

# ZEN GONGI

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*“You have asked permission to practice Zen meditation in this temple, but tell me: What is Zen?”*

*After some hesitation and embarrassed smiling, I said something about Zen’s being a way of life rather than a set of dogmas. Laughter filled the tatami-matted reception room.*

*“Everyone comes here to study Zen, but none of them knows what Zen is. Zen is... knowing thyself. You are a Western philosopher and you know of Socrate’s quest. Did you assume Zen would be something different?”*

T.P.KASULIS.  
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## **Zen Gong**

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# The Medicine of Emptiness

The world that upholds them, and the worlds of all the living beings of the ten directions, are all rooted in emptiness, and emptiness is rooted in mind. Therefore the sūtra says: "Emptiness is born within great enlightenment like a bubble produced in the ocean. The defiled dusty sensory realms are all things born based on emptiness."

It's just that living beings are stuck fast to their sensory habits, which have accumulated over a long time and solidified: in the end they are not easily broken. Thus the buddhas and bodhisattvas first use the medicine of emptiness to cure them of their strongly held to illness.

Wordly people, not knowing the intent of the buddhas and bodhisattvas, see them frequently talking about emptiness in the scriptures and commentaries, and so conclude that the buddhas take emptiness as the Path. They label Buddhism "the school of emptiness". Little do they realize that when the illness of the living beings has been cured, the buddhas' and bodhisattvas' medicine of emptiness has nothing to be applied to. With no application for the medicine of emptiness, they then use the medicine of subtle wonder to cure the illness of emptiness. Living beings are stuck to sensory habits, and the cure depends on the medicine of emptiness. Nevertheless, once the illness of emptiness arises, without the buddhas' and bodhisattvas' medicine of subtle wonder, the damage wrought by the illness of emptiness would not be slight. So how could those who think that Buddhism is the school of emptiness really know the intent of the Buddhas?

Some people take the words of the Sixth Patriarch of Zen - "Originally there is not anything, so where could dust be stirred up" - and make the unwarranted judgement in their minds that "if for me originally there is not anything, what sensory dusts are there that can stain me?" Please investigate this for yourself. Given that "for me originally there is not anything," what is it when people salute me and I feel happy, or when people strike me and I get angry? What things are the joy and anger that appear before me? If you cannot directly break through things like this, then the inner blockage will remain forever. Can you dare assume that the "originally there isn't anything" of the one who makes unwarranted judgments is the same as the "originally there isn't anything" of the Sixth Patriarch?

Buddhas and bodhisattvas expound the teaching like good doctors using medicine, like good generals using their forces. How could there be any unvarying method for using medicine or military force? They just investigate the true situation of the sick person or the adversary. If they find out the true situation the sick person or adversary is in, their

application of medicine or military force will (effortlessly follow the inner pattern) like Ding the Cook carving the ox. The worldly ones who think Buddhism is the school of emptiness and steal the Sixth Patriarch's "originally there isn't anything" for their own in effect have their knives broken and leave the ox uncarved.

The buddhas and bodhisattvas realize that for living beings emptiness exists because they are deluded about Mind, that body and mind exists because they are deluded about emptiness, and that the sense objects before them exist because they are deluded about body and mind. Sense objects are the things of the world; body and mind are what belong to sentient beings. Nevertheless, apart from emptiness, the world and sentient beings have no basis. Apart from the Mind of enlightenment, emptiness has no basis. Therefore the buddhas and bodhisattvas teach living beings to begin by understanding emptiness and end by awakening to Mind. When they awaken to Mind, emptiness, the world, and living beings are all unattainable. What is called the mind of great enlightenment is like this: when the floating clouds have completely dispersed, before you raise your eyes the bright moon is already in front of you. The "floating clouds" represent emptiness and existence; the "bright moon" represents the eternal light you inherently possess.

Someone came forward and said: "From sense objects one reaches sense organs; from body and mind one reaches emptiness; from emptiness one reaches Mind. Please show me, Teacher, where Mind is right now?" Zhenke laughed and said, "If you have no mind, what is posing this question?" The one who had come forward was at loss for what to do. Zhenke said: "Using mind to ask about mind, indicating mind without knowing mind: is this your error or mine?" He said, "It's my error." Zhenke said, "If you actually realize your own error, then you will manage not to forget it whether you're walking or sitting or hungry or cold, whether circumstances are favorable or adverse or right or wrong. Then, "Emptiness is born within great enlightenment like a bubble produced in the ocean. The defiled dusty sensory realms are all things born based on emptiness." Someday you will know for yourself: not only are living beings, lands, and emptiness all in your mind, but even the mind of great enlightenment is unattainable apart from your mind." The one who had approached bowed his head and withdrew.

Zibo Zhenke, 1543-1604 \*

(Zibo: *The Last Great Zen Master of China*. AHP Paperbacks. Berkeley, California, 1989. )

# An Interview with Albert Low

*This year marks the 15th anniversary of the Montreal Zen Center's move to its current location on Park Stanley. The editors of Zen Gong asked teacher and director Albert Low to reflect on how the Center has evolved during that time.*

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Q. Can you tell us the circumstances that made you decide to come here and to settle here?

A. Jean and I came here in 1979 but it was in late 1977 that I first came on a visit with Roshi Kapleau. He was to lead a weekend workshop and asked me to come with him. I think even at the time he had the idea that he'd like us to come here. I was very impressed with Montreal and had the feeling, and still have it, that Montreal has a very special quality about it. I think it is something spiritual, although of course one picks up on the bicultural quality as well. But my feeling is that it is deeper than that and quite possibly due to Frere André's influence. In spite of what was done architecturally to the Oratoire, particularly its interior, nevertheless it has a very strong presence. Obviously there's a very strong Catholic influence here which is a very pleasant change for me. I have lived in other places like London, Johannesburg, Chatham, Ont., and Rochester, New York which were all very Waspy.

Anyway, Montreal made a very strong impression on me and it so happened that the leader at the time wanted to leave Quebec and go to Toronto. This meant the group here was going to be without a leader. Kapleau roshi asked me if I would come. Jean and I discussed it quite a bit, and we had sort of a provisional agreement with him that we would only come here if the group could get a bigger house. When we came the group was located in Marlowe Street in a fairly small place. You know, when Jean and I went to Rochester, it wasn't our intention to stay there. We simply went to Rochester in order to get sufficient background to know what a Center meant, so that we could develop a Center of our own. That's why I left the business world. It wasn't for us to become monks, or anything like that. I really wanted to do whatever I could to teach, to

help people in the way I had been helped.

Q. The fact that you had to speak French here, was it not an extra burden for you?

A. On the contrary. I've always been a francophile. I did speak a little French at the time. I liked French very much when at school, and also did a lot of hitchhiking in France. I just loved Paris. I read a lot of the French novelists in French and I liked the French thinkers a great deal. I was once a Sartre fan as well as being fond of people like Benoit, de Chardin, Lamouche and so on. The French weren't so positivistic, so behaviouristic as the Americans.

Q. How did you find this place?

A. It was quite evident that Marlowe Street wasn't going to be big enough, and furthermore, the group was renting. The amount of alterations we could make was limited. We arrived at the end of July 1979 and I would say that there were 30 members, but of those, I'd say 15 were core members. In fact when we first arrived in Marlowe, only Jean and I used to sit in the zendo because July and August were slow months anyway in the Zen business. You could see it wasn't exactly a vital place. The impression that I had when I got here was that people were far more interested in the details. For example, someone went to Rochester in order to match the exact color of paint for the walls. There was an exact calibration on the dimmer switch where you had to put the light, it had to be exactly that dimness. Everything was written down as an instruction, almost like Dogen. But the real essence of the practice was missing.

Jean and I started walking looking for a place and we must have covered much of Montreal on foot. One day, we decided we'd take a walk by the river in

an area where we had never been before. The idea was to take a break from house searching. We got off at Henri Bourassa metro and when we got out of the station, the first thing we said to one another was, "I think we've made a mistake." In those days, a big bus station was situated outside the station and there were lots of buses to Laval making noise and spewing out pollution. We sort of walked along to St. Hubert St. and said "Look, that street looks quiet." We started to walk down, and I saw, at the end of the street, a 'For Sale' sign on a house. I said to Jean "That's the house we want." I was joking, you know. But Jean asked, "Why don't you phone and make inquiries anyway?" So I did and the agent said the asking price was \$225,000 but it was negotiable.

The group had previously come to the conclusion that the most it could afford was \$100,000 but we managed to squeeze the price up somewhat. I said to a lawyer, who was a member at the time, "Write and tell them we'll offer \$135,000 for it." At first the lawyer wouldn't do it. He said, "You're just wasting your time." I said, "No, go ahead, we've got nothing to lose. Give him the weekend to make up his mind." Come Monday and nothing had happened. It looked as though the lawyer was right. Then on Tuesday the lawyer phoned to say a counter offer had been made for 175,000. We replied with another for 140,000. It hung in the balance for a couple of weeks and we finally got another counteroffer back at \$155,000, final. That's how we got it.

**Q. How did you afford to pay the extra?**

A. First of all, we passed the hat around. We got \$30,000 (from 30 members). We used to pass the hat around a lot in those days, particularly at annual general meetings. That's why we'd never get anyone to come to the meeting (LAUGHTER). But we got that and then I managed to raise a loan of \$25,000. So we had \$55,000. But then I had to find a bank to give us a mortgage for \$100,000. This itself was not easy as few banks wanted to lend money to a very

small and impecunious group like us. Eventually I managed to prevail on the Toronto Dominion bank to take a chance. We signed up for the 100,000 at 12% on the Friday. I insisted that a provisional agreement be signed before the weekend as I was afraid the manger might change his mind over the weekend. On the following Monday we found the rate had increased to 13.5% but because we had signed the agreement we only had to pay 12%.

One of the most remarkable things I always tell people is the following. We still needed more money to move, and to set it all up, to pay the notary and so on. I reckoned we needed another \$5,000, and without that, I didn't see how we could go ahead. So again, the hat went around and, with everyone having committed as much as they could, we only managed to squeeze out \$800. I was at my wits end because I just didn't know how we were going make it work. Halfway through the week, somebody phoned me. He was a peripheral member, and he left shortly after. He said that his father had a trust fund for him and his brothers and each year paid the interest back into the trust fund. But this year he was going to make an exception and give our member and his brothers the interest out of the trust fund. This member said to me, "I don't need it, I have all I need, I'd like to donate it to the center." The amount was \$5,000!

**Q. How many were you and when did you move?**

A. We moved about the 13th or 14th of October. We were only a handful. When we first got here we couldn't sit in the zendo, because it was a real mess and we had to do a lot of work to get it ready. So we used to sit in the dining area and do kinhin around the kitchen, so you can see there weren't all that many people coming to sit with us.

When we first started, there were 10 people living here in the house. In those days, we'd start at quarter to six in the morning and sit for an hour and for two hours on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday

nights. Everyone who lived here was expected to attend all sittings and the residents were expected to work in the house. It's always been a condition of residency here that people sit regularly and work around the Center as much as they can.

**Q. Can you discuss the process of renovating the zendo?**

A. It was the Zendo building that really clinched the deal. It was just what we were after. When I walked up there, immediately I saw it I said, "That's the zendo for us." It was just that. The house is a beautiful house but one of the problems in getting a Zen Center is to find a house big enough to have a zendo as well as places for people to sleep. In Rochester, they've got an enormous number of huge houses. But have a look around Montreal and you will find very, very few places that would be suitable. Ever since we've been here we've looked around and only found one other place that we thought could do as well as the place we have.

The downstairs area of the zendo had been used as a workshop. The floor was covered with oil and grease. Where the changing rooms are now was the door for a garage. Upstairs had been used as storeroom for lumber, broken glass and rats. There were two *major* leaks in the roof, one over the stairway which caused the wall where the altar now is to rot. There was another where the small window is in the upstairs zendo. At the time there was also a door and a small balcony which we took down. At first we were absolutely aghast at the work we had taken on. It was one of my worst moments when I realized I'd committed myself and everybody else to \$155,000 for the property and we had to convert it into a zendo and a Zen Center. None of us at the time were construction-minded. I didn't know one end of a hammer from another and I've never been much interested in construction. Somebody came up to me and said: "What do we do first?" And I was so desperate that I said: "Pick up something and put it

somewhere." While we were clearing out the old wood, another fellow came to join the Center. I noticed that he had a certain way with his hands. I thought this chap is a notch above us. I asked him "Would you like to help supervise this, would you like to take over?" It was Jacques Fortin and without Jacques Fortin, we wouldn't have a Zen Center. I can't tell you how much he did, nor how grateful we should be to him.

**Q. How long did it take to finish the job?**

A. It took three years before we could move in. We were sitting in the house during that time. We did "two day sittings" but they were few and far between. This was one of the great burdens I had to carry. The Center had been a going concern on Marlowe Street and I felt as though I had in a way kicked over an ant heap. Where it had been a going concern, it was now just so much chaos.

**Q. The communal life was very intense in those days, much more so than now.**

A. Oh yes. We used to eat together, morning and evening, we took turns cooking and buying the food. But it worked. There wasn't any dissension.

**Q. Do you have any regrets that this sort of communal life no longer exists at the Center?**

A. Well, yes and no. From the point of view of the actual practice, I think it's a pity. I can understand why people no longer come to live here. They have family, work and social obligations that they did not then have. I wouldn't want to try and persuade anybody to make it different, but I feel as if the Center as a whole has lost something. On the other hand, I'm not sorry because it was sometimes very trying for Jean and myself to live in that kind of atmosphere. To live as a married couple and yet to eat with the others - we had no family life at all. We used

to live on the third floor. It was a very limited space and you couldn't have a family life on the third floor. We did it for about seven years.

When we came back from a sabbatical in Kingston, things changed. We set up a rule that when a person comes in as a resident, he or she can only come in for a year. Furthermore we had used the Center as a place where people could come and restore themselves, and had taken in some people who had real emotional problems. That was a mistake as well. People would come, they would love the whole thing for the first year. Then, because there's snow clearing, there's mowing the lawn, there's garbage be taken out, they would start getting resentful.

Another problem was that because Jean and I were together, they would look upon us as kind of surrogate parents. Very often they resented their own parents and didn't need surrogate parents which I could well understand, but it did not make life too easy. I don't think I could go back to it now.

**Q. What qualities do you ask for in a resident today?**

A. First of all, they must come into the Zen Center because they want to further their practice. We don't want people to come here because the rent is cheap. They must also recognize that if they do come in to the Zen Center, there is a lot of work to be done and that they have to take part fully in that. Then there is the condition that if a person comes, whenever they are in the house, they have to sit. If they're in the house on a Monday, Tuesday or Thursday night, they have to sit, and also every morning if they are sleeping in the house. We also expect that they would attend as many sesshins as possible.

**Q. Are you getting enough people to do work around here?**

A. We are getting more people who are willing to do the work and we're very grateful. It's getting to the

point where Jean and I don't want to do as much of the work anymore. We have worked very hard, physically, over the last 15 years and feel it is time that others took over. From the point of view of teaching - that's another story. I'm prepared to work as hard as is necessary and as long is possible.

**Q. After you moved into the zendo in 1982-83, how did the Center evolve from that point?**

A. A problem that we had was that Philip Kapleau was very reluctant to pass on the right to teach to anyone else. He was a man who had very high standards and was inclined to think that other people couldn't meet that standard. Quite a battle was necessary before he was willing to let go. Initially we could only do two-day sittings. Then I managed to prise it open to do three day sittings. Then I organized a three-day sitting at one weekend and a three day sitting at the next so we could begin to get more intensive practice. It was that kind of thing. It wasn't easy. Nevertheless when he gave me permission to teach I took six months off. I wasn't sure at that stage what I wanted to do. Having battled with him for so long, I was beginning to wonder what it was all about.

While we were away, from here everything fell apart. When we came back, there was practically no Center, so many people had left. But there was enough of a core, about 20 people, and we built it up from there. Because I was given the right to teach, I was my own man, I didn't have to ask permission for anything. And so really this Center dates from 1986. I don't think its unusual for this kind of difficulty to arise, but at the time it was tough.

**Q. What was the first big change you made in this place from the way things were done in Rochester?**

A. The big difference is that I don't use the kyosaku in the same way, I do not use the force, generate the kind of pressure-cooker atmosphere that Rochester had. I try to get people to face up to the contradiction

that is the basis of practice. I've swept away most of the ceremonies, which is another big difference. Rochester had a lot of ceremonies. I'm hoping one day that Western Zen will find its own rituals and ceremonies, but that they must grow out of Western experience.

**Q. Is the Montreal Center unique as a lay center?**

A. Yes, the only other one is in Hawaii. Because we're lay and there are no monastics, or monks there's no staff, which is another major difference.

**Q. Isn't lay practice very demanding because of this contradiction between two worlds?**

A. Yes, but do remember that I'm very familiar with this difficulty. In the business world, I would never discuss Zen with anyone. Nobody was interested in it. So yes, lay practice is extremely difficult. But we must try to see that we can turn those difficulties to our advantage.

**Q. What do you say to people who would argue that the monastic tradition is preferable for the study of Zen?**

A. I would say it's not, for our time it's just the opposite. Consciousness has evolved, and by this I do not mean that it has necessarily got better, but it has certainly got a lot more complex. The consciousness of a western Quebecois is not the same as of mediaeval Japanese. One of the most important differences is that we've got a very high sense of individual self, of "I". This would have been almost non-existent in medieval Japanese society. You know that autobiography as a genre only came in to the west in the 17th century. This is remarkable. Rembrandt, for example, was one of the first self-portraitists. The word 'self-consciousness' also only came into being in the late 17th century. To live in a group in a monastic situation which is highly

regimented and is designed to eliminate the sense of self through obedience, chastity and poverty, is too destructive of the western persona. Spiritual work is the birthright of everybody, but how we do this work must depend on our own temperament and the circumstances in which we find ourselves.

We can use the tremendous fragility of the modern ego to our advantage. Use humiliation, use these difficult moments of life in the way a monk would have had to use the abuse of a Zen teacher.

**Q. In order to make a lay practice work, you are depending on the commitment of those involved.**

A. Yes, but the same is true in the monastic tradition. Everybody that went to a monastery wasn't committed to spiritual work by any means. This is one of the big problems teachers had. But we in modern day Quebec can say, I guarantee it, that anybody who has been to a sesshin twice is committed to spiritual practice.

**Q. There is such a turnover in the membership of the center. What are the common characteristics of those who stay ?**

A. First of all, there has to be a profound sense of dissatisfaction, this sense that at one level or another one is not going to get any real, ultimate satisfaction out of experience. Then I think there has to be a sense at some level that one is whole and complete, there has to be the ability to affirm this at some level or another. And then I would just put it down to sheer determination. We don't look upon tenacity in our society any more because we're too psychological. But there is character, there is something that people have that allows them to face up to this practice that people who can't face up to it don't have - commitment, if you like, or virtue, or as I used to call it, character. To be able to give yourself to something for which there is no pay back to the personality is not easy.



**Q. We're living in a period of great stress - personal stress, economic stress, technological stress. Is this fertile ground for Zen practice?**

A. Oh yes. It's at times of stress in one's own life and stress in society's life that real things are possible. I think we are at a crossroads. I think people will look back on the times we're living through now and compare it to the Renaissance, for example, and say that was a great moment. We have a possibility of opening up in an entirely new spiritual way and there's a lot of evidence that it's going that way, even with all the absurdities of the Californian New Age, there are many people who are seriously seeking a new authentic way of life. But, on the other hand, there's all the stuff that technology is pouring out of which the most dangerous is virtual reality. This is a real threat. I don't want to sound like a fanatic but I'm beginning to look at television and all its offshoots as a little bit like Satan's family.

**Q. You said a couple of years ago that the Zen Center was entering a Golden Age. Do you still feel that way?**

A. Yes, many people in the Center are mature in their practice. They know what it's about. We've always got doubts, at least until one sees into one's true nature, but, underlying those doubts, with so many people now, there is a strength, a sense of purpose. A seven-day sesshin is a wonderful thing now at our Center.

**Q. You mean to say there's a certain permanence that goes beyond the formal structures of the Center?**

A. Exactly. I think that if I packed up and left, the center would go on.

**Q. There are certain questions in the minds of members about what happens after Albert Low. Who will you find to lead the Center after you? All those are open-ended questions.**

A. I can't answer that. But I can say it is a question for me as well, it really is. But I certainly have no intention of giving up until we do have somebody who can take over.

**Q. What qualities would you look for in a successor?**

A. They must have seen into the truth, then they should have done a good number of sesshins. But they also must have a sense that they want to take the center in their way, do it their way. I wouldn't want anyone to feel as though they've got to continue with the tradition, because that wouldn't work.

**Q. Is the bilingual character of the Center an advantage?**

A. It does create some problems but at the same time I don't see an alternative. One has to teach, as far as one can, in the language of the person. Whoever takes over the center would have to be bilingual. One of the really encouraging things is the increasing number of French-speaking people coming to sesshins. For a long time, it was almost only English-speaking people at sesshin. A number of the sesshins we've had recently have been at least half French-speaking people. This, I think, is very encouraging. This is one of the ways in which we are a very distinctive Center. \*

# Une brève visite à Sarnath

**I**l est dit que pour les bouddhistes il existe quatre endroits sacrés : Lumbini (Népal) où le Bouddha est né, Bodhgaya où il a atteint l'illumination, Sarnath où il prêcha son premier sermon et Kushinagar où il est mort. L'été dernier, j'ai eu l'occasion de faire un séjour de près d'un mois en Inde et de visiter Sarnath.

Sarnath est l'endroit où Bouddha, deux mois après son illumination, retrouva les cinq disciples qu'il avait quitté quelques mois auparavant afin de mener une pratique différente de la leur qui était trop ascétique. C'est au Parc des Gazelles qu'il s'adressa à ses anciens compagnons et de là naquit la première communauté monastique bouddhiste. Son premier sermon s'intitule La Roue de la Loi et il y expose les quatre nobles vérités. Je vais parler de ces quatre vérités, que la plupart connaissent, en faisant le lien avec mon voyage en Inde. Ensuite, je ferai une brève description de ce que j'ai vu à Sarnath.

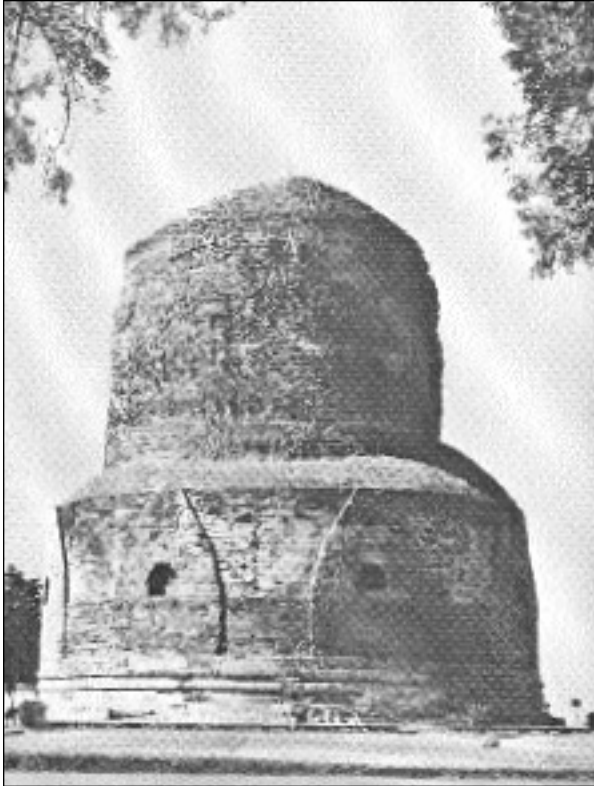
La première chose qui m'a frappé en arrivant à Bombay, c'est la misère : les taudis, les mendiants, la saleté et les conditions d'hygiène insalubres. C'est une illustration de la première noble vérité : l'existence de la souffrance. Pour moi, cette souffrance n'était pas seulement une constatation visuelle, c'était aussi une réalité ressentie comme un choc désagréable. Était-ce là le reflet de ma propre misère intérieure? Que faire avec cette misère? Si la souffrance existe, elle fait partie de la réalité. Et la réalité est là pour être regardée en face. Après près d'un mois en Inde, je n'ai pas réussi à être en paix avec moi-même au contact de cette misère.

Si on poursuit avec la deuxième noble vérité, le Bouddha affirme que la cause de la souffrance est le désir : le désir du bonheur individuel, le désir de satisfaire la passion, la soif du plaisir, etc. En Inde, j'ai été confronté à des choses désagréables, des choses que je ne désirais pas voir : des mendiants, des infirmes, des mères qui réclamaient de la nourriture pour elles et leurs enfants. Derrière cela, il y avait chez-moi le désir de ne voir que les beaux côtés de l'Inde.

La troisième noble vérité indique que la cessation de la souffrance passe par l'anéantissement du désir. Devant un mendiant par exemple, ce serait peut-être lui donner, du fond de nous-mêmes, le droit d'exister. Ce n'est pas quelque chose que l'on peut faire complètement et une fois pour toutes. Dans une autre situation, dans un des ashrams où nous sommes allés et où nous avons participé à certaines activités, l'horaire des repas était déterminé en fonction de ces mêmes activités. Donc nous ne savions jamais à quelle heure nous prendrions nos repas. Dans un autre ashram, à chaque heure de la nuit une cloche sonnait pour indiquer, par autant de coups, l'heure qu'il était. Dans ces circonstances, nous n'avions pas d'autre choix que d'oublier et notre faim et notre sommeil. Il le fallait, du moins suffisamment pour apprécier les activités de l'ashram et pour laisser le sommeil faire son oeuvre en dehors de notre volonté.

Finalement, la quatrième noble vérité établit le Sentier octuple qui mène à la cessation de la souffrance : la compréhension juste, la pensée juste, la parole juste, l'action juste, les moyens d'existence justes, l'effort juste, l'attention juste et la concentration juste. Tout un programme n'est-ce pas? Mais comme il faut commencer par poser le premier pas, nous savons que notre pratique méditative constitue un pas dans la bonne direction.

Voyons maintenant Sarnath. Trois siècles après la mort du Bouddha, Ashoka, l'empereur indien converti au bouddhisme, couvrit l'actuel site archéologique de monastères, de stupas et de colonnes commémoratives, oeuvre qui fut poursuivie sous les dynasties suivantes, Shunga et Gupta (5e siècle de notre ère). Très rapidement, Sarnath devint un centre majeur du bouddhisme indien, prospère jusqu'au 12<sup>ème</sup> siècle où il fut anéanti par les invasions musulmanes. Le site fut redécouvert au 18<sup>ème</sup> siècle par les Britanniques qui y entreprirent des fouilles, mettant à jour de nombreuses statues et reliquaires aujourd'hui déposées au musée de Sarnath.



*Le stupa Dhamekh.*

J'ai pu constater que Sarnath est un petit village situé à côté de Varanassi (Bénarès), la ville la plus sainte de l'Inde pour les Hindous. Le seul monument d'origine à n'avoir pas été démolé par les musulmans est le stupa Dhamekh. C'est compréhensible : il fait 27 mètres de diamètre et 42 mètres de haut. Cette tour qui n'a rien d'esthétique (n'y trouve-t-on pas là le dénuement du Zen?) se tient sur une base de pierre, entourée de briques et de pierres taillées et sculptées de façon ornementale. Elle indique l'endroit où le Bouddha fit son premier sermon. A côté de ce monument, on retrouve les vestiges d'au moins sept monastères, d'un temple et d'un autre stupa qui contenaient les cendres du Bouddha. Ces dernières ont été découvertes et jetées dans le Gange par un ministre non bouddhiste, il y a à peine deux siècles. Doit-on comprendre par là que le message du Bouddha était appelé à se répandre de nouveau pour finalement nous rejoindre?

Et que dire du chapiteau qui se trouvait sur le pilier d'Ashoka (à l'origine, 20 mètres de haut), au

musée du site, qui représente quatre lions finement sculptés, assis dos à dos? Etant donné que le lion a la voix la plus puissante de tous les animaux, il est compréhensible que ce chapiteau voulait dire que le Bouddha, comme le lion, était le maître le plus clairement entendu de son temps et qu'il a répandu son dharma dans toutes les directions. De la même façon, nous sommes rejoints par ses enseignements, peu importe où nous sommes et peu importe ce que nous faisons.

Sur le même site, on retrouve un parc de gazelles, fringantes et alertes, venant manger dans notre main des morceaux de concombres. Peut-on y voir la simplicité et la candeur de la nature qui ne s'inquiète pas de ce que sera demain? Le site, rempli de verdure, respirait le calme au moment de notre visite. A un moment donné, nous nous sommes retrouvés devant un figuier pippal. C'est une transplantation d'une tige d'un figuier d'Anuradhapura (Sri Lanka). Ce dernier est un rameau de l'arbre d'origine où le Bouddha a eu son illumination. En 1988, à côté de cet arbre, on a installé des statues modernes représentant Bouddha en train de prêcher à ses cinq premiers disciples. Cet endroit avait un caractère particulier et vivant. Etait-ce en regard de ce qu'il y a de plus particulier et vivant en nous?

Autour du site, nous sommes allés nous recueillir dans les temples de trois monastères bouddhistes : chinois, tibétain et birman. Ils offraient un grand contraste avec les temples hindous, souvent achalandés et bruyants. L'atmosphère était plus propice à un retour sur soi, au fait que, ainsi que l'enseigne le Bouddha, on ne peut compter que sur soi pour retrouver ses origines. \*

*Par l'effort, l'ardeur, la discipline et le contrôle, que le sage fasse pour lui-même une île qu'aucun flot ne pourra submerger.  
(Dhammapada)*

# La Roue de la Loi

## Premier Discours du Bouddha

**A**insi ai-je entendu.  
Le Bienheureux se trouvant au Parc des Gazelles à Isipatana (Sarnath) près de Bénarès, s'adressa aux cinq bhikkus (moines) :

Il est deux extrêmes, ô bhikkus, qui doivent être évités par un moine. Quels sont-ils? S'attacher aux plaisirs des sens, ce qui est bas, vulgaire, terrestre, ignoble et engendre de mauvaises conséquences, et s'adonner aux mortifications, ce qui est pénible, ignoble et engendre de mauvaises conséquences.

Evitant ces deux extrêmes, ô bhikkus, le *Tathâgata* (Le Bouddha) a découvert le Chemin du Milieu qui donne la vision, la connaissance, qui conduit à la paix, à la sagesse, à l'éveil et au *Nirvâna*.

Et quel est, ô bhikkus, ce chemin du Milieu que le *Tathâgata* a découvert et qui donne la vision, la connaissance et conduit à la paix, à la sagesse, à l'éveil et au *Nirvâna*? C'est le Noble Sentier Octuple, à savoir : la vue juste, la pensée juste, la parole juste, l'action juste, le moyen d'existence juste, l'effort juste, l'attention juste, la concentration juste.

Ceci, ô bhikkus, est le Chemin du Milieu que le *Tathâgata* a découvert, qui donne la vision, la connaissance, qui conduit à la paix, à la sagesse, à l'éveil et au *Nirvâna*.

Voici, ô bhikkus, la Noble Vérité sur *dukkha* (souffrance). La naissance est *dukkha*, la vieillesse est *dukkha*, la maladie est *dukkha*, la mort est *dukkha*, être uni à ce que l'on n'aime pas est *dukkha*, être séparé de ce que l'on aime est *dukkha*, ne pas avoir ce que l'on désire est *dukkha*, en résumé, les cinq agrégats d'attachement sont *dukkha*.

Voici, ô bhikkus, la Noble Vérité sur la cause de *dukkha*.

C'est cette soif (désir) qui produit la re-existence et le re-devenir, qui est liée à une avidité passionnée et qui trouve une nouvelle jouissance tantôt ici, tantôt là, c'est-à-dire la soif des plaisirs des sens, la soif de l'existence et du devenir, et la soif de la non-existence (auto-annihilation).

Voici, ô bhikkus, la Noble Vérité sur la cessation de *dukkha*.

C'est la cessation complète de cette soif, la délaisser, y renoncer, s'en libérer, s'en détacher.

Voici, ô bhikkus, la Noble Vérité sur le Sentier qui conduit à la cessation de *dukkha*.

C'est le Noble Sentier Octuple, à savoir : la vue juste, la pensée juste, la parole juste, l'action juste, le moyen d'existence juste, l'effort juste, l'attention juste, la concentration juste.

...

Avec la compréhension : "Ceci est la Noble Vérité sur *dukkha*", ô bhikkus, dans les choses qui n'avaient pas été entendues auparavant, s'élèvent en moi la vision, la connaissance, la sagesse, la science et la lumière.

Avec la compréhension : "Cette Noble Vérité sur *dukkha* doit être comprise"... Cette Noble Vérité sur *dukkha* a été comprise", ô bhikkus, dans les choses qui n'avaient pas été entendues auparavant, s'élèvent en moi la vision, la connaissance, la sagesse, la science et la lumière.

Avec la compréhension : "Ceci est la Noble Vérité sur la cause de *dukkha*"... Cette Noble Vérité sur la cause de *dukkha* doit être détruite"... Cette Noble Vérité sur la cause de *dukkha* a été détruite", ô bhikkus, dans les choses qui n'avaient pas été entendues auparavant, s'élèvent en moi la vision, la connaissance, la sagesse, la science et la lumière.

Avec la compréhension : "Ceci est la Noble Vérité sur la cessation de *dukkha*"... Cette Noble Vérité sur la cessation de *dukkha* doit être comprise"... Cette Noble Vérité sur la cessation de *dukkha* a été comprise", ô bhikkus, dans les choses qui n'avaient pas été entendues auparavant, s'élèvent en moi la vision, la connaissance, la sagesse, la science et la lumière.

Avec la compréhension : "Ceci est la Noble Vérité sur le Chemin qui conduit à la cessation de *dukkha*"... Cette Noble Vérité sur le Chemin qui conduit à la cessation de *dukkha* doit être développé et pratiqué"... Cette Noble Vérité sur le Chemin qui



conduit à la cessation de dukkha a été développée et pratiquée”, ôbhikkus, dans les choses qui n’avaient pas été entendues auparavant, s’élèvent en moi la vision, la connaissance, la sagesse, la science et la lumière.

O bhikkus, tant que cette connaissance réelle des Quatre Nobles Vérités sous leurs trois aspects et dans leurs douze modalités n’étaient pas absolument claire en moi, aussi longtemps que je n’ai pas proclamé à ce monde avec ses dieux, Mâra et Brahma, ses troupes d’ascètes et de brahmanes, ses êtres célestes et humains, que j’avais obtenu l’incomparable et suprême connaissance. Mais, bhikkus, quand cette connaissance réelle des Quatre Nobles Vérités sous leurs trois aspects et dans leurs douze modalités me devint parfaitement claire, alors seulement j’ai

proclamé à ce monde avec ses dieux, Mâra et Brahma, ses troupes d’ascètes et de brahmanes, ses êtres célestes et humains, que j’avais obtenu l’incomparable et suprême connaissance.

Et la connaissance profonde s’éleva en moi : inébranlable est la libération de mon esprit, ceci est ma dernière naissance et maintenant il n’y aura plus d’autre existence.

Ainsi parla le Bienheureux, et les cinq bhikkus, contents, louèrent ses paroles. \*

(Texte tiré de : *L’enseignement du Bouddha*, D’après les textes les plus anciens. Walpola Rahula, Editions du Seuil, 1961.)

# La fête du mois d'août

Quinze ans déjà de la vie d'Albert et Jean Low passées au service de la sangha de Montréal. Quinze années de dévouement et d'amour donnés et reçus avec beaucoup de reconnaissance. Cette reconnaissance qui trop rarement trouve le chemin hors de nos coeurs pour s'exprimer ouvertement à la



face du monde. Cette reconnaissance, quatre femmes ont sauté joyeusement sur l'occasion qui leur était offerte de l'exprimer en organisant une garden party pour souligner l'événement.

Même si le soleil n'était pas au rendez-vous, le jardin toujours aussi fleuri eût la chance d'accueillir de nombreux membres de la sangha, des anciens comme des nouveaux, avec enfants et conjoints, une célébrité que beaucoup d'entre vous connaissent, Placide Gaboury, et même Grizzly... Mais non, pas un vrai! C'est le nouveau chien de Jean-Claude et Anita, un Bouvier des Flandres.

Les oiseaux qui jacassent si fort d'habitude se taisaient pour mieux contempler tout ce beau monde qui jacassait à qui mieux mieux à leur tour. Car il faut dire qu'en général ils sont plutôt silencieux - Zen oblige. De plus, comme l'a noté quelqu'un, on pouvait pour une fois faire le lien entre les pieds et les figures.

Sur le plan culinaire, ce fut un réel succès. Les tables, installées sur la galerie avant, étaient recouvertes de plats à partager apportés par les invités. La variété, les couleurs et les odeurs étaient au rendez-vous. Personne n'avait le goût de chanter:

"Pas de couleur, d'odeur, de son,  
Rien à goûter, rien à toucher..."

Salades variées, gâteaux, fruits, pain maison

fait par Inouk, punch aux fruits de Lucille et bien d'autres choses encore garnissaient ce buffet végétarien qui n'avait rien à envier à ceux des carnivores.

Un trop court intermède musical nous a été offert par Inouk. Si certains réussissent à faire venir la pluie avec leurs danses, lui a trouvé, avec sa guitare, le secret pour faire sortir le soleil de derrière les nuages.

Un album de photos souvenirs, exposé près de l'entrée, a permis aux nouveaux membres de se rendre compte des difficultés des débuts. De plus, Albert Low et quelques anciens tels que Michel Lamarche et Jacques Lespérance ont su nous raconter avec beaucoup d'humour les péripéties de l'histoire du Centre. C'est avec grand plaisir et intérêt que nous avons écouté leurs anecdotes.

Je termine donc ce compte-rendu en remerciant les quatre

organisatrices pour nous avoir permis à nous aussi



par nos présences et notre participation à cette charmante journée champêtre, d'exprimer notre reconnaissance au maître et à son épouse pour leur labour incessant.

Merci pour le jardin et les fleurs qui exigent tellement de soins, merci pour les sesshins, merci pour les teishos, merci pour les dokusans, Merci! Merci! ❁

# 15 ans déjà

À l'automne 1979, le Centre Zen de Montréal se donnait des bases solides en se portant acquéreur du terrain et des bâtisses sises au coin de Park Stanley et de St-Hubert. Un terrain magnifique, une vue imprenable sur la rivière, des bâtisses spacieuses... mais pour le reste, il y avait beaucoup à faire... ou à refaire.

Il y a quinze ans le Zendo était un vieux garage abandonné dont l'étage du haut servait de pièce de débarras, « un véritable dépotoir où s'empilaient toutes sortes de cochonneries », nous raconte Jacques Lespérance, un de ceux qui se sont retroussés les manches à l'époque pour arracher, déclouer, déplacer, dégager avant de remettre tout à neuf.



Des années avant d'être converti en garage, la bâtisse avait servi de petite école de village. Ce fut sa première vocation. « Lorsque nous avons pris possession des lieux, dit Jacques, il y avait un autre escalier à la place de l'escalier actuel, et les marches n'avaient que cinq à six pouces de hauteur. Des marches conçues exprès pour de petits enfants. On a trouvé un tableau d'ardoise à l'étage. » Étrange destinée de certains lieux...

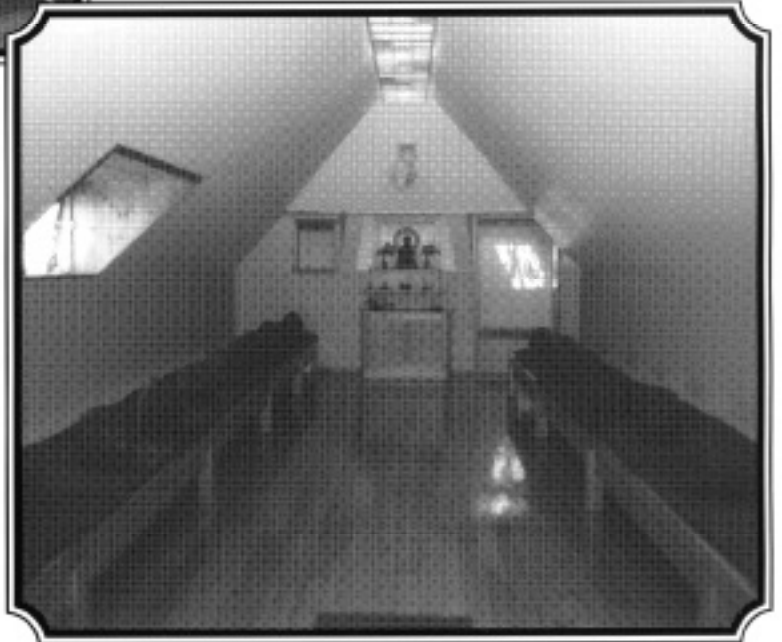
Les travaux de rénovation ont d'abord commencé à l'étage supérieur qui a été vidé complètement. Tout ce qui était utile, le bois par exemple, a été gardé et emporté dans la cave de la maison principale. Comme il n'y avait ni électricité, ni chauffage, les travaux se sont fait à la chaleur d'un fournaise au bois et l'éclairage était fourni par des extensions branchées sur le courant électrique de la maison.



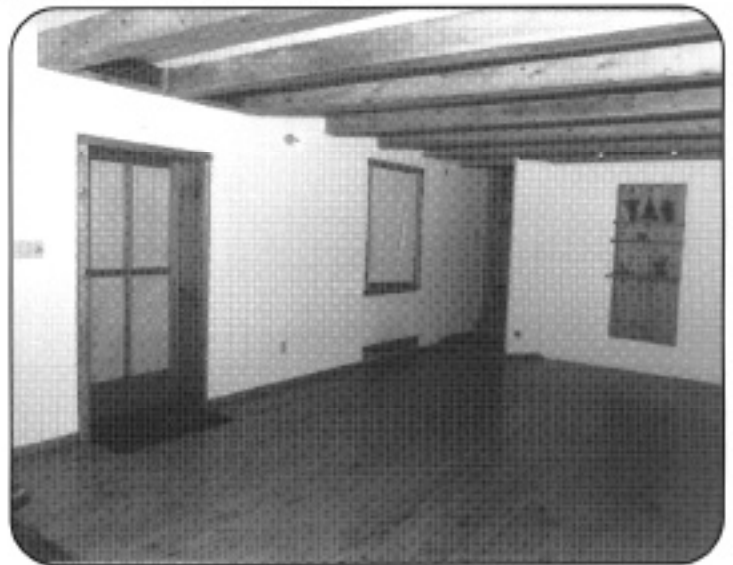
Le Zendo il y a quinze ans. On voit la porte de garage au rez-de-chaussée.



Des ouvriers de la première heure : Albert Low en haut à gauche, Mike Katz à droite et Ovid ci-contre. Les travaux de l'étage supérieur ont duré environ trois ans : d'abord les murs et le plafond, ensuite le plancher et finalement la construction des plate-formes.



Ci-contre, la fameuse fournaise au bois qui a réchauffé les membres endoloris de nos pionniers durant des années! Tout les matins, un résident devait se lever plus tôt pour alimenter le feu et durant les sesshins, s'occuper de la fournaise était une tâche à temps plein. Le rez-de-chaussée n'était pas isolé et l'hiver « on gelait » se souvient Jacques Lespérance. Les temps héroïques! En bas à gauche, le rez-de-chaussée transformé en atelier pendant que les travaux se déroulaient à l'étage. La porte d'entrée se trouvait là où est le vestiaire des femmes actuellement. En bas à droite, le rez-de-chaussée terminé.







Lorsque le zendo devint habitable, on s'attaqua aux murs extérieurs. La porte de garage fut enlevée, l'ouverture de l'entrée déplacée sur le côté et des portes-fenêtres posées là où sont les vestiaires. Remarquez la cheminée et le petit balcon qui n'existent plus maintenant. Il n'y avait pas de portique dans la bâtisse d'origine.



1983 : Le premier sesshin de quatre jours.

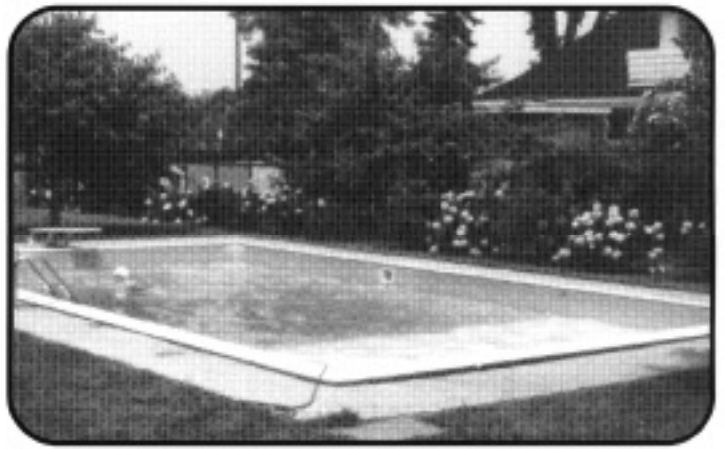


La première année des rénovations, les pratiques de méditation se faisaient dans la salle à manger et dans les corridors de la maison. Il y avait neuf résidents. Toutes les deux fins de semaine étaient temps de corvée obligatoire. Durant la semaine, tous ceux qui pouvaient travailler le faisaient. Le Centre n'était pas riche, les gens devaient fournir des efforts supplémentaires. Le plancher par exemple. Comme le bois dur coûtait trop cher, il a été fait en bois mou et Jacques Fortin a dû le sabler à la main avec une petite sableuse portative. L'énergie du guerrier et la patience du moine!

Sesshin lorsque le zendo n'était pas terminé.



Au début, le terrain du Centre occupait tout l'espace délimité par les rues St-Hubert et Parc Stanley. Une partie du terrain a été vendue il y a quelques années. Nous avons maintenant des voisins plus rapprochés, mais moins de problèmes financiers!



Vive un bain dans la piscine à la fin d'une journée de travail! Ici, nous voyons Jean Low s'ébattre joyeusement. Une piscine est un luxe que le Centre pouvait difficilement s'offrir. Elle a été remplie et recouverte de pelouse. Une perte?



Vue imprenable sur la piscine du voisin !



Comment se plaindre de la disparition de la piscine quand on admire le magnifique jardin de Jean qui la recouvre maintenant?



La façade actuelle de la maison qui donne sur la rue Parc Stanley. Beaucoup de travail ici aussi, beaucoup de dévouement et un éclatement de verdure et de beauté. C'est le Centre Zen. Merci à tous ceux qui y ont contribué.

# The 15th Anniversary Potluck

August 28th dawned not bright and fair, but overcast and threatening rain. Inauspicious one might presume for a picnic in the garden of the Zen Center, a picnic to celebrate 15 years in the house and zendo on St. Hubert Street. Yet we were to learn that day from our teacher, Albert Low, that the



Center, a Noah's Ark of sorts, had lived through many crises of water, both too much running through the walls, and too little, locked frozen in the pipes. So water, which has been theme to the Center, was to accompany the festivities.

Those of us who began setting up the tables in mid-morning were grateful for the huge veranda surrounding the house. Everything was ready under-cover for the arrival of the 80 some participants, each bearing food for all of us to share. As the trickle turned into a stream of people, the tables began to resemble over-loaded boats. One of the things which struck this participant was the variety of people, represented by various ethnic dishes from Polish to Brazilian to Armenian, which began to appear. Under our robes we are a motley crew.

The order of the day was to eat and get to know another in a social way after many months and years of seeing each other's heels circle in kinhin or hearing each other's muffled coughs as we sat in the zendo. Yet we had a coherence as people embarked on a mutual voyage, and as fellow-travellers on the raft.

Everyone particularly enjoyed the photos of the Center's transformation which were set out on a table. There were those among us: Jacques Fortin, Jacques Lespérance, Don Salmon, Jean-Claude Décarie, Rafe Conté, Dan Berty and Anita Low Décarie, who had contributed hard labour in order to assure us a tight ship as we sit on our cushions. The zendo was once a garage full of junk which after many man/woman hours was transformed into its present state.

As the day progressed we ventures into the garden and Anouk Demers treated us to a short guitar concert before the first drops of rain began to fall. It was a farewell performance, for Anouk was to leave that evening after a year of residency to follow his musical career in Princeton.

As the rain grew heavier we adjourned to the kitchen where Albert, flanked by Jean Low and Jacques Lespérance, regaled us with the adventures and misadventures of starting and continuing to operate the Center. Like carp swimming upstream to pass the dragon gate, the physical work alone would have daunted many. Everyone worked hard but without Jacques Fortin at the helm the boat would have often shipwrecked. Albert told us how in time of crisis he depended upon Jacques to solve the problem. As someone who had been a long-time resident, Michel Lamarche also shared some of his reminiscences of both work and the pleasure of jumping into the swimming pool afterward. In case you've missed it, the pool is now part of the extensive flower

gardens east of the house. Speaking of which, the reason for choosing the August date for the gathering was in the hopes of members



*Albert Low and Jacques Fortin.*

and guests getting a chance to enjoy the wonderful garden which Jean and nature have provided us. Though not at its peak at the end of the summer, it was still abloom with large black-eyed Susans and muskmallows, and many other flowers.

Like so many things at the Center, not least of which our teacher Albert Low, the garden, the house, the zendo should not be taken for granted. Many hours, days, weeks and months have gone into their making. Each time upon arriving at the zendo door there is the sense of homecoming in the odor of incense, in the quiet, in Kannon who greets us and the fellow-practitioners upstairs on the cushions. The joyful gathering of that Sunday was another in the long stream of our sangha. ❁

# An Exchange of Views / Témoignages

## A scratch of Zen.

For the past twelve years or so I have been doing things which I called practicing Zen. Some were activities like eating rice, some inactivities like sitting when I should have been working or sleeping, and others just attitudes. All of them involved postures, which, like the lotus position, I believed to be essential. Looking back, many of these things were just postures.

It is not that I haven't been sincere. I have gone about this practice with dedication, if you can call a bull dedicated. But now it seems accurate to say that while thinking it was practicing Zen I was counterfeiting spirituality in hopes of striking it rich.

Here is a pile of dead ends, all of which I've either seriously pursued or at least considered in the name of Zen. They were to be remedies for my pain, salve for my meaninglessness and currency to be exchanged for enlightenment. I offer these precious techniques to anyone now for exactly what they are worth.

Not scratching when sitting alone at home.  
Never doing two things at a time.  
Sitting cross legged off the mat.  
Not having fun.  
Logging the amount of time I sit.  
Keeping the house cold at winter.

Not dropping a single grain of rice.

Not stumbling during kinhin.  
Being the only person on the bus saying "mu" to himself.

Imitating the way my teacher walks, talks, dresses or leads his life.

Arranging my sitting around my beer drinking.

Trying to earn good marks on sesshin.

Sitting up late on sesshin until another person gets up first.

Wearing a rakusu.

Allowing abusive behavior from others.

Saying I'm sorry when I'm not.  
Disappearing during social visits to do zazen.

Neglecting to sit because someone didn't want me to.

Barking like a samurai.

Espousing reincarnation as if I know.

Naming children or pets with Buddhist terms.

Eating food to avoid throwing it out.

Vegetarianism, making pets vegetarians.

Trying to be more peaceful so others will notice.

Using different colored sponges for the bathroom floor and sink.

Swilling my breakfast bowl with tea and drinking it.

Looking down on people who practice TM.

Calligraphy. Yoga. Social work.

Giving to charities.

Using "Tom's Natural Toothpaste".

My hope, I realize, was that I could find some way, some blueprint by which I could transcend my own life, live above it or back from it. Most of the activities were, like recycling, intrinsically OK. But they began from disappointment and returned to it sooner or later. As bargains they failed, yet I can honestly say that I am grateful. Not for having tried, as the saying goes, but for having failed. You see, I didn't really want to live like that in the first place.

Heaven might be wonderful, but I have to scratch.



Bill Reinecke

Suivre un fil sans le savoir, le fil d'Ariane...

On emprunte des chemins obscurs pour arriver au Zen. En ce qui me concerne, la recherche a d'abord pris la forme d'une thérapie. J'étais mal dans ma peau, mal avec les autres, mal avec les petits gestes d'une vie quotidienne que je n'arrivais pas à assumer. Cette démarche m'a permis de sortir la tête de l'eau alors que j'étais entièrement submergée et aussi, de gagner en autonomie. Pendant cette période (s'étendant sur plusieurs années), je suis entrée en contact pour la première fois avec un enseignement spirituel, celui de Gurdjieff, par l'intermédiaire de

“ Fragments d’un enseignement inconnu ” d’Ouspensky. J’ai été fascinée par ce que j’y découvrais, mais ne voyant pas bien comment entreprendre le dur labeur de “se rappeler constamment à soi-même”, j’ai tôt fait de l’oublier.

Cependant je continuais d’avancer, sans grand courage, tout en cherchant ici et là des sources d’inspiration. L’écrivain Henry Miller fut l’une de ces sources. Il faut dire qu’à cette époque, je rêvais de devenir une artiste et qu’il parle beaucoup de démarche créatrice dans son oeuvre. Je l’ai lu quotidiennement pendant des années. J’avais besoin de sa façon de retomber sur ses pattes dans l’adversité et, de plus, il m’aidait à me construire un regard: pour ne donner qu’un exemple, c’est en appliquant ses propos à ma propre expérience que j’ai commencé à comprendre que la spiritualité n’a rien à voir avec la religion. Il parlait... il me parlait de tant de choses! De sa joie et de son désespoir. Du monde, “ des grands sages chinois ”...

\* \* \*

*La montagne Lu dans le brouillard pluvieux,  
la rivière Che à marée haute.  
Quand je n’y étais pas allé, je me languissais de nostalgie  
J’allai là-bas et je revins... Je ne trouvai rien de spécial:  
La montagne Lu dans le*

*brouillard pluvieux,  
la rivière Che à marée haute.*

Il y avait un haïku dans le petit livre à couverture noire d’Alan Watts ( “ Le Bouddhisme Zen ” ): j’ai donc décidé de l’acheter. Ce n’était pas une grosse dépense, un dollar. Comme livre d’occasion, on ne pouvait faire mieux puisque pas une page n’était rattachée à la suivante. Prise d’affection pour lui je me suis mise à l’emporter partout, ceinturé d’un gros élastique, jusqu’à ce qu’un ami - pour bien faire - en recolle les pages: Alan Watts a pris alors le bord de la poubelle et ça n’a pas été bien difficile d’oublier le Zen.

Je n’ai jamais pensé qu’un jour j’aurais un maître spirituel ni que je ferais partie d’un groupe comme celui du centre Zen de Montréal. Je ne voulais surtout pas ça! Mais puisque je tirais de plus en plus fort sur mon fil, il fallait bien que je m’enfonce plus profondément dans le labyrinthe. J’ai finalement appris ( par hasard ) l’existence du centre: il m’a fallu quatre ans avant de me décider à prendre le téléphone... Quelques rencontres avec Monsieur Low, un début d’atelier et il m’a fallu encore trois ans de zazen solitaire avant de revenir au centre et d’en devenir membre.

Maintenant, pour ce qui est du courage, c’est dans cette sangha en constante évolution que je puise mes sources

d’inspiration. Dans la rencontre d’un homme qui ne me laisse pas d’autre choix que d’être qui je suis.



Marielle Ouellette

**Comment je suis arrivée à la pratique du Zen**

Comme beaucoup d’entre vous, je suis parvenue à la pratique du Zen par un chemin sinueux, un parcours à la recherche d’un sens à donner à ma vie.

J’ai débuté ma quête il y a une vingtaine d’années, après avoir vécu des expériences difficiles. Je me sentais désemparée et démunie, ayant accordé bien peu d’attention jusque là à la dimension spirituelle de ma vie, pendant ces années où j’étais absorbée par mon développement intellectuel et préoccupée d’engagement sur le plan social.

Devant cette sensation de vide, surgit un questionnement : “ Qui suis-je? Où vais-je? ” Je me suis d’abord initiée à la méditation transcendente pour entrer ensuite dans un ordre fraternel et mystique, l’ordre de la Rose-Croix A.M.O.R.C. J’y ai bénéficié d’un enseignement qui m’a sensibilisée à des valeurs nouvelles. Ma vie prenait un sens : j’avais un code de vie et beaucoup de nouvelles croyances.

C'est alors que mon travail auprès de malades atteints de cancer m'a conduite à une réflexion plus profonde sur la solitude, l'absence de contrôle sur la mort, sur la vie, la peur de l'inconnu, de la souffrance.

Mon intérêt s'est déplacé vers les philosophies orientales, la pratique du yoga, les écrits d'Arnaud Desjardins, le Bouddhisme. Je me suis finalement retrouvée au Centre Zen de Montréal. La rencontre de M. Albert Low, ses précieux conseils, et une pratique persévérante depuis bientôt trois ans m'ont convaincue que je suis à ma place là où je me trouve. Je me pose de moins en moins de questions. Je ne cours plus à gauche et à droite à la recherche de la "Vérité", puisque la pratique du Zen nous fait rentrer dans la réalité de notre être, par la prise de conscience de soi.

Je suis mon chemin et je vis ma vie comme elle se présente. Comme nous l'enseigne Nisargadatta : "Vivre est la seule raison de la vie."



Lyse Lachance

### Lettre à la Sangha

Je suis membre du Centre Zen de Montréal depuis bientôt six ans. Comme j'ai deux jeunes enfants, que je travaille à temps plein, que j'habite à la campagne

tout en travaillant à Montréal (ce qui m'oblige à faire deux heures d'auto chaque jour), je me contente d'aller au Centre chaque mardi. Depuis six ans, je n'ai participé qu'à deux courts sesshins, à aucune assemblée annuelle, à aucune activité. Je parle bien peu lorsque je vais au Centre et, sauf Monsieur et Madame Low, je ne connais presque personne.

Pourtant, j'aimerais participer à l'effort collectif de la Sangha, pour témoigner du lien profond qui m'unit au Centre Zen de Montréal, et pour assumer ma part de responsabilité. Depuis un an, cette question me préoccupe. Culpabilité, mais aussi désir sincère de participer, désir profond de m'engager.

Etrangement, ces préoccupations personnelles ont trouvé une résonance particulière dans le problème principal du Centre : le manque d'espace. Il me semble tout à fait normal que Monsieur Low, à 65 ans, souhaite diriger moins de sesshins et prendre plus de temps personnel. Il semble tout à fait normal aussi qu'avec un pareil maître, le Centre se développe et reçoive plus de membres, plus de participants à ses sesshins. Ce problème d'engorgement est fondamentalement un problème de développement. Qu'une solution temporaire puisse être trouvée par un lieu qui permettrait à plus de participants

d'assister aux sesshins, cela peut sembler souhaitable. Mais le Centre n'a pas un problème d'espace. Il a un problème de relève.

Que faisait Suzuki aux Etats-Unis? A-t-il assumé la direction personnelle de tous les sesshins donnés à tous les Centres Zen qu'il a fondés? Et si Monsieur Low avait un accident demain? Devrions-nous fermer le Centre Zen de Montréal et dissoudre la Sangha? Voilà quelques questions qui me sont venues à la lecture des rapports de discussion sur l'évolution du Centre.

Je me suis demandé aussi s'il ne faut pas voir ce problème comme une conséquence directe du caractère spécifique du Centre Zen de Montréal, qui est un Centre laïc. Tous les membres ont une vie professionnelle, familiale et personnelle en dehors du Centre, activités et responsabilités qui impliquent leur rythme propre et leurs exigences propres. Dans ce contexte, et surtout en regard du caractère rituel et répétitif des activités d'un Centre Zen, il est difficile d'en assumer la responsabilité. Pourtant, si l'on veut que le Centre Zen de Montréal garde son caractère propre, et continue à se développer sans peser davantage sur les épaules de Monsieur et Madame Low, les membres doivent assumer une plus large part des responsabilités.

Comme je travaille à

Montréal et que j'habite à la campagne, le mardi je n'entre pas à la maison pour le souper. L'an dernier, j'en profitais pour avancer mon travail, restant au bureau jusqu'à sept heures, avant d'aller au Centre. Cette année, j'ai proposé mes services à Madame Low, de 5 à 7. Elle était toute heureuse et moi aussi. Comme je ne peux assumer la responsabilité d'une tâche hebdomadaire (car mon travail implique assez souvent de voyager), j'ai proposé à Madame Low de faire équipe. Si elle trouve 2 ou 3 personnes prêtes à travailler "presque" tous les mardis soirs, je peux coordonner l'équipe qui, elle, peut assumer la responsabilité d'une tâche spécifique. C'est un peu compliqué mais les tâches sont faites et tout le monde est heureux. On peut sans doute concevoir ce genre d'équipe pour des responsabilités plus

importantes, comme l'accueil aux sesshins, sonner la cloche, organiser les sesshins, inviter des "maîtres" ou des conférenciers... L'irrégularité dans la disponibilité des membres laïcs est une réalité à-peu-près inévitable qui ne devrait pas limiter leur implication.

J'ai cru un temps que si je n'arrivais pas à m'impliquer davantage, c'était que le Centre Zen de Montréal n'était pas vraiment ma place. Je sais maintenant que le plus grand appui que je peux apporter à la Sangha réside dans la qualité de ma méditation et de toute ma démarche, qui rayonne quand je fais Zazen au Centre et qui soutient tous ceux qui méditent. Depuis que j'ai conscience de cette dimension, j'ai plus souvent envie d'exprimer ce qui soutient ma vie.

A travers les récentes

discussions sur le manque d'espace et sur les besoins personnels de Monsieur Low, j'ai compris avec une grande joie que le Centre Zen de Montréal avait besoin d'une relève, et que j'en faisais partie.

En terminant ce texte, j'aimerais saluer les membres de la Sangha qui ont compris avant moi le rôle qu'ils pouvaient jouer pour la survie et le développement du Centre. La rare qualité du Centre Zen de Montréal s'appuie sur le leadership de Monsieur Low et de Madame Low, mais implique la présence d'un collectif qui alimente, soutient et élargit son rayonnement. Merci. \*



Pierrette Gingras

## Frank and Ernest



# Peaceful co-existence

*I*s there a path to peaceful co-existence and creative co-operation, and from where must we start? "We must start from what is at the root of all cultures and what lies infinitely deeper in human hearts and minds than political opinion, convictions, antipathies or sympathies: it must be rooted in self-transcendence." This is a quotation from an address given by Vaclav Havel, president of the Czech republic and playwright, and we thought that it could be of great interest to reproduce it here for our readers in search of a real alternative to the worn-out ideologies and dead-ends of our time.

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There are thinkers who claim that if the modern age began with the discovery of America, it also ended in America. This is said to have occurred in the year 1969, when America sent the first men to the moon. From this historical moment, they say, a new age in the life of humanity can be dated.

I think there are good reasons for suggesting that the modern age has ended. Today, many things indicate that we are going through a transitional period, when it seems that something is on the way out and something else is painfully being born. It is as if something were crumbling, decaying and exhausting itself, while something else, still indistinct, were arising from the rubble.

Periods of history when values undergo a fundamental shift are certainly not unprecedented... The distinguishing features of such transitional periods are a mixing and blending of cultures and a plurality or parallelism of intellectual and spiritual worlds.

These are periods when all consistent value systems collapse, when cultures distant in time and space are discovered or rediscovered. They are periods when there is a tendency to quote, to imitate and to amplify, rather than to state with authority or integrate. New meaning is gradually born from the encounter, or the intersection, of many different elements.

\* \* \*

Today, this state of mind... is called post-modernism. For me, a symbol of that state is a Bedouin mounted on a camel and clad in traditional robes under which he is wearing jeans, with a

transistor radio in his hands and an ad for Coca-Cola on the camel's back. I am not ridiculing this, nor am I shedding an intellectual tear over the commercial expansion of the West that destroys alien cultures.

I see it rather as a typical expression of this multicultural era, a signal that an amalgamation of cultures is taking place. I see it as proof that something is happening, something is being born, that we are in a phase when one age is succeeding another, when everything is possible...

The dizzying development of...science, with its unconditional faith in objective reality and its complete dependency on general and rationally knowable laws, led to the birth of modern technological civilization. It is the first civilization in the history of the human race that spans the entire globe and firmly binds together all human societies, submitting them to a common global destiny...

At the same time, however, the relationship to the world that modern science fostered and shaped now appears to have exhausted its potential. It is increasingly clear that, strangely, the relationship is missing something.

It fails to connect with the most intrinsic nature of reality, and with natural human experience. It is now more of a source of disintegration and doubt than a source of integration and meaning. It produces what amounts to a state of schizophrenia: man as an observer is becoming completely alienated from himself as a being.

Classical modern science described only the surface of things, a single dimension of reality. And the more dogmatically science treated it as the only dimension, as the very essence of reality, the more misleading it became. Today, for instance, we may



know immeasurably more about the universe than our ancestors did, and yet, it increasingly seems they knew something more essential about it than we do, something that escapes us...

And thus today we find ourselves in a paradoxical situation. We enjoy all the achievements of modern civilization that have made our physical existence on this Earth easier in so many important ways. Yet we do not know exactly what to do with ourselves, where to turn.

The world of our experiences seems chaotic, disconnected, confusing. There appear to be no integrating forces, no unified meaning, no true inner understanding of phenomena on our experience of the world. Experts can explain anything in the objective world to us, yet we understand our own lives less and less. In short, we live in the post-modern world, where everything is possible and almost nothing is certain...

Cultural conflicts are increasing and are understandably more dangerous today than at any other time in history.

The end of the era of rationalism has been catastrophic: armed with the same super-modern weapons, often from the same suppliers and followed by television cameras, the members of various tribal cults are at war with one another...

Politicians are rightly worried by the problem of finding the key to ensure the survival of a civilization that is global and at the same time clearly multicultural; how generally respected mechanism of peaceful co-existence can be set up, and on what set of principles they are to be established.

\* \* \*

These questions have been highlighted with particular urgency by the two most important political events in the second half of the 20th century: the collapse of colonial hegemony and the fall of communism. The artificial world order of the past decades has collapsed and a new, more just, order has not yet emerged. The central political task of the final years of this century, then, is the creation of a new model of co-existence among the various cultures, peoples, races and religious spheres within a single interconnected civilization. This task is all the more urgent because other threats to contemporary humanity brought about by one-dimensional development of civilization are growing more serious all the time.

Many believe this task can be accomplished through technical means... It is clearly necessary to invent organizational structures appropriate to the present multicultural age. But such efforts are doomed to failure if they do not grow out of

something deeper, out of generally held values.

This, too, is well known. And in searching for the most natural source for the creation of a new world order, we usually look to an area that is the traditional foundation of modern justice and a great achievement of the modern age: to a set of values that - among other things - were first declared in the American Declaration of Independence. I am referring to respect for the unique human being and his or her liberties and inalienable rights and the principle that all power derives from the people. I am, in short, referring to the fundamental ideas of modern democracy.

\* \* \*

A modern philosopher once said: "Only a God can save us now."

Yes, the only real hope of people today is probably a renewal of our certainty that we are rooted in the Earth and, at the same time, the cosmos.

This awareness endows us with the capacity for self-transcendence. Politicians at international forums may reiterate a thousand times that the basis of the new world order must be universal respect for human rights, but it will mean nothing as long as this imperative does not derive from the respect of the miracle of being, the miracle of the universe, the miracle of nature, the miracle of our own existence. Only someone who submits to the authority of the universal order and of creation, who values the right to be a part of it and a participant in it, can genuinely value himself and his neighbors, and thus honor their rights as well.

It logically follows that, in today's multicultural world, the truly reliable path to co-existence, to peaceful co-existence and creative co-operation, must start from what is at the root of all cultures and what lies infinitely deeper in human hearts and minds than political opinion, convictions, antipathies or sympathies: it must be rooted in self-transcendence.

Transcendence as a hand reached out to those close to us, to foreigners, to the human community, to all living creatures, to nature, to the universe; transcendence as a deeply and joyously experienced need to be in harmony even with what we ourselves are not, what we do not understand, what seems distant from us in time and space, but with which we are nevertheless mysteriously linked because, together with us, all this constitutes a single world. Transcendence as the only real alternative to extinction. ✱

# The Swift Years

*Calm days,  
The Swift years  
Forgotten.*

*Taigi.*

**F**ifteen years ago roshi Kapleau suggested that we should come to Montreal to start a Center. He said it would be a good place to do so because he felt there was a great spiritual need here. There was already a small group of his students in Montreal with a zendo in a rented house on Marlow Street, but he suggested we should try to buy a larger place so that sesshin could be held there.

Roshi Kapleau is now eightytwo years old and lives in retirement in Florida. There was a big celebration held in Rochester for his eightieth birthday, but unfortunately Albert and I were on holiday in England at the time. When Bodhin mentioned to Albert during a telephone conversation that roshi Kapleau would be in Rochester for a few weeks early this summer we realised we now had the opportunity for a visit. We were scheduled for a weekend in Kingston at the end of June and Alan Travers kindly agreed to drive us to Rochester - a marathon stint of eight hours driving there and back for him.

Roshi Kapleau now has parkinson's disease and we expected to find a very sick man. When he came out of his rooms to greet us he did look frail and I hugged him rather gingerly, but his returning hug was as strong as ever, and from that point on one saw past the frailty to the same strong will and wry humour we had known for so many years. When we asked him how he was he said, Well, I can't help thinking that whoever wrote those lines "grow old with me, the best is yet to be," must have been about twentyfive! Shortly after we had settled down in his quarters, someone came in to ask if we would like tea, offering a choice of green tea, herb tea or black tea. I said immediately, black tea please, and roshi Kapleau laughed and said, ah yes, proper tea! On one of our early visits to Rochester green tea had been served and I had asked if there wasn't any "proper tea." After that black tea was always proper tea.

We sat and chatted, sharing news of family and sangha. Albert and Alan told him about their trip to Korea and Japan and they compared how they had found Japan with how it had been when roshi Kapleau was there in the fifties. Inconsequential talk really, just words to rest on while we sat together. Roshi Kapleau mentioned a Rochester member who was just turning seventyfive and how they were going to have a party. The person concerned is a very rich man and has given a great deal of support to the Center from its beginning. He said they wanted to give him a present, but what do you give someone who has everything? And then, with perfect timing, after a slight pause, gave his crooked little smile and said, sympathy!

We talked about sesshin, our need for more space in Montreal, the noise of summer sesshin. We reminisced over the noises that were part of sesshin in Rochester - the parades and bands almost directly outside the zendo, the endless lawn mowing, the time a group had come and sung Christmas carols the last Friday night; and another final night of sesshin when police cars pulled up with screeching brakes and flashing lights, doors were flung open, radios blared, and as we sat in sesshin silence we heard cries of "Police, freeze you f——," as they chased someone through the Center gardens. Remembering all those times, Montreal sesshins suddenly seemed quite quiet, despite the planes!

We asked how he was liking Florida and he said he liked the heat; everyone seemed to find it too hot there in July and August, but it was just right for him. It reminded us of how Bodhin, when he was Roshi Kapleau's assistant, had nick-named him "the heat seeking missile." And Roshi said one of his favorite poems is The Cremation of Sam McGee; McGee was hunting for gold on the Arctic trails and he was always cold and he made his buddy promise that when he died he would cremate him so that he could be warm at last. And sure enough McGee dies



*Albert and Jean with Philip Kapleau in the Rochester Zen Center garden.*

and the buddy has to take the body along with him until he can find some way to cremate him. Then he arrived at the edge of a lake where an old derelict ship lay and decided to cremate his chum in the ship's boiler. So he built a fire and "The flames just soared, and the furnace roared, such a blaze you seldom see;/ And I burrowed a hole in the glowing coal, and I stuffed in Sam McGee." Then he goes off because he couldn't bare to stay and hear him sizzle! Later he came back to check, and when he opened the boiler door, there sat Sam, "And he wore a smile you could see a mile, and he said: Please close that door./ It's

fine in here, but I greatly fear you'll let in the cold and storm-/ Since I left Plumtree down in Tennessee, it's the first time I've been warm."

What we had anticipated being a very brief visit had stretched to over two and half hours and we knew we had to get going if we were going to make it back to Kingston. So we went out into the garden for some photos, and of course a little more talk, and then more hugs, this time to say good-bye. \*

# Sesshin

October  
under the cover of darkness  
the leaves fall  
without colour

The zendo has walls and windows  
chirp of the sparrow  
caw of the crow  
who is there to know  
where one leaves off  
the other begins

I am there  
in the violent swirl  
of a desert storm  
parched throat  
encrusted eye  
nowhere to go  
but into the stillness then  
the one step and the next and  
in the six directions the sun

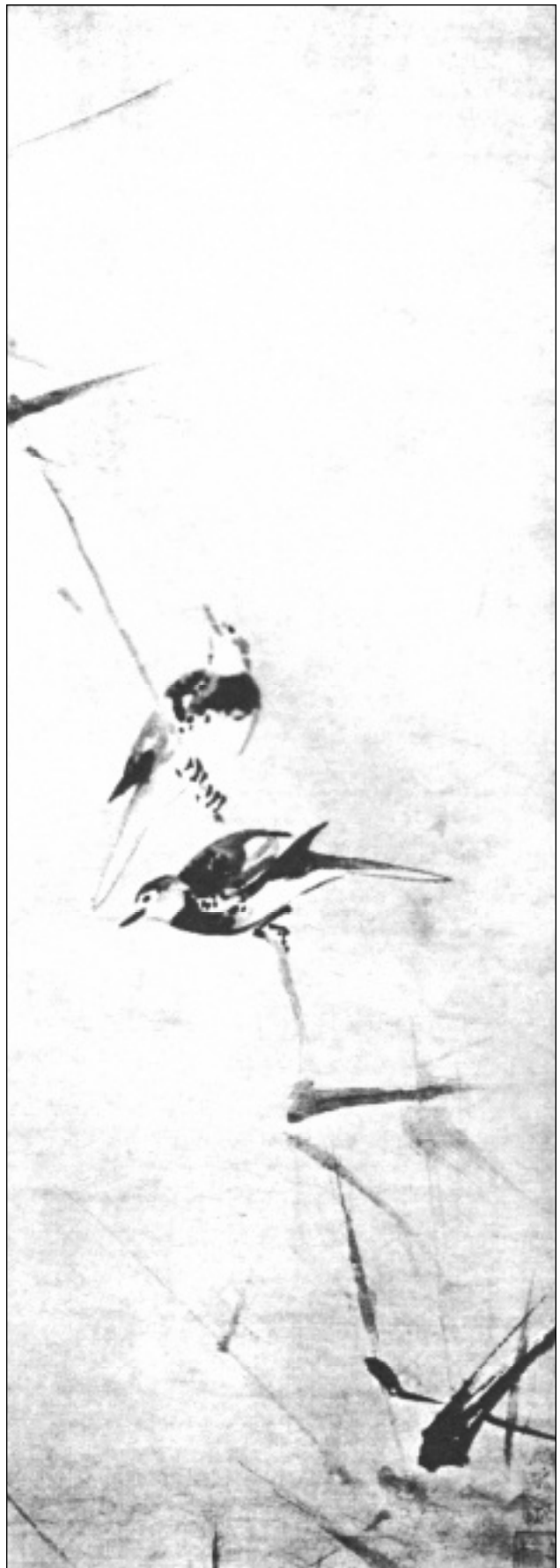
The leaves hang perilously  
from the branches  
their stems withered and dry  
about to lose contact  
to catch the wind  
to glide or tumble  
to land

28•

Does the gardener  
rake the leaves  
or shake them from the tree  
as he hears the autumn wind  
death before life  
death before life  
listen

The zendo has walls and windows  
chirp of the sparrow  
caw of the crow  
listen

*Nicola Stivaletti*



# Humour

## Comment je suis venu au Zen

Ben, t'sais *man*, j'suis un artiste, un musicien. J'étais avec le groupe Samsara, tu connais? Je jouais de la base, c'était ben l'fun, la musique, les filles, la dope, mais après un moment, après sept ans, j'ai comme ressenti un vide *man*, j'ai ressenti comme si j'avais perdu le contact avec mon vrai moi, t'sais l'feeling, il me manquait quelque chose, j'avais encore ma guitare mais j'avais comme perdu le feeling, *man*. Alors je me suis assis deux minutes et puis j'ai réfléchi *man*, ça a été heavy *man*, j'ai eu comme un flash *man*, c'était très bizarre, j'peux pas l'expliquer mais mon esprit a comme ressenti le grand vide cosmique, quelque chose de too much. Ça fait que je ne savais pas quoi faire avec ça pis c'est là que j'ai vu le mot ZEN écrit sur le mur, en fait c'était le mot NEZ mais j'étais comme à terre la tête à l'envers, ça devait être à cause de mon flash que j'avais eu avant... ça fait que je pensais (je ne suis pas sûr si je pensais vraiment ou si c'était encore l'effet de mon flash) que ça me disait quelque chose ça, le mot ZEN, pi qu'il devait y avoir une grande bonne raison que j'avais vu ZEN au lieu de NEZ, ça fait que je me suis informé autour, j'ai appelé mes chums pi je leur ai demandé si ça leur disait quelque chose, pi un jour y en a un qui m'a parlé de la place ici, pi je suis venu, pi je trouve ça too much.

*Man*, j'entends de la musique toujours dans ma tête, plus je suis tranquille, plus je trippe *man*. Le Zen c'est too much. J'ai juste hâte que le grand chef me laisse entrer dans le zendo, je sais que j'vais la catcher vite l'affaire, j'ai un don pour les flashes moi, *man*. Le vide pi moi on se connaît déjà *man*.

Johnny "Beat" Blanchette

## A Mundane Koan

It's an early autumn afternoon. You're walking down the street musing on nothing in particular. The air is soft, the sun warm and the sky has that kind of supernatural swimming pool blueness in which you nonchalantly enjoy a metaphorical bath. You float, off-guard. And then it happens: down to earth reality appears to you in the guise of two legs, two probing eyes and a big swaggering smile that ejects teeth all over the face. A person you know but haven't seen in eons.

I literally bumped into her. It was too late to use my usual evasion tactics. I knew, even before she opened her mouth, that after the mandatory exchange of politeness (how are you, etc.), I was in for the unavoidable question.

"SO WHAT'S NEW?" I heard her say trying unsuccessfully to restrain the triumphant tone in her voice. "How much time do you have?" I replied and for once not unhappy with my snappy retort. "The last time I saw you was three or four years ago. It might really take some time." We laughed. I was relieved, but not for long. The girl was persistent, downright stubborn. She shot back with a quick follow-up question, a variation on the same theme: "So what are you doing these days?" I thought fast. My mind remained blank. A blankness filled with the trivial things that happen in the everyday life of an ordinary person not recently divorced or starring in her own t.v. program. A trivial life with nothing special. "Nothing special", I said. And feeling that this dumb answer could be interpreted as somewhat impolite, I added hastily, "I am still writing". Oh, she said, her eyes looking suddenly vague. I can sense it when a person is slightly annoyed. It was her turn to go blank. It must have been the same answer I gave her three or four years ago. At least, she was polite enough not to ask when my work would be published.

Seizing the dead moment I turned the spotlight on her. "And you. What's new with you?" That is what she had been waiting for. Judging from her eyes, shining with that decisive and winning glow again, I knew she had an answer to this damn question. Great news were coming soon.

While she was expounding in minute and intimate detail about what an awful ordeal it was to be the new owner of a big old centennial cottage in the Eastern Townships, my mind began to travel to a parallel world. It landed in a dokusan room where a Zen master sat on an olympic mound of unshakeable cushions. He kindly asked me, with all the good manners of a person who was learned in the art of spiritual etiquette, "How is your practice?" There it was, the same damn question in its dokusan manifestation. What would happen if I give him the mundane answer I wondered, dimly aware that the girl in front of me had started her narration about the money you need for renovations etc. etc. After all, nirvana is samsara, isn't it? And everyday mind is the way... Intentionally allowing my voice to project profound philosophical innuendo, I heard myself say : "Oh, the usual thing, nothing special." He looked at me. I felt awkward. It now seemed too flat. Didn't leave much leeway for further conversation. So I added: "I am still sitting." "Where?" he asked abruptly. I could assume he was not referring to the cushions in my bedroom. That put an end to my everyday chitchat. I mumbled and then became mute. Time for the bell. Back to reality.

Meanwhile my long lost acquaintance was waiting for me to say something to close the encounter. "Well, I'm pleased to hear that you've found a good seat...I mean a good house... I mean I hope it's unshakeable..." Dumb, real dumb. I received a bemused look and the ironical reply "everything is impermanent you must know that". With a quick "farewell", she sped on.

Geez! That's unfair. I am the one just back from a sesshin. I lacked vigilance. Zen masters are all over the place. They hide themselves behind ordinary people. Next time I go for a walk, I must be careful. Whoever comes along with a koanesque inquiring look is to be systematically avoided. If that's not possible, I should have a set of answers ready whatever the circumstances. For instance, if I'm asked "what's new?", I immediately shoot back "you!" Funny and direct, but maybe a little impertinent. Or maybe something like "every moment is new." No, that's too philosophical, sounds pretentious. What about: "I've got a terminal disease." Too brutal. Or this: "I fell in love." Too intimate. Perhaps a zen like answer. Someone asks what's new, you rear back and give out a big loud KWATZ; you bow, you leave. May not be very civilized, but it certainly demonstrates where you stand. On the lunatic fringe of society; which is probably what they're thinking of you in the first place. It is the only way to explain why they keep tormenting you with that question. The world is full of compassionate people who want to help you. Rejoice! That's the good news! \*

#### Avis aux membres

Dorénavant les personnes qui arrivent en retard à la journée de méditation du dimanche ne seront pas admises. Leur arrivée tardive dérange trop les personnes présentes. Donc veuillez noter que la séance de méditation commence à 8 hres le matin.

From now on people late on a one day sitting will not be admitted. Their late arrival is very disturbing for the people already there. So please note that the sitting begins at 8 am.

## Avis aux membres

Veillez s.v.p. indiquer à l'endos de votre chèque s'il est fait en paiement de vos cotisations mensuelles, d'un sesshin ou si c'est une contribution volontaire. Lorsque vous changez d'adresse, veuillez le noter sur une feuille séparée.

When you make a check for the Center, could you please indicate if the amount is to pay for your monthly fees, for a sesshin or if it is a voluntary contribution. When you change address, could you also indicate it on a separate sheet, please.

## Tokusan's Favourite

At long last we are going to reveal to you, our beloved readers, the reason why Tokusan went with such eager haste to the kitchen with his bowls. Simply for Tamari Basil Dressing:

1 cup vegetable oil  
1/2 cup water  
6 tbsp. tamari  
1 tbsp. basil  
1tbsp. tahini  
1 tbsp. honey  
1tbsp vinegar  
1tsp. onion powder

Blend well, and pour over just about anything; salad, vegetables, grains. . . . turning a plain meal into a feast. Just ask Tokusan!

## Les petits péchés de Tokusan.

Enfin dévoilé, pour vous chers lecteurs, ce pourquoi Tokusan, transportant son bol, se rendit à la cuisine avec tant d'enthousiasme: C'était pour aller y chercher de la vinaigrette au basilic et au tamari.

Vinaigrette au basilic et au tamari.

1 T. d'huile  
1/2 T. d'eau  
6 c. à table de tamari  
1 c. à table de basilic  
1 c. à table de tahini  
1 c. à table de miel  
1 c. à table de vinaigre  
1 c. à thé de poudre d'oignons

Mélanger au mélangeur et utiliser avec à peu près n'importe quoi: salade, légumes, riz et autres céréales... Cela transforme un repas ordinaire en un somptueux festin.

# 1995

## January

Evening Dec. 31 at 8 PM New Year's Eve Ceremony

## February

Saturday 4 Workshop

Sunday 5 One day sitting

Wednesday 8, 15 Beginners' Course

Friday evening 17/24 Seven day sesshin

## March

Wednesday 1 Beginners' Course

Saturday 4 Workshop

Sunday 5 One day sitting

Wednesday 8, 15, 22, 29 Beginners' Course

Thursday evening 16/19 Three day sesshin

## April

Saturday 1 Workshop

Sunday 2 One day sitting

Thursday evening 13/17 Four day sesshin

Wednesday 5, 12, 19, 26 Beginners' Course

## May

Saturday 6 Workshop

Sunday 7 One day sitting followed by Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 10, 24, 31 Beginners' Course

Saturday 27 Workday

## June

Wednesday 6 Beginners' Course

Thursday evening 8/13 Three day sesshin

Friday evening 23/25 Two day sesshin

Thursday 29 / Sunday 1 Kingston

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The moon's the same old moon,  
The flowers exactly as they were,  
Yet I have become the thingness  
Of all things I see!

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