual expression was not the same as everyone else's. Why is this so important? In this life we are but grains of sand and yet each grain of sand like every ant has its own recognizable face, each finger its own recognizable print surely this is an amazing mystery. This is what as an artist one taps into and seeks but like one's true nature this is something that is already there. Practice develops the skills, confidence and courage to create art or to sit in zazen in this place of not knowing. Sometimes this is a joy but sometimes it is a tortuous process.

Before I became confident in my work I remember making a coat on commission, half way through it I thought it was terrible and I became depressed and didn't do any work for months then I decided to finish the coat and when I did I found it was one of the best coats I had ever made, this was a valuable lesson.

I like to think that Kanzeon is making the work. These hands are the hands of Kanzeon and sometimes I will chant the En-Mei Jik-Ku Kan-Non Gyo when I work especially when I am doing the mundane repetitive manual labour part of it. Remembering to be present with the seemingly boring aspects is part of my work practice, my life practice and my Zen practice, sometimes I am able to remember. Remembering is my practice.





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