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TIME

Zen Bow: Time

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From the Editors

Some readers may have noticed they haven't received *Zen Bow* in recent months. Because so much time, energy, and Sangha volunteer power (which included the *Zen Bow* editors) were devoted to coordinating the Rochester Zen Center's 50th anniversary events, something had to give. The editors also have been diligently working on a special anniversary edition of *Zen Bow*, which will take the form of a full-color bound book and arrive in your mailbox this coming spring.

—Donna Kowal & Brenda Reeb

Green Mountains are Always Walking

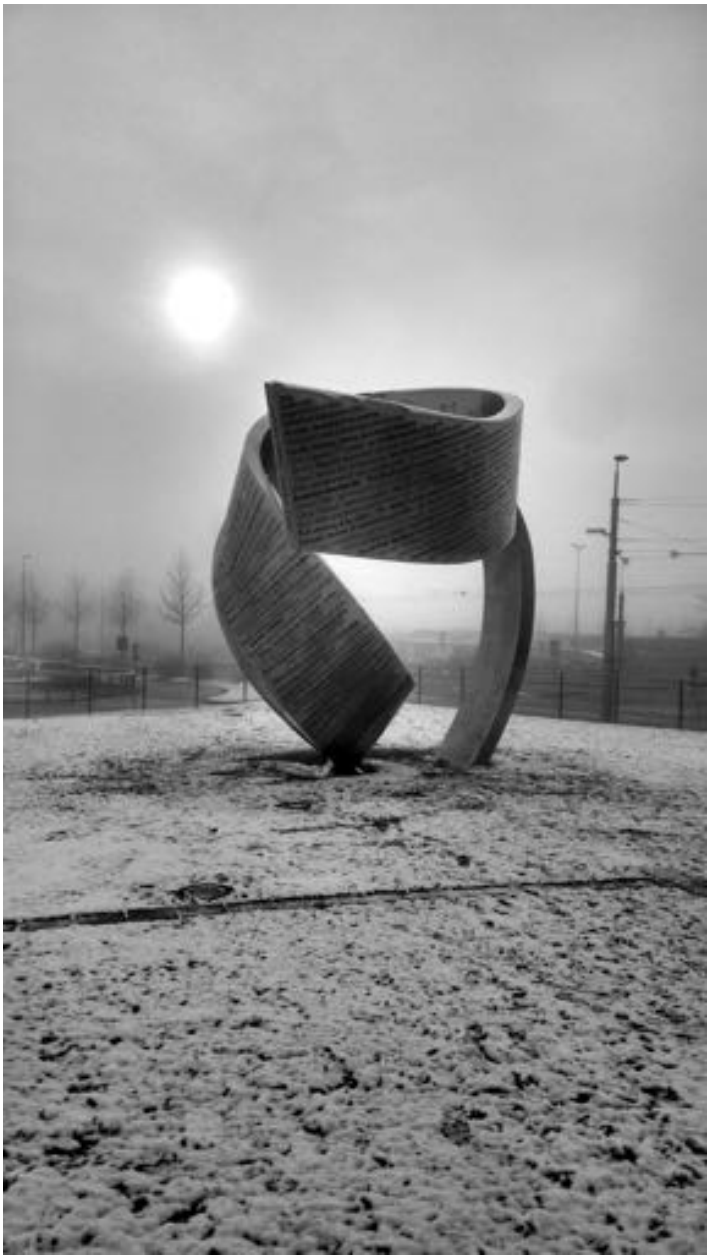
RICK SMITH

> Profundity has run hither—under the quilt,
>
> Knitting up time only to crash it apart.
>
> And the cat smells movement from under the door of forgotten hope,
>
> As we dream in stasis, seeing our future become our past.

When I decided to write an article about time, I was immediately excited. It has been an area of fascination for me since high school. I've thought about it from different perspectives and have found that, as time passes, I understand it even less. Yet it is as familiar to me as existence itself. As St. Augustine said in his *Confessions*, 'What is time? If one asks me, I know. If I wish to explain it to the one that asketh, I know not.' So, before I enter the rabbit hole of personal experience, I thought it may be helpful to step back a bit and look at it from a cosmological perspective. As Richard Feynam states, 'The imagination of nature is far, far greater than the imagination of man.'

From the perspective of a 'me' that is relative to the world of objects, time is experienced as movement, and this movement can be divided into two types, both of which are summed up perfectly in the title of Stephen Jay Gould's book, *Time's Arrow, Time's Cycle.* The Arrow of Time, what physics calls entropy in the second law of thermodynamics, states that matter goes from lesser to greater disorder. Or, to put in practical terms, you can never unscramble an egg.

The other type of movement is the cycle of time, which consists of those observations that repeat—that is, what we call a day (the time it takes the earth to make one full rotation) or a year (the time it takes the earth to cycle around the sun). Our bodies are full of such 'clocks' that keep the body in homeostasis. Our aging is to a large extent the breakdown of these numerous biological clocks. Both of these types of



Rick Smith

time imply movement, movement that repeats and movement that is irreversible, what we refer to in Buddhist terms as change. Both types of time are experienced every day by what we call the self—the witness. Movement is also used to record duration: the time it takes a pendulum to swing back and forth ticking away the seconds. But as we know from physics, time is embedded in a larger context—space.

Einstein said that time and space cannot be separated. He referred to this as space-time. In our four dimensional universe, space has three dimensions and time makes up the fourth. In more practical terms, if I want to meet you for coffee I have to specify the place, which has three coordinates: latitude, longitude, and—less thought about—height. Let's say we decide to meet at Java's coffee shop tomorrow at 3 pm. If I were to look at the observable universe, from the universe's perspective, I would now have four coordinates that specify exactly where we should meet: Java's coffee shop (the space with three coordinates) at 3 pm tomorrow (the state of change of the entire universe at that particular

moment). Java's coffee shop at 3 pm tomorrow will not be the same coffee shop at 2 pm today. As seems obvious, the people in the coffee shop will most likely be different, the weather will not be the same, and even our planet, our solar system, and our galaxy will be in a slightly different configuration.

In essence, the entire universe will have moved (changed). You could look at this precise time as a snapshot of the entire universe at that moment. The universe can be divided into an infinite number of snapshots, depending upon how short or long of a duration we choose to 'picture the universe.' However, these snapshots never change the space; they capture the unfolding of the universe at a particular moment (time). If I took a picture of the universe with an exposure rate faster than the speed of light, I would see nothing, since light would appear motionless. If my exposure time was infinite, I would see a big blur, which would include everything from the Big Bang to the end (we don't know yet what that means) of the universe.

As human beings, what we use to capture the moment is our memory, which is constructed of thoughts and perceptions. In fact, because information entered through our senses takes a bit of time to be processed, what we experience is actually ~80 milliseconds in the past. Because it takes eight minutes for light from the sun to reach the earth, when I experience a sunrise, I see the sun eight minutes after it has actually risen. The farther from earth we look 'out,' the farther back in time we observe, until we get to light that has taken ~13.8 billions years to catch our eye—the beginning of our observable universe. In the same spirit, if an alien being from another planet was looking at the earth this minute with a powerful telescope, they would see dinosaurs walking upon the earth (depending on how far away they are).

The entire past is here right in this moment. The future is also here, but we lack the ability to perceive it. The best we can do is form a memory of events, which creates a past and then we form predictions based upon our experience, which is what we call the future. In theory, if I could calculate the precise location and trajectory of every particle in the universe at this moment, I could predict what the future would be. In that sense the past, present, and future are all contained in every moment of time in the universe. This is why changing one thing, no matter how small, changes all things—everything is connected. This is illustrated beautifully in the concept of Indra's Net: every jewel (time) reflects the state of all other possible times, both forward and backward.

What I am explaining is conceptual, but how is it that we experience this moment in space-time? And why can't we experience the past or the future? What is Hakuin referring to in his statement, 'In coming and going we never leave home'?

Let's begin with our experience of the past. As I stated above, what we remember is not the past, but our memory of an event we experienced in the now. When we are in a life-or-death situation, our brains take many 'snapshots' of the moment and record them into memory. This increased number of recorded snapshots gives us the illusion of time slowing down. As children a typical day is filled with novel experiences; therefore, a childhood moment is experienced as richer and lasting longer because the activities of everyday life are not yet routine. As we age we start to form habits—we eat the same food, drive the same way to work, form prejudices and judgments of people, places, and things. None of this is inherently bad, especially insofar as it serves the positive function of allowing us to navigate more smoothly in the world. Still, our 'snapshots' are now sparser: been there, done that. As a result, when one is 80 years old, a year passes much faster than a year when one was three years old. At three, we learn (lay down memories in body and brain) at a phenomenal rate since we have to learn so much just to be able to walk. At 80, very few new skills and information are being acquired.

We filter the world through a lifetime of snapshots, and add what new skills and information we experience into our already full repertoire. The imagined future is also limited as

we age. What seemed magical and full of possibilities at the age of eight tends to seem pedestrian and even fearful at 80. We focus on what we 'know' instead of what is. If you want time to slow down, focus your attention on what is at hand. New cultural experiences force us to do this, but it is possible to see a soap bubble as you've never seen it before.

Now, on to Hakuin's statement. When I think of home, I think of a place of rest, a place of deep intimacy and familiarity, the place from which all coming and going begins and ends. But what really is this coming and going that Hakuin refers to? As I stated above, I would argue it is none other than the experience of time itself or, as Dogen states, 'being is time.' Many other spiritual teachers have likewise said, now is all there really is. I would say now is all that is ever experienced, now being a particular snapshot of space-time. From a physics perspective, how does this 'snapshot' arrive?

Let's say I need to make a decision about what type of coffee to get. Theoretically, if you disregard my conditioning, all the possible choices offered by the coffee shop are available to me. But in the end, I am only going to choose one type of coffee. When I finally choose Costa Rican, some physicists would call this a collapse of the wave function. To put it simply, the wave function is a term used in quantum mechanics that describes all the possible configurations a particle can inhabit, but when we make an observation, the waveform collapses and the particle exists only in one particular time and place.

Going back to the coffee analogy, when I make my choice, all other options disappear and only this moment in space-time is experienced—me drinking my cup of Costa Rican. However, just because this is the only moment that is experienced doesn't mean that this is the only possible moment.

From what we now know from modern physics, this may not be the entire story. In fact, perhaps it's not that the waveform collapses at all, but that it 'splits' into every possible choice that could be made—meaning the choice I made and all the choices I could have made exist at the same time, but in a different world or different multiverse. These other universes, if they exist at all, would be completely beyond my ability to experience directly, but are of interest in the sense that they point to just how limited our ability to understand the universe (multiverse) is. Of course, this is not what I experience as I traverse my day and decide on the dark versus light roast—I only experience one choice.

Yet, just because my experience is limited doesn't mean that it represents the way things are. I can't experience the billions of bacteria in my gut working symbiotically to benefit all of us, but that doesn't mean they aren't there. All too often, one doesn't actually experience this moment—one experiences one's *thoughts about* this moment. To truly experience this moment from no reference point—from home—one has to be still. This is one of the functions of zazen, to bring one to an experience of absolute stillness, where there is no movement. And without movement, there is no time. This silent, still knowing has no place left to stand and therefore it can finally lie down.

Paradoxically, the silent, still knowing is where all movement is experienced. It is the being-time that is the mountains, rocks, trees, rivers, and this human body. Yet at the same time, it is the centerless center, with no coming and no going. When one is fully Mu, even Mu disappears. As we chant in *Affirming Faith in Mind,* 'When rest and movement cease to be, then even oneness disappears.' From this perspective, things don't come and go; they simply change in the still space that is now. However, these are no longer two—the change is the stillness and the stillness is the change.

Witnessed from this empty place, a mountain changes very slowly in this space and takes millions and millions of years to be scattered about by the wind. A human is born and dies in this unmoving space and takes ~79 years (on average if you live in the US) to go about its myriad changes. And a drop of dew is gone before it is noon. This coming and going is time. Therefore, a mountain is time, a human is time, and a drop of dew is time. But the knower, that which

Amaury Cruz

experiences movement is timeless, that is, it does not move.

Just ask yourself if you have ever really experienced your awareness move? Not the thought of 'I,' but the direct experience of 'I.' Does that feeling come and go? In deep samadhi one can lose awareness of all things, including 'I am', and no matter how much time has passed, one can feel as if they just went to sleep and suddenly woke up. Yet, awareness is either there or it is not. It doesn't move, but is either present or absent as in the transition from wakefulness to deep sleep.

This silent, still continuity is why even though our body ages, our awareness feels the same now as it did when we were kids. Most likely, everyone has had a brief experience of this timeless presence that fills the ten directions. Shakyamuni Buddha refers to experiencing it under the rose-apple tree as a child watching the oxen plow the fields. I remember a particular day myself, at the beach when I was young. Time seemed to be non-existent, and I was in a state of vast openness to the wonder of the moment. It was if I was finally in a state of deep rest. I like to refer to it as royal ease, which is depicted in Guanyin's (Avalokiteshvara) royal-ease posture. In this posture there is no sense of the urgency of time. Everything is as it should be.

This is what the path of Zen offers us: a path that leads to a state of royal ease. And when one is in this state of ease is there any desire? Can one be at ease and full of desire (aversion being the counterpart of desire, but desire nonetheless)? Just try for a moment to be full of desire and at ease. When one is desireless everything is as it should be—perfect! So anytime we want things to be other than they are, we dig the hole of time.

One way I have found to investigate this experience is on the mat with pain. If I want the pain to go away, or the round to end 'sooner', I find myself feeling time stretch on endlessly as I long for the bell to be rung; however, when I investigate the pain, with no desire for it to

be other than it is, a sense of timeless ease can arise. I am no longer creating a mental map of movement from one place to the other. Things are just as they are, and wonder can replace fear.

As we practice, maybe we just get a glimpse of our true home, or maybe it is an unshakable foundation upon which we live our lives. Either way, it offers us human beings the possibility of freedom from identification with the cycle and arrow of time, in other words suffering. From this space, everything changes of its own accord, and we have the opportunity to witness the entire beautiful spectacle of coming and going from a place that has neither beginning nor end, no coming or going, no here or there. Yet at the same time, we are not separate from the stillness that is in constant movement.

So, after all this, do I have a better understanding of time? Not in the least; however, perhaps I will come back a little more often to investigate that which moves and that which is still and find that the wind is always still and, as Dogen would say, 'Green mountains are always walking.'

Rick Smith is the group leader of the Madison Zen Center. He currently works as a research specialist at the Center for Sleep and Consciousness at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

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Out of Time

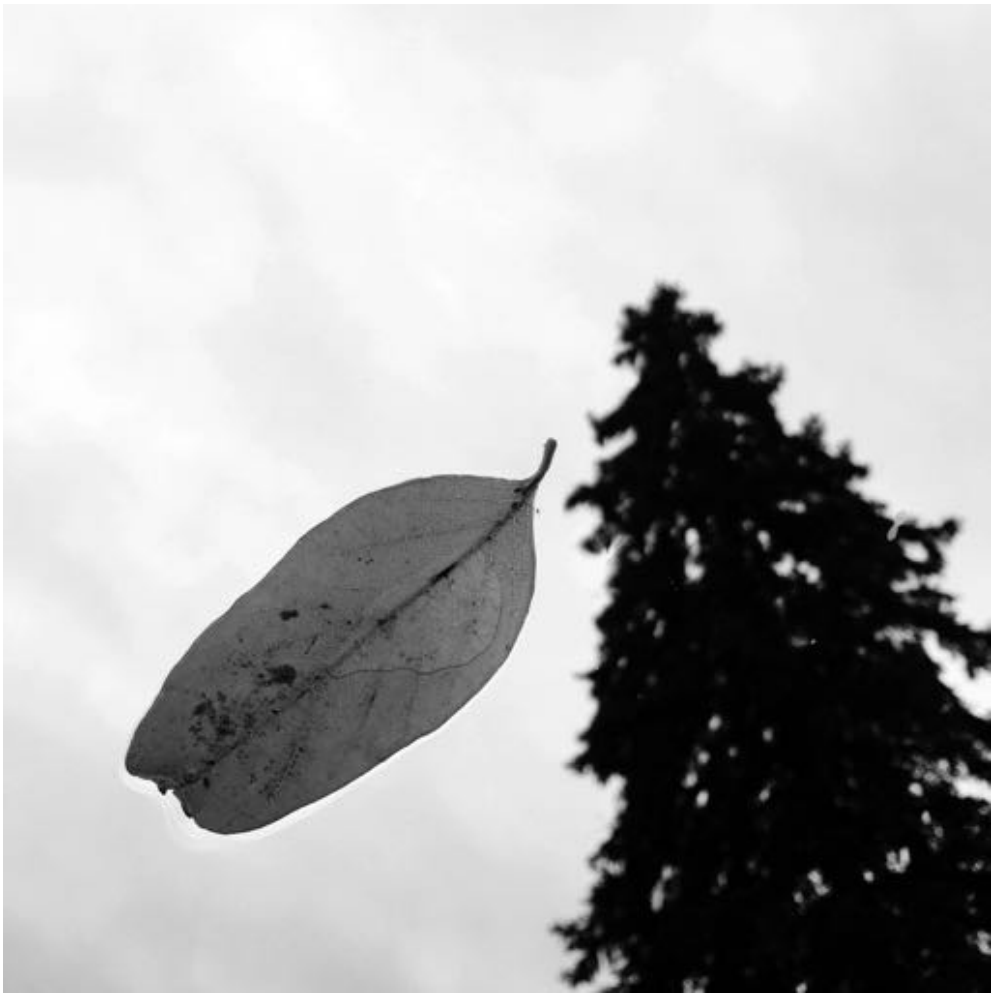
RICK STIRR

In sesshin recently, a memory of an incident came to mind from a time when I was an Air Force instructor pilot. At the time we were training advanced student pilots in a very fast and highly maneuverable airplane called the T-38. It was fully aerobatic, with short, stubby wings and powerful, responsive engines with afterburners. In the journal I kept in those days there is a passage that reads: 'Speed is only time gone by so fast we feel it live within us.'

The incident occurred after flying a low level route at 400 knots a few hundred feet above the ground through west Texas. On our return to base everything was normal. It was a nice, blue-sky day. Final airspeed was about 160 knots. As we approached touchdown, the student pulled the throttles to idle and began to flare. Then, in an instant, the aircraft rolled 90 degrees to the left like a leaf being blown in the wind.

We were about 15 feet off the ground. I took the controls from the student, pushed the throttles to max, came in with full right rudder, and hoped the burners would light. The ailerons were ineffective. We were out of the envelope for a successful ejection. I didn't know why this was happening.

I can describe what happened next only because it's the one way we could have survived. My real memory is only of being aware that I was still alive and that we still had a chance. I



David Merulla

had never planned on how to survive this particular situation, never practiced anything like it. I had never dreamed I would have to know how to escape this. I had no idea. Time ceased to pass.

We hung on the rudder and vertical stabilizer, barely flying, still 90 degrees to the ground for maybe 70 yards. When the burners lit, the airspeed increased enough for me to let up on the rudder and slowly roll the plane upright. The ailerons came back to life. The aircraft wanted to fly, so when the wings were level we raised the landing gear and went around for another approach.

During the debriefing, we pieced together a narrative of what must have caused the aircraft to roll so violently. A much larger aircraft had landed on a parallel runway a couple minutes prior to our approach. The wingtip vortices from that airplane must have drifted unseen and settled over our runway. We had, in effect, landed into a horizontal tornado whose diameter had exceeded the span of our short, stubby wings and rendered normal aircraft control ineffective. We really had become that leaf in the wind.

That was a long time ago.

It's spring. Mallards are landing with a splash in the pond next to my house. Drakes chase the hens. I'm munching on toast and drinking tea.

Rick Stirr is a member of the Madison Zen Center.

Gordon Nelson

What the Waiting Was For

RICHARD WEHRMAN

How it is

This is how it is:
everything, right now.

And after that,
everything,
everywhere you look.

And then you leave,
you travel far way,
and there it is:

everything, everywhere.

Wonder

Time stretches out,
the three-sixty,
the no-edged wonder,
the rushing away
and the compacted closeness,
empty like space,
every point now,
fruit plucked from the
velvet sky,
every moment from
birth to death,
shining like a jewel.

It is Time

Sometimes it takes a long time
for the quietness to come in,
an hour or a day, a week or a year.
The oaken door opens slowly,
and within the wine has sweetened,
old bottles of rich darkness,
their glint a deep red,
their savor their softness,
not their bite but their blessing,
which thanks you for waiting,
for abandoning the rush, the speed,
the accelerated whirling,
to give time to boulders,
to mountain walls,
to your own waiting for ripening,
that says now is the time,
now is what the waiting was for.

Tom Kowal

Cleaning the Driveway in Spring

Master of the house—
do you feel betrayed?
Did you think our
agreement was one
of eternity?
That I would lie here forever,
smooth and unchanged,
baking in summer sun,
freezing in winter ice—
that my cracks would never show?
Am I better than you,
that fire and ice
would not break me apart,
as age has eroded
your youth?
Now I am returning to
my old ways—gravel, sand, and mud,
and the relief of returning
to formlessness.
May you be blessed
as well to fall apart completely,
to be released
from holding together
every single thing.

Richard Wehrman studied with Roshi Kapleau and Toni Packer in the seventies and early eighties. Thesee poems are part of his recent collection titled Talking to the Wind, *published by Merlinwood Books, 2016.*

Kathy Petitte Novak

Finding a Way to Sit Every Day

ROSHI BODHIN KJOLHEDE

Most people are used by the twenty-four hours, whereas I use the twenty-four hours.

—Zen master Zhaozhou (Joshu)

Editor's Note: The following essay is an edited transcription of a teisho delivered on April 3, 2016, during a 7-day sesshin at Chapin Mill Retreat Center.

This is our second teisho that is being live-streamed. So hello to all of you out there who are hearing this live. We've also begun live-streaming the sittings here, and have received enthusiastic feedback from those who've plugged into them while sitting at home. This has turned my mind to the all-important matter of daily sitting, and its central role in Zen practice.

In Rochester we've always promoted sesshin attendance, and for good reason—it offers true growth spurts in our practice. Yasutani Roshi used to say that you can achieve in a strong 7-day sesshin what it would take you three years to achieve sitting on your own. Still, if you had to give up one or the other—either sesshin attendance or daily sitting—it would be better to go without sesshin. Daily sitting is the meat and potatoes of Zen practice. You just *have to sit every day* (or almost every day) in order for Zen to really work for you. Over the years I've gradually learned that a lot of our members—even people who seriously support the Center in other ways—don't manage to sit regularly. It's what people seem to struggle with the most. I think most people *know* how important it is, but their resistance to it proves too strong. So I'm going to explore what you might do to become more consistent in your sitting at home.

People have often commented, 'Boy, you people on staff have so much self-discipline.' No!

On staff our self-discipline isn't tested, because we *have to* attend sittings. We have no choice. It's home practice that is the real battlefield. That's where sitting has to compete with work pressures, family life, and an historically unprecedented challenge—the lure of smart phones and social media, TV, and radio. So how can those of you sitting at home get your batting average up and find a way to make room in your daily schedule for what the psychoanalyst Eric Fromm called the 'highest form of activity'?

You'll have better luck sitting every day if you try to do so at a regular time. People who have flexible schedules can vary the times when they sit, but they may then find themselves missing more days. If your aim is to go for once a day, then there's much to recommend for mornings. It seems that for most people, the later you go into the day without sitting, the less likely you'll get yourself to stop and do it. There will always be *something more to do*. Once the engine of the mind gets revved up, it's hard to downshift.

Best of all is to sit *first thing* in the morning. As soon as you've rolled out of bed and done your bathroom routine, sit down and cross your legs. Don't allow yourself to check your smart phone or computer, don't flick on the radio or TV for the news, don't engage with your playlist. If you do, you're likely to get drawn into these diversions and stuck in them. To postpone involvement in these things for just an hour, or even less, doesn't take a tremendous amount of self-discipline in the morning—certainly less than it will later in the day, when, according to research, our tank of willpower will have been somewhat drained.

In the morning, if you've had a decent night's sleep, you'll wake up feeling relatively refreshed. You may still have some morning fogginess, and dream residues, but then sitting will blow that stuff out of the mind and leave you more fully awake. Moreover, if you get up early enough (which means getting to bed early enough!), you won't have to worry about your zazen competing with the needs of your partner or children.

Another advantage of early-morning sitting is that you'll be doing it on an empty stomach. Some people may need to have a bite before sitting, but no matter when you sit, it's advisable not to have much to eat before doing so; your sitting will be clearer and less susceptible to drowsiness. That's the danger of sitting after dinner, and why sitting before dinner is likely to be of better quality than afterward.

At its best, sitting has a paradoxical effect: when you uncross your legs and stand up, you feel grounded and at the same time energized. What a way to launch the day and move through its challenges—the meetings, interpersonal frictions, handling of children, and deadlines. What an advantage to be able to meet these inevitable stressors with greater calm and resilience!

If your schedule permits, you can synchronize your sitting with the formal sittings at the Zen Center, and via live-streaming tap into the collective effort of those of us sitting in the zendos at Arnold Park and Chapin Mill. It really is hard to sit every day on one's own, and those who've been plugging into sittings at the Center have reported that doing so helps them stay on track. It mitigates the feeling of being isolated in one's sitting.

When I got my start in Zen, decades ago, in Ann Arbor, Michigan, I had a local affiliate group to sit with once or twice a week, but otherwise was on my own. For connection to Rochester I had to rely on *Zen Bow,* and I could hardly wait for it to land in my mailbox. If there had been live-streaming of sittings and teishos back then, I know I would have been all over it. So take advantage of this technology—we'd love to have you join us ('us' meaning not just the resident staff and others in the Sangha who come in, but also others beside yourself who are live-streaming the sitting). Morning sittings start at 5:45 and evening sittings at 7:00.

Really, whenever you can carve out time for sitting is great—morning, afternoon, or night. Some practitioners find over time that they're more likely to sit once their day is behind them, and that it will be of better quality then than in the morning. With evening sitting there are two bonuses: first, if you sit right before going to bed, you're likely to find that you sleep more

soundly. Why? Because most insomnia, they say, comes from an overactive mind, and sitting settles the mind. Also, after sitting at night the energizing effect of it somehow carries through the night and enables us to wake up more easily. Instead of languishing in bed unnecessarily, we're more likely to get our feet on the floor and then … make our way straight to the mat. Or, if sitting isn't in the cards that morning, we'll be able to launch the day with greater energy than if we'd not sat the previous night. Best of all, then, is to sit first thing in the morning *and* last thing at night!

> What is there outside us,
> what is there we lack?
> Nirvana is openly shown
> to our eyes.
>
> This earth where we stand
> is the pure lotus land,
> and this very body—the
> body of Buddha.
>
> *—Master Hakuin's Chant in Praise of Zazen*

Even sitting every day, though, offers no guarantee of coming to awakening in this life. That point is dramatized in a koan in the *Mumonkan*, number nine, called 'Daitsu Chisho Buddha,' which is based on a metaphorical passage in the *Lotus Sutra*. Here is the case (paraphrased a bit):

> Once a monk asked Master Seijo, 'Daitsu Chisho Buddha, the Buddha of Supremely Pervading, Surpassing Wisdom, did zazen on the Bodhi seat for ten kalpas, but could neither manifest the Dharma nor attain buddhahood. Why was this?' The master said, 'Your question is exactly to the point.' The monk persisted: 'Why did he not attain buddhahood?' The master replied, 'Because he didn't attain buddhahood.'

A kalpa is an Indian Buddhist measurement of vast time that basically can be described as an incalculable eon.

Every koan has a contradictory element to it, and in this one the contradiction is that if he's already a buddha, what does it mean to say that he didn't attain buddhahood?

Clearly, this monk was troubled by what he saw as a failure on Daitsu Chisho Buddha's part. We might guess that this monk had been doing years of sitting himself, and then one day, to take a break, he went to the monastery library and was thumbing through this sutra, maybe hoping that in it he would find the turning word that would bring him to enlightenment. If in his sitting he'd been grasping for enlightenment, imagine his reaction upon reading of this Daitsu Chisho Buddha—'For God's sake! This guy was sitting for a jillion years and still didn't attain buddhahood?!' And then maybe, with his back now slumped, 'What hope is there for me?'

But now, what was the nature of this monk's motivation? Was it to understand his Self Nature, or was it to get something for himself?

Beginners to Zen often ask, 'How long will it take me to come to enlightenment?' The question reveals a transactional orientation to practice—How much time will I need to spend in order to get the return on my investment that I want? Yet it is that very self-concern that is an impediment to awakening. And it is that attachment to time that stands in the way of our experiencing the Eternal.

So motivation, or intention, is a significant factor in our practice. Ideally, in a perfect world, we'd all be sitting purely for the sake of sitting, with no goal in mind. But how many of us can *just sit?* Not Philip Kapleau, when he started his practice. Years later he said, 'When I went to Japan I just wanted to grab kensho and run.' Even if one's goal is something more modest than awakening, like calmness or greater concentration, as long as we have some future prize in the back of our mind—much less at the front of our mind—our sitting will be tainted.

I can hear it now: 'Wait—so it's not enough for me sit every day, but I also have to be doing it without any concern about results?' Well, that would be ideally effective, as shown in studies on motivation such as one that appeared in

the *New York Times* in July of 2014: 'The Secret of Effective Motivation' by Amy Wrzesniewski and Barry Schwartz; she is an Associate Professor of Organizational Behavior at Yale and he is a Professor of Psychology at Swarthmore. The research reported on in the article distinguishes between doing something as a means to an end—what they call instrumental motivation—and doing something for its own sake—internal motive. Some segments of this article bear directly on Zen practice, so I'll read them now:

> There are two kinds of motive for engaging in any activity: internal and instrumental. If a scientist conducts research because she wants to discover certain facts about the world, that's an internal motive, since discovering facts is inherently related to the activity of research.

I've used this analogy when advising people on working on a koan. You want to bring to the work on the koan what a scientist who is doing pure research does—just *wondering, looking directly*. You're just trying to *understand* how that aspect of, say, physics or medicine, works. In the case of a koan, it means understanding what the koan is pointing to, what it's all about. With the koan Mu, probably the most common of initial koans, it's just wanting to know what Mu is. Not 'in order to' anything else, but to understand it in its essence. That's the key.

They resume:

> If she conducts the research because she wants to achieve scholarly renown, that's an instrumental motive, since the relation between fame and research is not so inherent. Often people have both internal and instrumental motives for doing what they do.

In the case of working on a koan—or on any practice in Zen—the instrumental, or less pure, motive is to get something for yourself—get awakening, get enlightened. And then the koan becomes just a means to that end, rather than something you're investigating in order to understand it. You're kind of looking past the koan, or the breath, toward the reward it might bring you. That just subverts your efforts; you're not purely probing the koan for its own sake. And that's what the research described in the article confirms. What they found is that the most effective motivation is internal, or intrinsic—doing something for its own sake. But what's significant about this research is that employing the two motives together—both internal and instrumental—is less effective than just the internal motive. So the instrumental motive undermines one's efforts, even if it's mixed with internal motivation. They analyzed data drawn from 11,000 cadets at West Point, and they rated how much each set of motives influenced their decision to attend the academy. The motives included such things as the desire to get a good job later in life—an instrumental motive—and the desire to be trained as a leader in the United States Army, which they considered an internal motive. How did the cadets fare years later? Not surprisingly, they found that the stronger their internal reasons were to attend West Point, the more likely they were to graduate and become commissioned officers. Furthermore, cadets with internal motives did better in the military than did those without internal motives, unless—and this is the surprising part—they also had strong instrumental motives.

The researchers continue, 'Whenever a person performs a task well, there are typically both internal and instrumental consequences.' They give other examples: A conscientious student learns—that's the internal—*and* gets good grades (instrumental). A skilled doctor cures patients (that's the internal) *and* makes a good living (instrumental). But just because activities can have both internal and instrumental consequences does not mean that the people who thrive in these activities have both types of motives. They then apply this to education:

> There is a temptation among educators and instructors to use whatever motivational tools are available to recruit participants or improve performance. If the desire for military excellence and service to the country fails to attract all the recruits that the Army

needs, then perhaps appeals to money-for-college, career training or seeing the world will do the job. While this strategy may lure more recruits, it may also yield worse soldiers. Similarly, for students uninterested in learning, financial incentives for good attendance or pizza parties for high performance may prompt them to participate, but it may result in less well-educated students.

'Mindfulness' has grown into a major buzzword these days, and it's not surprising why. The research on mindfulness meditation is piling up evidence that shows the many benefits from doing it—lower blood pressure, sharper attention, improved sleep, higher earnings …. This research is on mindfulness meditation without religious content, presumably to enable the studies to get funding; let's call it secular mindfulness, as distinguished from Buddhist meditation. The latter, at its purest, calls for a different orientation: practicing in order to benefit others. We're reminded of this expanded motivation whenever we recite the Four Bodhisatta Vows, which begin, 'All beings, without number, I vow to liberate.' Of course, anyone would want the psychological and physiological benefits of meditation, but those fruits don't approach the promise of the Mahayana. Besides, if our aspiration goes beyond self-interest, we will still reap the rewards of self-improvement.

It's hard to imagine that the monk asking about Daitsu Chisho Buddha was looking beyond his own attainment. As a result, he was limited by his ambition, tethered to time as something that comes and goes.

We Americans are notorious for our impatience. Asian teachers have said that it is one of our biggest obstacles to going the distance in practice. We're always looking for the quick fix. Of course, anyone would want liberation sooner rather than later, but when that natural wish becomes an *attachment*—a grasping at speedy results—it flips into a hindrance. This monk, too, as he was reading the passage in the *Lotus Sutra*, suddenly saw the work before him framed not in years, but kalpas. His dismay tells us that he'd been sitting in order to reach a goal that now appeared all but unreachable to him.

In Zen practice we never want to lose sight of the big picture. This can mean full enlightenment—'The great way of Buddha, I vow to attain'—but that itself implies taking the long view. Here is where a belief in rebirth can prove useful. In Zen, there is no *need* to believe in rebirth; Zen practice is just that—a practice, and not a belief system. Still, by expanding our sense of who we are and our place in time, we can find ourselves unbound by time. We effectively unplug the clock, and get free of obstructive impatience.

It's a fine line we need to walk with respect to time. We could misuse the doctrine of rebirth to slip into complacency—'Hey, I've got eons of future opportunities to practice, so what's the rush?' The mistake in that is that we don't really know when we'll be reborn again into a life in which we'll encounter the Dharma. Chances are we'll be born as human beings countless times more, but in any given lifetime most human beings don't find the Path of Dharma. So it was that Japanese Zen master Dogen urged his monks to 'practice with the same urgency as someone with his hair on fire.'

Urgency, however, is different from impatience. The former is fueled by an awareness of the way things are, as we're reminded in the lines inscribed on the wooden block outside the zendo:

> Great is the matter of birth and death
> Life slips quickly by
> Time waits for no one
> Wake up, wake up
> Don't waste a moment!

Impatience, on the other hand, connotes a restless eagerness to get somewhere. It's a hankering which always arises from a goal hanging in the mind. This can spur us to exert ourselves

Tom Kowal

for a period of time, just as the mechanical rabbit in a dog race can entice the dogs to tear around the track. But to reach the depths of understanding requires that we let go of thoughts of attainment and end points. How do we reach a state of such mental purity? Through complete absorption in our practice—the koan or the breath or, while active, whatever we are doing. In this realm of no-thought there is no time, since what we call 'time' exists only in terms of thought. In one of the verses in the *Mumonkan,* Zen master Mumon points to this experience:

> This one instant, as it is, is an infinite number of kalpas.
>
> An infinite number of kalpas is at the same time this one instant.

Although it is an important part of practice to notice when we're caught in thoughts of goal seeking, so that we can return to the koan or breath, we can't wait until our motivation is pure to practice; how many of us, especially early in our practice, can sit without expectations? What gets all of us to the mat is some mix of internal and instrumental motive, and we need to sit right there in that soup of self-interest and pure aspiration.

Our success at sitting every day comes down to a matter of need. Roshi Kapleau used to muse that everyone needs to sit—who wouldn't benefit from meditation?—but for most people it's not a *felt* need. In that sense it's like yoga or fitness training or other activities requiring self-discipline. If you feel the need to do it, you will, and if you don't, you won't.

With so many things competing for our time every day, we should accept that our impulse to sit will often come with some measure of resistance. We turn a decisive corner once we've learned that the quality of our experience on any given day will suffer when we skip it. That diminished experience may be one of energy ('I tire more easily' or 'I have less zest for things') or mood ('I more easily feel down' or 'I'm more irritable') or something more vague—'I just don't feel at my best' or 'Everything seems more complicated.' Once having learned that we're likely to feel compromised by not sitting, we come to understand that sitting is not just one of many activities, but the very basis of all activity.

When the world-renowned Polish pianist Ignacy Jan Paderewski was asked how often he practiced, he replied, 'Every day.' When the interviewer showed surprise that a master pianist like him would still hold to daily practice, Paderewski explained, 'I've learned that when I miss a day, I notice it. When I miss two days, the critics notice it. When I miss three days, everyone notices it.'

Let's acknowledge that the practice of Zen involves far more than sitting. The work of non-attachment to thought is to be done in all our activities, and in principle Zen practice while shoveling snow or tapping at a keyboard or dancing has just as much value as Zen sitting. But if you're not sitting regularly, you won't have much success keeping your mind free of thought while in activity. Those who imagine that they can carry on with their practice off the mat just fine without sitting are deceiving themselves. They're unaware of the thought activity that grinds on outside sitting.

If you've tried and tried to maintain a daily sitting practice but without success, what's left to do? Maybe nothing, for now. It would seem that your affinity for Zen as a steadfast practice has not ripened yet. It may take further suffering before you feel the need to sit regularly. Until then, stay in the game by sitting as often as you can, and that will enable you to move ahead when causes and conditions change.

Danne Eriksson

The Zen of Zumba

SUSAN RAKOW

Welcome to Zumba at Angie's Fit-Natics. The studio couldn't be more different than the zendo. Mirrored walls are constant reminders of how I look. Other walls are bright purple. The room is often crowded with rows of women (rarely men) in neon colors and brightly patterned spandex, t-shirts, and sneakers. T-shirts proclaim 'I'm Hot,' 'Woman of Faith,' and 'Too sexy for you.' At the front of the class is a teacher who models the moves and gives instructions, usually by hand signal, so we can follow her steps. Huge speakers push the pound-ingly loud Latin and Hip Hop rhythms into every corner of the room, rattling bones and organs at a potentially deafening decibel level. A zendo nonetheless.

The first song is always a warm-up and then the pace picks up until the cool-down an hour later. In between? Well, there's the Dharma in action. The minute I look in the mirror and start to worry about the width of my thighs, I lose the steps. If I compare myself to the twenty-somethings and feel old … or the seventy-somethings and feel young, I lose the steps. If I judge that I'm doing really well, better than that woman over there, I falter. If I decide I'm really not following and this series is too hard, I lose the steps or slide in the wrong direction. If I judge the teacher—too fast, too slow, too soft, too loud—I lose the steps. But mostly what I lose, when I go from just dancing to thinking about dancing, is the joy. The sheer pleasure

of letting myself join with the music and the movement, the flow of it all, the laughter at a song lyric that definitely does not pertain to me, clapping to the beat in unison with others, the elegance of the grapevine or mambo, the turn and dip, the Bollywood hand movements, the feel of muscles warming and stretching, and the sweet replenishing drinks of water. The teacher reminds us to modify moves for ourselves, just as Roshi reminds me that everyone has to find her own way to mu.

Why do I feel 'virtuous' when I leave? Not just because I'm following doctor's orders to get more exercise or because I know I need to keep my body flexible for zazen, or because it's the only time I ever really sweat. Monks sitting on top of a mountain may not need to take dance breaks! But my life has never been lived in solitude. I have a husband, a career, grandchildren, a house as well as a committed Zen practice. The lessons I learn from zumba are essentially the same lessons I try to integrate throughout my daily life when I bring single-minded attention to whatever task is before me. So this IS my practice, learning to pay attention in the studio with all its distractions and delusions just as surely as on the mat.

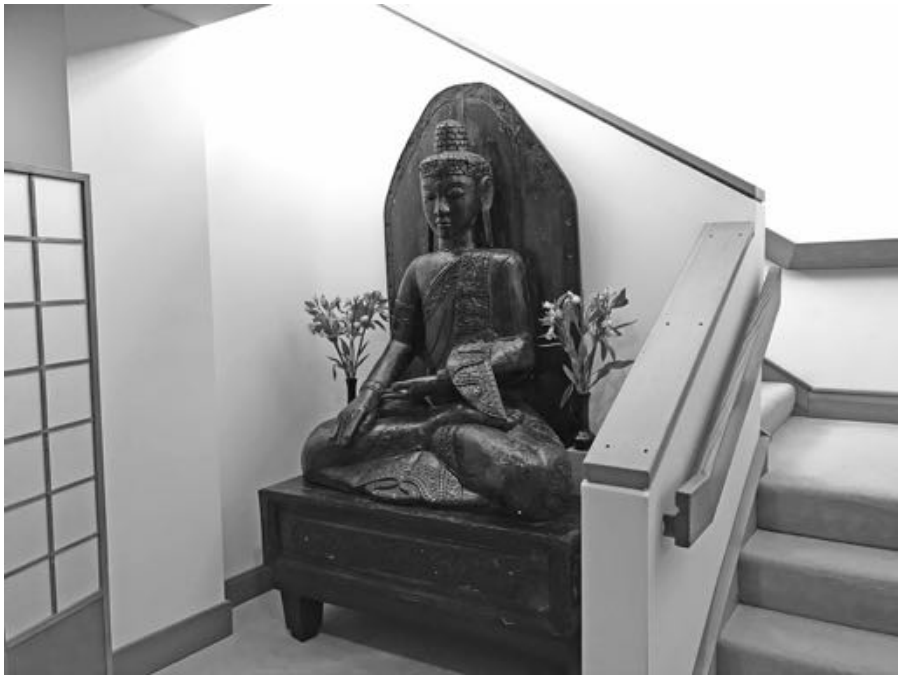
Susan Rakow has been a member of the Zen Center since the late 1960s. She is a lay member of the Three Jewels Order and serves as group leader for the Cleveland Zazen Group.

NOON

The hot sun pressing down the waxy grass
Like a flatiron.
The creek gurgles with promised relief,
But keeps to its path.
Dry leaves have no strength to rustle
In the still air.
A lizard lies motionless in the undergrowth.
Life takes a momentary pause between
The inhalation and exhalation.
It is noon.
Who can say more?
Or less?

—DAVID SAINE

From Indra's Net



Maha-Buddha Finds New Home

In mid-December of 2016, a delivery truck pulled up to 7 Arnold Park and unloaded a life-size wooden Buddha figure that was donated to the Center from an estate sale. Little information on its provenance was available other than that it was imported from India and belonged to Breathe Yoga, a local yoga center, before being purchased by the donor, Ryan Swain. The Buddha was placed in the link where it presided over our New Year's festivities.

Two members with knowledge of Buddhist art have weighed in on its possible history. One thinks it is Burmese from the late 1800s. The other agrees with southeast Asian but added, 'As for age … looks more 'decorative' to me … nice way of saying a modern piece made for the interior designers' market.' No matter what its age, the Buddha's face and presence are riveting.

Ultimately Roshi decided that the size of the Buddha made it ideal for a location at Chapin Mill … but where? The exercise room was discussed as an obvious possibility, but when the figure arrived a new space emerged: a previously ignored niche under the front stairs that was precisely the right size for this figure. It was installed in its new home in time for the Rohatsu sesshin.

New Community Engagement Initiatives

Last year, the local chapter of a national recovery group, Refuge Recovery, began meeting weekly in Roshi's quarters. Refuge Recovery is a mindfulness-based addiction recovery community that uses Buddhist philosophy as its foundation; it is especially helpful for people who are not comfortable with the concept of a 'Higher Power.' A mix of members and non-members, the group has grown to the point where more than 20 people have been contorting to fit themselves into a lovely but small space. And the library was out of the question as a location since the group meets on Wednesdays, the staff's night off.

Concurrently, two Zen Center members have been meeting with a medical director of the local Blue Cross Blue Shield plan to develop a community program of meditation for people with chronic pain. Both the aging population and the opioid crisis point to the need for more alternatives for sufferers of chronic pain, and the leaders of this initiative are certain that it will fill an unmet need in the Rochester community.

Armed with a Health Foundation grant for community initiatives, both groups are now repurposing the women's dorm in back of 7 AP into a community room. (Older members may remember that a similar refurbishment was done decades ago in the hopes that the space would be used for Sangha events; at that time the French doors leading to the side yard were installed.) The space will be carpeted and chairs suitable for meditation have been purchased.

The space has several advantages over either Roshi's quarters or the library. It is easily accessible, with just one small step that would have to be ramped to accommodate a wheelchair. Non-members can walk through the garden and enter the space without having to enter the main buildings. And the space can remain a full-time community room as long as staff members can be accommodated elsewhere.

30 Years of Selling Water by the Riverside

On the Sunday before Thanksgiving, after the Ceremony of Gratitude, members presented Roshi with a new kesa, the hand-sewn vestment that is worn for special occasions. Although his actual 30-year anniversary was on June 15, 2016, the later date for the presentation was chosen so as not to conflict with the myriad activities leading up to the 50th anniversary celebration. Additionally, Roshi has said many times that Thanksgiving, with its emphasis on gratitude, is his favorite holiday ... hence the perfect time to express gratitude to our favorite teacher.

… and 90 Years of Living!

Audrey Fernandez, member of the original Vedanta meditation group that invited Philip Kapleau to Rochester and a charter member of the Center, celebrated her 90th birthday in December. The occasion was marked by a special luncheon in her honor.

Our Next Building Project (Don't panic; it's small)

In October, the trustees moved to begin the design process for a new building at Chapin Mill. Planning is now underway for a small, 1200-square-foot building that will be sited just beyond the existing farmhouse. The building is needed so that Tom and Donna Kowal can take up residence at Chapin Mill. Plans are for Tom, an RZC staff member, to eventually take over the caretaker's position from Wayman Kubicka, and for Donna to help Eryl with rentals. The Kubickas have lifetime rights to the farmhouse, Andris Chapin has lifetime rights to the third floor of the Mill House, the main floor of the Mill House is used as a zendo during rental periods, the Guest House is very small, and the Retreat Center is rented a good portion of the year. For all those reasons, the trustees felt an additional building was justified, not just for immediate but for future needs. Because the new building will be fully accessible and adaptable as time goes by and our needs change, it can be used for multiple functions.

Set into the garden slope, the building will have a walk-out lower level and will take advantage of reclaimed timber, insulated sheathing scavenged from commercial building deconstruction, and leftover materials from building the Chapin Mill Retreat Center. After the foundation is installed, the construction will be almost entirely a DIY project this summer.

Careful readers of the trustees' minutes may know that this project has been named Klava House in honor of Laimons Klava, Ralph Chapin's long-time property manager and the Center's continuing resource for Chapin Mill knowledge. Laimons heard about the project and, completely unsolicited, made a major donation for it. We look forward to putting his name on the door!

As soon as completed plans for Klava House are ready for prime time, they will be shared with the Sangha. In the meantime, if you have any materials left over from a building project—anything from shingles to lengths of plumbing pipe—please contact Tom Kowal at the Center: tmkowal75@gmail.com.

Countless Good Deeds.

If you're thinking about financial planning, estate planning, or both, please remember that there are myriad ways you can help the Rochester Zen Center through planned giving. The right kind of plan can help you reduce your taxes significantly while providing for a larger, longer-lasting gift to the Zen Center. Because there is a wide array of bequests, annuities, trusts, and other financial vehicles to consider, you'll want to work with your financial advisor to decide what's best for you. Long-time Zen Center member David Kernan, an attorney who concentrates his practice in tax law, has generously offered to help point you in the right direction at no charge. For more information about planned giving and David's offer, please contact the Center's receptionist.

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Zen Bow

NEXT ISSUE

50 Years of Dreaming

Rochester Zen Center anniversary edition

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Working with Pain

The issue that will appear after the anniversary edition will focus on physical pain and Zen practice. Physical pain is a mainstay in our lives; it is unavoidable in that sooner or later, whether temporary or chronic, we find ourselves in pain. For some, the pain of sitting in a meditation posture itself is a major obstacle to deepening practice. The editors invite submissions of essays and photographs on the topic of working with physical pain. Send your submission to the editors, Donna Kowal and Brenda Reeb, at zenbow@rzc.org.

Submission deadline: March 24, 2017.

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