

Roll Your Own Religion

2022 Edition

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Note that other translations I particularly now enjoy are the ESV (English Standard version) and the New King James Version (NKJV). Each has its own what it says, and its style.

Opening Images

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Introduction

I want a simple, accessible, clear description of what it means to live and die within Reality on the planet Earth. I want a place for a description of the universe. I want to create a sacred space.

Understanding is great. I want to know what I can do with it.

Philosophy seems to be interesting. I need to know more. I'll introduce my own simple definition of philosophy for now, one which I think will be workable for some time.

I've encountered some religions. They try to address human existence, work with truth, and know art, symbolism, and ritual. They know motion, and stillness; and, to put into practice. I value them and have drawn from them.

Music and literature and the arts can also work with these factors. It is part of Reality to do so. And there are many aspects to life.

And, What is Reality?

Atheism as a philosophy may not be completely satisfactory, because it is not descriptive enough, or because it overlooks certain features of existence. 'Atheistic' may carry meaning that needs to be worked with. Atheism does not describe either ritual or a sacred space; but there may be a way to approach religious meaning without dwelling on these.

Or maybe it depends on how one uses the word. I prefer 'non-theistic' because that makes no final statement, yet has a standpoint and potentially indicates a practice; and it engages the meaning in a certain way.

There are atheists I respect and admire, and I have drawn from them.

In this short book I describe what may be an innovative approach to developing your own religion, in simplicity, probing the depths, acknowledging the profound. I use both text and photographs.

Some may decide to roll their own religion under the guidance of or within the purview of an existing religion. Others may decide to roll something entirely their own.

I practice Zen, and you'll see some of that in this book.

When I compare it to the Zen sutras, is it a feeble light? No doubt. But the book is meant not to replace the sutras, or any religion for that matter; only to open the door to a resonant domain.

This book is just an outline, a framework, with some material etched, with some material sketched in, with other material detailed. It is rough-hewn. It is a snapshot. It is meant to be refined or extended by others more expert and by you.

Definitions

These definitions are my own.

Reality is this: “What is really happening” or “that which is most profound” or “the essential nature of the world”. And there is a deep sense, corresponding with some of this — a Reality that one can touch, and likely enter. (Here these might be somewhat distinguishable, and you have to see how the word is used, in context.) You could start with: everything, attributes, how everything within everything relates, and what causes what. You could think in terms of “things”, “no-thing”, “being”, or “nothingness”. Or, each of these is something to consider: a stone, a flower, a glass, a table, a concept, a process, a principle, a galaxy, a planet, an ant, space, gravity, an electron, an electromagnetic field, intelligence, perception; the relative and the absolute; the objective and the subjective; a form, a mind, and a spirit; the universal and the specific; the interplay of surface and depth; the nature of existence and being, or neither being nor non-being; wisdom; and Buddha, Tao, and God. If there is anything beyond perception or naming, it, too, is included. So then what do some of the visible forms listed here become, in context of the deeper sense, reality? There’s another sense to the word — simply to see things as they really are. Both the deeper sense and this (also profound) sense then work with each other. Another way to view this is that it could be seen that just this world is reality; any sense of the deeper is simply one’s unfolding realization of its nature.

Truth is this: That which describes or points to reality and/or Reality. It also is the flower of Reality. It also incorporates Active Principle. Sometimes in its use it is synonymous with Reality. One should note Wisdom.

Realization is this: The recognition, incorporation, or manifestation of Truth and Reality. Realization may be within your own mind, or in and through the visible world. It is sometimes easier and more meaningful to point to “I realized such and such”, and to work with the realized, than to define realization in other words. It is from that which is real to in your own mind, or as shown in and through the visible world. Or, consider that which is real, in your own mind.

Knowledge is this: If you’re outside on a clear day then you know directly whether or not the sun has risen. If you’re in a room with no windows then you do not know directly. If you know what time the sun should rise and you have an accurate clock then you know indirectly. If you do not have a clock but if you have a telephone and someone trustworthy calls with a report then you know indirectly. And so on. How do you define knowledge other than by example? The table is black. The telephone is ringing. Then, it is how this interlocks, in your mind. And, in another sense, knowledge is a representation of the world, — as entities, structure, causes, and relationship.^{1, 2, 3, 4}

Meaning is this: If the telephone rings it means that someone wants to speak with you — unless it’s a wrong number. How do you define meaning other than by example? The black table supports the glass of water. A black object does not reflect much if any visible light. If it isn’t black color — black color itself. The table is hard and level. The water is fluid and is always level. What is a table? The dictionary definition is pretty good. What are four legs? The dictionary definition uses the word “support”. The dictionary definition for “support” says to hold up. The dictionary definition for “hold” says to keep or sustain in a specified position. The dictionary definition for “position” says a place

where something has been put or a particular way in which someone or something is placed or arranged. The dictionary definition for “place” is a particular position or point in space. We’re getting circular. The dictionary definition for “point” is a particular spot, place, or position in an area. We’re continuing our circular pattern. Besides which, there are 18 definitions for “point”. Which one do you use? And so on. What is a glass of water? What is a reflection? What is light? You can show, or point to, or describe. And define. Or indicate, or present before me. Definitions can point to meaning, or illuminate. But the point of to show or to describe or to define is either (1) Awareness, and to work and play with meaning and function. Or (2) Art. This can be subtle! And “to point to” something may direct to realization, or illuminate. And the meaning is not in the definition — meaning is innate to the mind (but also applies to the physical world). And, I can figure meaning myself, too. And meaning is also tied to knowing — or what is knowing. Here it is this: The black table supports the glass of water. The water is fluid and is always level. Her hand was poised next to the glass. She had not moved.

Understanding is this: What you know of Truth and Reality. It may be simple or complex. It should be accurate. It should be directed by wisdom. It should be rooted in meaning.

Compassion is this: That which cares for all things and guides them away from suffering.

Love is this: That which cares for all things and nurtures them.

Wisdom is this: That which leads to a better grasp of reality, and greater understanding, and deeper insight into what to do, or how to navigate, both by you and by others. Although it may be more of a destination, or a place to reside; and as such, incorporate aspects of these features. It can be direction, within and as a place to reside. It loves the truth. It is compassionate. It knows balance. It understands good, bad, and evil but is not trapped by them. Its source may be experience, instruction, insight, or a pattern. It really is ineffable, and my descriptions here do not indicate it fully.

Philosophy is this:⁵ It encapsulates your understanding, and talks with specifics. It is one way you explain things, it is one way that you seek wisdom, and it may describe what your love is, or focus; or it may be the love of wisdom.⁶ It is one way that you observe and describe the world. It may be what a set of values are, it is a stance, and it may be an approach to life. It may be a framework, a detailed system, or informal. It probably incorporates views.⁷

Sacred is this: Something that is set aside as particular to your religion. Or, something that is special, and should be considered carefully. But there is a sense, ‘sacred’, that cannot be defined.

Ritual is this: What you do on a periodic or occasional basis to celebrate or to focus. It reminds you and others like you of aspects of your religion or of your particular religious insight; or it may be an expression of these. It may incorporate the metaphorical. It may incorporate the sacred. Ritual is something done at certain repeated times incorporating mantras, prayers, or sermons; or meditation or worship; or incorporating similar themes or structure.

Practice in this context is this: How you seek Truth and Reality and how you manifest Truth and Reality, and work with them; it also is one way that you seek wisdom. Or, it may not be so much to seek as to uncover what is already present. Your practice might incorporate study, meditation, prayer, worship, daily life, and other things, including sacred ritual.

Religion is this:8 Understanding; philosophy, theology, or direct description; teachings; discourses; insight; plus wisdom plus practice. And stories and accounts; and direct experience. Realization, enlightened activity, relief of dilemma, or worship results.9, 10, 11

Intelligence is this: The ability to put things together and to figure things out. Or, the ability to perceive something with insight, or to perceive its essence and scope.

Stupidity is this: Not quite comprehending, or apparent lack of intelligence. But what are ‘stupid’ and ‘intelligent’? Which can perceive, and work with, Truth? Time t. (What is the true source of intelligence?) And, what does it mean to truly not understand something? Is there danger in this?

Definitions: Used in language, that which defines or tells about a term or thing in other terms or ideas, and points to or indicates meaning. Meanings to words are usually shared, and definitions can help this. Gesture, diagram, or material indication, or an example of instance-of, can also supply definition and meaning. Entire worlds may be the reality under a definition, that is not seen at first or indicated directly in the definition itself, although these might occur to one, and one should work with the actual reality and meaning. One doesn’t want to see a definition as a reified, separate specification or category (although specification and category can be useful), and certainly not the thing itself, although it might indicate or state an idea or a description of the thing. A definition can only define, tell about, or indicate the actual concept, thing, idea, or reality. A good definition might indicate the fusion of the abstract and the concrete, but this must really be penetrated and seen in mind. Most definitions will reference other definitions, words, and actualities. A definition can be useful in becoming familiar with the reality of this or that, in this world, and any worlds, universes, hells, celestial places, etc. The meaning to a definition is only indicated; and this is one way that a definition should be used – the meaning or actuality as apperceived in one’s mind is the reality; and it may be possible to take this apperception deeper. Then, to work even more deeply and adeptly. One can invent one’s own terms, meanings, and definitions.

Example: noumenon, ‘a thing of reason’, a term invented by philosopher Emmanuel Kant.

Example: pratityasamutpada, Sanskrit, ‘dependent arising’, a term used to describe the world, used in Buddhism.

Example: God, ‘Absolute Being, the Creator’, a term used by Christianity, and (as far as I know) in ways or terms (such as “Allah”) by other theistic religions such as Islam..

Example: one cannot eat the word ‘apple’ or ‘rice’ or ‘flour’ for food; one needs the thing, substance, or food itself. Nevertheless, the word can be useful to indicate, and communicate, and obtain the apple, rice, or flour, or express need for it. The word can point to meaning, and can indicate reality, which is not to be discriminated. Likewise, actual space is not contained in the word – it must be noticed.

My definitions do not form a clear hierarchy. This is by design, and the nature of things. I think that meaningful understanding is, in one way, a network of cross-connects, and that there can be mutually supporting ideas without being circular.12 The point is to get to a place of meaning.

1. Then/And, one could discuss epistemology, about “the structure and theory of knowledge”.

2. Then, too, one might consider: “Know where the ledge is.” And, “Knowledge does a ledge.” Contrast, “Knowledge is a ledge.” See: work, effort, effortless effort-putting. From a Zen perspective, proper function here is enlightenment.
3. How does knowledge relate to ideas, theory, and practice? Realization? Knowing?
4. The second sense here can be useful, as a way to work in the world. And to have knowledge of certain things, or function, can be important. This much is true! And it is natural to discuss knowledge. However, an interpretation of knowledge also can be problematic, a view where one’s being is based on (especially factual) knowledge, a bound premise. I saw a play once, I think citing Greek mythology, where the men drank from a certain flow of water, and found that they were unable to stop drinking, they were unable to satisfy themselves, and that became their life. This is unlike enlightened activity — in enlightened activity one is aware, and unattached, and able to direct effort, and directed to realization, and centered on spiritual truth. In say Zen when one is thirsty one drinks water (or, now I am tired, now I am rested); when it is time to respond, one responds; when it is time to meditate, one does zazen. (And eventually one’s entire life becomes, in a sense, “the zazen — (that which is) zazen”, as what it is and ongoing; and it is still true that zazen is zazen.) But knowledge in the second sense certainly can be part of the Zen path, and so can study, along with meditation; the goal is realization.
5. The dictionary, in its primary definition, ties philosophy to “the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence”; but only as a study, especially as an academic discipline. The New Oxford American Dictionary.
6. This then folds into the domain, objects, and subjects-objects, of your philosophy — and world — becoming active principle. Note that this itself may imbue philosophy with either a religious or an active meaning, inclusive of both. And this religious meaning would coincide with the other aspects of religion, presented below. While not strictly separate, philosophy carries its own type of feel and inquiry, as does religion a different or similar type.
7. How does all of this this relate to meaning, or theory? Theology?
8. I consider the primary dictionary definition for religion to be inadequate, as it is for theistic religion only; and it’s still not that descriptive. And the more general definition given, also not that descriptive, is circular. The New Oxford American Dictionary.
9. Note that I’m relating philosophy and religion. But again this is to then imbue philosophy, here, with religious gravity, illumination, and import, and vice-versa; and then also in a way so that one’s “religious” viewpoint on a, b, c is still a valid expression. (But one’s philosophy should not be only dry and tedious, in any case. It could incorporate many textures, and could be at one time meticulous and at another spontaneous. But that might tie back again to another aspect of one’s religion — one’s practice! And religion does not always have to sound religious, especially as expressed in philosophical terms. Yet one’s religious insight can permeate one’s philosophy.) Then, to here consider these (philosophy and religion, and wisdom and practice) as separate, strictly independent entities is a mistake, even they are their own type of thing. With insight, one sees that this is true of the other aspects of religion, too.

10. Here I mean to say simply, that the philosophy is sourced from, or is very much tied to, your religion. Although one can get started, to orient, by drawing a rough philosophical framework, and then consider religious insight.

11. Or religion could simply be, "philosophy put into action", or "philosophy in reality (not just intellectual grasp; that is, it is a working function of mind and being)". But philosophy could be this, in any case. This would remove the "separate" sense that religion sometimes carries itself with, or connotes. Or, conversely, you could characterize what you do not as religion, but to act in accord simply "with the way things are". Each viewpoint is valid in its own way. You could decide either of these, or that there are aspects to each of these viewpoints that one could consider relevant, each in their own sphere, or at one or another time. Often, though, it seems that in religion some sort of ritual is involved, and symbolic or simile importance given — and this could be seen, not to set it apart and separate, but simply to typify it. Also, praxis. Yet there remain various modes, and this is not entirely separable, in philosophy. As a result, religion in this sense is interwoven, not separate from philosophy or stance, yet with highlights that distinguish it. Some religious interpretations might have more of a faith/life emphasis, or teachings/living aspect; while others theory/praxis.

12. See The Society Of Mind, "Prologue", p. 17, for some of this.

Core Values

Look for Truth. Look for meaning. Look to center.

Discover the world around you.

Nurture the human spirit. Be at some responsible sense of liberty. Be fair. Be tough. Be sensitive. Be supple. Be fluid. Be resilient. Be creative. Be loving. Be compassionate. Be healthy. Work, develop insight. Work for the benefit of others.^{1, 2} Let children, youth, and adults find themselves in the right place.

Consider yourself, others, and the ecosystem in all that you do.

Be serious. Have fun.

Roll your own religion.

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1. There are a number of factors, and difficulties.
 2. Likely, a search can begin from many standpoints; and it has to start with the individual position.

Pattern

Tree.

Seed to sapling to tree.

New leaf to young leaf to mature leaf to dead leaf to fallen leaf to no leaf to new leaf. . . .

Roots to trunk to branches to leaves.

Trees last a long time. There is the interplay of tree and lightning. Many trees are healthy and live for a long time. Trees are a powerful metaphor for life and of image. How do trees indicate ‘existence’?

Walk around a tree, or look at it from. . . perspective, angle. Is it the same tree? (The subjective.) Yet the tree still is there. (The objective.)^{1, 2} What persists, what is still present; and what is fixed, or is unchanging? What is it that is the tree? That is you? That is the space between the tree and you? For the subjective, the objective, the tree, the sun, and you — the magic of integration — and, the reality of time. Being-time!

Trees need water, ground, nutrients, air, sun, and space.

Trees are fascinating and express themselves in seemingly endless repetition and variety. Color. Texture. Shape. Size. Subtlety. Wonder!

You recognize a pattern.

1. But what is reality from the standpoint of the tree? Sun, air, space, water; height, trunk, branch, leaf; wind, movement. So the tree itself has its own view, and the domain becomes “subjective”. And you may have already changed your own viewpoint or understanding, as you walk around the tree. Consider: subject, subject-object, standpoint, subjective, object, objective, object as subject. “The tree blows in the wind.” There’s a particular meaning, interplay, and resonance to each of these that I’m referencing, and it leads to a fluid, dynamic understanding of things. This “puts everything in their right place”, and is in accord with the way things are. I need to work out details of this myself, and to apply it. Note also the interplay of existence and non-existence, from a Buddhist perspective. That is, the tree is in neither existence (because it has no self-nature) nor in non-existence (because of the aggregates). The illusion of “fixedness”. The Middle Way speaks to this, the view that understanding “neither existence nor non-existence/nothingness” as leading to see reality in all things. See the glossary in *Manifestation Of The Tathagata*.

2. I say, “objective”. But take tree, sky, sun, building, person, sidewalk, path, road. (In describing the objective world) we use these terms for convenience; they themselves are not the reality — and then they are: Zen realization. Then, one can consider the actual act of going in the present moment, and what our concepts might be of another’s act of going. So there’s a subtle aspect to how one can

consider these features — tree, person, sidewalk, path.(For more on gone and not gone and the real act of going, see Nagarjuna’s Fundamental Wisdom Of The Middle Way, translated by Nishijima, chapter 2.)You can play with these terms. For instance, with tree, “shade” might be the (concrete) reality, involving the subjective (“the tree (is its) branches rustling”, a person in the shade of the tree). That is, the concrete world starts somewhere, and can take objective form, along with subjective form. Can you break it down so as to consider the subjective and the objective, to consider the subjective but not the objective, to not consider the subjective but only the objective, or to consider neither the subjective nor the objective? (I need to practice this myself.)Then one can ask, Where does one start, given the importance of one’s (own) subjective reality, and that of others, and how these intersect the objective? What is the setting in terms of the “concrete”? How fluid is the “concrete”-type reality? How structured?

Key Words To Work With

Sustainability.

Balance.1 Clarity of intent.2 Proportion. Unfolding. Nurture. Care.

Survival. Wonder.

1. But how do you tell where balance is? — there is a certain sense to this. You might sit, stand, or (from center) rotate and step sideways, 106 degrees.

2. But how do you find a new way?

Key Words To Work With, With The Right Balance Or At The Right Time

Simplicity. Complexity.

Equilibrium. Change.

Growth. Sustenance. Contraction.

Cooperation. Competition. Teaching. Discourse. Study.

Realization. Insight.

Society. Solitude.

Joy. Sadness.

Permanence. Impermanence.

Strength. Flexibility. Steadfastness. Yielding.

Action. Stillness. Observation. Reflection.

Strategy. Tactic. Method. Chance. Cause.

Intelligence. Awareness.

Science. Mathematics. Music. Art. Aesthetic. Reason. Intuition. Paradox.

Rhythm. Pattern.

Key Questions To Ask About Anything You Encounter

What is it? Where does it come from? Where does it go? What does it do? What does it look like? What does it touch? What is it in? What does it contain?

There is the Sanskrit word kutas: What is it, what is its essence, how is it interconnected with other things, what is its basis, what is its extent, what contains it, what is relational with it, what does it contain, what does it referent, and so forth.

Things To Think About

Enjoy surviving, thinking, learning, creating, conversing, music, silence, stillness, and motion.

What effect does my life have on other humans? Animals? Plants? The ground? The environment? Everything else? What effect does everything else have on me?

There's a certain simplicity in enjoying fairness, responsibility, community, individual freedom, privacy, sharing, and a peaceable life. Within this context people can sustain themselves, contribute to and enjoy their natural environment, contribute to and enjoy their created environment, develop ideas, express themselves, compete, and cooperate. Then, What profound questions can one ask within this context?

Treat other people using skillful means, ready to respond with insight and assistance. Be sure to take into account reality.

There are several ways to cross a stream on foot. Wade across it. Walk across it on stones. Walk across it on a bridge.

Or — don't cross the stream!

Forgive and forget. Forgive and protect. Forgive in advance. Forgive yourself.

But what is the referent?

Treat anything that is not part of a larger renewable cycle with great care.

Have families of sizes that make sense.

Be intelligent when you want to or when you need to. Accept and enjoy the simple at the right time.

Don't be dismayed if you think you're stupid. Instead, look to simplicity.

Remember — it might be an occasional rule to show lovingkindness to others, as well as to love yourself without thinking of the self. What does it mean to show lovingkindness? It may not be so simple but may be directly understood. Here your own insight is important. And, religion can provide further insight and guidance. What is true lovingkindness? This can make it more clear what it is to provide love for oneself without thinking of the self, and what is its place. To think of the other illuminates this. But how to proceed? Look for difficulty, simplicity, and skillful means.

What are the factors of love? What if it's neither love nor hate? What is the nature of mind? Does lovingkindness differ from love?

Your religion, or aspects of it, should be sacred. Perhaps! — How does this tie to Reality? Here again the undefinable sense of ‘sacred’ is important. But what is its meaning? You have to answer this for yourself.

What if, also, the whole world, untouched, were sacred? What would you do? How would you treat it?

Should your religion also be holy? Is holy innately untouchable and without error? What “objects”, or features, if any, of your religion are holy?

How do you look to those around you? To those who came before you, or who will come after you? How do you look to yourself?

What does context mean?

Argue sometimes. Maybe. Or likely not. Remember to put it down. Land on a calm place.

Debate. Resolve. Disagree. Agree to disagree. Then what? Land on a calm place.

Discourse.

An example of Truth might be discipline. And lack of discipline may also be an expression of Truth. And what is it that shines through discipline?

An example of a truth might be to know that to present such and such, rather than to attempt to structure insight, is often more direct to realization. In this book I structure some things, where the content is left to you, and present other things, to work with. But there is a joy to working directly with the material in a religion such as Zen, and to work with it in practice, and it has a very present sense.

A black hole is the symbol of Zen Buddhism. It is inevitable at the event horizon, it sparks outside, and it is some sort of superdense inside. You cannot see it directly. It is mysterious and mathematical. It absorbs light but can be known. It is gravity.

The sun is certain to be noticed and has a non-uniform spectrum. You can't miss it. It is easy to glance at and difficult to look at (and you avert your gaze quickly). Its spectrum may be art. An image of it is art. It enables us to see. It is routinely practical. It represents both dimension and function. And work. It also represents clarity. It is one form of perception. A sunset is art.

The moon is endlessly fascinating. Like trees it is endless repetition and variety. It is routinely striking in both its presence and its absence. It represents dance, or a certain way of “to float”. It is art.

Either daylight or the dark can represent play.

Usually, 98 out of 100 is pretty good. Sometimes only 100% is sufficient. Sometimes 1% is absolute fun.

Horizons

Hour. Day. Month. Year. Ten years. One hundred years. One thousand years. Ten thousand years. One hundred thousand years. One million years. One billion years.

Use nanoseconds, milliseconds, seconds, and minutes to get to the horizons. Telescope the horizons.

Or, it could be: hours, hours, days, minutes.

Ritual

As I wrote earlier, ritual is what you do on a periodic or occasional basis to celebrate or to focus. It is an invention that you find special. It can be both serious and fun. It may be just so. It may be simple or complex. It may be creative. You should enjoy it; or it might be difficult. It may be a natural part of your practice. It may be meditation, the sound of a bell, the sound of a gong, music, a chant, a hymn, a song, a prayer, the lighting of a candle, a clap, a dance, the burning of incense, the burning of sage, the drinking of tea, or a posture. It may incorporate teachings. It may take place in your home or at a formal center. It may be done alone or with others. It should remind you of your core values, or of core truths. It also can be an expression of Truth, and to direct to insight.

The ritual of your religion should be sacred. But, what does ‘sacred’ mean? And what is religion?

You should also feel free to enjoy secular ritual.¹ Then you should ask yourself this: What is the real difference?

How does ritual introduce a feature of time? What other features of time can be incorporated, in daily life?

What is the contact of ritual and practice, and are they really separate, distinct?

1. A birthday is a ritual.

My Favorite Acronym

OODA is this: Observe. Orient. Decide. Act.

Source: A U.S. military man who gave a talk at Messiah College.

What about: Observe. Orient. Stillness.

My Religion

In the early 2000s, my religion had been this: No-Thing Mumonkan Zen Badism. More recently, I looked to this: A particular flavor of Zen Buddhism. Now it's a careful study, of depth Zen material. I'll be at this phase for a while, but things unfold. Then what? Probably Zen!

There is a lot of Zen that I find particularly compelling. This Zen is like mathematics. It is easy to intuit counting numbers and infinity. It may be difficult to formalize these. It is difficult to invent and master Calculus. Mathematics is pure, is useful, is fun, is easy to describe, is difficult to master, and touches many things.

The human mind and body know mathematics and Zen already. A 10 year old can throw and catch a baseball, which travels in a parabolic arc, without formally knowing the mathematics that describes it. A 10 year old can know that serious play requires effort and attention, without formally knowing Zen.

I need to take my practice of Zen more deeply, and I intend to look further into mathematics. I have managed 10 steps out of 1,000, I imagine.

When I was in my badism mode in the early 2000s, I did zazen for 1, 2, or 3 hours, effortlessly. It was as natural as drinking spring water.

I have done intensive solitary zazen — some while listening to Four-4 Works For Percussion Vol. 3, written by John Cage and performed by the Amadinda Percussion Group.

I find koan to be profound.

Zen art is deeply expressive; and also profound.

I have never studied with a Zen master. I have respect for both monastic and lay Zen.

In Zen it is simple. Experience is the one hand and realization is the other. Use your hands to drink a cup of tea, to use a hammer, and to share.

Some Zen is photographic in its words.

I have begun to take into account the tone of what is taught by anyone.

The music work A Un by Ushio Torikai is striking, in its resonance. It has to do with Shingon. Listen to her statements from the liner notes: "During the 1970s and early 80s I tried to gain a firm grasp on my own position in the universe through the medium of sound by going as far as possible back into the history of music, of musical instruments and of the Japanese nation itself. Part of my intention here was to reassess from a 'macro' standpoint the most minute phenomena and phenomena I had lost sight of. It seemed to me that by possessing a sense of temporal distance which far exceeded the scope of phenomenal perception, I might be able to see the outlines of the present in clearer relief. Shomyo proved to be the ideal means for me in this endeavor, and I tried to become as closely involved as I

could with the genre.” I have not meditated much to A Un, but I should. It is wonderful in either the foreground or the background.

My Poetry

This is all mine, dedicated to the universe.

ND

Naked like a snake —
Down when you frown.

Silver Image

Silver image, wall.
Can't map maybe never will.
Rage gone mad so true.

Fleeces Flies

Ship of specious guise
Spacious skies
Damn species shift.

I'm Dreaming With My Eyes Open

"I'm dreaming and my eyes are open and I cannot access the dream."

Harmony

Living peacefully.
Gazing at the wall
In unbroken harmony.

Response To Attachment-Images (17.8) #7*

Freedom is a hundred puzzles each of which is equally wonderful.
One answer is good.
One hundred answers is good.
Without attachment, find a new pattern that is good for everything and everyone.
Investigate this and you will realize all possibilities.
This can be done. It also cannot be done.

This is a response to The Society Of Mind, Section 17.8.

The Moon

I'm looking out my window

the moon, it just floats, in space...
astonishing!

Still looking out my window
the moon disappeared behind the tree (the tree obscured it) then reappeared briefly
the clouds now alternately letting it through and not...
as we rotate beneath it.

Good, Bad, Evil, And Badisms (And Good, Better, Best)

Good nurtures a tree or a flower and lets it grow.

Or, “That which nurtures a tree or a flower and lets it grow, nurtures a tree or a flower and lets it grow.” For instance, to call something “good” or “bad” may mean to separate oneself from the other. You have to be careful, I think.

Sometimes something may have an immediate effect which is disorienting so that a better orientation may be found. This may be something so intuitively compelling that you can’t deny it — and it has some impact, perhaps amazement, renewed focus, or wonder.

Badisms happen by intent. There may be an artistic component to a badism. What results from a badism? This result should make the badism worth it. Maybe a badism could happen by accident.

Time t.

I think that mistakes happen when we’re careless or when we’re learning. Some mistakes are harmless and can even be instructive. (This depends in part on what the mistake is contained in and what it touches.)

I think that we cause suffering for ourselves or for others when we make some kinds of mistakes or when we set the wrong priorities — or when we get attached to ideas that direct away from insight. Looking to Core Values is important. What is really being done?

But suffering may be only one aspect, feature, or implication.

Those who are familiar with Zen will understand what I am about to say here, about good and evil. I introduce it here mainly because today here in America the use of ‘good and evil’ seems to be applied, in a subconscious or conscious way, especially by those who work primarily in an inherited, hierarchical structure, in a way that disallows contact with others and realization for oneself, and reinforces division. Or it is in parallel with this. And it seems to deny or be void of philosophical or spiritual connection, expression, discussion, or dialogue; or discussion of Reality. Hierarchical structure can be fine, but one has to work with the material at hand, before himself or herself, whether it’s reality or the print word. It simply otherwise seems to be a trap.

First, a couple of definitions.

Good is this: 1) That which leads to health, wisdom, enthusiasm, wonder, strength, flexibility, and nurture. It may incorporate life and death, beginning and end, cycles of nature, zero, infinity, mathematics, and games. It may incorporate work, play, and art. It enjoys the search for truth and the natural order of things. Yet — what else? 2) Some might say that “good” is to have the moral attributes of God. 3) The word good also has functional meanings, in describing things, like “suitable for a purpose”, or “well-constructed”.

Evil is this: That which sets out to or intends to destroy good, or to harm. It may or may not actually do so. This is how it is often used. This word “evil” is only partly helpful, you have to consider what lies behind, it can obscure, and it can be very much a detriment. But what is really going on? And one has to consider what is seen as good. In other contexts it may mean something else. And what of the sense that the thing with the attribute “evil”, or the thing perceived “that which is (noun) evil itself”, is absolute and must be destroyed?

Bad is this: That which may compromise but not destroy good. Or, something that leads away from insight (or is this just delusion?) It is not optimal. Still, it may lead to insight. You can probably determine any number of precise meanings here.

Badism is this: Something that seems bad that is reasonably correctable and whose ill effect is inconsequential and that is intended to indicate some reality or to spark deeper insight. The badism may be a ripple or a handy blowtorch. The “bad” has been used from a firm footing. A badism has some impact and finds a new optimum.

Second, a discussion.

If you think that it’s a cosmic battle between good and evil then you’ll want to focus on that. Or, you might find yourself thinking of good, bad, mistakes, and evil in terms of views, view, cause and effect, and no-mistake.¹ Or something else, perhaps to investigate ‘name and form’. You might reformulate the problem or apply an entirely different perspective.

I might say, “I think, for a moment, that we cause bad and evil when we go against our true nature.” But it’s not so simple. We might cause suffering. We might set up causes for joy. We might get a point across. The ideas of right view, and what one sees, and what one takes as given, and one’s understanding, and one’s design on things, and actual intent (versus “intent to destroy good”) are important. The subjectivity of good, bad, and evil also plays a role, from an outside perspective viewing those coming from that premise, which for those holding the premise, results in contradiction. But it’s a problematic premise. It is still true that “what is our true nature” is fundamental.

From the premise of ‘good and evil’, sometimes it’s hard to differentiate the effects of bads and evils, and that subject/object reversal can illuminate. Then, to introduce the idea of identity is profound — identity yet recognizing differences (between things) is important.

Views in terms of good, bad, and evil can be problematic — because often it seems that someone A tries to defeat perceived evil in someone B by destroying that person — with no path and with no way out. But what is A really doing? It also seems to be true that there are disparate views on what it is that is evil. And what if someone A sees in someone B an evil that while not physically threatening is nonetheless seen as essentially threatening? In any case, you might find these involved: attack, retaliation, justice, and self-defense.

And to revisit something in the definition of “evil”. I say in the definition for evil, that the term is “only partly helpful”. But this is to grant too much. There is a flaw to the word, as it is often used in this sense — for it seems that for one who thinks in terms of ‘good and evil’, the first premise is that evil, or that which is evil, must be destroyed, it cannot be worked with, its intent is to destroy that

which is good. And this is seen as part of its intrinsic nature. Then various types of entities or beings are given this embodiment, in an absolute sense. Yielding problems, ignoring evidence, giving false characterizations, and directing away from insight. At least, there is a subtle aspect to this.

The categories of good, bad, and evil that I present in the definitions — while they straighten some things out — do not suffice, except perhaps within one's own search. That is, the meanings I give to them are mine, then, my view — and other people are looking to different essential features! This indicates one trap of a view 'good and evil'. It is possible to take a set of values or ideals, set up its opposite, and call that evil. And there are many such sets of values. You would think that to start with this recognition would lead one directly to the necessity of a nondualistic framework. But here, I guess, one has to recognize the very compelling nature of a simple dualistic line of belief or thought, "It cannot be otherwise."

And, to use "good" and "evil", good as desired, to move toward and taken on, evil to be rejected, to move away from and to be destroyed, where good is seen as or imagined as an independently-existing innate positive essence, and evil is seen as or imagined as an independently-existing innate negative essence, these sometimes seen as spiritual, and especially when seen as opposing —

"When it (reality as an ideal) is a fixed idea."

— obscures the nature of what is happening and causes problems — and leads one away from the resolution of problems, or suffering, or things that are out of place. And then the good/evil duality becomes a tool, to be applied to new realms and realities — and this tool eventually becomes self-contradictory, ignores evidence, or fails. And it usually fails to take into account the view of another. The one holding such a good/evil dualistic view may attack another for some fault or perceived threat — with the irony that this other individual or group may themselves hold a view of 'good and evil', slightly different — and also consider themselves good!

Perhaps it is fine to use the terms good or evil, as applies to various features, if one keeps in mind the subjectivity of views, as well as what the terms stand for as descriptors. It seems to me they may be used as short-hand, while keeping in mind the fact described and the things represented; and that they may be useful for one's own search, or practice. It may be fine to use the terms good or evil in applying as attributes or qualifiers, say of thoughts, attitudes, or deeds, rather than in a dualistic relationship. The important thing is not to treat them dualistically, in which case some of the problems with the terms that I've outlined evaporate. There is also the wisdom of when to use the ideas, good or evil; but I think it's better to pay attention to causation and what one is actually doing. I am wary of the terms, the way they are used; yet, it seems one can use them in a specific way that is meaningful. So these considerations can be important. I think here, too, context matters, and what is really being said. I think that you can cut yourself on the idea, "good and evil", and maybe overlook essentials, then it becomes a fundamental problem. Being aware of their meaning is different from operating from within a premise as independent opposites. Perhaps the best way to address them is through a koan, or to speak in ways that cut away false views.

But I should not be too prescriptive; your individual stance may be quite different.

I haven't really explored these, but you can consider the matter in terms of describing a state (of mind, of being), and what is done, rather than an essence (good) and an essence (evil), and see if that illuminates. You might become aware of how good and evil operate with respect to each other. (A theological question might be, does one imply the other?) You can consider the matter of "applied substance" (that one creates in one's mind), or "the relative"; and each of these could have profound meaning in ethic. To see "the relative" really helps clarify. The relative is the unfolding relative simultaneity of things, and that for this things are different among them.

In contrast to 'good and evil', things are not an essence which is being worked with, but what he or she has set up in his or her mind! That is the compassion of emptiness. Nevertheless, there are natural outcomes to things, and one should be careful of picking up the duality.

What about right and wrong? It seems that at times Zen warns even of discussion on these: I think this is said to make clear that the goal is to penetrate the matter — and one could note that to develop key insight into Zen truth means that things falls into place, without trying to develop, "from the outside" of awareness of these truths, some sort of system that one tries to superimpose on the reality. I think you can draw a rough framework, or work with right and wrong — but it may or may not always answer the actual immediate need. And you may eventually have to cut through it. Zen does seem to be very aware of clear ethics, and what sets for what conditions. That is, you can set up a rough framework, and work with it, of right and wrong, or as applies in a particular circumstance; but another goal may be to answer the need or root of the problem at any given moment, and a statement of insight might not be pulled from a library of right-and-wrong, but from insight into the dilemma, very dynamic.

But I don't want to prescribe something, only from the Zen standpoint. That is, if you feel you need to reflect on, work with, and act on right and wrong, in your own way, of course feel free to do so. You may have established some fundamentals, and get the deeper ethic. No matter what your exact viewpoint is.

In a way, to step back to the Buddhist view, maybe it's (to find this reality-awareness of the fact of right and wrong) to be "like the earth, opposing nothing" (see the Dhammapada) — where the earth serves its natural function. Again, to see not in terms of independent opposites, but as a dynamic — and, recognizing problematic outcomes that at times can be very serious; but with a subtle viewpoint that the problem is a lack of ability to see into something as it is, or the problem is an insistence on seeing things and the world as fixed, or a failure to understand the implications of the relative. That is, once you get acquainted with the dynamic of the dilemma, the interplay of various features, I suspect the problem in mind concerning the matter at hand begins to resolve itself, of its own accord, and the view naturally becomes supple, able to deal with what comes before one. It's tough to describe, and you can't really superimpose this.

Then one is prepared to answer — the ability to recognize both profound or subtle suffering, and conditions for joy, meaning, and insight. But this is not really a duality. Without suffering, these conditions would not exist as they do; and except for the conditions, there would be no way to address the suffering; they are not apart from each other.

Then what of, "When it (reality as an ideal) is a fixed idea."?

There's a freedom of action that I haven't realized yet, although I've started to, but is spoken of in Zen. Already, though, with a deeper appreciation for emptiness, it seems apparent where this freedom of action might be indicated.

I think that Zen's view for itself may simply be to pay attention to what needs to be done — and thus there is no dilemma. To be with what is around one, in present awareness, perceiving deeply, responding at the right moment. Thus the attention to suffering, the practical, and a strong sense of compassion.

I might say, "I don't know exactly what to do with evil except to thwart, transform, or enlighten it." But to state it as such is too simple, maybe. You can look to turn the situation, or to recognize what is really there, not to apply fixed language that only gets in the way. How that occurs to you may be creative spiritual working.

You might have to begin with or work from a fundamentally different premise, than 'good and evil'.² Sometimes I think two sides can simply talk past each other with their own assumptions; or the true need is not met. I suspect the real workings can be subtle; either that, or more direct, than thought, maybe to another point altogether.

There may be other ways of viewing phenomena, besides 'good and evil'.

Here, some Objective-C:

```
[iPerson setInMind:iDuality]; [iPerson frame:iDuality]; [iPerson makeMultifaceted:iDuality]; [iPerson  
applyFunction:NSCenteringFunction]; [iPerson applyDimensionTo:iDuality]; [iPerson  
applyStreamlikeFracturesTo:iDuality]; [iPerson lookForGravity]; [iPerson applyForce:[NSForce  
radialOutward]];
```

Or:

```
[iPerson setInMind:iDuality]; [iPerson frame:iDuality]; [iPerson trace:iDuality]; [iPerson  
lookToContextOf:iDuality]; [[iPerson lookToCenter] trace:iDuality];
```

Or:

```
[iPerson setInMind:iDuality]; [iPerson frame:iDuality]; [iPerson rotate:iDuality by:[iPerson  
someAmount]]; [iPerson notice:NSInMind];
```

Or:

```
[iPerson setInMind:iDuality]; [iPerson frame:iDuality]; [[iPerson setInMind:[iDuality leftPole]]  
noteCauses]; [[iPerson setInMind:[iDuality rightPole]] noteCauses]; [iPerson  
applyFunction:NSCenteringFunction];
```

Here, you have your own means.

Then.

How does right view illuminate?

How does one find “right view”, and take right action? Again, a sense of “to resolve into place” — not to acquire something fixed, in “right view”.

What is right awareness, or right thought?

Or/And — You might step into the realm of

Aspect

Scope (point sphere circle . . .)

Perspective

Awareness

Time t.

Instead of subjecting itself to the pain of good versus evil a better way for the human race to have lived would have been “good, better, best.”³ Simple. And here one can step (again) to aspect, scope, perspective, awareness — in other words, someplace real. That way we would have been busy figuring out awesome ways to live. Instead we find ourselves caught in a world of unceasing strife.

Maybe good, bad, and evil are a vicious knot. Silly mistake.

I have been bad at times. I have been unfair. Fairness is tricky because fairness nurtures the human spirit and unfairness doesn't. I have made mistakes.

I hope to correct the bads that I can. I hope to avoid mistakes in the future.

However —> A'. A. A''.

And, the form A B A'.

Maybe I've done one or two badisms.

I don't think that black is symbolic of evil at all. You can't see the stars very well without black. Most text is black on white. A black and white photograph is illumination, reflection, shadow, shades of focus. Gravity knows light, matter, space, and time — and black. It is true that you can see in the light — if you're not trying to see the stars. Of course, in both cases, light illuminates. But black is the center of the galaxy.⁴ So there is function and balance. That said, the metaphor “light” and “darkness” is useful and concise. We cannot see in the dark. It is taken directly from daily life. I'm not giving U2 (“And in the world a heart of darkness, a firezone”⁵) and Mumon Ekai (“your attainment will be as a candle burning and illuminating the whole universe”⁶) a hard time.⁷ I think that you have to be able to pick up the metaphor, use it, and put it down again. The meaning has to be clear from context, and not

absolute. Then light and darkness can be used to profound effect without getting tangled or forgetting things. I think that we have forgotten that stories can be told in the dark, from memory.

Artists will rely on color for various purposes, according to various viewpoints, or the abstract.

This, then.

Is sparkline an abstraction?10

The rocks lined the shore.

He sat on the sand, gazing out over the beach.

The world is illusion. Yet rock, sand, wave is sure to be noticed! This applies proper perspective, and orients within Reality.

So the world is illusion; and the world is a stunning illusion. The world is not an illusion. — Or is it?

(Also, there still is the physical realm and the mental realm, and all that holds for them. That is, the concrete world expresses itself in certain ways.)

It also provides a path for someone who is disillusioned — by a world presented by another as “objectively real” and found to be void of meaning, or compromised, or self-contradictory and unfulfilling. Yet there is the objective world, we can see it and talk about it — and its effect should be one of orientation and the awakening to perspective, dimension, fixedness, impermanence, fluidity, and variability. And, perception and memory. Then there is the subjective — for people, as he or she sees and experiences it, and the subjective in the sense of thought, and from that standpoint; and perspective; and also importantly what is seen or experienced; and also is-being. Here, perception and memory, understanding, the mind, the body, the breath, and stillness, motion, and activity. Then, this reality is not separate, from another individual or from the objective world, which itself is subjective (both as seen, and as object as subject, and also as the “conceptual”).

The disillusion comes from applying the idea of “objective” to a reality that is simply another’s idea or perception, and seeing that “objective” idea fail to satisfy. It is from the false application of the objective world. The objective world is itself an illusion, and to navigate it is to navigate illusion already! But one cannot deny the reality of the objective world. Here one must understand the role of the subjective. It is perspective, and to illuminate. And, insight. But how does one apply this?

Here, some notation:

ABAABCA’B’AACAA’B’’ mn...mmn,an.d . • .

Or:

. • .

Wisdom is that which discerns the true nature of all phenomena and what is efficacious in attaining realization for all.

-
1. Does no-mistake take away or give you air supply, or room to maneuver? Does mistake take away or give you air supply, or room to maneuver?
 2. In his Zen warnings, master Mumon says, “Thinking good and evil is attachment to heaven and hell.” Mumon’s Zen Warnings is only two paragraphs long and is worth reading. See *Two Zen Classics* by Sekida, p. 138.
 3. Sometime around 2002 Apple, Inc. used “good, better, best” to present their computers on their online store.
 4. A supermassive black hole — from our perspective in the constellation Sagittarius.
 5. See “One Tree Hill” on the album *The Joshua Tree* by U2.
 6. See *The Gateless Gate*, Case 1, “Joshu’s Dog”, in *Zen Flesh Zen Bones*, p. 115.
 7. The Dalai Lama uses the metaphor. See “Words Of Truth”, a prayer. You can find it at <http://www.dalailama.com/teachings/words-of-truth>. I re-read this recently, and it seems to have depth, written carefully. See for yourself.⁸ But I wonder if the Dalai Lama doesn’t make a mistake. If I were working with China, maybe I’d look to the dynamics of the religions they do permit, why they support some forms of Buddhism, and I’d certainly avoid a static “it should be democracy, then” stance. I also wonder about his book *How To Expand Love*, where love is sometimes described in programmatic ways; yet other parts of the book are words of insight.
 8. I noticed this about Buddhism in Tibet, an article in China’s People’s Daily Online, on a new Tibet Buddhist center in China, with studies in exoteric Buddhism, esoteric Buddhism, and living Buddhas. See “China Opens Tibet Buddhist Theological Institute”, 2011-10-21, <http://english.people.com.cn/102774/7622915.html>.⁹
 9. I’ve noted ongoing Taoism in China, also, and even debate about Roman Catholicism. I would like to know more about China. My guess is that it’s multifaceted. I think that China has some profound things to offer. I hope that China and the Dalai Lama find a way to resolve their differences. I’d suspect that the integration would be very interesting. If I were living in China as a Zen Buddhist, I would try very much to work with the state, and find the right place in society; and soon I should look into a depth interpretation of Marxism, although here in the United States Representative Federalism should work fine and is really appropriate (if only it could be fully put into practice). Senzaki (a Zen Buddhist from Japan) noted strong characteristics about America. And Zen has been present in America for some time. Zen is apparently strong in Japan. Ch’an (Zen) developed in China. Buddhism started in India, and Bodhidharma (a Zen ancestor) was from India. Mumon (Wu-men Hui-k’ai) was a Zen master from China. Dogen was a Zen master from Japan.
 10. See *Beautiful Evidence* by Edward Tufte.

Mental View

If I would have had the following mental view and strategy in the early 1990s before I moved to NYC, my experience there could have had the same broad circumstances (job type, friends type, art and music type) but the flavor of all this would have been different, and of course many specifics. Maybe I encountered these types of things because, in part, of the mental view that I did have; but it could have struck a deeper factor.

Factors

1. Tai chi.
2. Worlds within mind within worlds within worlds.
3. Supple form and structure.

I had worked with tai chi for a year or 2 by 1990, and should have picked it up in NYC. With these 3, I could then have over time investigated Zen, which I'd encountered already, also. At that time, I would have discovered that point (2) is actually:

Worlds within mind within worlds within worlds, yet the world as one.

A mistake I made that I must have particularly learned during (and not necessarily because of) high school was to place my mind along a linear timeline. Because I was intelligent, I made too-quick decisions that did not fit into overall supple structure, or work with form. I did not contemplate various views, and was far from being able to observe the world, to unfold for myself what its nature might be. Thus, I short-circuited intelligence. I was not aware that there might be a wisdom layer. I was not aware of awareness itself, which allows for resonance.

With the above factors, I would have treated differently relationship (dimension, and to establish identity-with yet neither the same nor different; relationship to and among people, and to art and music; and things like of- and to-), work and its context, and personal time (time of reflection, meals, friendship, and contemplation).

It doesn't have to be tai chi. It can be yoga, tai chi, other, the gym, walking, or an at-home workout. There are schools and types within each of these.

A chef must work with worlds within mind within worlds within worlds. As he or she selects the vegetables that go on the cutting board, the same vegetables then (the world of the vegetables, now cut up) that go in the soup, already simmering on the stove, the world of the finished soup in mind. . . the world of the finished soup forming. . . as complete attention is given to the vegetables in front of the chef, selecting them from the pantry.

A gardener also reminds me of this. The cucumber is in the refrigerator (in the kitchen) in mind as the cucumber is in mind in the hand (or the mind is in the cucumber in the hand), picked from the world of

the cucumber plant in the world of the garden under the vast world of the hot summer sun, all beside the world of the house. (Two stories already here, with the cucumber.)

Supple form and structure means that you can place things; that you can reference across the three times (past, present, and future) as well as current understanding; and that you can better recall that which is relevant, and past experience. You can notice the present while considering the past and future. Forming a sense of identity yet differentiation and non-attachment with people and events and all that you encounter leads in part to compassion and the resonant domain, allowing each of these to reflect each other while retaining their features (and these can be ever-shifting or static, depending; yet, stable, as you consider what is before one). Then, one's understanding and relationship deepens.

Note that if I would have had another factor:

Factor

4. The present moment and the three times (the past, present, and future).

I would have been really prepared.

(Yet much of the above has come to pass and is reaching fruition in the present, in 2017 and ensuing.)

There is the relative in the present moment, and you can see this from the vantage point of the present moment. And awareness of the relative, and the simultaneity aspect of it, helps one to see from the vantage point of the present moment.

An explanation type example of the relative in the present moment is this: I'm in the kitchen looking out the window and the tree is outside the window (because someone planted it long ago). At the same time I'm holding a coffee cup and it's empty but the coffee is made (so I can have coffee in a minute). I'm looking at the tree with the aggregates (skandhas) that form my being: form, feelings, perception, impulses, consciousness. So these are relative to each other and to the window and the tree. My mother hasn't called me yet (we're supposed to have breakfast) because she's brushing her teeth (but she'll call me in a minute). This all occurs in the present moment, yet you can consider the three times past present and future. This all is simultaneity. And it unfolds because of another feature of emptiness (sunyata) besides the relative: things are impermanent (emptiness also says that things are without self-existing intrinsic nature). That is, it is the very thing of emptiness that makes it possible for all this stuff to happen (the world's "container" is empty in this way, such that it can be filled with all this stuff).

The relative is the unfolding simultaneity of things, and the relative positioning of things. It is also the absolute sense of the relative positioning of things. It is also the subjective viewpoint-importance to the unfolding simultaneity of things.

Global Summary

This is personal as well as global.

Meaning, fundamental truth, and function have been on my mind.

Now it's to work with mental view and orientation.

And, Zen.

Appendix 1: The World Trade Center In New York City

These observations are my own. Except for some Zen.

1 WTC and 2 WTC were perfect. They represented several things. I am including notes on them here because of their symbolism and because of how I think they represented the mind. And perfection itself.

First, they represented two people standing, in perfect position next to each other, that was distinctive, at an angle that could represent several things. (Is motion next? How long can they stand there?) And there's magic in the variants from this standpoint. And, as two objects, neither touching nor not touching. They also represented the sheer nature of a cliff.

Second, they represented the number two, in a sense, but because of their asymmetry (between 1 WTC and 2 WTC), they broke up this "2" symmetry. Two is everywhere: 2 hands, 2 feet, 2 eyes, 2 ears, left and right, on and off, binary, bicycle, plus and minus, male and female, wet and dry, north and south, front and back, inside and outside, up and down, forward and reverse, time scanned forward and time scanned in reverse, light and dark, knowing and not knowing. And opposites that work together and pairs within multiples. And from-to, maybe to a multiple. Sometimes there is space between two.¹, 2 Sometimes in two there is unity, one.³ Always? Unity of design, architecture, proportion, space, and arrangement. And function. For other things, there will be unity concerning other elements or features. The particulars of the world. Yet can one lose the 1 aspect, in "the particulars of the world"? And, "one": in north and south, 1 earth; in 2 ears, one hearing; in left and right, one balance. I believe it was Shodo Harada who spoke even of one unfolding truth, in the world (in *Moon By The Window*).

And in another sense, 1 & 2 WTC were not-two, since (again) they were neither touching nor not touching (their edges).

There was an "action" aspect to 1 WTC and 2 WTC — say, right foot in front of left foot — that was contradicted nicely by the otherworldly sense of "there", a "there" "unmoving" presence that could not be denied.

Third, they modeled the ideal mind. Each was a perfect square from above and a rectangle from the side or a trapezoid from below. The sides were seemingly endless repetition and variety. The lights were on or off in seemingly endless repetition and variety. The engineering was ingenious. It was accessible to the public — but only in specific places. There was seemingly endless function and space within, hidden from external view. They were virtually symmetrical.

Maybe, it's pretty clear, some of this is too geometrical, as a model for the ideal mind — and it actually is a better model of a certain stunning process. But the word model is to be applied carefully, not too literally. And what is the mind? What form? Is it formless? So you can ask questions of this.

Fourth, the scale of 1 & 2 WTC was perfect for Manhattan as seen from above the river south of Manhattan.

Fifth, I managed to find my apartment — my home — using the binoculars on the observation deck of 2 WTC. It took some time.

Sixth, they represented WKCR — a radio station whose signal was distributed to NYC by the antenna on top of 1 WTC. WKCR propagated the joys of experts from Columbia University who presented jazz, blues, hip hop, classical, Caribbean, bluegrass, interviews, and so on. Hosts included Phil Schaap, Cucumber Slice, Kate, Brother Nemo, and many others.

Seventh, 1 & 2 WTC, on the moonlike plaza that surrounded them, demonstrated how perfect space and form, according to a given architecture, can exist in the midst of disparate elements. How does the natural world balance and function, by comparison?

Finally, let me wrap up with an observation. . .

. . . 1 & 2 WTC were monolith in one aspect, yet unity (with the individual) in mind.

Both other, and unity (with the individual) in mind, likely at different times. They were very approachable, yet impossible to grasp. . . and this reminds me of what is said of the Tao!

-
1. Walk between 1 WTC and 2 WTC. Draw a high-wire taut between 1 WTC and 2 WTC.
 2. Sometimes 2 can become 10. Or is it that 10 can come only from 1, a primordial unity from which the 10,000 things spring? Maybe it's only not-two that yields to 10.
 3. For some Zen on three, two, and one, see "The Song Of Zazen" by Hakuin Ekaku Zenji, in the Tahoma Sutrabook; or by Web search, for "Hakuin's Song Of Zazen". (For instance, http://www.thezensite.com/ZenTeachings/Translations/Song_of_Zazen.htm - 2013-11-25.) The poem also is in Manual Of Zen Buddhism, as "Hakuin's Song Of Meditation", where the terms are non-duality and non-trinity. You also might be interested in the poem "Faith In Mind", attributed to the Zen third ancestor Jianzhi Sengcan, in Zen's Chinese Heritage, appendix, p. 499, a poem that covers a lot of ground.

Appendix 2: Strange

These are things that I've noticed and nothing more.

This Is A Story

On September 3, 2001, in the morning, Andy went by train then by bus from 21 East 2nd Street in Manhattan to Jones Beach on Long Island. Andy said to Blue, whom he had just met on the train, and they were talking of Zen, "Sometimes I cut myself on it." Andy meant this: In anger, in frustration, in trying, through intensive zazen, and endless reflection, and endless study, to nail something that he could not place, he'd scarred the inside of his apartment over the period of the prior year or two. He'd cursed. He'd gotten angry. He'd smoked cigarettes. They talked normal stuff on the beach. Too much talk but it was OK. Andy left early. When Andy got home that afternoon he took a warm bath to clean off and reflect. He reflected, grew frustrated with stuff, and punched the bath tile in front of him with his right fist. One tile fractured just slightly. He stood up, rotated 90 degrees to the left, and jammed his right elbow backward into the tile wall behind him. In Tai Chi perfection. It was Badism with a preemptive test.

This Is History

Eight days later terrorists executed a violent act worthy of gravity's brevity. Was it worthy of gravity's shape? 1 WTC was hit then 2 WTC. They were destroyed. It was horrific. Roughly speaking, if no suffering had been involved, and if all the atoms, mind, spirit, or whatever it is that constituted the people, buildings, and things in and around 1 & 2 WTC could have been put back together the next day, 9/11 could have been a Badism of amazing perfection. There was no practice and not even a test.

Maybe it was a badism. Maybe it was an evil. (It was a military maneuver that was also a terrorist act.) Or, it seems to be something else entirely, but with badism component (striking effect, meant to probe a deeper understanding). It was all the things that it was: the emotion felt; the stunned awareness; the inability for many of us to do anything but "watch, watch"; the economic effect and reality; the disappearance in one fell act (the collapse) of the buildings of steel and stone and glass, and the individuals inside; scale, proportion, and perspective; what must have been the cold, burning anger of the terrorists, and the alligator move that it was. I think you have to also turn to other things to determine what it was, in addition to the physical/spatial illusion yet fact that the buildings were, real at the same time: theories of justice (say Six Theories Of Justice by Karen Lebacqz, and her source material); causation and causal effect; karma (an action that produces a result; and things tend to have their natural outcomes); the architecture and space; the design of the function within; representation; and causes and conditions; and the sense of the real; the actual living belief of all those involved; and a perception of reality itself; and philosophy¹, the spiritual, and religious expression. These points, all of the points in this paragraph, can be debated, considered, diagrammed, discussed, or written about. There is much more: the actual living experience of all of us connected to 9/11; its immediate stunning and perilous imagery; its implications for the planet; ensuing military strategy; ensuing dialogues strategy; etc. Was it a badism? Was it an evil? Was it a striking blow to the enemy? Whose perspective? Was it any of this, all this, or some of this? It was, also, likely much more: the entire content of 9/11.

But I was sad that day. It was an implied sadness. I did zazen for a short time, on the fire escape outside my apartment, as the twin towers burned in sight. I was also somehow determined, to be with it.

This Is Personable

The year before, Andy had bolted his makeshift computer table to the wall using drywall screws. The table was 90 degrees counterclockwise to the wall and was screwed fast on the right side to the wall. Small nail holes pocked the wall in a rough line above where the table was fastened; these holes had been where he had tested for studs. He had since moved the table to the bedroom.

The first jet to hit WTC hit building 1 straight on. The second jet looped in a clockwise arc as seen from below and hit building 2 with the tip of the right wing showing just slightly along the east face as the jet smashed into the south face.

Andy saw both buildings collapse straight down. 2 WTC fell first, then 1 WTC. He did not see the hits.

This Is Strange — The Society Of Mind

In Section 30.8 of the book *The Society Of Mind* by the marvelous Marvin Minsky of MIT there is a list comprised of eight sentences, each starting with the word “The”. Section 30.8 is the last section of the book. It is a summary. The last words in that section could be, with the right emphasis, “Find another realm.” Foo Bar. September 3, 2001 was eight days before 9/11.

30 multiplied by 0.8 is 24. There are 24 hours in the day.

In Section 18.7 of his book, Minsky draws a picture of an upside down pentagon and links that to an airplane. On 9/11 a jet slammed into the Pentagon — which didn’t have the information or positioning it needed to protect the U.S. from attack and thus was “upside down”.

Published 1986.

This Is Strange — Transparent Things

In chapter 3 Nabokov uses some phrases that, when put side by side, are eerie, given 9/11 and in particular 1 & 2 WTC. Key phrases are “now reduced to atoms of dust”, “wide, wide dispersal”, “panic catching its breath”, “one should be above it”, “watch, watch”, and “stop, stop”. Interchange things to get “wide, wide — stop, stop — watch, watch” to describe 1 & 2 WTC, the jets slamming into them, and what many did as they burned and collapsed. Rearrange things in temporal order. There’s more in the book.

Published 1972.

This Is Parallel — “Running To Stand Still”

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The song by U2 could be metaphysical.

Harrowing image — you're in 1 or 2 WTC just as it's being hit and then as it's burning.²

You gotta cry without weeping
Talk without speaking
Scream without raising your voice

Prophecy — the world out of balance when it could have maintained steady state, nursed expansion, and nursed contraction using tools already at hand.

And so she woke up,
Woke up from where she was lying still,
Saying I gotta do something about where we're going.

...

You know I took the poison from the poison stream
Then I floated out of here.

...

She's running to stand still. . . .

There are probably all sorts of things that you can find in the song if you keep slicing and dicing.

The song was released in 1987, on the album *The Joshua Tree*.

This Is Strange — Through The Looking Glass

1 & 2 WTC each had 110 stories. Binary 110 is decimal 6. Side by side then you could say the WTC represented the number 66. Chapter 4 of *Through The Looking Glass* is Tweedledum and Tweedledee — virtually symmetrical names — and begins on page 66 in the edition I have.

The ending to the chapter could be eerie, given 9/11, in the right light.

Alice ran a little way into the wood, and stopped under a large tree. "It can never get at me here," she thought: "it's far too large to squeeze itself in among the trees. But I wish it wouldn't flap its wings so—it makes quite a hurricane in the wood—here's somebody's shawl being blown away!"

Of course, binary 110110 is decimal 54. There might be more of interest on page 54 of *Alice In Wonderland*.

Published 1865 and 1871.

This Is Strange — The Tower Of Babel

From the Bible (NASB):

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Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words. It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. They said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly.” And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar. They said, “Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.”

The Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. The Lord said, “Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another’s speech.” So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth, and they stopped building the city.

Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth.

The story can be found in Genesis 11:1-9.

This Is Interesting — Zen Flesh Zen Bones

There is a koan from a long time ago about how to proceed from the top of a 100 foot pole.³ If you are in a building that is more than 100 stories tall and you want to get down, you want to get down by elevator. Not by catastrophe.

This Is Fun — NEXTSTEP 3.3

If you put the Release 3.3 boxes of NEXTSTEP User and NEXTSTEP Developer side by side, the ends resemble 1 & 2 WTC. In their existence! NEXTSTEP 3.3 was a refined computer operating system and was released in 1994 or so. Technology and ideas from NEXTSTEP resurfaced in an important way in Apple’s Mac OS X in 2000 or so. NEXTSTEP was developed by NeXT. Apple purchased NeXT in 1996.

This Is Preemptive

For at least a year prior to 9/11, Andy had intensively studied The Society Of Mind, Zen Flesh Zen Bones, and Transparent Things. For at least a year prior, he had done intensive zazen, often with a multi-interval digital stopwatch.

Conclusion

If the topic weren’t so serious, then noting coincidences, allusions, similarities, and metaphors would be fun.

Think pattern. Invert it. How? Find a larger pattern of to apply universal activity. Or from another perspective — a deeper pattern, layer, realm of compelling and meaning, insight and awareness. Map

the broken pieces that are the human race to the pattern. Live the pattern until the broken pieces are but a memory.

There is more. Nearly infinitely more. That part is up to you. Roll your own religion.

1. For some material, see logic, say in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* by Ludwig Wittgenstein, Routledge Philosophical Classics edition, or Pegasus; and Aristotle and his ‘the universal and the individual’ and ‘the (logical) negative statement may be more accurate than the positive statement’. (His work “On Interpretation”.) Is the universal statement possible? I think so, but ‘the universal’ is debated. See also, in addition to this, *Envisioning Information* by Edward Tufte, and his other work. For writing, see *Arftul Sentences: Syntax As Style* by Virginia Tufte or *Last Plays And Operas* by Gertrude Stein. There are many places to look, to illuminate. We each have our own experiences, yet we can share them in narrative, or philosophy, or spirituality. For instance, it is my own view, realized through Buddhist practice, that 1 WTC and 2 WTC represented Universal Mind (see the *Lankavatara Sutra*) in architecture, that their physical form and slight sway was an instance of Universal Mind. What of the form and function within, the very individuals and their individual and collective karma (an action that produces a result), and the nation they were in, and relative to other nations and beliefs? Their interconnection to the rest of society? Were they aware of this ‘Universal Mind’, and the intuitive mind and discriminating mind that the *Sutra* speaks of? Was this shared, universally? How sad if not!

It cannot be simplified to just this, but it might be that the bourgeoisie would put (a theoretical) unlimited financial accumulation in a building such as a universal mind building, a set of architecture and design, instanced in a certain way; and that they would thus try to reduce the vast extent of human-societal-religious interaction to a funds transfer (see Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*). Ouch. Is that really what Thomas Paine meant, in getting to know other nations through commerce? (See *Common Sense*, chapter 3.) Or did he mean something else? (Of course, these funds transfers represented somethings — and what? Perhaps somethings helpful and somethings not; actual products and the things they represented; or otherwise. And not everything would have been a funds transfer, and people were involved, in day to day activity. (And, that is, the things in and of 1 WTC and 2 WTC were by their nature function and ‘space within’, as well; not everything was reduced to ‘funds transfer’. There were things represented by funds, and the function and space allowed by it. So the analysis is not one-sided; neither is it at all dogmatic. That would be yet another mistake.)) I think Thomas Paine meant something else, perhaps an introduction, a facility, a way of working with others, so that we can sustain natural human relations with them, and get to know them. While I see the state as having some function as the state does things, a particular type of things (and this would be different than his initial premise in that book), Paine was too natural and real. There are some who do this type of mutually recognition in trade. Another way to put things is to note the Buddhist idea, dependent arising. What was there about 1 & 2 WTC that were – dependent arising? Note that in Buddhist thought, dependent arising applies to the entire world. It is a universal. It is a principle that is at once the manifest thing before you, and those things it is absolutely dependent arising with – and the world as it is (since this includes the entire illusion, and actual fact, and its ongoing infinite extending, within space and so forth; the world: not a spec or a molecule is overlooked, yet it is at-once and this world is reality, the fusion of the abstract and the concrete; and facts cannot be overlooked; and the world is neither real nor unreal – an illusion of a category that is tactile, tractable, and positively-realism).

But WTC, stunning architecture, I think, was not set forth as a means for ‘getting to know the other nations’ – as a world of societies, cultures, religions, philosophies lives, time, economies, and trade center, manifest. A marketplace of knowledge and interconnection that was dynamic and multi-faceted; inter-States, intra-States, inter-national, intra-national; and such type awareness, in our culture and such mutual exchange. It was not so for the United States, writ large, I don’t think. Nuts. Maybe it wasn’t meant to be, and I think it would have been dynamite and striking to be so, and also sublime – and, significantly, it was set in timeless, universal architecture. And there is a place for solitude and society, in the cultures of the world, in this vast world, and a place to find, realize, and express truth. It was – the very architecture, buildings, and their presence and scale and modern art – Universal Mind.

My own response to 9/11 is to cry or consider it in its sublime state; when I think of the individuals caught in it, the image, the very nature of it; or in its pre-9/11 state. And yet then I notice, What were the terrorists angry at? Is there a deeper read to justice, and that would see from this or that point of view? How would one respond, and take action? It’s that type of thing, they (all involved, and us) were that type of thing.

There are many facets to pick up; and standpoints to consider.

Is it that there is the striking? There is cruelty? There is illumination? There is awareness? There is resource? There is justice? There is equability? There is ability? There is interdependent dependent arising? There is the absolute position (constantly arising) of things? There is God, or not; or beings; or neither being nor non-being? The Tao? There is the unfolding relative? There is funds transfer? There is cultural exchange? There is that which is represented? There is gesture? There is geometry? There is projection? There is illusion? There is reality? There is the actual? There is fact? There is a proposition? There is dimension? There is limit? There is the constraint? There is the opportunity? There is the limit of the infinite sum as delta-x goes to zero? There is the slope of the curve? There is the infinite point? There is the grid? There is the spatial? There is the descriptive? There is the philosophical? There is the religious? There is the spiritual? There is understanding? There is thought, speech, and action? There is livelihood? There is effort? There is awareness? There is extent? There is family? There is connection? There is connexion? There is solitude? There is society? There is logic? There is reason? There is logic? There is intuition? There is basis for? There is spontaneity? There is the planned? There is fire, wind, metal, earth, and water – and space and consciousness? There is the East? There is the West? There is the North and the South? There is that which is indicated? There is ‘some, or a little, or a lot’ of the above – or none or less than before? Or between some of this and none of the above? There is ‘all of the above’?

Each will have his or her own point of view.

Back to Universal Mind: was this indicated, in architecture or function? Was it shared? Would it have been recognized or cut down, if it was shared? Should it have been ‘put on the table’?

Perhaps those within 1 WTC and 2 WTC on 9/11 were simply caught between a fact and a symbol. Perhaps it was a maneuver, and with what impetus.

My notes from Section LII of The Lankavatara Sutra translated by D. T. Suzuki:

The elements and form. Five Skandhas (form, sensation, thought, conformation, consciousness), the last four, space, and space as numberless. Truth of solitude. The Samadhi known as Mayopama (Maya-like). The Buddha: “Thoroughly conversant with the powers, psychic faculties[,] and self-control, you will be the supporter of all beings like the earth. Mahamati, as the great earth is the supporter of all beings, so is the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva the supporter of all beings.” [wtc]

2. Also, if you see a bomb headed down toward your home.
3. See The Gateless Gate, Case 46, “Proceed From The Top Of The Pole”, in Zen Flesh Zen Bones, p. 157.

Appendix 3: Dedication

This is to all the people throughout history who were looking to reality, both in themselves and in those around them. This is only a brushstroke.

It's also to all those who found themselves bewildered by a mechanism of failure, by stuff that didn't add up, by an endless stream of "it has been decided" knowledge — and who were trying to re-orient.

It's also to those who found a path to the recognition of the importance of both the mental and physical worlds, and those concerned with the unity of these.

Appendix 4: Thoughts On Buddhism

I did not grow up Buddhist. Buddhism as taught to a child may incorporate answers to my questions by second nature. And no doubt there are teachings out there that clarify some of this.

Minuses

Where do you start? Which Buddhism? With which book? But you may be able to start at any number of places.

Neutral

I've begun to understand the Buddhist Four Noble Truths better, and their insight. To start, I'd say something like, "Understand and manifest Reality. In doing so plant wholesome roots. Individual life and societal life should be bliss or at least continually compelling, engendering contentment. It might be tough but it should not be full of difficulty. Strife should dissipate. This process can begin no matter where you find yourself right now. In fact, you may embody the truth already." That's practical and creates space. You can expound from there.

The Buddha might have uttered his words in just such a context.

It is apparent that the Four Noble Truths have been treated with great care.^{1, 2}

It's fine of course to first consider the Four Noble Truths (roughly, 1. There is dukkha, or suffering. 2. There is a source, or cause, the origination, of dukkha. 3. There is the cessation of dukkha. 4. The Eightfold Path is the way to the cessation of dukkha) — as spoken by the Buddha, from a reliable text, and then work with Zen. But in whatever way you work with this you have to penetrate the matter, and realize it for yourself. One's path it seems may not always be defined in advance, although there are straightforward ways to work with the material. And I'm only now working with this in a more dynamic way, relying in part on Nishijima's presentation of the four noble truths as idealism (which leads to suffering when it becomes apparent that our ideals don't hold; not that there's something necessarily wrong with considering an ideal, but to become attached to it, as the existent reality) / materialism (accumulation) / action in the present moment (the way out of the dilemma) / inclusive reality (the eightfold path). And since action in the present moment, properly understood, can be handled by anyone, this is a compassionate view.

The Eightfold Path is: right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right awareness, right concentration. This seems to be direct, and also yields subtlety; it is a list that seems complete, also, and very workable. This is like the four reliable facts that Nagarjuna introduces in *Fundamental Wisdom Of The Middle Way* (reason, the external world, the present moment, and reality, this world). It seems there are many concise lists of things in Buddhist thought; and they each have their unity.

Buddhist Thich Nhat Hanh starts by meeting others in suffering. (See *The Heart Of The Buddha's Teaching*.) This is a genuine way to meet someone. But what if the person does not perceive that he or she is suffering? This, I'm sure, is an essential question; and I've seen it addressed.⁵ And what does it mean to be suffering? What are the implications? And, what are the implications of the word 'suffering'? It seems that it does apply to the realm of the physical, like old age, sickness, and death; and to the mental, like not being in a state of the pleasant, or being in the state of the unpleasant, or not getting what one wants, with various outcomes. Then, as a cause, is included the thirst for becoming or continued existence, or the thirst for non-existence, both rejected. (See *The First Discourse Of The Buddha*.) It also seems that we become attached easily, and bring suffering to ourselves and to others. What is mental suffering and grief, to be attached to things we do or do not have, along with suffering in body? Do we make mistakes in trying to alleviate suffering? How do we recognize suffering, within ourselves and others? (This all deserves further study on my part.)

With respect to Thich Nhat Hanh, why not meet in joy also? There might be a reason he approached it this way. Joy is present in Buddhism.⁶ I've experienced it myself, too, within the context of Zen. It's not the only feature, depending on the best way to meet people in a given state of mind or circumstance, thus his book. And Thich Nhat Hanh himself does say that we must not forget the joys that are present in our lives. Also, an important idea of his is transformation from suffering into peace, joy, and liberation.⁷ This seems to be clear. (Then, how does "to remember joys" differ from "the state of joy"?) What also adds up is, for Thich Nhat Hanh, meeting in all seriousness. It seems, also, he was just speaking to the dilemma. In his book he provides means for working with the dilemma.

It seems that the Buddha was addressing a fundamental problem — but not to exclude factors such as joy at all. In fact, naming the dilemma, in his hands, seems to have been part of his pointing to the path out.

Buddhism is fluid yet firm.

Zen master Seung Sahn said something about there being many words, and he might have an answer to this problem of words.

But I look at it as "to start somewhere", and then depth, dimension, and specificity. I find it striking now that I'm unpacking some of the sutras and Nagarjuna's philosophy in greater depth (along with zazen) how Buddhism so thoroughly covers a wide domain.

Note that to read words and understand what the sentence is saying is not the same as the actual working with either reality or what is before you, oneself. Although it can be part of that. That is, there is study and meditation, and there is Buddhist knowledge. But this is simply to say that one

cannot “learn” Buddhism strictly by memorization; the realization has to be within one’s mind, of the truth of what is said. And study, meditation, and memorization can be part of that.

Realization is pleasant.

Also, it seems to take much study to thoroughly understand quantum physics. But Buddhism relies more on practice, and insight; and Buddhism is likely, for an individual, within reach, to be looked for, and to be grasped — and realized. And Buddhism is not about the words, or strictly intellectual grasp; it is about one’s realization, one’s understanding, one’s attainment, and how one moves in the world.

The six paramitas are: open-handedness, discipline, patience, will-power, meditation, and wisdom.

Pluses

It is kind. It is compassionate. It is reflective. It is intent on truth.

It knows art and symbolism.

It is conscious of nature.

Zen Buddhism attempts to convince by nurture, by dialogue, and by silence. That is, if it even tries to convince at all beyond pointing out the obvious or the path to the not-so-obvious or the path away from a misperception.

Zen Buddhism seems to be compelling. You might know other forms of Buddhism.

I’ve seen one Buddhist point to this: There is the physical realm. There is the mental realm.⁸

Some Zen is extraordinarily compelling for its directness, simplicity, and complexity; and for its respect for truth and mind.

Zen speaks of the sutras and Buddhist verses. These, along with koan, seem to form a pattern. I’ve studied some. I need to absorb, study, and practice more.

When I think of Zen Buddhism I think of the phrase Zen calm.

Buddhists meet in kindness.

A Zen center is a place where you can strike the spark of a search for meaning and truth.

One need not be particularly religious to approach Zen. There is much to work with. And the work is your own.

1. The book *What The Buddha Taught* presents the Four Noble Truths in some scope and detail. But if you’re looking for Zen, I would start elsewhere. You can always visit the book later. However,

if you want to consider Buddhism as Buddhism, then *What The Buddha Taught* is a really fine text. The book does not provide a literal record of the Buddha's initial sermon, in which he presents the Four Noble Truths, and this is something that I am looking for. (Ah! I found the book *The First Discourse Of The Buddha*, listed in Core Library. I'm considering it now — it has the actual discourse, and the commentary is thorough. Note that it may be the craving and attachment that leads to this or that, that is the root problem. I think this is from the Theravada viewpoint. But the book may be out of print.) And again, what is existence/non-existence? What is being and non-being? A discussion of the Middle Way is found in *The First Discourse Of The Buddha*, and also in *Opening The Hand Of Thought*, p. 97.

2. First, a refrain: “Round, rectangular, circular, perpendicular. Particular!”³ Then, Zen. Then, after some time, the Four Noble Truths, as the Buddha presented them.⁴ Or, as indicated, another order. The matter simply unfolds.

3. I heard this from a hip hop tune at a low key bar in NYC one time; but I don't know the tune.

4. My intuition says that the Sanskrit word *duhkha*, often translated as ‘suffering’, is both direct and subtle; and it may be rooted in concrete imagery. (For instance, a wheel out of round, or with a flat spot; or an axle worn off-center.) And I've seen how the Buddha presented the Four Noble Truths, the full scope, in his own words — it's succinct. Here again see *The First Discourse Of The Buddha*. And the Four Noble Truths are directly put; I think that also it's correct that contact, or rather when it's craving and attachment from or leading to contact, are important factors in *duhkha*, suffering, or a limited view.

5. Seung Sahn talks about this in *Dropping Ashes On The Buddha*, in the story by which the title of the book is given — treat it as a koan.

6. Buddhism might be after something else, though, aside from or beyond joy. I think, at least, “it depends”.

7. See *The Heart Of The Buddha's Teaching* by Thich Nhat Hanh, pp. 3ff. This is a very interesting book. I should re-read it, and also apply practice. I have a question about the nature of existence and being, in some cases where the author treats these. This is set in context of some well-presented material. Then, how to perceive? The “sign” nature of things is very interesting, in Chapter 19, “The Three Doors Of Liberation”, and could probably be taken in a couple of different directions. What arises in our mind when we see something, an object of our perception?

8. See *Taking Refuge In Buddhism*. By Sujin Boriharnwanaket. First edition. 2000, Zolag, London. You can find it at <http://www.archive.org/details/TakingRefugeInBuddhism>.

Appendix 4A: My Rendition Of The Buddha's Four Noble Truths

By Kevin A. Sensenig

2017 September 7, November 4, December 23

Draft 1.04 | RYOR Version

Introduction

These Four Noble Truths by the Buddha, expounded by him long ago after his initial realization, cover dilemma and insight and actualization, and this his First Discourse was meant to lay out and outline and specify. This is my rendition of the Four Noble Truths, as spoken by the Buddha in the First Discourse. My rendition relies on my own Zen insight as well as the text *The First Discourse Of The Buddha* by Dr. Rewata Dhamma, a key book. Mine is a spontaneous rendition, with significant exposition and interpretation; Dr. Rewata Dhamma's is careful and elucidated, and its translation of the actual discourse is to be noted.

The Middle Way

The Buddha laid this out as background to his exposition. First, do not seek to deny oneself what one needs to function well. Second, do not indulge oneself with what is excessive. Instead, select the Middle Way.

It is my understanding that this principle of the Middle Way can be applied in other ways as well; that is, for instance, to not seek extreme answers to questions, but to seek the answers that best suit the question. And so forth.

First Noble Truth

There is suffering, unease, or dilemma. It is birth (in an unfavorable circumstance), death (in suffering, or grasping at things, or not having applied oneself to life in its potential), old age (where this is unpleasant, unwise, or lacking resource), sickness (which seems impenetrable, and becomes the essence of life, and its sole focus and focal point), lamentation (where those sorrowing cannot be consoled, and see no resolution to their lack of joy), and sorrow (where the deepest meaning of life is seen as futility, a void, a lack of anything desirable or constructive or of-center or any sense of 'of-').

Second Noble Truth

There is a cause of suffering, unease, or dilemma. There are several potential causes of suffering, unease, or dilemma. One cause is to grasp at things that do not fulfill, do not add up, do not reflect the reality of the world, do not measure, do not illuminate, and do not engender questions and their answers or further profound realization. It is then also to set this condition up for others. A second cause is to persist in the belief that there is nothing to life, that all is futile, that there is nothing but nihilation. It is then also to set this view up for others. A third cause is that it is possible and desirable as paramount, to

be reborn in the same way and with the same fixed idea and thought through multiple lifetimes or succeeding life-moments, and to be attached to the idea that one has to take advantage of others in order to maintain this fixed idea, thought, or ruinous attitude. That is, one picks up an idea that he or she attempts to or actually does cause suffering, unease, or dilemma for others. (And this is not an attempt to illuminate, with a dilemma of profound realization, but to set to disadvantage.) It is then also to set this view up for others. A fourth cause is that one becomes naturally in-tuned with the desire for continued existence in this lifetime, and potentially through rebirth, in harmony with the way things are, and so forth — and becomes a target of those with delusion, or lack of insight, or contradictory ideas, or attachment to a fixed idea or thought or ruinous attitude. This is not so much a cause of internal suffering, unease, or dilemma, as the First Noble Truth elucidates; but a path to the realization of the natural and wonder-filled and serious-mindedness and deepening realization of those who note it; yet with sometimes a noticeable result of 'those things cut short'. It can result in serious physical and mental hardship and natural anguish in another way, for those who are the target of others who intend only their own delusion, and for some if they are not truly detached, or who are unaware of their causes, or differently, those who feel compassion and human spirit. Those who are treated this way may likely nevertheless realize and know profound realization, insight, wisdom, and solace; and a path to compelling stratagems and expressions. This is a way of illumination, and is not a cause of suffering. A fifth cause is to cling to this or that idea, thing, object, or person in a way that excludes insight and creates a bonded attachment and stuckness that leads to frustration at its absence or displeasure in another thing's presence — to not have what one wants or to have what one doesn't want. It is then also to set this condition up for others. Yet there is a natural expression, “to have what one wants, and to not have what one doesn't want”, but one has to be careful, and this is a refinement of the religious or spiritual or philosophic life. Nevertheless, those who are the target of others who intend only their own delusion may find natural lack, or not. This also is a religious, spiritual, or philosophic question.

Third Noble Truth

There is a way out of suffering, unease, or dilemma. It is to be free of pre-conceived attachment to things, concepts, and ideas, so that one can consider them in all their dimension, probe new things, concepts, and ideas, and to put them and realize them in reference to an unfolding realization of reality (this very world), keeping in mind that this will be in accordance with the way things are. It is to realize the present moment (the unfolding invisible and infinitesimal surface to the present), the relative (the unfolding simultaneity of things, the relative positioning of things, and the absolute sense to the absolute positioning of things), impermanence, interdependence, the un-born nature of things. It is to realize one's own (and that of those around one) participation in the unfolding, dynamic, and dimension that is the world (while acknowledging the suffering, unease, or dilemma one sees, that is within or around one). It is also (at the right time, and in the right way, and with diligence and wisdom) to put others' realization at the forefront and often-times the basis for one's own actions and realization — which then leads to a deepening awareness and illumination of one's own path, and so forth. But it is to study, meditate, contemplate, and reflect on things as well. It is also to treat one's conduct carefully, and to work with wisdom, and train in thought and wisdom well, and to apply oneself to this effort, “to disentangle all this snarl” (the Buddha relates this at a later time[1]).

The way out of suffering, unease, or dilemma — or the way to realize more deeply awareness or questions of suffering, unease, or dilemma in the face of delusion — and following then, in addition,

the way to realize more deeply certain religious, spiritual, and philosophic questions — is the Fourth Noble Truth.

There is much to be said. There is a way to penetrate suffering, unease, or dilemma; and to work with the world that is around one. This is subject to causes and conditions that the individual finds himself or herself in. The goal is unfolding realization, and the release of suffering, unease, or dilemma. This may be possible, right away, over time, or (depending on one's viewpoint) over lifetimes.

Fourth Noble Truth

The Fourth Noble Truth is the Noble Eightfold Path, and is the way (and there are many facets to this, and religious, spiritual, and philosophic questions) to a deepening awareness and realization of the world and those things, places, people, thoughts, concepts, objects, nature, and ideas within it. The Noble Eightfold Path is as follows: right understanding or right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right awareness, right concentration. These form basic and advanced building blocks and paths for one to work with; and the many things within them; or the simple ascertaining of them (as in, "objects are simple"). They can be sub-typed and further etched detail can be noted. They can be worked with directly. There is much or little to be said, noted, or considered, and put into action.

A Concluding Note

May the sincere individual find his or her path, way, insight, realization, awareness, and unfolding reality within a compelling framework, dynamic and fluid, resilient and flexible, with dedication and at-ease.

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Footnotes

1. See Buddhism In Translations. By Henry Clarke Warren.

Appendix 5A: Thoughts On Islam

Here I have mostly questions, and I should know more. Just a few concise points I think serves best.

First, I should know Allah, and what that means. Are there implications for ‘unfolding reality’, that one sees around one, and finds one within? What type of worship is it?

Second, I wonder what Muslims see ‘dependent arising’ and ‘the unfolding relative’; and ‘the unfolding simultaneity of things’. This would be profound!

Third, there was once a Muslim imam who gave a fatwah on this: to care for (all of) the animals. How important! This balance of things is needed in today’s society, and his citation of the Qur’an, and his presentation, were convincing. Taoism and Zen are also very cognizant of nature.

Which of the sects of Islam focus on training, and perhaps an idea of mistake/no-mistake? Teaching and recitation are important, with it, and training in social and societal and religious: you really have to work with truth yourself, you have to work it out before you, and deal with it. The world, as it actually is, is a participant place.

There is a strong sense of ethics in Islam, I think. The clarity and surface-like dimension read of the Qur’an is appeals to me, as a Zen Rinzai, Zen Obaku, Zen Unmon, Zen Mumon type.

Observations

In The Holy Qur’an, the chapter Najm (The Star), there is a verse that goes, “It is to God that the end and the beginning of all things belong.” I put this as saying in addition, a bit of my own perceptual from my Zen Buddhist type thought, that there is the end of an interval, which suggests the beginning of the next interval, which end suggests a trajectory (in time and space, and ontological space) back to the beginning of the first interval. It is elegant, and totality. One can do this for any set of intervals, each varying in length or duration, and various trajectories unfolding. Then, first, one’s every interval and action within is dedicated with this in mind; and its fact; and second, there are branches to intervals, and each is its own world, and own nondual individuality, in human, social, societal, natural, and God affairs; that is, and, none of these separable. It’s dynamite.

This is clear perceptual and actual reality in Buddhism; and yet this belongs to God, in Islam – so in Buddhism the Thusness and Suchness might be similarly universal.

I have plans to become much more familiar with Islam this year (2022), and The Holy Qur’an reads in a dimension way that as a Zen Rinzai, Zen Obaku, Zen Unmon, Zen Mumon type of person, I really enjoy to the nth degree. So I’d point so far to The Holy Qur’an and Islam for significant insight, based on what I have seen so far.

Appendix 5B: Thoughts On Christianity

If I knew more about The Religious Society Of Friends or Taoism, I would touch on those, too. I'd like to know more of the Lutheran Church, the United Church Of Christ, and original Mennonite thought. I should also become familiar with the Roman Catholic church, and various thought within that. This is ambitious, and will take some time. But I know have a framework for approaching Christianity, in studying Scripture and considering teachings; and I'll share that below.

I grew up in a Christian family, traditionally Mennonite, and left the church as a young adult; now I am asking questions on a more probing level after some time without a center of gravity. To take Christianity seriously again, with a deeper read, is an outcome of my Zen studies and practice, and a pleasant surprise.

Minuses

Christians sometimes seem to have a concept of hell and exclusion that may prevent them from talking with others who are looking for Truth. Yet this might not be entirely true — and they may feel excluded themselves, just because of this perception! There does seem to be a locked-in type of Christianity, one interpretation, that has an idea of original sin that may be unrealistic, and a fixed idea of what salvation looks like. Is truth exclusive? Jesus provided a clear avenue, to “ask, and receive”. And what is Jesus, the Being, and also Jesus the personification of a Principle?

“Maybe it's not so simple.”

It is important in more ways than one to recognize the search for essential Truth.

God tells the humans during the Creation to rule over every living thing and to fill the earth and subdue it — instead of to be joyfully, vibrantly part of the entire creation of God, in perfect balance. I'm not sure what to make of this, or if there is a deeper read to it. Here, awareness may yield insight. (Time to. Then — here to treat the Scripture with nuance, grace, and subtlety; and maybe scale and perspective. How full is “to fill”? And, What aspect? What is the precise meaning of “to subdue”, and how much of the idea of “to work with” is implied?) Here I wonder if the Taoist approach might inform, or illuminate by contrast, as conveyed in the Tao Te Ching. (Here refer to the version by Gia-Fu Feng and Jane English, chapters 10 and 52, for instance.)

Neutral

Is God demanding, and why?; or, what is His true nature?

Christians sometimes attempt to convince using fear — the fear of hell or the fear of God. Is this the most profound interpretation of the reality of God, or of Jesus? What would be the God of Deep Mystery? And here, one might look to the means that Jesus Himself used. They were specific, and relied on spiritual insight. And His parables are clarity itself.

The crucifixion of Jesus was a most serious gash in history. It was also a pointer to insight. It was also a deep expression. I'm not sure what the most profound interpretation would be.

Note what Jesus says in John 6:51. Compare John 6:51 to Romans 10:8-10.

I find Paul's thesis in Romans to be problematic, but it was worth study, a straightforward read. I would note Romans 5:18; but this verse seems to be ignored, even in the material before and after; although this perhaps depends on the read, how one sees "justification" — the actual fact in reality, or simply an available. The book presents an intricate argument of justification. And it works with the Law, to interpret through the implications-of-Jesus-Christ prism. It also presents a case for the difficulties of what Paul terms "the flesh", difficulties that seem pretty grim, and enduring. (But does this correspond to the Buddhist perception, the web of suffering? Still, Buddhism's path can be straightforwardly put, and something to work with. Paul also cites in a fundamental sense difficulties with the creation — the natural world.) His idea of sin may be to impute something where it does not exist. From a read of Romans, it seems that Christian theology finds important root here.

I read Romans as having some things to say, and the epistle is more dynamic now given the start of a second read through (so far in my re-read, I've studied ch. 1-3); there is something Paul wrote later: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me." — Galatians 2:20. "Christ lives in me" and "I live by faith in the Son of God" seem to indicate a profound spiritual state. There seems to be indicated much more than faith as a set of beliefs — it is the very real working with the reality of Christ in one, as disciple, and the living of the person in Christ. This is an important distinction.

I'd note also the verse in Romans (1:19) "...because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them." — that is, God and what is known about them, is evident within, within [oneself]. It is not something that is attained by transfer of fixed-theology, or the belief in language statements; you have to realize the reality itself, within oneself.

This is true of Aristotle also — the statements at the start of the Categories must be grasped in meaning, and worked there; then they become part of you, and (personal) understanding, insight, and to work with the material, and a statement of philosophy.

Then, compare Romans (separately) and the verse in Galatians with the gnostical treatment in the beginning of John. (After all, if it's Christ that lives in the person, then that Christ becomes known.)

I'd like to address the sin (as Paul understood it) in Romans 1:24-27, and the link to more specific moral layer statements in 1:28-32. I think as a Zen Buddhist (and I'm not sure how the Spirit works) that I'd read that given today's modern society, I'd say that the first is Paul's statement on what he saw in culture from his viewpoint in his day, and that the second applies to any type of individual, not just those in the first; and that given today's modern society where the link between the first and second cannot really be seen to hold, one concentrates then on the second, as applicable to oneself or not, the statements of applicable morality; and break the link between the first and the second.

However, I'd like to introduce what may be a striking interpretation of 1:24-27. It focuses on the term "the natural function" to refer to that which is everyday, in referring to women. It actually provides that the woman is the referent.

That is, the natural use of [that she has] of- herself. [NKJV] This is then referenced by those who know her, men and women alike.

In the NASB, it reads, "for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural" — in day to day life, a general life principle.

To drop into a sense of [here Christian] morality, there are many vile (or degrading) passions, and to suggest a primarily sexual read to this Scripture is a mistake. (Why would you, as your first thought?) This would more directly lead to a realistic interpretation of verses 1:28-32. That is, to referent "the natural function of the woman", in what she does, in everyday life — dynamic, sharp, observant; or quietly latent (for instance). "The natural function of the woman" being referent for all of us — so key is it.

Only limited moralism would interpret the verse as supposedly sexual, with presumption, and its associated distortion: Paul is actually pointing here to wisdom and insight, in how we all (should) referent the woman.

Proverbs 1, 2, 3 is focused for instance on several basis things, that one could note as context; and these have to nothing to do with sexuality, but how to approach life, how to work with God, and the paramount importance of wisdom.

Alignment in mind, thought, and spirit -- and this latter is so much of what the rest of the Bible is talking about.

This interpretation of Romans 1:24-32 then also is consistent with the defining statement of Paul's in 1:1-4, and these verses then are seen as themselves defining of the type also "woman", and inclusive of the type's vital characteristics, in many things she expresses and does — "the natural function".

It's interesting to note that even given the failure to set that which is of the woman as key, Saint Paul puts an absolute stop to such discussion of to think in terms of judgment or even to set oneself apart as superior from, those who might do the moral error of 1:28-32. There's just no room for judgment in 2:1-4; in fact Paul says that he who entertains such judgment commits the same sin of which he judges others! This is interesting, and I feel again as a Zen Buddhist has something to do with where one puts one's mind — of God (from within) or outside of oneself (in judging others). Thus, even this discussion of morality, if it leads to judgment — Paul stops it short, in very strong terms.

I found the first few verses of Hebrews 11, author unknown (maybe Apollos), to be accessible via Zen mu, at least resonant. Note Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart." I take the part of this to mean, piercing to the point of!

In Him we have our being — “for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we also are His children.’” — that is, walking around in [the space of] Him, walking around in [the translucent substance of] Him. Acts 17:28.

My comment —

One might think, for in tai chi I live and move and exist, the very action and fluidity and strength of.

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” — Hebrews 11:1 (NKJV).

The substance and evidence interpretation, and that’s the meaning of faith.

It cannot be said that a belief in a fixed-theology is what faith is, the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. That is not the real substance or evidence. The substance and evidence is what faith is.

Just as a giraffe is such and such, so faith is such and such.

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” — Hebrews 11:1 (NASB)

The spiritual interpretation.

This after the author talks of sanctification, a process, a real layer type thing, or activity, process. In fact, Hebrews 1-10 then 11 may be significant.

As for John.

In John 1:9-1:10: “There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.”

Interesting! What is enlightenment? Other versions say, “brings light to”.

John 1:1 is a classic Christian verse, a Christian koan.

Then, What nature was Jesus’ Father? See John 6:27. It seems to me that John told here of a profound spiritual reality to Jesus. See John 6:41-58. Thus the entire chapter sets context and then Jesus’ truth.

1 John 1-3 might impart some ideas basic to Christian thought.

Christians attempt to explain good and evil, attempt to overcome evil, and attempt to be good. But is this to accept and work within the premise of the knowledge of good and evil? (See Genesis 1-3 for the account of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.) I think that it is traditional Christian theology that all have inherited this knowledge or premise (without the wisdom required to deal with it). But what is meant, by the account in Genesis? And what is implied by the premise?

And what are the implications of the knowledge of good and evil? A superstructure representation of, in one's own mind? Or a division of this or that into good and evil?

What is knowledge of clothes?

What is knowing clothes?

What is wearing clothes?

One should study this carefully. Yet the meaning of "the knowledge of" may reflect the "wearing of". In another read, there seems here to be a warning that what you've picked up in the knowledge of good and evil is a duality. I also think Jesus was familiar with these aspects to the knowledge of things, in the way that He tried to illuminate; the nature of His teachings had a compassionate feel to them, in that they were teachings meant to bring light.

And in Luke 7:35, Jesus said, "Yet wisdom is vindicated by all her children." This is a profound statement. See the verses immediately preceding this. That is, did Jesus approve of those who had cloaked themselves in some sense of self-righteousness, or did He indeed associate with the tax collectors and sinners, and what did He see in them?

I'm not sure how Christians map the initial eating of the tree to the working of salvation that may undue its eating in the present-day individual. Apparently Isaac Watts spoke to this in his hymn, "Jesus Shall Reign". Maybe there could be a deeper discussion of what good and evil is, as a duality. I'm also not sure how that would map theologically. Jesus had a fluidity that I've found interesting, something that I had to read the Gospel of Luke with careful study, more recently, to find. The sections in Mark that I've read also seem to have a certain dynamic. The standard theology seems a bit less fluid, or dynamic.

Let me backtrack a bit. While a superstructure of knowledge can be fascinating, it is only a reflection, and can be incomplete. There are features of this fascination that one can look to: creativity and self-consistency. But the gateway to insight is not logic-based-on-fact.

Both Christians and those who are secular can identify with the following: start with some very abstract-and-concrete ideas and methods in fifth grade — grammar, diagram, description, mathematics, story, and philosophy — and this is where academics should be grounded. Then Christians would add the foundation of faith, as the essential.

It's interesting who Jesus associated with, what He said, and the stories He told. It's very concrete imagery.

I'm not sure what to make of war in the Old Testament. Here, I'd like to interpret for myself the view of it that Jesus had when He said in Luke 6, "But I say to those who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you." Luke 6:27-28. I personally would like to work with this teaching and its implications, as a Zen Buddhist. Does this apply strictly on a personal level, or does it have implications for the state? Does one-on-one contact in this way makes a difference, maybe the key difference? My father wondered this recently. Either way, it would be a spiritual truth, an underlying dynamic.

Roll Your Own Religion

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Where is God in the following two Scriptures? Luke 8:4 thru 8:15 and Joshua 6. And I believe that Jesus also clearly pointed the way toward discovery and truth, for those who follow Him, through what He said in Luke 11:9 thru 11:10. Work with these in conjunction with the story of the conquest of Jericho. But the story of the conquest demands careful reading. And so does the account of the Last Supper in Luke. It may illuminate. This then can explain Luke 6:27-28, for the Christian. And it also begins to explain what Jesus meant, in Luke 24:45-47; that is, to speak of the nations. I'd note the timing, in history. That was His insight, anyway, and one that seems to resonate, for me, at least to consider.

In Jericho: 1) what God said was "to go up into the city"; 2) what Joshua and the Israelites interpreted it as: "to kill every living thing, every man, woman, and child, and every donkey and animal"; 3) they could have carried instead the story of the escape from Egypt, and a profound read to God, as they had insight. This is my annotation to the story of Jericho. One could apply a sense of justice.

Jesus Christ yielded his own life for the truth and did not take the life of another.¹

One of the final acts of Jesus Christ was to forgive.²

There may be a spirit world that Christians try to address, something that clearly is out there and/or within and deals in intent. What is it that is discerned?

But, what else could be meant by the word, spiritual?

For the traditional American Christian tradition, I have a question as to how a perfect and good God could have created everything — unless He granted us the freedom to choose this or that. But to choose evil? If God didn't create evil, to choose, then maybe there are some goods He also did not create. (There are indicated "of any tree" you shall feel free to eat, except for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.) God provided the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but He would have understood the underlying dynamic. It may have been a delusion on the part of Adam and Eve that they could see as God sees by eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil — to eat of the tree is not the same as understanding the underlying dynamic. There may be an aspect to 'knowing' that God has, and that He created us with, and we may also have part of His creative aspect. And this might answer part of, things — good or evil — that exist. And maybe there is an underlying spiritual aspect to us that is a domain that we do not normally encounter in our routine thinking-like mind. And the story in Genesis yields to a careful read.

Christians cornered intelligent design, and they do have support. I'd like to know if other religions picked up on it, too. I should know what the Koran says. The Biblical story of Creation is intriguing, but it does not seem to be complete. The discussion intelligent design allows one to talk about the matter before one, a real strength; theological concerns or considerations of intelligence embedded in nature can be considered, or not, as one would think appropriate. It's just one way to approach the subject. Evolution by intelligence might work but it seems unlikely here, or not. Vladimir Nabokov had something to say that casts doubt on evolution — evolution by random mutation or unguided interactions and natural selection.³ I don't have a problem with our genesis by natural means outside mind and outside God, if that's actually what happened. I just wonder. . . .4, 5, 6

A significant thing about evolution is this, aside from intelligence or consciousness as being perhaps part of the universe: if function is part of evolution, the thing itself, that is, that each change is to a new place of function (macro, system, and micro), then that would be a compelling part of the theory. Add in a necessary combinatorics, and the theory might be workable. Being-function with combinatorics.

And: is everything sentient? Perhaps it realizes a dimension discussion of ‘sentient’.

The book James deserves a careful read. I should note here a couple of things. It says, “And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.” James 1:4-5. Training does produce results, and this likely also speaks to endure hardship. Note that the second part is theistic; a more general question is, where is wisdom to be found, and what is its nature? I wonder if we all don’t have access to the dharmakaya or prajna. James again addresses wisdom as follows:

But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

— James 3:17-18

In the remainder of James 1, the author lays out religion in stark, simple terms. How does this apply to other interpretations, of religion? Then in James 3:15, where again the author is talking about wisdom, wisdom from above, he associates three words, a different wisdom, “earthly, natural, demonic”. What did James see, that he framed the matter thus? Is this a necessity? (Ah! But I see that ‘natural’ may have a specific meaning here, indicative. But the word doesn’t always mean this.) And how does it contrast with Jesus’ statement, in Luke 11:9-10, “So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened.”? Remember, it’s about A.D. 0 when Jesus said this. And where. In what state was the planet Earth at that time — and then, how to proceed? This verse in Luke in my view would reference both disciple/Jesus Christ and disciple/neighbor. There was another parable in Luke about a man who persisted in asking his neighbor for some bread, for an unforeseen guest, and the neighbor eventually relented. This bread could be seen to be akin to wisdom. That is, to seek wisdom and insight from one’s neighbor (in the world) would be part of what Jesus is talking about here, in these verses in Luke 11:9-10 — as well as the standard interpretation of to seek the working aspect of salvation and spiritual bread from Jesus, and guidance and instruction on various things from the Holy Spirit.

There is a lot of material in James, at least to work with, and it has a self-correcting feature, that I think is missed in mainstream American theology. See James 5:19-20. And, one might ask, exactly Who is the One who sits in Judgment? See James 4:12. Again, Zen may have a somewhat different answer, but an answer that resonates, in that it is not the individual who pronounces final judgment. The point is to direct to truth, simply put. It may not have quite the same meaning as in Zen, but see again James 5:19-20. And note the interplay of the objective and the subjective in James 4:17.

One other note. James painted a picture of the tongue as a world of iniquity. Is this the total picture? What does it point to? Is not the tongue to be used carefully, and then is it simply a tool for the work of salvation, enlightenment, or insight? Or art? But it is powerful, and perhaps one can speak ill will very easily.

Pluses

One must treat the Bible, the Christian Scripture, as a profound religious text. In my view, the perspective and level of spiritual insight by each of the writers must be taken into account.

Moses may be deserving of study. And, maybe I should look into Rumi, or Saint Francis of Assisi. The Book Of Job is a noteworthy study in dilemma, accessible whether one is Christian or not.

I should know about Allah, as well.

There may be a reality to God. Does God account for the totality of Reality? What are the interpretations of God?

It's not my own understanding, but if there is a God that is the Absolute then I want to know about it. Or — is the Absolute that which is referred to as God?

Christians meet in joy, a notable feature.

A Christian church is a place where you can strike the spark of a search for meaning and truth.⁸

I've started to look for the features of realization that Jesus Christ may have identified as being important — in what He said, and the direct accounts written of Him.

I have a strong sense that Jesus tried to resolve things, that was one of His key traits. How He balanced this all out, I'm not sure.

I think that it may be important to treat "sin" from Jesus' perspective, that which He was working with in His day to day life when He associated or was friends with the sinners and tax collectors, as, from His view, simply "missing the mark", or "not quite there, yet", nothing unholy. And my read is, with a certain level of insight already present. Or — is that, depth of intelligence and visual awareness. (See also the story of Zaccheus, in Luke 19.) You have to interpret this for yourself, exactly what is meant. Again, Jesus said, "Yet wisdom is vindicated by all her children." in just such a context. See Luke 7:35, and the entire chapter.

Joshu, a Chinese Zen master, said something similar (that is, about insight, although he said it not in the context of a sinner or not, but a 7 year old or a 70 year old). See The Gateless Barrier by Shibayama.

I have read and continue my study of the book of Luke for insight into Jesus. So far, for that, it's top notch. And I've begun to consider John. Then, to consider Matthew and Mark.

My own standpoint for now is this: Friendly to those in heaven, compassionate to those in hell. And, “Yet wisdom is vindicated by all her children” --> salvation question, and what it really is.

A Note On One Approach

Through following a contour of truth, I arrived at the following way of approaching Christianity. It's just one approach. If Christianity is a matter of personal faith, then that direction would also be up to the Holy Spirit. But I thought this conveys the heart of it. If one approaches Christianity as an interesting subject of study, then this would also apply.

It's 4 fold. I also include the starting point for consideration, in Scripture.

4 fold juxtaposition

1. These things happened that the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms might be fulfilled. (Luke 24:44).
2. Jesus as Light, Salvation, Forgiveness, and Judge.
3. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit.
4. Relationship with God, wisdom, one's neighbor.

I would myself then add: “Jesus tends to resolve things, and any dispute is toward that end”, and “Jesus very action is to break up untruth and realize truth, the actual”. One could then re-interpret: “where 2 or 3 are gathered together, there I am also” — as a spiritual Truth, working in this way. Peril for the disingenuous, or falsehood, or ‘to contradict the evident’! Dynamic interplay for the one speaking truthfully!

Scripture

Genesis 1, 2, 3; Noah; the Exodus and the 10 Commandments; Moses and the burning bush; Elijah; Samuel or Daniel; Micah; selections from the Psalms; Proverbs 3; Luke; John; James; 1 John; Hebrews. These are the things I would study, with the 4 points in mind. What dimension! If you find Christianity to be of interest in any way at all, whether as a subject of study, or of personal faith, how interesting this approach would be! Then one can look into Romans and the other books, revisiting material along the way.

Proverbs 3 is important because it covers several things: first, instruction on how to approach life; second, instruction on how to work with God; third, an account of the paramount importance of wisdom.

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1. I don't know what this means for all of us.
 2. And, Jesus did bring forgiveness during his life. See Mark 11, and Luke 7.
 3. See Speak, Memory, by Vladimir Nabokov, p. 125.

4. It's clear to me now that our existence cuts pretty deep.
5. It's clear to me now, too, that evolution is simply untenable. Still, science should be debated. Proportion, integration, function. Bone, muscle, mind — integrated perfectly. Then, breath. And, balance.
6. Scientific inquiry, when it's just that, is just fine. To work with direct evidence by a scientist must be fascinating. The main limitations to the evolutionary view that I see are 1) Information origination and the apparent complexity of the cell; 2) The complexity of design micro macro and the unfolding development of interlocking parts; 3) Combinatorics micro macro. If it can resolve these, fine; but maybe there are directed guiding influences in nature that provide the key. Christians would of course point to Creation, some interpretation of it.
7. I now see 4 possibilities, with maybe overlapping features, for how the world exists, life forms and complex matter and form of matter:1. Creator. All at once, the various features of the world explained. Science can explain what's produced as a result, but not the Creator. The appeal is a sense of the integration of nature that is seen as what only a supreme Mind could produce; and that it aligns with religious experience and sense of morality.2. Tao or yin-yang. Subtle guiding direction or interaction, very active, maybe non-action, also expressed as principle; not separate. The appeal is in what is noticed.3. Evolutionary theory. Mindless physical material and their processes that build things; things operate in certain well-understood ways that can be scientifically validated absent anything but physical law and processes of otherwise inert matter. The appeal is precisely this, and that we can with enough observation and theory truly understand our dynamic universe.4. Form around a Platonic ideal/form. This could be indicated also by working of the Tao or of yin-yang, or something similar that works with, or something entirely different that works with. One quality that occurs to me is that as activity things form around Platonic form, finding resting place and becoming perfect themselves. All 4 views have the feature of explanation. This is important to note. I simply don't see that a Creator God is realistic. Creation does have the appeal of being immediate, whether it's the Big Bang or the world pretty much as it is. I don't see how evolution explains, with random mutation and unguided interactions, although scientists might have identified certain mechanisms in operation. The key insights for me were Tao/yin-yang and now Platonic form.
8. One could spark insight on a Harley-Davidson, too; and this needs to be taken into account. I think Jesus would appreciate this. "Yet wisdom is vindicated by all her children." (And there are Christians and non-Christians alike I think who ride Harleys.) But in going to a church, I think that there are important questions to ask, especially of the Four Gospels, the words in print; and that they deserve careful study. How do they figure reality? What do they point to?

Appendix 6.1: Psych! — Experiential Analysis

Basics

Psychology is simple. You can change your own mind. You can communicate with others. Words, images, and perceptions can transform a person, a culture, or a world. Life can be difficult. Wisdom, love, and compassion guide you to the truth of realization.

This does not mean at all that psychology is easy or is not also complex.

Psychology, like philosophy, is both simple and complex, etched detail and stunning directness (and logic and awareness and ‘to notice’ and study things).

An individual can center, re-orient, and establish new points of reference.

There is an underlying premise that, say, Aristotle got — he dealt with things. I haven’t read that much Aristotle, yet — but I plan to. However, it’s already clear that he (1) structured a clear method, that was functional in his mind; and (2) worked with what he saw around him.

What does it mean to predicate something on?

For some people there are troubling mental phenomena. This is where the experiential insight and record of the individual enters. A grounded person — diagnosed or not — may work with a mental model, and refine it. And, he or she works within parameters. Then, What are the parameters outlined by Truth? And there’s more, and this takes you to the realm of a direct experiential nature of human existence. Full circle! But what is it, that is this? Why can it be illuminating? What does it mean to center, and to work with good theory and practice? And, what is it that is insight and awareness?

Plant wholesome roots. Roll your own religion.

Resources

The Society Of Mind. By Marvin Minsky. 1988, Simon & Schuster Paperbacks. Original copyright 1985, 1986. This book might be worth careful attention, for some. It may provide centering, and an analytical approach, on “what is the character of”. A couple of followup notes: What is the nature of being? What is the nature of thought, and its source? Can you validate Minsky’s underlying theory? How does it work with the questions you might have? What if, instead of based on mindless particles forming agencies, the mind is simply — mind? 1, 2 How does wisdom play a role? And, What is it, the mind that is before you?

This One Moment: Skills For Everyday Mindfulness. A DVD. By Marsha Linehan, Behavioral Tech. Linehan’s presentation is perfect, with a multifaceted approach, that needs to be practiced.

Five Keys To Mindful Communication.

Open Dialogues And Anticipations: Respecting Otherness In The Present Moment.

Ten Zen Seconds. By Eric Maisel. 2007, Sourcebooks. This is a refined, creative work. The author introduces a series of phrases or incantations that one can use with breath during the day to center, re-direct, strengthen, or calm.

Perspective

Psychologists and psychiatrists who put forth a genuine good effort, even if they make mistakes, should not be blamed if an individual does not pull through. It's up to the individual as well as the psychologist and psychiatrist. Humans are complex. And some psychiatrists may be helpful. And genuine attempts by the individual, even if problematic at first, should be acknowledged, and put in perspective. And, what is the path of the individual?

The renewal/introduction of profound ability should be a goal; and an encounter with psychiatry and/or psychology should be resource-driven, supported by a state framework, and illuminative. Some of this is already the case, especially in followup treatment. However, mainstream psychiatry's basic premise, up to now, is neither philosophy, religious, medicine, deep science, or evidence-oriented. (This is problematic!) Followup programs may be different, and should be noted. There may be evidence at the U.S. National Institute For Mental Health already, and it needs to fit and support a redefined framework and basis, while remaining focused on actual dilemma. Social dilemma should be treated differently, and meaning/evidence/intent/and goals should be emphasized.

Background & Premise

(It seems) bodhisattva activity here has yielded insight.

I spend some time here, on this topic. I think it's a dilemma in current society, and that a more strategic, integrated, natural language approach could be helpful, grounded in real-world narrative and description, theory that draws from a broader domain of thought in its description, and presents a more creative, connected way for psychiatrists to work with their clientele.

Psychiatry may not point you in the same direction, as outlined above. Its theory is in terms of brain function (molecules and chemical reactions), and genetic or environmental triggers to permanent disability. It measures in terms of behavior, and infers mental state and diagnoses from a flawed interpretation of the 'objective', and with virtually no acknowledgement of the 'subjective'; and psychiatrists have already decided what constitutes behavior. It does not consider the internal world of the individual using descriptive terms, or report on it (as the individual would describe it); and it is not interested in the individual's explanation. It frames the matter as a medical problem, and not one to be addressed in the mental realm, in natural language descriptive ways, or by matters of the spiritual, by the individual. Here one must be aware of several factors.^{3, 4, 5}

Psychiatry concerns itself with the medical model, and I think it needs to recognize that various features of the mind can be described in everyday language that can be put together in descriptive terms, providing far better grounding. The medical model does not consider various aspects of the mind, or of action and goals, description and dilemma, that are relevant, and can lead to treatments that

are constrained and limiting for the individual. Psychiatrists also may paint a false picture of the individual.

In considering behavior, one could consider “action”, “view”, and “reason”.

For the Zen view, Hui-neng says (for instance) to be congenial to others, and sets a framework for understanding the nature of Zen inquiry, with many specific examples. (See The Sutra Of Hui-neng.)

For those who might take a Christian view, in the book of James, in the New Testament, the author provides another spiritual answer:

Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. . . . But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

— James 3:13, 17-18.

But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

— James 1:5.

Whatever your source for wisdom, and insight, I’m not sure that psychiatry can account for these. (Strictly mechanistic? Or part of Reality? The key is to invert the view of biological function — to see it as part of Reality, set in its context. And to see wisdom and insight as part of that Reality, also. You have to get the “shift”.) I’m not sure that psychiatry can account for that many features of human existence. One has only to touch these to know; much less the realization of profound truth.

There is a reality of difficulty that psychiatry has set itself to deal with. But it ignores important facets of what it means to be human. Psychiatry needs a new theory, a fundamentally different interpretation of human existence, and a functional model.

Psychiatry needs to take into account the genuine aspects of Reality, dealt with in religion. It may misunderstand religion, and the spiritual domain; and it may be premised on a fundamental philosophical error. I suspect though, that it also doesn’t perceive the strength of the print word, description, text, and diagram. But to be a serious Zen Buddhist is to work with a surprising domain. And the correction to psychiatry may be spiritual, or can be indicated in diagram; but can be discussed in secular and philosophical ways, also. The individual psychiatrist can note these features. That is, it appears that religion has various frameworks and views, a language and reality, that would apply in dealing with mental difficulties, depending on how deeply it (religion or spirituality) cuts, for the individual. Thus, the importance of the subjective. And again some significant material can be framed in a philosophical way.

I say that the correction may be spiritual, because of the material and toolbox made available from religion or via the spiritual. Others, though, may have resolved matters for themselves in other ways, and the text- description- and diagram- of-insight that I mention I think are invaluable.

An individual may find psychiatry helpful, in a limited but possibly important way, in the right circumstance. There may be something called “deep psychiatry”, which is resilient, of a capable intellect, reflective of source material in real time, and responsive to the individual, as well as to peers.

But especially other psychiatry has to be put in the right context — here, “Object A. See A. If A is not too hot, Grasp A. Put A. Then, memory and space.” Pause, in emptiness, or reflecting a picture. Followed by — stillness, motion, or activity? Here, complications; and perhaps weeds and stony ground.

Time t. What role for: “Feel, carefully; sense.”? Or — to see what is known. How is it known? What is the role of perceptions? Reason? We’re already adept with these, to some degree. Is it necessary to find a renewed balance?

Or: “I know to put the asparagus in the fridge after I’m done cooking.” Factor to the internal. What else do you know, and can determine? How do you develop a compelling frame of reference? How do you center? What is the role of society, and of solitude? Work on this yourself and allow it to unfold. This might not apply, or it might apply to some; and there is that which simply is difficult. How do you look to others for insight?

These simple examples are just that, and the day to day experience of the individual may be very much more difficult. He or she can have persistent annoying thoughts, seemingly beyond direction; or be so caught up in his or her own world that others become upset; or try but find no or little relief. It may be difficult to remember anything helpful in the middle of the day, or to recall how to re-orient. It may seem that nothing works.

I wonder how over time and with repeated experience, one can develop insight into patterns, and with the right text- diagram- and description- of-insight one can recognize certain things in real time, and apply correction — all within the scope of psychiatry, and to bring additional resources to say a “deep psychiatry”.

You might consider: how do “perceptions”, “action”, and “reason” function, and work together? These are topics that can be expanded upon.

Types Of Psychiatry

There were 3 types of psychiatry practiced, at a given psych unit, and here I focus on the first 2.

First, a list.

To support religion.

To work with philosophy.

To work with working knowledge.

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To develop and work with psychology.

Second, the analysis. To put it succinctly, the first psychiatrist did not work with these, and actually seemed to set them aside; the contradiction displayed itself in sharp relief (she was highly intelligent, but there was little material provided, to work with). Actually, though, I did manage to bring some material to the table that I presented in a less passionate and less demonstrative way than other material (yet still expressive), and with this material the psychiatrist and I were able to establish a new pattern, centered on meaning that we both could recognize. If I had followed through on this, I would have been released much sooner. (There are 2 lessons to be learned: 1) it helps to bring salient, meaningful material to the table, yourself; and 2) you can ruin a lot of hard work with a single mistake.) But was I free of contradiction? No doubt not! One should correct oneself, first, before speaking the thought — and this naturally yields workable material, set in proper perspective. I did this sometimes, but failed in this instance to make sure to apply it as a rule. Especially, it seems mine was not an expression of Zen calm, always, although sometimes. The second psychiatrist did work with these 4 points from the above list, the focus on the material. The second psychiatrist then was able to work more directly with the patient view; and he had his own demonstrable framework, that he saw as material. Thus, with these 4 in the list, a serious treatment of them, the patient view becomes material, in a more dimension way, and the psychiatrist can framework in a distinct way, with more flexibility, and with material that is relevant.

I feel though that I could relate to the first psychiatrist — given material to work with, and better communication on my part of where my true interest is. This was indicated by her acceptance of what I said regarding “noumenon”, and how I worked with it by example. I told her at discharge that I would keep her in my thoughts, and that’s been true.

Grid-Graph-Theory-Praxis

At another more recent psych unit, I re-oriented from at first a friction view, in which I simply tried to ascertain routine function and expectation, to a recognition that there was something different at the psych unit than I’d experienced at the others — and that turned into pulling together notes that I made myself, that seemed to eventually align with a deeper ethic. This entire experience may have been within a Zen framework, and might also then redefine the action leading to the various other psych commitments — as dedicated effort. We’ll see.

At this psych unit I came up with the following list:

Directive indirectives
Modus determinative
Modus determinant
dW (and the implied W)

That is, “directive indirectives” for some of how the lead psychiatrist functioned; modus determinative for how he thought, his mind, and ability to quickly grasp a situation; modus determinant for how another of the psychiatrists navigated his asking of questions, and probing; and dW or the difference in work done, and the implied actual work effort — the architecture of the effort and result. This psychiatrist was capable of “deep psychiatry”; he had a strong intellect and was simultaneously reflective of his own theory and of the patient.

I aligned several things with a physics equation from Analytical Mechanics (Fowles, section 6.3), that describes gravitational potential:

$$dW = \frac{GMm}{r^2} \mathbf{e}_r \cdot d\mathbf{r}$$

I substituted:

G = the resources the patient or individual has available via what he or she finds at the psych unit: text, description, diagrams, maybe yoga, study material, theory of the mind, psychology insights and observation, narrative

M = the individual's own effort

m = of-insight (specifically directed, from the psychiatrist or support staff, a counselor, or a psychologist)

r² = the projection by the individual of his or her own circumstances

e_r = the actual field of things surrounding the individual; his or her experiences and context; life events, situation, and people

d \mathbf{r} = the resulting difference of the path taken, by the individual with guidance from others

You can modify d \mathbf{r} to be the actual architecture of the path taken, in which case dW becomes W, the actual work done, an integral of the architecture. (There is no mistake in the language — the goal is often to integrate, with the individual, the various factors and context.)

(And in the text Analytical Mechanics, from which I took the above equation, various equivalent expressions are given for it, especially considering this or that described or imagined circumstance: but it is the case that each expression is actual and descriptive, at each step, and applies, each in its own way. That is, the integral applies, and so does the derived equation from it. This should be taken note of, in physics! I wish I'd had this in mind as an undergrad; I only recently realized it for myself, and further back I realized the dimension to physics – I would have been visualizing each step along the way, during lectures, with these in mind!)

I feel it is so important for the individual to have material to work with — both to solve dilemma and to have something to engage with that leads to renewed meaning and experience.

I'm working on further exposition of some similar ideas. Another is the idea that perception may be a precursor to more than we think. See the first 2 verses of the Dhammapada: The Sayings Of The Buddha (Oxford World Classics), where the Buddha claims that perception is of paramount importance.

Before this, I'd worked on some documentation called "MVO", or "mental view and orientation", that I'd hoped might provide additional resources — and call attention to the value of resources in print and study and contemplation — for the individual. I'd also look to narrative, and the type of psychology of

say a Marsha Linehan, psychologist and author, who works with diagram and text, and mindfulness training.

Renewed Meaning, For Psychiatry

Psychiatry takes a pathology view. But I really wonder if it shouldn't see itself as concerned with a really interesting domain, a broader definition: that psychiatry considers reasonable inner calm, resilience, orientation, behavior, and realism; and their exceptions.

I think this covers the bases. This is my new model for psychiatry (and related psychology). We'll see if it maps over time. This would allow society to consider psychiatry in a different light, and re-think what its obligations are, or in what way. Since this definition is more comprehensive, it would allow the fact, further, "to consider what is before you", for the psychiatrist and psychologist, and would be much more than the simplistic line of thought that leads to routine diagnoses-and-claims of absolute deficiency, and would actually set context, per individual. ("Deep psychiatry" doesn't necessarily follow this rule, and does acknowledge context.) This definition is less static and allows for more dimension material to be presented. It would allow psychiatry, and in conjunction with psychology, to consider resources anew — resources already available — perhaps to re-formulate them, or not, and to apply them in creative ways. It would allow for natural language discussion, in addition to the technical. It would better allow for personal stories and narrative. How exciting!

I think that psychiatry could see that the individual can work with "the mind that is before one", and his or her mental view and orientation. I think these are key terms.

A note on natural language description, and also on the medical model. The following expansion on a theme is how one can approach various things in a natural language sort of way, yet allow technical description depending on context.

The mind could be said to be made up of the regulation of the mind, and also features like assumptions, reason, conclusions, ideas, thoughts and thought structure, feelings, speech, action, view (view of the world, of others, of speech, of action), perceptions, understanding, and consciousness. These are just some ways to establish the domain. It's not just brain chemistry (and this would most closely correspond to regulation of the mind, or be a subset of it; some meds might be said to work on some level with a subtype of regulation of the mind; they may also work with brain structure, and is that problematic, or a renewal of natural expression? This might depend on the nature of regulation versus direct action.) Regulation of the mind would touch thought, perceptions, action, and consciousness, and other things mentioned. It would be regulation of mental energy, regulation of thoughts (regulation of thought type, regulation of thought content, regulation of thought pace). I think there are several ways to approach regulation of the mind: recognition, thought direction, awareness, working with the breath, and meditation. It would be interesting to work with these in my own life, after having taken over time the standpoint of simply "to try try again", and not working directly with depth material; that is, to operate from a deeper premise of insight, description, awareness, and wisdom. Since 2014, for me, this has clearly occurred, and may help explain how the current scenario may be within a Zen framework. But the natural language sort of way is how the individual could work with the mind, the mind before himself or herself, make his or her own observations, and come up with text- and diagrams- description- and study- of-insight. I have various papers under the categories of "mvo" and "grid-graph-theory" that use natural language.

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I think that the standard industry view that meds are to correct a “chemical imbalance” is simplistic, and that some of them, when successful, actually restore entire regions of “mental state” or thought/speech/action patterns to routine. It’s like walking into a different room. This could not only reinterpret the action of meds, but could also open up a dialogue with non-meds treatment, where that has worked for the individual.

Finally, I also think it would be key for psychiatry to recognize “meds-understanding” for the individual; that it’s not just meds. The balance would be specific to the individual. This would be important in both psych units and more routine consultation. “Deep psychiatry” needs to understand the requirement for meds-understanding. Deep psychiatry is responsive, and has the intellect to appreciate this, and to also put it in its own language.

How We Maintain Our Health

It seems to me that if we in American society rely on medications (physical, mental) for widespread maintenance application, that there’s some underlying problem, that one can consider both physical health and mental health in another light. Maybe this would serve to prevent illness by long-term work or integrated mental and physical training. Others may have more perspective on this.

I think to consider physical function and mental function — observable features, workable, available to the individual — might be an important viewpoint. To apply physical correction or mental correction as a matter of spot color (see Envisioning Information) seems to be the traditional way to view medicine. Thus, the use of antibiotics after surgery might be spot color — used to correct for a specific identifiable problem that the body encounters until it can regain full capacity or strength, and continue then its routine function. There is room for maintenance, there’s no hard and fast rule. But a routine reliance on these, in culture? At least maybe other processes or features should be considered, that haven’t been introduced very much yet. Yoga would seem to be one. Herbal tonics may be another. Then there’s tai chi, and still the traditional gym or home workout. We need to balance what was available to the ancients with what we have available with the Western view.

To integrate mind/body in training, and for psychiatry to really consider a new view, that psychiatry considers reasonable inner calm, resilience, orientation, behavior, and realism; and their exceptions, would lead to a more dimension perspective and practice of psychiatry.

That is, also, that would be that for psychiatry it’s not just behavior (can be subjective and not indicative of the actual dilemma, if there is one) and pathology (limiting).

A Note On The Objective And The Subjective

Reasonable inner calm, resilience, orientation, behavior, and realism — you might have exceptions to these, something that the mind insists on.

If the situation involves an inability to move, that one is depressed, not resilient, then that’s problematic. If it involves behavior, and maybe with an unrealistic view, then that might make one subject to complaint!

Maybe you could for some cases put it in terms of the individual being off-balanced, unrealistic, and intrusive. Each of "off-balance", "unrealistic", and "intrusive" are subjective. This does not make them unreal, or not-in-fact. But it does mean that the objective and the subjective have to be considered.

I think the subjective side of the primary definition might answer some of the frustration of some of those put through the psychiatric system. It does allow for intervention, but also points to maybe incorporating the fact that the experienced is subjective; of course, both the individual in question and those around him or her have their own subjective views, and their own interpretations of the objective. I think to acknowledge the interplay of the subjective and the objective would yield a more dynamic interpretation of psychiatry.

This would benefit the individual in question more often, as well as those around him or her, would it not? It also would seem to make psychiatry more dimensional.

Buddhism speaks of delusion — is it possible to walk an individual through a psychotic break or what might commonly be considered delusion more readily with better tools concerning the subjective and the objective and the interplay of these? What about in the cases of extreme social friction? Friction in whose mind, and how does the entire picture inform each individual and experience? Does the individual realize the effect of his or her thought, speech, and actions? Do others realize that what is apparent may not actually be so?

I feel also that, along with this, the psychiatrist would be better equipped to establish a connection to the individual, both structured and informal, engendering a state of "at ease". Some of this has been noted above. About 80% of institutional psychiatry positions itself in a remote manner, or unrealistic, unable to connect, or with no relevant material besides the routine of meds. About 20% is able to establish some sort of formal, structured, or informal rapport with the individual. The degree to which these work is also up to the individual, not just the psychiatrist and support staff; and both short-term and long-term value is also up to the individual, not just the psychiatrist and support staff.

To some degree, the individual is responsible for what happens. To be unnoticed is likely to go far. It seems that in American culture, to be calm engenders calm, at least often. And to stay clear of delusion and out-of-step may be important. Yet, creativity sometimes is out-of-step, so subjective realization of balance is important; and this, too, is part of a vibrant culture in America.

I think the goal, to borrow from the definition above, is to look to reasonable inner calm, resilience, orientation, behavior, and realism — though that may be the case already, or not, or shades in between.

It is also true that one's internal world can be very difficult. And one's external circumstances.

I'm also interested in what the fine points on delusion are within Buddhism, how psychiatry uses the term, and how these might work with or inform each other.

Note that the state, here in America at least, infers danger often, in dealing with individuals within the psychiatric setting. I've set that aside, for this discussion; and perhaps, I'd suggest, better understanding of the research and a more dispassionate stance may be required. Mental dilemma does

not always mean danger; and danger may not be indicated by mental difficulty. I'll leave it to others to work out more.

Note On The Interplay Of The Subjective And The Objective

If it is raining on the rock, it is the rock that feels the rain. This is the subjective, it is the rock itself that feels the rain. Yet we can see this and observe that, "It is raining on the rock." This is the objective; and this objective statement is said subjectively, of us ourselves, and from our standpoint: it is we who notice that it is raining on the rock, and this noticing is also subjective, of us.

Dependent arising says that the rock continues to get wet because it continues to rain; or dries off and becomes hot because the clouds disperse and the sun comes out again, and it is early afternoon, during the summer.

The rock contains a gold nugget, yet it is the miner of gold who is on the other side of the state; so the rock is left alone, as it is only several of us together, and none of us are interested in the gold, only in whether it is raining or not.

This, too, is dependent arising.

This type of viewpoint has value in a psych unit, and for both the psych team, the individual, and the psych unit psychiatrist, as they mutually realize what is before them, whether it is perception or action, or significant dilemma, part dilemma, no dilemma, or no-dilemma. This mutual co-arising occurs no matter what, and to realize its value and nature yields insight, which makes things more easily approachable, recognizable, safe, just, or workable, whatever form that might be. This is my view, in any case.

My Own Present Circumstance

I wrote this in 2014. Subsequent experience has shared light on this, which I'll cover later.

In 2014 on meds, I've either "tunneled through" the meds, and there is interesting causality and depth, either that or non-causality, involved; or I've found that the meds have "created space"; either/or, for deeper insight and better balance and the ability to step out of the box of my immediate experiences to better place attitudes and perceptions involving my stint with mental health matters — and for me Buddhism informs this. I have demonstrated to myself that one can have Zen realization, and encounter essence of mind (see Hui-neng), within a system of medication; this has to be at the right time. And now I'm working with a perception of emptiness that opens up the entire domain of the human experience; and there's room to go deeper in this direction. It may be that with a Zen practice (or otherwise), one can work with non-causality, at the right time; and the manifestation of this may initially be subconscious.

I don't know if all this work has been "surface", with a "badism" component, and followed the Zen preparation of the early 2000s as just that, preparation and initial consideration of Zen principles; this all including zazen, and the study of Zen Flesh Zen Bones (Reps, Senzaki) and The Society Of Mind by Minsky, for study and research into what constitutes method and structure, and a creative approach.

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Zen would then use one of those tools itself, from *The Society Of Mind*, reformulation — and reformulate!

And, I enjoy working with the visual imagery of Minsky's, in *The Society Of Mind*, and, with the truth of Zen, I might be able to integrate some aspects of his book into a compelling view. This also would stem from the early 2000s. The book very much influenced how I write.

I don't know what further opportunities I'll have to study some of the material I've presented. I'm taking notes now on what a more "dimension" approach within psychiatry would bring to the table, plus some papers that would provide material for an individual experiencing schiz-like mind features (or maybe bipolar) to work with his or her mental view and orientation. If these are of benefit to others, all my difficulties would have been worth it. (I can't speak for others. I am grateful to my parents for their role in this.) Then in 2015 I unpacked grid-graph-theory at another psych unit, definitely worth it; and I maintain an enthusiasm for that experience. I would enjoy working at the corporate level within a state agency, or a private group, to work with corporate staff and psychiatrists and their staff to work on and refine some of these ideas. I don't know if the state is looking to solve psychiatry's problem domain in different ways at all or not. Then there are organizations working as advocates.

I am fully responsible for my failures and efforts 2000-2014. I need to apply effort diligently, to fully appreciate Buddhist thought and practice, and how it manifests. I have learned so much, now the early middle of 2015, in the past 6 months (back to early-winter).

In 2017, as I write this paragraph, a new pattern has emerged; one that sets a new context for the efforts and observations of the past 14 years — and they are this text and other documents that I've written that illuminate the topic in several ways — again, all to renewed or strengthened ability, and now with an emphasis on philosophy as providing orientation along with something I call mvo (mental view and orientation). I now work on this as a duration project, and the events of the past number of years in this domain are now more fully explained. Patterns and observations and engagement have emerged, and I aim to take this to further definition within the State.

Psych Units

Psych units should be places of interest, domain, dimension, form, and meaning. They should incorporate, per individual, the following: philosophy and philosophical expression; the spiritual, its ideas, and its applied basis; practical and proven psychology, from any number of points of view; speculation on how we think and why; diagrams and description by, with, and for the individual; open dialogues; classes with excellent worksheets and discussion; 1 on 1; the selective use of meds, to be used in a medicinal sense; and pointers to state, agency, and organizational resources. They could be places that one goes either to 1) heal and re-orient from dilemma; or 2) strengthen and flexi an already stable position. They could also be places that the police, the family, or the individual can rely on, so as to "sort things out" and fairly find, seek, and adjudicate appropriate and just outcomes, with all participant and involved.

Concluding Notes

I'd note that Richard Feynman, the extraordinarily balanced physicist, was rendered deficient by psychiatry, according to his account in *Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman* (in the chapter "Uncle Sam Doesn't Need You"). He did in fact wonder as to the nature of the sounds he heard. His account is hilarious and cutting. Likewise, Vladimir Nabokov, the expert novelist, would probably be diagnosed deficient, given his account in *Speak, Memory*. Never mind what he was.

One comment. One should also ask, "Why?" in a critique of psychiatry. That is, "Why is there the current interpretation of psychiatry?" I strongly feel that resources in print- diagram- description- and narrative- should be recognized. This may lead to deeper questions, too, and a compassionate stance, and is likely the more enlightened path. Several Zen Masters have warned against finding fault with others. But I think it's fine to discuss views.

Reincarnated as a Zen Marvin Minsky would be phenomenal Zen Whatism with the potential for an amazing and compelling Zen Badism — where the puzzle sparks a momentary glitch and then insight.

Recently my road has been Zen/mind fun, Zen/mind ease, Zen/mind interesting, Zen/mind tough, Zen/mind trouble, and Zen/mind troubled — and not in that order. I have been floative. I have been grounded. One day perhaps I will know which of this has been a dead end and which has been insightful. My hard work may have begun to pay off already. (How this might be is now more clear.) But tomorrow starts tomorrow and there are no guarantees except that the sun will rise. If that. I aim to be Zen wisdom, Zen compassion, Zen love, Zen work, Zen serious, Zen fun, and Zen effort for the rest of my life.

In Buddhism there are the three worlds: past, present, and future.⁶ There is the present, look, it exists, here. But the past, present, and future have a certain type reality, and are interdependent.⁷ And one can be immersed in the past, present, and future — while there is the reality of the present moment. And neither the world nor the individual is independent of time — the world is an unfolding hallucination and that is what time is. This doesn't really describe in detail what is happening, in front of you, and there is depth behind it; but it does begin to indicate the reality of what is in front of you. Yet it's not so simple. (For myself, I'm revisiting this, in depth. The results are a release of rigid structures, and the mind naturally centers and relaxes...)⁸ What grounds are there within this? What of the individual perspective, and perception? What grounds for suffering or delusion, or for insight and relief? Insight is liberating, and frees one to benefit others! And realization works with the fact, or the vector.

How do you navigate this, work with Reality, and attain realization?

And the world is likely very real, in front of you. But what world?

While some things might persist, they are impermanent, or one might say, not fixed. How can you work with this? What if something seems permanent for this lifetime? They, and you, are also interdependent. What are you, in mind? What if something is a memory? In this, one's goal might be to discover for oneself, to realize, the emptiness of (presented by, made possible by) time,⁹ and how this may allow for a world that you want, or is beneficial, from your standpoint at any given moment. Is this a feature of Reality you can work with? Should you remember selflessness, and to be unattached to the result?

-
1. The agency model is a useful one, as an initial model for how we apply certain strategies of thought to the world — but in considering your own mind you may eventually cut through this model to determine the factors of mind, for yourself. (Is this another model?) And here meditation and Buddhist theory can be useful, centering, and illuminating.
 2. When you start with the assumption of the world as physical matter, it is my guess that you end up spending your time solving endless problems with theories that never quite work out or unify. (Subset theories are just fine.) And you miss some profound questions, and insight, realization, and direct experience. But some thinking around this nevertheless can be instructive, or orienting.
 3. Note that psychiatrists in psychiatric institutions often are not interested in the written or spoken record of the individual. If they are not cognizant of the individual's stance (some are) it does not inform the diagnosis, which stands, arbitrary, on permanent record, and with no recourse for the individual to challenge it; and even if cognizant the overall theory and social construct demands a diagnosis. (By a sheer stroke of what one might term an “evolutionary glitch”, plus a certain type of “mathematics”, psychiatry is leaky and cannot explain much. It is not a sieve.) In fact, “to challenge” the diagnosis by the individual is further indication, in the psychiatrists' testimony, of further “mental illness” — not one of varying degrees of being cogent, reasoned, able to marshal facts, articulate, or able to present matters of scope or detail. And the diagnosis, its nature, its rationale, and its alleged implications are never discussed with the individual. Remember, the diagnosis is permanent. Note that, unlike in the theory of evolution, upon which psychiatry is based, there is no self-correcting or advancing genetic/environmental mechanism. (In evolutionary theory is this mechanism really present, or explained?) Of course, we're here talking in a single lifespan. The UNIX || symbol means to take the result from one process and send it to another. In UNIX, || is read “pipe”. This is as close as one can get, perhaps, in one word, to describing what might be a really dynamic process, and the meaning I give to || in the previous sentence conveys a deeper function. It must [iSun rotate] || [iTern landEachTime] || [iSand dimple] to be an e-glitch! . • . (That's to put it nicely.)
 4. The viewpoint of the individuals surrounding the individual must be taken into account, and the viewpoint of the individual must be taken into account. But psychiatry hardly takes into account the total picture. Nor does it want to. (Thus, in another realm, one might imagine “neutron star”, and “labyrinth”, and “razor wire”.) (Yet — Is this the way of the Tao? See Stephen Mitchell's Tao Te Ching.)
 5. Here again some Objective-C: [iReport takeIntoAccount];. (Note the elegance of astronomy?)
 6. See The Gateless Barrier by Shibayama.
 7. Is your relationship to, orientation to, or perspective viewing the past or the future fixed, or permanent? What actually is available, in the present? Are you varyingly constrained, locked in, free to maneuver? What can you do with observation and reflection? Activity? Meditation?

8. This has to do with the Middle Way; see again *Opening The Hand Of Thought*, p. 97.
9. Think coffee cup, or an empty glass. A container. And how time presents and makes possible the reality of the meaning of emptiness, the Buddhist term; and how this relates to “container”.

Appendix 6.2: Psych! — Idea Space I

The following document and notes are sourced from an email I sent in September, 2017, with expanded themes. They are meant to be applicable to interlocking societal viewpoints and standpoints, as well as the field of mental well-being and its implications.

Hello!

These are from notes that I took in August, 2017; with now some additions and edits. They apply, in my view, very much to the topics of mental well-being and dilemma. Feel free to study and/or review, or to file for your records. They address the thought, 'Idea Space', and how that informs one's recognition of the actual nature of dilemma, and its possible resolutions, if possible.

See below. Some of it is Zen. Other categories apply as specified.

Thanks!

:-)

Kevin

Note

Idea Space

American Psychiatry Association (APA) Model

We, our mental thoughts, are nothing but chemical reactions, that are genetically-driven.

Therefore, if something goes wrong, it's genetically driven, and there's no recourse but meds.

There are other descriptions, but this is succinctly it.

Philosopher

How does thought occur? What is 'idea space'?

What if you have a different type thought, or someone introduces a different or new idea into the idea space you have?

What dilemmas occur by not realizing certain things? Or working with a given set of default assumptions with no means to recognize new vocabulary, applied theory and description, and tools to awaken insight?

What of 'in front of me when', 'in front of me what', or 'in front of me where'? What of 'not there when'? Things, Objects, Concepts, Persons, Ideas.

How do you describe things and develop your own viewpoint of things? At times you may rely on others. At the same time, how do you ascertain truth, or the intelligent path, yourself?

What is 'working knowledge'? How do you start?

Sometimes to establish the structure of the framework is important. Other times you may want to study and work out the detail within -- or extended from -- a framework. Then at times there's framework within detail, and detail of framework, to work with. Other times a rough view will establish a framework, and you can etch some details, then return to the framework, and unfold ideas, views, and knowledge.

Buddhist

'Meaning' is actual.

We are sentient beings.

Working with dilemma and insight may be key. There are several dilemmas and a path out of dilemma outlined in the Buddha's Four Noble Truths.

The Fourth Noble Truth, The Eightfold Path, is as follows. There is, to study and practice, right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right effort, right livelihood, right concentration, right mindfulness. You can sub-type off of these for other or within-worlds domains; and these get you far, and you can consider them, and practice them.

Realizing the 'thingness' of things, and their interconnectedness and actual connections, and the overall space these are made available in, and their lack of 'thingnessliness' is important!

What is a thing? What is the unfolding simultaneity of things (the 'relative'), and how do we work with things that are impermanent, and does this include all things, things, objects, concept, dilemma, the relational, etc.?

Spiritualist

Something is missing within, that when acknowledged, can correct many ills, and lead to a fundamental change in the person.

Recognizing certain facts like 'God' and any Manifest Reality of such would surely be important!

Yoga Teacher

There is awareness, the breath, the being, and the intelligence of the body; and so much form and dimension within and around us.

Scientist Of The Mind

It is clear that even on the micro-biological level, where the atoms and structures of the mind are considered in physical expression, for a person with effective training and re-orientation and development of a new stance or philosophical outlook, connections are reconfigured and new thought- and being-patterns emerge. New connections emerge, and this is then different thought, emotion, mental space, and centeredness. Note that with new connections, often new content and meaning has been set up as well -- this can be part of the healing and the adaptation process, then the change in stance or philosophical outlook, giving the person much more material to work with, or 'chiseled' in a certain way, or resonant in another.

It's also like taking in different foods -- the effects are different with different foods and drinks, and the body re-configures itself, whether for endurance training or getting through the day in a satisfactory way or for weight or strength optimization.

We are sentient and we are beings, and the integration of the two -- sentient beings!

Endnotes

Meds

There are physical realities to things. Meds may be appropriate, as the person addresses dilemma! Other times, when there is 'space' or 'at-ease'-ness to work with, the person may benefit from working with both insight and present-mind dilemma in that context.

Thought, Energy Level, And Perceptual Value; And 'Idea Space'

Thought can be connected to energy level and perceptual value; so if one can work with 'idea space', this relationship can be developed and enhanced over time.

Interdependence; The Unity Of The Mind And Any Physical Arising

Subject/object being absolutely interdependent, and the mind and any physical arising (and the thingness of it, and the no-thing of it), are important!

Also

Study, reflection, contemplation, activity, goals, and meditation or mindfulness may also be key.

Appendix 6.3: Psych! — Squares And Cubes — Diagrams By, For, And With The Individual

By Kevin A. Sensenig

2017 October 9, November 3, 2018 August 16

Draft 1.05L

Introduction And Outline

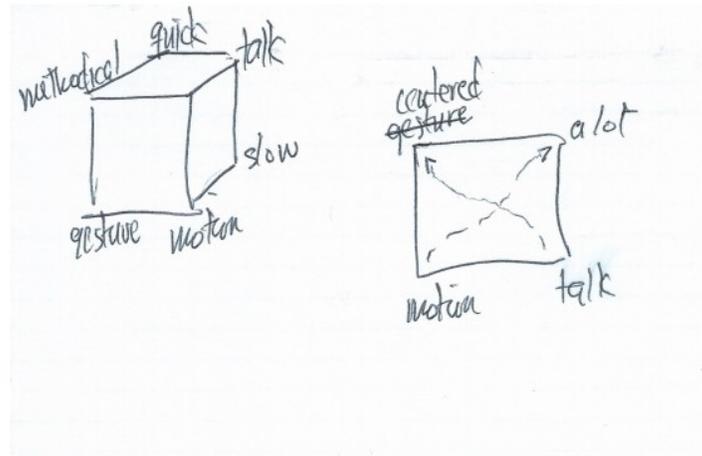
Squares and Cubes can be very powerful, I think, for the individual in navigating a meaning- and thing- object- concept- person- idea- and place- landscape. You can draw a square then write terms representing the preceding, re-arrange them as required (or re-label them), and then notice relationships that "emerge" from the sketch or diagram. You can develop different squares in succession.

You can draw causal and relational and directional arrows. Then, consider how all of this can, at each step, or in a "free" sort of way, or in any number of different ways, re-formulate or illuminate the subjects, types of things, concepts, and so forth, that you've put down.

You can work with fictional stories, or actual events. Both should be resonant and descriptive, of-insight and helpful.

See the example below. You can see what a cube does, but focus on the square, with four labels: "motion", "talk", "centered", "a lot". Note that there are a couple of arrows that were drawn after the square and the labels, linking pairs of corners. You can visualize relationships among the four corners (these are terms or things or concepts or ideas or descriptions) and then possibly identify a way to look at what you have in mind, in terms of actual lived experience; or what you have in mind in terms of possible narrative or fictional stories.

Considering again lived experience helps to re-formulate what may be difficult or troubling situations, or to clarify them. It may help introduce the remembered experience or memory to a new thought-space. It also may help to see from the point of view of various actors (participants) in a situation or set of situations. It also may allow you to work with relationships, causal connections, and directional speech or action "trajectories" -- all of this to allow for more meaning and greater room to maneuver, or for more realism, and so forth. The diagrams are in fact potentially helpful to the person who wants simply to form who they are; and they can help step from default assumptions presented by others throughout life, to greater realism and deeper understanding.



Fictional Stories And Narrative (Or A Record Of Actual Events!)

Fictional stories or narratives of things may actually serve also a deeper sense of realism, as you feel more free to actualize consideration of the possible, in mind; and how this maps to mind-form-being-circumstance.

The above sketch or diagram, of the square and labels, could lead to the following accounts (fictional or actual):

There was little talk between us, but what was said was centering. And so was the silence and space of the room.

There was a lot of talk between us, but it was centered. We got a lot said.

We weren't quite centered in all our conversation, but we kept bringing it back to center.

She gestured just a little while she was talking, and it had the effect of “explaining” what she was saying.

You can come up with your own examples of things that relate, draw causal connections between, or themes among the several labels.

Abstract Descriptions

See if you can both work with types of scenes that might be realistic or are actual, and more abstract things.

Some examples of a more abstract thing is this:

When someone talks a lot, it's often less centering, since they're saying too much in too little time.

When someone is running a race, they're often silent! I wonder if this can't be visualized for when I'm expending more effort -- that I need to be efficient with words.

You see how the idea is as concrete, but an actual or fictional event is not being described; it's more “conceptual”. This type of thing may help you reflect on your insight and abilities, and draw further parallels to lived experience.

End Notes

Abstract Things tie more into noumenon, or ‘a thing of reason’, and narrative of actual events or fictional stories can also spin-off ideas that can be more conceptual. That is one of the goals.

These new ‘things of reason’ and conceptual images can then be applied in similar or new domains. Seeing ways to re-formulate and re-interpret, as well as identify realistically the actual or perceived, is important; and so is being able to generate new domains that may be “perpendicular” or “at an angle” to existing domains – or at least have interesting parallels, with new thought and awareness a part of that.

Appendix 6.4 – MVO-Psychiatry — More!

By Kevin A. Sensenig

Draft 1.03L

2018 June 25, September 1, 3

A Redefined Psychiatry

I realized in some thought just now that one could see a redefined psychiatry (mvo-psychiatry, short for ‘mental view and orientation psychiatry’) as really applying in society, in a different way than is currently the case.

That is, instead of interpreting so many things as ‘disorders’ (using the disease model), mvo-psychiatry would turn to the language of ‘dilemma’; for instance, *the 5 types of dilemma*: mental dilemma, existential dilemma, social dilemma, societal dilemma, and experiential dilemma. And *the 4 grades of dilemma*: significant dilemma, part dilemma, no dilemma, and no-dilemma.

It also would enhance its consideration of ‘fact’ to be ‘all that is the case’: as psychiatry needs to consider reason, merit, and ‘all that is the case’, on the table, in psych units, (significantly) with the individual, and (in a demonstrative way) with all involved. Then it can reason, and apply sound basis for its domain.

For instance, it would then begin to consider *the 5 significant things*: thought space, energy states, perception, speech and action, and patterns of speech and action (behavior), and these as being interconnected and yet noumena to themselves.

It would consider *mind-form-being*, or mind/body/spirit. It would value *explanation and insight* from the individual (with respect to both dilemma and not-dilemma, in the various types), as well as family, friends, and the police; and the state (say an independent arbitration expert or mediator, and the hearing officer).

Finally, it would consider *the 4 states and their unfoldings*: physical state, mental state, emotive state, intentional state, and their unfoldings. Each of these is a noumenon, yet interconnected.

In the psych unit, then, the following would then be presented, *the various combinations of resources*, by the psychiatrist and the psych team: philosophy and philosophical statements; the spiritual and its applied basis; practical and proven psychology; speculation on how we think and why; open dialogues; classes with excellent worksheets and discussion; 1 on 1; the selective use of meds; and pointers to state, agency, and organizational resources. This helps create a dynamic space, and more deeply helpful. It also is connection.

All of this then becomes just, equable, capable, ability-aware, dilemma-aware, and dimension to work with: psych unit psychiatry becomes a place of dimension, vocabulary, and logic, in its theory and praxis. Things can still be tremendously difficult, yet sometimes easier than it would otherwise seem:

Roll Your Own Religion

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and the results should be demonstrably different in feel and effect. And the state would support and protect this: the individual (rights and resource), the psychiatrist (judgment, working, and facilitator), the psych team (working, dimension, illumination), the family (common sense needs, value, explanation), and the police (so they can rely on the psych unit system as backup for sorting things out, but not that the individual is always found deficient), etc.

Psych unit psychiatry would step from a position of always determining a situation with an individual to be one of absolute deficiency, to one of ‘all of the above’.

It then, mvo-psychiatry, becomes a resource for many in society, and will help augment deficiencies in opportunity or education from school, provide answers and good questions for those encountering dilemma, provide pointers to resource for everyone, and will turn to medicine *as medicine*, not as an interpretation that is narrow and considers things only in terms of the serial transfer of molecules: but substance, merit, reason, and ‘all that is the case’; and that the medicines, apropos, can wake-state entire realms of thought and being. All of this then is also a wonderful investigative tool for society. How dynamic! So the psychiatrists’ role (and the psych teams’ role) would be more suitable — and *more*, in society!

Endnote

This idea of ‘more’ in society is a fun play off of Minsky’s idea of our developing new ways to think as, in one way, a ‘society of more’, in considering volume and extent, as we grow from children, the way we develop our minds. See his book “The Society Of Mind”. This fun play led to the thoughts in this document, to look at the psychiatry situation in a different way, and to better explain my standpoint.

Appendix 7.1: Philosophy — Not There When Series

Background

The Not There When Series says things in philosophy, AI, the mental well-being space, and education. It challenges built-in assumptions that one may accrue, without truly subjecting them to scrutiny.

In philosophy: a distinct perspective.

In AI: an implied and explanatory basis.

In the mental well-being space: a renewed or deeper freeing from set patterns.

In education: an escape from thought that is too linearly "set forth" for- instead of with- the student.

For all of these, a spatial and temporal way to work with things.

Please enjoy these, and work with it.

It starts:

Not There When

Not There Where

Not There What

Not There When

A Time t

A Time Interval

A Time Duration

Not There Where

A Location

A Place

Where Is It

Relative To (A Place)

Relative To (Another Thing, Object, Concept, Person, Or Idea)

Not There What

Roll Your Own Religion

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Thing
Object
Concept
Person
Idea

In Front Of Me When

In Front Of Me Where

In Front Of Me What

In Front Of Me When

A Time t
A Time Interval
A Time Duration

In Front Of Me Where

A Location
A Place
Where Is It
Relative To (A Place)
Relative To (Another Thing, Object, Concept, Person, Or Idea)

In Front Of Me What

Thing
Object
Concept
Person
Idea

Notes

All of these become important because they give a relational sense to Not, There, and When. The negation, space/place, and time/time interval are all indicated as possible.

Both affirmation and negation are necessary, in describing things, depending; you may find that you've tried to affirm this or that, in insistence on a viewpoint that tries to genuinely be helpful and affirmative in all things; and even when you take a noticeable negation of a fixed point of view, or a statement within that genuine attitude, you may find that an otherwise static, locked-in, or 'frozen' world becomes supple, free, or fluid.

Note that the genuine attitude must remain intact! I'm speaking here of logical negation, to try an alternate viewpoint. Like, "Not all crows call out all the time. Some sit silently." In other words, this does not, I mean to say, state that you should take a negative or bleak outlook on life; quite the contrary! This is not what I mean by negation. You may simply have put things in a seemingly consistent state then seen that state evaporate or not add up. This philosophical — and what I mean by 'negation' here is philosophical — approach that I'm suggesting is meant to work with reality as you see it/the things it is/its expression, while acknowledging the strength and flexibility and dynamic nature of so much in the world; as well as some limitations imposed on us at times. It is also a way to describe the strong and flexible and dynamic and resilient world that we live in, to find a referent — and thus renewed orientation and sense of place for you. This is key!

It is important to note also that I think we are 'trained' to put things in serial-fact by serial-fact by serial-fact order; and that this does not focus on developing a realistic and critical view of the world; and that this leads to faults in our conclusions, or limitations in what we derive from the world. This can be rectified by a more philosophic approach, with the realization that both Not- and Is- are necessary toward a deepening appreciation for the world and the reality it manifests. Note in conclusion that both Not There When and What There When are necessary! So this can become a theme of yours.

'There' indicates many things, but these can be grasped and worked with, and with 'When', form many possible worlds. This again frees up what may be a static, locked-in, or frozen world, to be dynamic, free, and fluid.

There is a bit of Zen in this; and I'm also tying in some philosophy. Too often I feel we're trained to ascertain what the world is about without philosophic thought, and such 'concept', 'identity', 'to reflect on', and 'insight' are helpful in this. It is also meant, the above, to be material for 'discussion', and 'to investigate' ('for oneself', and 'with others'), a field of 'inquiry', that applies to real life.

Appendix 7.2: Philosophy — On Brickiness And Coffee

Background

This free verse is a response to physicist Richard P. Feynman's illuminative complaint about several philosophers he encountered, and the question 'brickiness', as told to a nice story in his book Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman.

Poem

There are say 6 different frameworks for viewing a brick.
The brick.
It is in a wall.
It is cemented into place.
But not the 6 different frameworks.
They are of-premise and insight.
The brick.
Not in a wall, the brick before you.
The brick.
A brick.
A brick before you.
A brick before you in mind.
A brick.

The brickiness of a brick.
A brick is hard.
It has a surface.
When it breaks it shows a new surface.
When it is not broken, before it is broken.
It has a surface.
It has an interior.
Is the interior the same as the surface?
It's not exposed to air.
It's the same substance.
You can't see it.
You can't grasp it or strike it to break the brick.
It must break for you to break the brick.
The brick shows a new surface.

Does coffee have brickiness too?
Its surface.
Its interior.
You would think it's the same coffee.
But in each case?
Yes!

If it is so!
Its hardness.
Its shape.
Its rigid atomic structure.

Coffee swirls together.
Humans swirl together and apart.
Humans swirl together and in apartments and in open spaces.
Humans talk together and within apartments.

A brick is.
A brick in a stack at one end.
Another brick in a stack at the other end.
Bookends.
Brickiness of thickness. And width.
Brickiness of thickness and width.
And length and height.
Towers with space in between.
Space between.
Width.
Is brick a space of width? Or a width of space?

Is brickiness something that when you break the surface, or break it in 2, a new surface appears?
You can't break coffee in 2.
You can divide coffee in 2.
You can swirl coffee.
You can swirl coffee and get a new surface, that appears.
Is this brickiness?

A brick that you break into 2 pieces shows a new surface, that you couldn't see before. It was hidden.
Coffee that you swirl shows a new surface.
The surface was hidden and non-existent.
Water that you swirl shows a new surface.
The surface was hidden and non-existent.
Water is transparent.
Where is the surface of a brick, when it is hidden?
Also, is it existent?

The swirl in the water produces a surface that was non-existent — except in the motion of one's hand that begins the swirl of water.
The unity also of the latent motion in the hand, and the still water; then the motion of both.

Appendix 7.3: Philosophy — Just

The following juxtaposition of words occurred to me.

just as
just
justice
just so

I thought,

Just as the chair is just (there), and the table is just (there), and the bowl of soup is just (there) -- in a parallel to a 'just so' sort of way -- that the dweller can have them available, notice them as such, and use them, having the resources he or she needs. That is, the individual or family has it 'just', and that justice is done, the situation is just.

Appendix 8: Questions

Existence And Being

The word “is” denotes existence, or existence with some quality. The word “be” denotes “present with some quality”. They seem to have complementary and supplementary roles, and “is” can have a transitive role. Then, “being” is very important.

And both “is” and “be” can denote “some sort of manifestation”.

The Buddha may have started with the existence of suffering. He may have said, “There is suffering.” There may be other ways to start.

In considering oneself, one might consider, “I see a tree.” Then, what is it, that is I, that sees a tree? And what is the tree? What exists? It may take profound effort and insight to investigate this. And, what is it, then, that does such and such? In response to seeing such and such? This is something that I may one day understand for myself, by direct insight, and knowing. I’m not sure it’s my first goal, that is, what other stages may come first. And there’s a way to address the profound matter of enlightenment, along various paths. But for example, when I see a tree: there is sight, there is perception, there is knowing, and there may be memory. For other things, with words, or with thought, the sequence might be different. With these basics, then — what happens? Most people are likely pretty familiar with how they respond to things. What are the actual steps, and the causes, are there causes, and are they inevitable, and am I aware of them? This is interesting, but more immediate for me right now is my actual recent incremental realization. Where does one start, and what does one have to resolve first? I think this has been debated!

One might ask, is life or being an endless cycle, a spiral, a progression, an “as set forth” progression, a stream-like existence, stages along a path, and/or a journey to another shore?

What is the relationship of being and a being? What is the difference between being and a being?

Consider "An idea is being." What leads to that, and what are the implications?

The Mathematical Game Of Life

One could ask questions on the nature of being — and whether one could set up a game with a being with separate, intrinsic nature.

Does the totality of a particular new scenario in the mathematical game of Life exist in the mind of the person who has defined the initial parameters?

Is there a computer game of Life with boundaries that can expand infinitely? Conway’s game of Life itself is mathematical and does go to infinity. If life or intelligence itself is a law of the universe like physical laws then infinity must be a terribly fascinating thing. Then again the universe might be mind itself in which case infinity is second nature, as is zero. And maybe infinity and zero are both second

nature and, well, landscape. Something indescribable. And, if the universe is mind itself, or rises from the mind — well!

God

It is my understanding that traditional American Christianity sees the path that Adam chose as one of primary disobedience, or an essential sin. I'm not sure if there's a way to perfection through Christ; it seems so, and perfection is alluded to in the New Testament (see the earlier discussion of James, on endurance, and the book's corrective feature). The Zen interpretation likely would be that Adam picked up a delusion, and a rather painful one. It is my understanding that Zen would say that there is a way to avoid entirely, or step back from, this delusion, within the individual. The story is a profound one, and indicates what has been a serious human dilemma. But this also involves the discussion of good, bad, and evil, that I talk about in an earlier section.

One could ask why God did not provide Adam and Eve with the wisdom to preempt the Fall in the first place, to understand the underlying dynamic. And one could ask why it is that the original sin is then inherited, by everyone it's claimed. And one could ask about the statement in Genesis 3:22, "... become like one of Us, knowing good and evil", and how that means different things for God and for us, to know the same thing. But there could be an additional wisdom to His Being, again, that He recognizes the underlying dynamic.

Is God a being? Is God immutable? Is God immutable in nature or in being? There is perfection to the creation that is not reflected in the path Adam chose. However, I'm not sure that the explanation, Creator God, covers enough ground. But there may be a profound reality indicated, on some level, that at least one can infer some points.

And what I think is that there is perhaps Tao or prajna present in all things.

Again, What would be the God of Deep Mystery?

Nyogen Senzaki talks about some interesting viewpoints on God in his book *Like A Dream, Like A Fantasy*, chapter "Zen And Philosophy".

Is God by definition good? Or is there some intelligence that invented us to tinker with? To fail? We seem to fail too often — while we also succeed! (But here see the *Tao Te Ching*, translated by Stephen Mitchell, on success and failure.) There has been too much strife and too much imbalance. There has been a lot of cooperation, too. But I don't think that this is it. At all.

I've seen it noted that the Buddha had a sword that cut through delusion.

I used to think that the God of Genesis 1, 2, and 3 has the sublime feel of one waking up. This may be true, but now I see all indications of a clearly present wisdom, in God. And, — awareness.

Yet, it seems to me that God is simply an impossibility. Here, one could note that a first cause could not then interact with the world, because then it's no longer first cause. Another way to state this is that if God is relational with His creation, then He causes things to happen, and we cause responses in Him.

But then He's no longer first cause. (And it may also be seen that His responses to our actions then have an effect on history.) This seems to indicate the impossibility of God's existence ever as first cause. Or, He could not, as first cause, create a world that He relates with.

Free will doesn't solve this; in fact, it makes a similar argument striking in another way. If God as first cause created us with free will, then our very first action (and this action is of free will) is a first cause; and God is no longer first cause. You might be able to say that God contains all the first cause (free will) from the start to finish; and thus retains his ultimate first cause power. However, there still is all the stuff in between, to very real effect; and God is very concerned with this, as evidenced at least in the stories in the Old Testament, and fulfillment in the New Testament.

For instance, if such a thing as a fundamental phenomenon interacts with or even sets relation to an "interval" phenomenon, then that world or interval phenomena becomes part of the fundamental phenomenon, but such a thing is not then a fundamental phenomenon. This may get more to what Nagarjuna is saying (thanks to Nagarjuna and Nishijima for this insight). There is even the fact that then the interval phenomena become a set of "external causes and conditions" to the fundamental phenomenon! There are also, it occurs to me, all sorts of ramifications for using such an approach: nonduality and emptiness, the consideration of whether a dharma (truth-type, in describing or of the world) is impermanence, or has permanent, unchanging aspect to it, or both.

For a different and very elegant way to put this, that may also have greater scope, see Nagarjuna's *Fundamental Wisdom Of The Middle Way*, translated by Nishijima, chapter 7 verse 6.

As separate Being. Once the Creator notices the creation, the creation becomes part of/set-relation-to the Creator. And once the Creator acts in the creation, the Creator becomes part of/set-relation-to the creation. There is again no separability, and no separate Being is possible.

For the following I'm using the framework good and evil as a Christian would view it. And it seems to me that there is the premise that is standard theology that it is evil in the world that causes suffering. The question is that of good and evil, and how a perfectly good and all-powerful God would design the world in the way that He did, to create a world where evil would appear, and suffering and eternal damnation and so forth (what Nagarjuna would call "unfavorable things and phenomena departing from favorable situations", see FWOTMW chapter 7 verse 7). In other words, you could say that the serpent tempted Adam and Eve, and that led to the Fall; but who created the serpent? God must have created the knowledge of good and evil, embodied in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. One could ask as an inquiry into Truth, why did God as all-powerful, set up the design of the world, such that the duality good and evil would or could appear? If He knew the possible outcomes, did He have the wisdom of Solomon, who saved the baby? Perhaps it is part of the wisdom of God to do so! That would be a matter of Christians to grapple with.

Yet I now see a clear and sublime wisdom to Genesis 1:1 thru 2:4. Also, it helps to see that account as the defining Creation story, with the subsequent story of Adam as an entirely different reflection on what might have happened — and what might still be relevant today.

Another question might be that if God is Truth, or if Truth is what God is and evidences, and if all is created by God, then how can the possibility of a lie be part of this? (You might call the temptation to

eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to be a lie, and to pick up the temptation is to pick up the lie.)

A similar idea to this last one is that if God is the Absolute, the foundation to and fundamental of all that is, then how is it that evil or untruth exists? If it's free will, then how is God as Absolute the foundation and fundamental of that, which can yield evil, or an untruth? While this is fairly clear to me, it must have been treated carefully by theologians.

I have another question. If God is Truth, then how is it that He directs anything? In other words, isn't the world then set up as a strict manifestation of Truth? In that case, what was God's role in its design, as a Being? You could relate this to being all-powerful, and what options He had. Yet, you could say that Truth is what God is (as Being) and evidences. This does tie back to the design question.

You might say that this is beyond our apprehension, that the mind of God is unattainable to us, and that He alone holds the explanation. But this seems to be unreasonable, that such insight is unavailable on so basic a question, the design aspect to the story as told in Genesis 1, 2, and 3. It seems to contradict the sense of perfection in God that theists claim. There is certainly detail provided on the nature of sin, and its source in Adam and Eve, that we all inherit, and for which we need salvation from Jesus Christ to atone. But not the initial premise?

However, the Christian will likely cite the importance of faith, a pillar of the religion and practice of it: "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." — Hebrews 11:6. This is an important aspect, as seen by the Christian, or as one considers the Christian view!

At least, each of us can ask questions on the nature of God and features of the world, and the design aspect to the world that He set up.

Maybe we looked for something as the ultimate God and there are other explanations for perception, phenomena, intelligence, compassion, wisdom, and love; and the way things work out.

For yet another perspective, see the blog Zen, Yoga, Gurdjieff by Lee van Laer (zenyogagurdjieff.blogspot.com). A recent essay is "How Thoughts Form, Part 1 - The Arousal Of Thought (<http://zenyogagurdjieff.blogspot.com/2014/04/how-thoughts-form-part-1-arousal-of.html>) and it is particularly apropos. His essays represent careful work. In his essays, van Laer considers a number of features of experience, and talks of Being and our connection to it.

There may be various ways to interpret God, and various manifestations. How God is the Absolute or an expression of it must be very interesting.

God would be infinite in time. But what is time? Or maybe it's different. How does God incorporate time, or how is God found within time?

And I should note again here: I suspect that there is access to a truth and a wisdom layer, or dharmakaya or prajna, for us all, and that theists have access to this too; they may simply misapprehend

it. So I look to Christians for insight, as well, while I see points of difference. And that's fine. And, there are various views at work, for Christians also.

And apparently there is Zen Christianity as well as Zen Buddhism. The Rinzai-Obaku website (see Appendix 10) says that Zen is non-dogmatic, and presents zazen in just such a way. Katsuki Sekida worked with Catholics on zazen with a Christian prayer. In my own life I've approached Zen from the Buddhist perspective.

Reports And Allegory

I do not necessarily discount various features that some account for. I do not discount visions or dreams. Nor do I discount the sense of the presence of God, or awareness of His reality, as reported by some. Nor do I discount the activity of gods, or of the Divine. I do not necessarily discount miracles. There may be bodhisattva activity. Are there explanatory ways to view these? Are at least some of these accurate reports? Is any of this the reality? What does it mean? Ah!

Should Genesis 1, 2, and 3 be read in an allegorical way, also full of meaning, with subtle shades? — that allegory has the strength of not over-explaining, but allowing one's own insight to penetrate the matter? This would inform how one might read the book of Job also.

Mathematics

How quickly can one approach a profound domain with zero, infinity, the integers, and the real numbers? For instance, you can trace your pointer finger from a point 1 to another point 2 across a blank piece of paper (the points being along the real numbers), traversing infinity (the path, the real numbers) in a finite time, itself infinity (the real numbers). That is, infinity coupled with infinity, within a finite time and space, along the real numbers. That's magical already. Take a second scenario, starting with the first scenario, and draw circles (integers) around each of the two points (real numbers). That is, circle 1 around point 1, and circle 2 around point 2. Now when you trace your pointer finger from point 1 to point 2, do the circles interfere with the path? I'm not sure if they do mathematically. And I'm not sure if there's an answer in topology. But to one's mind there's a difference — the path encounters the circles, and one can't help noticing this encounter. Is this disruptive, an interference, or in some other way conjunctive, perhaps constructive? That is, is it still infinity coupled with infinity, within a finite time and space, along the real numbers? What is the answer in Reality? How can one ignore the presence of the circles, the integers, as one traces one's finger across the paper, from point 1 to point 2? "To ignore" or "to notice" is part of the mind. And here both the human participant and the nature of the universe may be at play. And again, I'm not sure that even the mathematics ignores the presence of the circles (integers).

What if you label the point within circle 1 as 0, and the point within circle 2 as 1? Points 0 and 1 are still along the real numbers. What happens to the landscape? What if you toggle the points to integers, in either case (1,2 or 0,1), the path still being real? Does the path intersect the points, mathematically? Or is there some other mathematical relationship, between the points and the path? Or is it strictly an abstract relationship, that exists in the mind alone? Do the circles evaporate? And, What happens to the landscape? And what does the mind notice? Then, back to paper, or the mathematical plane.

In the original second scenario, perhaps there is some coupling between the circles (integers) and the path traced (real numbers), as well. You could represent the integers 1 and 2 as points, and this would take you to the mathematical plane. But you can't see a point! But you can work on the mathematical plane. And this mathematical plane, it seems, exists in the mind only, as an abstraction with concrete results, manifest in various mental and physical ways.

If the universe is mind, or rises from the mind, then that would explain where the mathematical plane exists, in various physical phenomena (electronics, mechanics), and why natural phenomena fit together and function so well. Here I would suggest that there might be other realities, that exist in the universe as manifestation of the mind — such as dharmakaya. And then you have principles such as prajna. And I intend to investigate these further, to directly see for myself their nature.

And if the universe is mind, or rises from the mind, it says something about the nature of mind.

You can work with “integer” on the mathematical plane. To be able to work with “integer”, an abstraction, in the visible world, you need to work with objects; that is, to apply “integer” to physical objects. You can apply “integer”, an abstraction, in the mental realm, to count ideas, or to work with other abstractions. You can apply “integer”, an abstraction, to various physical objects, like 0, 1, or 2 stones. (Either to count the objects, or to represent “integer” with the object or objects. Can you apply object to “integer”?) To do so, the objects each need to have unity. And these stones would be interchangeable, with multiple orders possible. But not the planets, if you count from the sun outward. This then can take you to the world of physics: What planets can exist in orbit where? Is there some necessary order; or, how do you factor gravity, mass, and speed, to place the planets at various distances from the sun, or other planets from another star?

So “integer”, an abstraction, has a very real existence.

Then to apply features to the objects sets forth dimension, another realm beside “integer” and “real numbers”, yet working with.

Put down point 1 and point 2 on a blank sheet of paper, no labels, and trace your finger from 1 to 2. Notice. Then draw a second set of points, with circles, and trace your finger from 1 to 2. Notice.

Emptiness

Then, consider that emptiness is involved (see Appendix 9 for a definition of the Buddhist term). The path is dependent on (or at least relative to) points 1 and 2, and space; and “to trace one's finger” is dependent on (or at least relative to) the paper, the points, time, and space — and mathematics. And the finger is dependent on (or at least relative to) you, and what led to you at the time that you could trace your finger, and perhaps other factors. And “to trace one's finger” is impermanent. So, it seems, is the paper, and it then embodies another reality. But if the paper is impermanent, is the reality embodied by the paper at first also impermanent? Also, if you show the paper, in its first form, to another person, it causes a new effect. Yet, at the same time, one might say, “The reality embodied by the paper is the same.” Or is it?

And does the idea of “intrinsic nature” apply? — to trace one’s finger is itself magical, it is dimension that can be perceived and is available as being with perception and is a different type of tactile. Perhaps this also is the realm of the infant.

And, with respect to emptiness, I’ve seen it stated that the Buddha said, “Suffering is impermanent. Impermanence is emptiness. Emptiness is selflessness.” I haven’t been able to verify the source, but the statement sounds genuine. Nor have I been able to fully validate the Buddha’s statement, but reflection has already yielded insight, indicating its profound nature, a simple truth to be realized, and a fact to be experienced. There is a definite trajectory here, another type of path.

Here are several basic Boolean logic functions. The functions are named, the parameters are along the upper and left edges (outside), and the results are inside. See Boolean algebra.

The Brain

It must be possible to do a rough calculation that predicts whether the brain is a molecular computer or a quantum computer or something else. Can a molecular computer hold enough information and decision making power? Eugene Hecht, who wrote a physics textbook Optics, must contain the entire text in his head. And not just the text which any computer can store but the meaning of everything and the relationships between everything. I’m sure he knows the entire thing intuitively.

What else is there about the nature of thought that might point to a molecular or a quantum computer? And my bad for not knowing enough: Does molecular computing intersect quantum computing?

Is a brain simply a key to the mind, for the individual?

Is a brain a sophisticated manifestation of the mind, itself then manifesting mind?

If you’re trying to replicate this, what are you actually trying to do?

Some people might have brains tuned to gravity. Some people might have brains tuned to quantum certainty.¹

As humans, isn’t it fascinating and important to get both the scope and detail of mental experience? I’ll bet that to gloss over the profound subtlety of which the human mind is capable would be to create progeny that are less than stellar.² And, why progeny? I’m certainly satisfied with human ability and spiritual and artistic insight. And we fit the planet perfectly; and what we need is readily available.

Suitcase

A story. (Once upon a time.)

I cut off a conversation in a restaurant, and left. The next time, the manager asked me about it. I said, “I meant to keep my comments to the table. The next time I’ll be more conscious of that. And I’ll be more aware of how my voice carries.”

A story. (Once upon a time.)

I packed the suitcase with my sutras and belongings. Later I unpacked the suitcase.

Bubble A, Bubble B, Bubble C

And, “Bubbles evolved. One could develop a taxa — for bubbles.”

Survival

When is survival not enough, and how does the goal of survival explain, or not explain, certain things? When is it the referent, and when not?

Illumination, Or Touch, Or Taste, Or Awareness

What does it mean to think of illumination, or touch, or taste, or awareness, or some other “as such” quality?

The Term ‘Good’

What does it mean to use the term ‘good’?

Andy

Andy is a fictional name for a real person — me. I didn’t want to point to me in telling the story. Was Andy’s “Zen” authentic? It doesn’t seem to have been Zen calm. (There was and I experienced profound Zen calm at times — but I didn’t follow those paths.) What does it point to? Is there any insight?

Reflect on raising waves where there is no wind!

Maybe Zen is ultimately expressed in a work of art or an intellectual accomplishment or an act of love or an act of compassion — in society or in a dwelling or in conjunction with a tree. But, also, see The Gateless Gate, Case 16, “Bells And Robes”, in Zen Flesh Zen Bones, p. 131.

1. See the essay Virtual Molecular Reality by Marvin Minsky for a brief description of his concept of quantum certainty. You can find the essay at <http://web.media.mit.edu/~minsky/papers/VirtualMolecularReality.html>.

2. See the essay Will Robots Inherit The Earth? by Marvin Minsky. You can find the essay at <http://web.media.mit.edu/~minsky/papers/sciam.inherit.html>. Minsky’s papers are interesting, and can be found at <http://web.media.mit.edu/~minsky/>, along with an interview of him on music by Otto Laske.

Appendix 9: Disclaimer — 2012*

My path has (had) not been particularly Zen Buddhist, and my path has been the activity of a Zen Buddhist, and I touched on Zen Buddhism. But I did not study the sutras until recently and it looks like I missed some important facets of Zen — unless my path has been non-linear, with a lot of subconscious activity, collecting material. Others may develop something called Zen Badism even more emphatically. Yet this, too, in a refined state, might turn out to be a particular flavor of Zen already.

In some ways I used to wish that I could play with time and turn the clock back to early in the year 2001 or so, with a slightly different approach, but incorporating many of the same influences. (To play with time like this, I recognized, might be risky — I might be omitting certain factors, too many other workable things might not have happened, or I might have made other mistakes! Nonetheless it is tempting to want to accumulate the workable, exclude the distractions, and uniframe to obtain insight. Maybe that's what excellent Zen does in real time.) But it's been worth it. And, it turns out, this is not really the way to look at it, and the unfolding of Zen from 2000 or so to present has been natural, and a pure expression.

It would have been fun to have studied the Lankavatara Sutra in conjunction with Zen Flesh Zen Bones, The Society Of Mind, Transparent Things, and zazen, then to have developed a compelling inner and outer world, and then to have taken that to Zen for authentication.^{1, 2} I might have, maybe, paid more attention to Dropping Ashes On The Buddha.³ But to have contemplated, also, at this time, the Diamond Sutra (particularly, the rendition, the sutrabook, from The Zen Studies Society; or the rendition in the book *The Diamond Sutra & The Sutra Of Hui-Neng*, translated by Price and Wong Mou-lam) would have provided an important counterpoint to my study of The Society Of Mind.

I studied them but did not consciously implement some of the strategies detailed in The Society Of Mind. Perhaps I was not careful enough to apply single-minded determination to do so, with zazen as the grounding. Perhaps I should have insisted that everything fall into place along the way — according to what is real. However, this is unrealistic: The Society Of Mind does not come from the Zen standpoint. In retrospect, it would have been an important counterpoint to develop or to work with the big picture that is detailed in the Lankavatara Sutra. (Note that the shift occurs in consciousness, and is not grasped by words.) What would have been really interesting is if, starting from scratch — referencing some of the structured methodology in The Society Of Mind, then departing, with study and patterns from Zen Flesh Zen Bones, and the tone, playfulness, and gravity from Transparent Things, and perhaps insight from Dropping Ashes On The Buddha — all the while immersed in zazen — I would have developed the view presented in the Lankavatara Sutra, and verified it later. (If that was the goal, for that time thru to now. Shibayama relates that it's an observation of old that the essence of Zen is "Why?") That would have been phenomenal Zen insight!

But Zen is fluid, not locked in to a single path.

My real mistake, it seems, unless I was moving with causation, was that I did not follow through on Joshu's mu during zazen and in all of my life.⁴ Joshu's mu is simple, but after awhile I allowed

distractions to happen. I had not yet hit upon wisdom and compassion as part of my practice. Where do mistakes end and no mistakes begin?

But Shibayama may have something to say about this, in *The Gateless Barrier*, which is striking.

What I did correctly happened with effort and diligence, with influences that were gifts from the universe at the right time, including *Zen Flesh Zen Bones*, *Transparent Things*, *The Society Of Mind*, and *zazen*. And now *The Sutra Of Hui-neng* is similarly important.

Once I was doing steady *zazen* with my usual books and I went to a Zen center to meditate. I had stopped smoking cigarettes without a glitch. In my apartment, I was quietly in a Zen zone, just doing my thing, with a clear mind. I asked someone after the ceremony what book I should read and *Zen Mind Beginner's Mind* was suggested. I did not follow up on this and did not pursue Zen practice at the center. Instead, I returned to a psychologist and continued my personal practice under his nose but out of sight. I started to smoke cigarettes again. A question I have is whether my dialogue with karma would have allowed me to write this book with an authenticated Zen and without having had primary input from psychology at any time and without cigarettes. The seed to this book was not sourced from psychology; nor was this book's development sourced from psychology. Would this book have occurred to me with an authenticated Zen? If not, why not? What might have happened in place of this book? Would I have avoided some bads? (But this was not my premise.) What is the nature of things according to any particular Zen tradition? What is the nature of things according to any particular psychologist? Would this book have occurred to me without the cigarette that got me outside to see a tree in a new light and take its photograph? Was it worth it? Perhaps the trajectory of mind is not yet complete and this is the best way possible, psychology and cigarettes included. I used to doubt it. But not so much anymore. In an interesting and rather ironical way. Although there are other more typical paths. We'll see.⁵

And with *samadhi* ideas of oneself simply evaporate. (Not a state of unconsciousness at all — but one is the water itself. And it's my understanding that there are a number of types of *samadhi*. I've only begun.) But this is not to say that *samadhi* is one way or the other, next to the "nameless natural state".

I want to back up, for a minute, to make sure I'm fair to the psychologist that I mentioned, who I returned to at one point. He stuck with me through thick and thin. I wonder if what happened isn't simply a bit like what happens when you ask the centipede to explain how he manages with 100 legs. He starts to trip up. This isn't necessarily bad; it does have to be done with expertise, so that the centipede can walk again, with a surer footing. It wasn't quite that, and maybe part of the puzzle was what I did myself. Think mathematics problem. In any case, this psychologist I think allowed me refreshing depth. I felt free to look into Zen, Minsky, and Nabokov. It seems that these are what I found, quite outside his premise. I wonder if I shouldn't have brought these to the table, although I did introduce a Zen koan. However! — My feeling is that with this psychologist, with a more depth understanding of Buddhism I would have found hospitable territory.

I do have a parenthetical riddle for this psychologist: What rhymes with "Dumb Standard Mulch"? What is the rhyme? Where is the rhyme? But I set that aside. That wasn't really what happened.

My own rhyme here are a few poems in the section My Poetry. Or see the book Zen Flesh Zen Bones, or Shibayama's The Gateless Barrier: Zen Comments On The Mumonkan. Some of this material I wrote or encountered much later.

One more note on the psychologist. It is with current reflection and awareness that I realize that I may have encountered in him something incomplete, yet profound and surprising. And this would explain several facts (for instance why I stuck around even though it was problematic; what he brought to the table with the sense of space he provided; and again some of the problematic may have been a result of my interpretation, which he was unaware of). But what I realized was that what he brought to the table was something resembling Platonic form. In the book Hidden Dimensions: The Unification Of Physics And Consciousness, the author tells of meditation adepts who developed consistent practice, and encountered a sort of Platonic form in perception. Not a vision, although it resembles vision; not a hallucination. Perception. And with this, it is my insight that as activity things form around Platonic form, finding resting place and becoming perfect themselves. Someone may have said this once, that I read, as well. So I have to conclude that not only did it somehow work out, with this psychologist, but that there was something very profound and real. It is integrating in fact with Zen. It is also my conclusion that Platonic form teaches, if you are looking, non-discrimination and non-attachment. After considering Platonic form and recognizing it, then form (the form before you right now) is just as it is.

It's pretty clear that with Zen training I would have gotten the following, at least to work with in front of me: a better truth, more structure, and better guidance. That's in part because my views at the time developed into a bit of helter-skelter, jagged edges and circular themes, with the psychologist, and a downward spiral; and they weren't fully integrated on the surface with the study I was doing. I needed the structure and guidance, and to ask questions of what is the world around me.

But also I was interested in Zen, and here again subjectivity takes a role. My experience with this psychologist worked in some way, however, and it was pretty dynamic. This is just one story. Maybe after a point it would have been perfect for a smooth handoff, like when "I was quietly in a Zen zone, just doing my thing, with a clear mind." I could have known then, except for the path I seem to have been on. But, suppose — where to go? I did keep up my zazen practice. Solitude turns out to have been important for me, along with, sometimes, others. And the next step could have been simply a careful study of appropriate sutras. The Three Jewels: Buddha, Dharma, Sangha. But how do you know up front, starting from scratch, what path to take? You get reports and you investigate. You might look to the ancients, those around you, and yourself. Look for a resonant and deep pattern. Pay attention to both the framework and the detail. Follow through.

My guess is that refined Zen takes care of both the framework and the detail while developing insight. I recall the time when I was quietly in a Zen zone, just doing my thing, with a clear mind. A type of informal samadhi. I look back now and I see that that time was really pleasant. Present awareness. Why I left it I'm not sure. At times, I have encountered such a profound state again. Maybe I simply needed to meet Zen, part ways for a while, and let it up to others to go way deep. I don't know if I am less skillful than I would be if I had followed through in a refined Zen arc. I may have encountered things that may be helpful. But I am grateful to have met Zen at all, and to have picked it up again, in the way that I did, and I am grateful for the influences that I've mentioned.

Actually, again, this process seems to be unfolding; and naturally so.

2. Note that I still have *The Society Of Mind*, the book, and in the back of my mind; it may be useful as a methodological tool and resource for investigation, perhaps into thought and the mental world; one should be aware of what Minsky is trying to do as a resource for a description of the actual functioning of the mind; the descriptive attitude of observed phenomena is to be noted, along with a willingness to conjecture; some of it is a useful conceptual model, put in the right domain; it contains some excellent thought, and its concept of structure/function is key. But here Zen is my focus.

3. There is a lot of good material in *Dropping Ashes On The Buddha*. Did Seung Sahn make a mistake? The cigarette smoker with the ash, in the story, insists on an answer. Seung Sahn did not see this. Was the cigarette smoker appropriate after all? — with a koan. The woman who wrote of emptiness having no edge perceived correctly: emptiness (no edge) and form (edge), with emptiness none other than form, and form none other than emptiness. This should be considered with attention. Both ‘no edge’ (emptiness) and ‘edge’ (form) exist.

4. See *The Gateless Gate*, Case 1, “Joshu’s Dog”, in *Zen Flesh Zen Bones*, p. 115. If you study *Zen Flesh Zen Bones* you may find that your awakening happens spontaneously and without preconception. One way to approach the subject would be to use *Zen Flesh Zen Bones* for the first 1, 5, or 10 years, along with other resources. See “Appendix 9: Introduction To Zen” for a start. *The Gateless Gate* in *Zen Flesh Zen Bones* is precision and is accurate — although there might be other resonant translations.

5. I wonder if this psychologist ever smoked an empty cigarette. Or perhaps one should look at a koan, with careful attention!

* Since 2012, I took up a more Zen path, particularly from 2014-2017. In 2017 I attained enlightenment, most striking, yet ordinary mind. I’ve found that enlightenment deepens thereafter, and that there is so much to work with, once one has taken up ‘concept’ and tried this or that and realized several things, then has penetrated through ‘concept’, then is even more adept with ‘concept’, and also adept with the non-conceptual. It’s been a journey of effort, work, study, contemplation, meditation, reflection, realization, and so forth — and activity in other regards, along with. This does have concrete, in-front-of-one applications; and also is at-ease. It has been delightful many times, and both fun and serious.

Appendix 10: Introduction To Zen (Mainly Zen Resources)

My own contribution to Zen literature might be this: Zen is the imperceptibility of the actual. This then becomes perceptual. The Tao is present, and things arise simultaneously.

I put together what follows early in 2010 and then through to now (2017). It is drawn from my own understanding, which is drawn from others and from my own experience. It also cites some resources, and may serve as one sort of rough guide. There are many ways to approach Zen, and Buddhist thought and practice.

I started with a couple of things, in 1999 and ensuing years: zazen and the book Zen Flesh Zen Bones compiled by Reps and Senzaki. I also studied the book The Society Of Mind by Minsky, during this time frame. I put Zen down for a while, although it was in mind; and it was not until I started to write this book in 2007, and then from study and practice in 2015 and 2016, that Zen really became salient for me. It is now 2017 and it is a delight, work, and effortless effort to work with at this time.

Background

Introductory/Reference Website: <http://zen.rinnou.net/>.

Basic Stance: http://zen.rinnou.net/whats_zen/index.html.

History: http://zen.rinnou.net/whats_zen/history.html.

My Key Zen Books, Practice, Result

2016/2017

Initial And Advanced

Zen Flesh Zen Bones by Reps and Senzaki

The Gateless Barrier: Zen Comments On The Mumonkan by Zenkei Shibayama

The Diamond Sutra And The Sutra Of Hui-neng translated by A. F. Price and Wong Mou-lam

Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu, translated by Addiss And ...

Tao Te Ching by Feng and English

Sutras

The Lankavatara Sutra by D.T. Suzuki, epitomized version by Dwight Goddard, foreword by John Daido Looi

The Diamond Sutra And The Sutra Of Hui-neng by Price and Wong

The Diamond Sutra translated and with commentary by Red Pine

The Diamond Cutter Sutra translated and with commentary by Sodargye

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The Heart Sutra: A Comprehensive Guide To The Classic Of Mahayana Buddhism by Kazuaki Tanahashi

The Heart Sutra translated by E. Conze

The Lankavatara Sutra by D. T. Suzuki (long version, available on the Web)

The Flower Ornament Scripture (The Avatamsaka Sutra) translated by Thomas Cleary

Training

Zen Training by Katsuki Sekida

Two Zen Classics by Katsuki Sekida

The Unfettered Mind: Writings From A Zen Master To A Master Swordsman by Takuan Soho translated by William Scott Wilson

Nice Work

Eloquent Silence by Senzaki

The Book Of Rinzai: The Sayings Of Zen Master Rinzai (Linji)

Shobogenzo by Dogen translated by Nishijima and Cross

Practice

Study

Zazen

Contemplation

Everyday Life

Result

Self

Others

Practice

The World

A Few Terms

It is difficult to define some of these terms apart from context in meaning. It may be a mistake to do so – study these for yourself.

Attachment is this: Attached to a thing, idea, person, perception, train of thought, a dualistic view, or conclusion — this is in a way that blocks you from insight, or seeing. Note that becoming attached to something is subtle, and can lead to a series of events. And that this is different than either “focused intently on” or “to hold” or the way an insect attaches itself freely to a wall; and it tends to prevent “to see either what is there, what is behind, what is obvious, or what is not-so-obvious”. It is not the fluidity and comportment of Taoism. It is a sort of stuckness. This attachment is detrimental to the expression of your nature. Free of attachment, and with a nondual, nondiscriminating mind, one can

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see so many ways and things in original and resilient ways. One is then fully participant and in a wake-stated way of mind and ontological reality, neither being nor non-being; just as the universe is.

Non-attachment or detachment is this: Free of attachment; although it is more than this, and can be active, or still.

Dispassion is this: equable and able to consider in wisdom, prajna, and still or active participantce.

Duality is this:¹ To consider things in terms of separable two-things, or independent opposites, seeing them as separate, and to find meaning or truth within the resulting framework. To see things as fundamentally separable. Examples: subject/object, being/non-being, yes/no as the sole arbiter — all of these must integrate with its opposite, or actually in a sphere of dimensional reality, nondual, total, and complete. (Some answers are yes/no, but is there a descriptive or exception answer? Is it yes, yes/no, yes/no/yes, or yes/yes/no, or a negation of one proposition within a set of propositions, or the negation and replacement of one proposition within a set of propositions with another proposition? Is it *what*, or *not there when*?) Then, also, there is the discriminating consciousness, which goes on assigning various things to these categories, within this framework, based on what it encounters through the senses², without consideration of the relational (the mutual arising of things and the way they inter-relate). A corollary definition of duality might be that it is when we view the world or aspects of it in terms of completely different and opposing, or discrete-and-separable, things in our minds (this is different than the ‘integer’ nature of things), this being most noticeable when coming to see things as separable pairs or independent opposites (and often these are of an arbitrary designation), attaching this or that to these thing-representations — with a certain fixed character to the resulting view — and not really reflecting the world after all.

Nondualism is this: “Nondualism proper holds that different phenomena are inseparable or that there is no hard line between them, but not that they are the same.”³ Inseparability is the key. If the supernova is over there it is not here. If it is here it has implications. If it is over there its implications are different, but still manifest. Likewise, if something is at Time t₁, it is not at Time t₂ — unless it occurs at both t₁ and t₂, which has implications. It may or may not, on the other hand, occur at all.

A comment here. Nondualism holds that things are not separate in the profound relational sense – there is always a relational position in the spatial-temporal, and other domains; or separable, or that there is no hard line between them, but not that they are the same. With this as a framework type understanding, and the realization of emptiness, one can realize nondualism. In Zen, it’s not that we don’t see features — we see them, we just don’t isolate them in our minds, to see them as truly separate. But nondualism has to be realized in mind, then this all falls into place, intuitively.

Emptiness (Sanskrit. sunyata) is this:⁴ (Note that Buddhism introduces its own meaning to the word emptiness, and also plays off the usual meaning.) To begin, What is a thing? What is an object? What is a flower? What is a being? Does a thing have intrinsic self-existent nature to be found? If so, what is this nature, and where does this nature exist? If not, how can the thing exist or function?⁵ It might have unity; but what does this mean? Are there any causes involved? Is one thing independent of another? Are things relative, among them? Are things self-existent? Are things permanent?⁶ Then, What are the aspects of the world, and how does one perceive them? What is the interplay of the subjective and the objective, and existence? Emptiness is what makes the world so dynamic and

complete — but one has to have insight into this to see its importance, to avoid a view that is “fixed”, and perhaps to avoid attachment, or getting stuck in one place. This also may be tied to the “sign” nature of things (mentioned in the section on thoughts on Buddhism) — the ability to penetrate this also leads one to drop attachment. The view on emptiness is that all things are impermanent (emptiness is impermanence), and things are without self-existent nature, separate from other things; there are to things external causes and conditions; and there is the relative. The relative is the unfolding relative simultaneity of things, and that for this things are different among them; it is also the relative positioning of things, and the absolute sense to this; it is also the subjective viewpoint-importance to the unfolding simultaneity of things. Another statement on emptiness is that emptiness is the view that things are nonexistent except for their relationship of the subjective and the objective. In a sense, emptiness is an edgeless “container” that allows the universe, and the world, to exist as it does: the world is emptiness, and emptiness is the world.

Emptiness (sunyata) is, again:

- impermanence
- (things are) without self-existent nature
- the relative (the simultaneous unfolding of things, and the relative positioning of things, and its absolute sense)
- there are external causes and conditions, yet they arise as non-born, and the universe is a catenation

It still pertains also to the emptiness of a coffee cup — and the idea ‘the void’, or ‘space’: what does one fill the coffee cup with? It is to allow these things, while the emptiness or space is its own expression. This, also, is the function of sunyata – it is the surfaceless surface that allows all that there is to be.

See The Heart Sutra for its profound consideration of and statement on emptiness.

Nonduality is that things cannot be divided up as strictly separate or separable: there is always a relation or relational or map or dependency actually there, unfolding, set up; or as the Tao Te Ching puts it (Feng-English): front and back follow each other. “Yes” and “no” do not resolve this otherwise.

Yamamoto Gempo said this:

All phenomena and I are one body.

The purpose of Zen training is to clarify the truth, nothing else.

Practice

Zazen is this: Zen seated meditation. Zazen is the body, breath, and mind; and these are unity. Zazen is flexible and allows inner mind to manifest, or to work with “no-thing”, or a koan. It may be realization or quiescence. It may be to cut through discriminating, pre-set or pre-determined, consciousness, which is problematic, and to go deeper.

Koan is this: In The Gateless Barrier, Shibayama says, “Koan are Zen Masters’ sayings and doings in which they freely and directly express their Zen experience. The primary role of the koan in Zen is to

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help in the actual training of Zen monks. The philosophical or dogmatic studies of koan are of secondary significance because the standpoint of such studies is fundamentally different from that of true Zen training, in which the only aim is to experience and live the real working spirit of Zen.” He goes on to say, “At a monastery, doing zazen with a koan is considered the authentic way to study it, and in order to help students with their koan studies, teisho is given by the Master.”⁷ My own view is that this then can serve as a pattern for lay practice.

Bodhisattva is this: A being who is fully dedicated to the goal of complete enlightenment and universal liberation.⁸

Daily life: What is the meaning of Zen? What is its significance?

Practice And Study

This is one path, and includes material on zazen, on the Mumonkan, general practice material, the Rinzai school of Zen, and the Dogen school, focusing mostly on the Mumonkan, general practice material, and maybe Rinzai aspects.

An approach centered on Dogen might be to start with zazen, the chapter “Bendowa” (the first chapter) and the chapter “Fukan-Zazengi” (an appendix) in Master Dogen’s Shobogenzo: Book 1, and the introduction to Shobogenzo Uji. Then, Shobogenzo by Dogen and The Gateless Barrier by Shibayama. Note the essay in Shobogenzo Zenkei.

And, in any case, you might start in a different order here. The realization of Zen is not fixed. And it’s even more likely that you’ll consult and work with only a selection of what’s here, following your own path of working with Zen, and actual practice.

Note that I have not read or studied the entirety of the books here. Of the ones that I have not completed, it is clear to me where they fit. And they are part of my path, itself.

You may find that the first material you encounter later becomes advanced material, and that the advanced material works with the simple!

- or -

Zazen. Use proper posture and breathing — and adjust mental and physical focus — for zazen. Then have fun, or be serious. Find, allow, and develop a good technique.⁹

Zen Flesh Zen Bones: A Collection Of Zen And Pre-Zen Writings. Compiled by Paul Reps and Nyogen Senzaki. 1988, Tuttle Publishing. Original copyright 1957.¹⁰

The Gateless Barrier: Zen Comments On The Mumonkan by Zenkei Shibayama.

The Diamond Sutra And The Sutra Of Hui-neng translated by A. F. Price and Wong Mou-lam.

Sekida (Including Zazen and The Mumonkan)

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Optional track, depending on the path you want to take. Also, can be referenced as a resource with the above. Invaluable. Sekida provides exceptional treatment, in *Two Zen Classics*. A wonderful resource. Sekida has firm mastery of Zen, and his method is translucent. Some will be interested in this. It is possible to visit the books later: *Two Zen Classics* and *Zen Training*. As you wish. Sekida very much integrates practice, in both books, with *Zen Training* providing the reference for this. Note that Sekida is comfortable to work on a conceptual level, in *Two Zen Classics*, if that's what you want. But in Zen the premise is not one of the conceptual, it is to become familiar with 'concept' then to break through it to become truly fluid with what is around you and its meaning — then one is quite adept at the conceptual, but not this so much as present-moment working-with, and the realized; in Zen, it is in actual experience and insight. Then you are free, with concepts.

Zen Training. By Katsuki Sekida. 1985, Shambhala Publications.
Two Zen Classics: The Gateless Gate And The Blue Cliff Records. By Katsuki Sekida. 2005, Shambhala Publications.

Just Zazen And The Gateless Barrier

This would be a thorough path. Shibayama provides teisho on the cases in the Mumonkan; these teisho include detailed historical accounts, background, and related material, with significant commentary. And, it imparts a palpable sense of the expectations of Zen training, as perhaps a monk would experience it. Shibayama emphasizes the direct realization required by and experiential nature of the Zen path. The necessity of active training on your part would be made clear by this text. His emphasis is more "spiritual", and also perhaps from a "Zen as religion" view.

The Gateless Barrier: Zen Comments On The Mumonkan. By Zenkei Shibayama. Translated by Sumiko Kudo. 1974, Shambhala Publications.

Zazen. (Perhaps see *Zen Training* by Sekida.)

See other Zen resources for guidance, as well.

Study — Dogen

Zazen. An introduction is included in the following book.

Moon In A Dewdrop: Writings Of Zen Master Dogen. By Dogen. Edited by Kazuaki Tanahashi. Several translators. North Point Press. Copyright 2005, San Francisco Zen Center. (There is some overlap, but with a different translation, from the 4-book Master Dogen's *Shobogenzo*, below. This book is a subset of the complete *Shobogenzo*, and is capably translated.)

Shobogenzo by Dogen ... including ...

Shobogenzo Maka-Hanna-Haramitsu by Dogen

Shobogenzo Uji by Dogen

Shobogenzo Zenki by Dogen

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Refrain

Sutras such as the Diamond Sutra, the Lankavatara Sutra, and the Heart Sutra¹¹.

The Diamond Sutra & The Sutra Of Hui-neng. Translated by A. F. Price & Wong Mou-lam. 2005, Shambhala Publications. (This proved to be key to me, at the right times.)

The Lankavatara Sutra translated by D. T. Suzuki (long form). (This proved to be key to me, at the right times.)

The Heart Sutra: A Comprehensive Guide To The Classic Of Mahayana Buddhism by Kazuaki Tanahashi. Also, The Heart Sutra translated by E. Conze. There are other renditions available, and there is Shobogenzo Maka-Hanna-Haramitsu, perfect.

The Flower Ornament Scripture (The Avatamsaka Sutra) translated by Thomas Cleary.

Refrain, Reference

You can consult this at any time. But also a profound resource. It contains material that one could consult as part of routine, daily Zen practice; and also material for insight into practice and Reality.

Manual Of Zen Buddhism. By Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki. 2010, Pacific Publishing Studio. I'm not sure when the book was first published; some time ago.

Intermediate Study

Sun Face Buddha: The Teachings Of Ma-tsu And The Hung-chou School Of Ch'an. By Cheng Chien Bhikshu. Jain Publishing Company. Copyright 1992, Mario Poceski.

Like A Dream, Like A Fantasy: The Zen Teachings And Translations Of Nyogen Senzaki. Edited and introduced by Eido Shimano. Wisdom Publications. Copyright 2005 Zen Studies Society.

The Unfettered Mind: Writings From A Zen Master To A Master Swordsman. By Takuan Soho. Translated by William Scott Wilson. Copyright 1986, 2002 by William Scott Wilson. Shambhala Publications. (This book goes very well with Zen Flesh Zen Bones, either with or later or whenever.)

Refrain

The Book Of The Zen Grove. By Zenrin Robert E. Lewis. Zen Sangha Press. Copyright 1990 by Zenrin Robert E. Lewis.

Reflection

Moon By The Window: The Calligraphy And Zen Insights Of Shodo Harada. Translated by Priscilla Daichi Storandt. Edited by Tim Jundo Williams and Jane Shotaku Lago. Wisdom Publications. Copyright 2011 One Drop Zendo Associates.

Further Study

Manifestation Of The Tathagata: Buddhahood According To The Avatamsaka Sutra. Translated by Cheng Chien Bhikshu. 1993, Wisdom Publications. This book is one chapter from the Avatamsaka Sutra.¹²

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The Lankavatara Sutra: An Epitomized Version. Translated by D. T. Suzuki, epitomized and edited by Dwight Goddard, foreword by John Daido Looi. 2003?, Monkfish Book Publishing Company. Original copyright 1932.

Study - Rinzai

The Book Of Rinzai: The Recorded Sayings Of Zen Master Rinzai (Linji). Translated by Eido Shimano. 2005, The Zen Studies Society Press.

Relevant Material - Mumonkan

Selected Teishos On Gateless Gate. Delivered at Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-ji, New York, by Yamakawa Sogen. Translated by Saiun Atsumi Hara. 2005, The Zen Studies Society Press.

More By Dogen

Master Dogen's Shobogenzo: Book 1. By Dogen. Translated by Gudo Wafu Nishijima and Chodo Cross. BookSurge. Copyright 1994. Reprinted 2006.

Master Dogen's Shobogenzo: Book 2. By Dogen. Translated by Gudo Wafu Nishijima and Chodo Cross. BookSurge. Copyright 1996. Reprinted 2005.

Master Dogen's Shobogenzo: Book 3. By Dogen. Translated by Gudo Wafu Nishijima and Chodo Cross. BookSurge. Copyright 1997. Reprinted 2006.

Master Dogen's Shobogenzo: Book 4. By Dogen. Translated by Gudo Wafu Nishijima and Chodo Cross. BookSurge. Copyright 1999. Reprinted, 2006.

Shobogenzo Uji. By Dogen. Translated from Japanese and annotated by Eido Shimano Roshi and Charles Vacher. The Zen Studies Society.

The Essence Of Dogen. By Masanobu Takahashi. 1983, Kegan Paul International.12

Buddhist Philosophy

This is just one work, well-established in Mahayana Buddhism, by a ca. 150-250 CE Buddhist meditation and philosophy master, Nagarjuna. It may require careful study, this also accompanied by zazen (the Lankavatara Sutra suggests — to study and meditate):

Fundamental Wisdom Of The Middle Way: Nagarjuna's Mulamadhyamakakarika. By Nagarjuna. Translated by Gudo Wafu Nishijima. Monkfish Book Publishing Company. Copyright 2011 by Gudo Wafu Nishijima and Brad Warner.

Resources On The Web

The Official Site Of The Joint Council For Japanese Rinzai And Obaku Zen
zen.rinnou.net

Overview and history.

The Zen Studies Society

www.zenstudies.org

They seem to emphasize the Rinzai school, but touch on Dogen.

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They seem to emphasize the Dogen school, but other material is available. I'm not sure it really matters, but different schools will have different points of emphasis, or context. It really is up to the practitioner. Dogen searched until he found the right teacher. Each will have his or her emphasis, as will each Zen center.

A search for "zen" or "zen center" and your town or city or nation should yield results.

-
1. This is a definition I've come up with; it's important to see the term in context.
 2. In Buddhism there are 6 grounds for the senses: eye, ear, tongue, nose, body, mind; 6 senses seeing, hearing, taste, smell, touch, thought; and 6 worlds the seen, the heard, the tasted, scent, form, and perceived or thought of ('all of the above preceding').
 3. This is from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonduality>. Accessed 2011-06-12.
 4. This is a way to approach it I've come up with; for a straightforward definition, see the book *Manifestation Of The Tathagata*, glossary, similar to what I present here.
 5. For instance, where is this quality, for a coffee cup, "to hold coffee"?
 6. Also, consider a balloon, a cd player, or a kite. Or, a tree. Then, what is a mountain? What about the mental realm?
 7. See *The Gateless Barrier* by Shibayama, p xiii.
 8. This is from *Manifestation Of The Tathagata*, Glossary, p. 165.
 9. See the topic "Zazen" at The Official Site Of The Joint Council For Japanese Rinzai And Obaku Zen, zen.rinnou.net. Be sure to note the sections "Introduction", "Preparations", and "Sitting". In *Opening The Hand Of Thought*, Uchiyama gives a good introduction to zazen. In fact, it is the focus of much of his book. Whether you follow the Dogen track or not, you might consider the chapter "Fukan-Zazengi" (an appendix) in *Master Dogen's Shobogenzo: Book 1*. This also is a thorough introduction. This chapter is also in *Moon In A Dewdrop*. If you want a more involved approach, see *Zen Training* by Katsuki Sekida, Chapter 1, "Orientations", Chapter 2, "Zazen Posture", Chapter 3, "The Physiology Of Attention", Chapter 4, "Breathing In Zazen", Chapter 5, "Counting And Following The Breath", and Chapter 6, "Working On Mu". Then make this and whatever else you figure yours. I prefer to keep it simple to start, mu is key, and Sekida is only approaching it from one — profound — angle. You might also consider any of a number of descriptions at Zen center websites. I keep my eyes open, eyelids relaxed, body in the form of settled, relaxed, in attention, and alert; and I mostly sit facing the wall. Sekida introduces a somewhat different technique, with perhaps the eyes closed. Most others, and Dogen, say to keep the eyes open. I also have used the Burmese posture. But I'm finding that the half lotus offers better stability and is more natural. At first, I had to be careful to align my back carefully. And at one point I've begun to sit in the full lotus posture. I now use a zafu (round cushion, to sit on) and zabuton (wide flat cushion, on which the zafu is placed). I use several breathing techniques. You can start with counting the breath, to align mind, body, and breath. And perhaps for modern "American" thought, with, What is a process, or a stream? What is a state of mind? What is a thought,

or the present thought? What arises as a question, a dilemma, or a problem? What is fixed in time, what changes, and what persists or maintains? Then, how might one apply “mu”, or “no-thing”? Do concerns with all of these then drop off? What remains? For these, you will have your own methods, everyday or otherwise; but note that here zazen becomes very natural — and one can use a koan, for example Joshu’s mu — or not. See the work *The Gateless Gate* by Mumonkon presenting this koan, in books such as *Zen Flesh Zen Bones*, *Two Zen Classics*, or *The Gateless Barrier*. Or another koan may apply. Other ways to approach zazen are described in the preceding material. Uchiyama says that one can watch for thoughts, their cloud-like nature, and ask, what is the reality of thoughts? Finally, zazen should be natural and may require effort, although with practice this effort drops away, replaced by effortless effort. And eventually zazen may become the most natural way to sit. But Dogen says there are the 4 positions: walking, standing, sitting, lying.

10. One way to approach the subject would be to use *Zen Flesh Zen Bones* for the first 1, 5, or 10 years, along with, but not limited to, these other resources. *Zen Flesh Zen Bones* is direct, simplicity itself, and depth.

11. See http://zen.rinnou.net/whats_zen/sacred_texts.html. Other sutras and material are available on this website, as well. I haven’t looked into everything here; and in a refreshing way my practice is just beginning. Various Zen center websites also have renditions of the Heart Sutra and other sutras. For the version in Master Dogen’s *Shobogenzo: Book 1*, I recommend starting from the beginning of the book, at first read; the Heart Sutra is not that far in.

12. This book appears to be out of print. I wonder if the publisher could be convinced to put it in print again.

Appendix 11: Core Library

This would form my core library, if I had to distill what I had. I haven't completed all of the books here, but they're all part of my ongoing study. Each person will have his or her own core library.

Books

- Secrets From The Center Of The World. By Joy Harjo and Stephen Strom. 1989, The University Of Arizona Press.
- Ogbo: Sharing Life In An African Village. By Ifeoma Onyefulu. 1996, Gulliver Books, Harcourt Brace & Company.¹
- Tao Te Ching, 25th Anniversary Edition. By Lao Tzu. Translated by Dia-Fu Feng and Jane English. 1997, Vintage Books, Random House. Original copyright 1972.
- Tao Teh Ching. By Lao Tzu. Translated by John C. H. Wu. 1989, Shambhala Publications. Original copyright 1961.
- Tao Te Ching. Pocket Edition. By Stephen Mitchell. 1992, HarperPerennial. Translation copyright 1988 by Stephen Mitchell. A hardcover edition was published by Harper & Row in 1988.
- Tao Te Ching. By Lao Tzu. Translated by James Legge. VigoClassics. 2010, Vigo Books.
- The Pocket Tao Reader. Writings selected and translated by Eva Wong. 1999, Shambhala Publications.
- Tai Chi Chuan: 24 & 48 Postures With Martial Applications. By Master Liang, Shou-You & Wu, Wen-Ching. 1993, 1996, Yang's Martial Arts Association (YMAA).
- Tai Chi Illustrated. By Master Pixiang and Weimo Zhu. Copyright 2013. Human Kinetics.
- Beginning T'ai Chi. By Tri Thong Dang. 1994. Tuttle Publishing.
- Tai Chi Ch'uan & Meditation. By Da Liu. 1986. Schocken Books.
- Zen Flesh Zen Bones: A Collection Of Zen And Pre-Zen Writings. Compiled by Paul Reps and Nyogen Senzaki. 1988, Tuttle Publishing. Original copyright 1957.²
- The Unfettered Mind: Writings From A Zen Master To A Master Swordsman. By Takuan Soho. Translated by William Scott Wilson. Copyright 1986, 2002 by William Scott Wilson. Shambhala Publications.
- Buddhism In Translations. By Henry Clarke Warren. Copyright 2005 by Casimo. Casimo Classics.
- Instructions To The Cook: A Zen Master's Guide In Living A Life That Matters. By Rick Fields and Bernard Glassman. Random House. Copyright 1996 by the Zen Community Of New York and Rick Fields.
- Ten Zen Seconds. By Eric Maisel. 2007, Sourcebooks.
- Opening The Hand Of Thought: Foundations Of Zen Buddhist Practice. By Kosho Uchiyama. Translated and edited by Tom Wright, Jisho Warner, and Shohaku Okumura. Wisdom Publications. Copyright 2004 by Jisho Warner.
- Zen Buddhism In The Twentieth Century. By Heinrich Dumoulin. Translated by Joseph O'Leary. 1992, Weatherhill.¹
- Zen's Chinese Heritage: The Masters And Their Teachings. Expanded Edition. By Andy Ferguson. Wisdom Publications. Copyright 2011 by Andy Ferguson.
- Zen Training. By Katsuki Sekida. 1985, Shambhala Publications.
- Two Zen Classics: The Gateless Gate And The Blue Cliff Records. By Katsuki Sekida. 2005, Shambhala Publications.³

The Gateless Barrier: Zen Comments On The Mumonkan. By Zenkei Shibayama. Translated by Sumiko Kudo. 1974, Shambhala Publications.4

The Heart Sutra.

Diamond Sutra, Lotus Sutra (Chapter XXV) And The Surangama Dharani. A sutrabook. The Zen Studies Society.

The Diamond Sutra & The Sutra Of Hui-neng. Translated by A. F. Price & Wong Mou-lam. 2005, Shambhala Publications. (This is nearly identical to the one above, in its rendition of the Diamond Sutra.)

The Heart Sutra. See The Official Site Of The Joint Council For Japanese Rinzai And Obaku Zen. Or, see the chapter “Maka-Hannya-Haramitsu” in Master Dogen’s Shobogenzo: Book 1.

Like A Dream, Like A Fantasy: The Zen Teachings And Translations Of Nyogen Senzaki. Edited and introduced by Eido Shimano. Wisdom Publications. Copyright 2005, Zen Studies Society.

The Book Of The Zen Grove. By Zenrin Robert E. Lewis. Zen Sangha Press. Copyright 1990 by Zenrin Robert E. Lewis.

Moon By The Window: The Calligraphy And Zen Insights Of Shodo Harada. Translated by Priscilla Daichi Storandt. Edited by Tim Jundo Williams and Jane Shotaku Lago. Wisdom Publications. Copyright 2011 One Drop Zendo Associates.

The Book Of Rinzai: The Recorded Sayings Of Zen Master Rinzai (Linji). Translated by Eido Shimano. 2005, The Zen Studies Society Press.

Shobogenzo Uji. By Dogen. Translated from Japanese and annotated by Eido Shimano Roshi and Charles Vacher. The Zen Studies Society.

Selected Teishos On Gateless Gate. Delivered at Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-ji, New York, by Yamakawa Sogen. Translated by Saiun Atsumi Hara. 2005, The Zen Studies Society Press.

Sun Face Buddha: The Teachings Of Ma-tsu And The Hung-chou School Of Ch’an. By Cheng Chien Bhikshu. Jain Publishing Company. Copyright 1992, Mario Poceski.

Manifestation Of The Tathagata: Buddhahood According To The Avatamsaka Sutra. Translated by Cheng Chien Bhikshu. 1993, Wisdom Publications.1

The Lankavatara Sutra: An Epitomized Version. Translated by D. T. Suzuki, compiled and edited by Dwight Goddard, foreword by John Daido Looi. 2003?, Monkfish Book Publishing Company. Original copyright 1932.

Manual Of Zen Buddhism. By Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki. 2010, Pacific Publishing Studio. I’m not sure when the book was first published; some time ago.

The Essence Of Dogen. By Masanobu Takahashi. 1983, Kegan Paul International.1

Master Dogen’s Shobogenzo: Book 1. By Dogen. Translated by Gudo Wafu Nishijima and Chodo Cross. BookSurge. Copyright 1994. Reprinted 2006.

Master Dogen’s Shobogenzo: Book 2. By Dogen. Translated by Gudo Wafu Nishijima and Chodo Cross. BookSurge. Copyright 1996. Reprinted 2005.

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Music

Music as dimension. These reflect only my own listening.

There [is|are|be] recorded music, live music, and nature's sounds. There [is|are|be] the sounds of the day.

And there are the sounds of the village, or of the mountain.

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Rock And Roll. . .This Is Jungle Sky, Vol. 5. 1998, Jungle Sky Records. (jungle/drum n bass)

Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers With Thelonious Monk. Performed 1957. Essential Jazz Classics. (jazz)

Aura. By Miles Davis. 1989, 2000, Sony Music Entertainment. (jazz)

Bobs Tumbla. By Bobs Tumbla. 2002, Scraggly Records. (jazz)

Invisible Paths: First Scattering. By Steve Coleman. 2007, Tzadik. (jazz)

Chamber Music Society. By Esperanza Spalding. 2010, Heads Up International, a division of Concord Music Group. (jazz)

Black Gold (With Algebra Blessett) - Single. By Esperanza Spalding. 2012, Heads Up International, a division of Concord Music Group. (jazz)

A Song. By Pablo Moses. 1980, Island Records. (reggae)

Roll Your Own Religion

Shall We Dance. By Beth Quist. 2006, Beth Quist. (vocals and instrument)
Early Music. By Kronos Quartet. 1997, Nonesuch Records. (modernist classical)
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Copland 100: Fanfare For The Common Man, Appalachian Spring Suite, Third Symphony. By Aaron Copland. Performed by the Minnesota Orchestra and Eiji Oue. 2000, Reference Recordings, www.ReferenceRecordings.com. (classical)

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Pi. Directed by Darren Aronofsky.
The Fountain. Directed by Darren Aronofsky.
Rivers and Tides: Andy Goldsworthy Working With Time. Directed by Thomas Riedelsheimer.

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Marvin Minsky

web.media.mit.edu/~minsky

Edward Tufte

www.edwardtufte.com

Mountains And Rivers Order Of Zen Buddhism¹⁵

www.mro.org

The Zen Studies Society¹⁶

www.zenstudies.org

The Official Site Of The Joint Council For Japanese Rinzai And Obaku Zen¹⁷

zen.rinnou.net

TheZenSite

www.thezensite.com

Zen, Yoga, Gurdjieff — Perspectives On Inner Work

zenyogagurdjieff.blogspot.com

A paper, food for thought, for physicists, titled Why Classical Mechanics Cannot Naturally Accommodate Consciousness But Quantum Mechanics Can by Henry P. Stapp

<http://www-physics.lbl.gov/~stapp/36574.ps>

1. This book appears to be out of print. I wonder if the publisher could be convinced to put it in print again.
2. A perfect Zen book. If you study Zen Flesh Zen Bones, you may find that your awakening happens spontaneously and without preconception.
3. You could always unpack your own Zen with Zen Flesh Zen Bones and the sutras, and other resources, then later reference Sekida. But this is a top notch Zen book, also to make Zen your own, for those who want another type certain clarity approach, for those who feel that they need something instead of or in conjunction with Zen Flesh Zen Bones, or who want a more involved approach. Sekida provides his own additional commentary. I've checked a couple of things and with Two Zen Classics and Zen Training it looks like Sekida had a realization that I admire. I'm looking forward to discovering more. Note that I have, in the past, read, in Two Zen Classics, The Gateless Gate but not much from Hekiganroku (The Blue Cliff Records).
4. Shibayama's book provides his teisho on the cases in the Mumonkan; these teisho include detailed historical accounts, background, and related material, with significant commentary. And, it imparts a palpable sense of the expectations of Zen training, as perhaps a monk would experience it. Shibayama emphasizes the direct realization required by and experiential nature of the Zen path. I might quibble about a few very minor things, but obviously his grasp of Zen far, far exceeds mine, and none of these are important. It's a profound book. My entry into Zen was by Zen Flesh Zen Bones, and to visit The Gateless Barrier later. To probe more deeply, after some time, with resonance, is for me a bit stunning! But others may appreciate the subject matter covered in The Gateless Barrier, up front, as a matter of orientation and compelling interest.
5. The text itself seems to be precisely translated, and the text is profound, and the endnotes very helpful. However, I'd take issue with the endnote's meaning given to "mental states", in the first 2 verses. I see mental states as a blank canvas, able to carry many types of things. It is a neutral carrier. With that in mind, verses 1 and 2 yield much fruit, across the landscape.
6. Rahula presents aspects of Buddhism with careful detail. Note that the meaning that I use now, for karma, is given by Cheng Chien Bhikshu, and is this: "any physical, mental, or verbal activity that produces a result; the universal law that any action brings consequences that are largely determined by the nature of that action.", from *Manifestation Of The Tathagata*, Glossary, p. 166. It is a useful term; this may be a particular Zen meaning. I feel that it is precise, that it is perfect, and that it describes the domain. Rahula brings up his material in a different way, in *What The Buddha Taught*, p. 32, and the difference between the two deserves careful study and attention. And what is important to realize, in considering Buddhist theory, is the nature of existence. If one starts elsewhere, perhaps with koan study, zazen, and no-thing (mu), the entire realm opens up, or unfolds. This requires meticulous attention, and I need to apply myself further to this realm. But in considering 'existence', I would suggest that there is a deeper realization than what Rahula presents in the paragraphs following his discussion of karma. Perhaps he accounts for this elsewhere. It is the realization of neither existence nor non-existence. And of emptiness. Another meaning is attributed to 'karma', by some. The dictionary says it is, "the sum of a person's actions in this and previous states of existence, viewed as deciding their fate in future existences.", from *The New Oxford American Dictionary*. Kalu Rinpoche gives it as, "The sum of all an individual's deeds, which ineluctably determine their experiences during

this life and in the afterlife and future births. Positive karma (merit) can be increased and negative karma eliminated through meditation and the practice of virtue, especially the six Paramitas.”, from *The Dharma That Illuminates All Beings Impartially Like The Light Of The Sun And The Moon*, Glossary, p. 195. Possibly one could use either meaning, in context.

7. This may be Theravada Buddhism. I forget, from the text. But it's an interesting book. You can find it at <http://www.archive.org/details/TakingRefugeInBuddhism>. Here, it's indicated to be Theravada.
8. According to the back cover, Kalu Rinpoche was a Tibetan Buddhist meditation master.
9. The NASB Study Bible is by all indications an accurate and perfect translation; and the rendition is careful, and the text is straightforward and readable. There are many translations, each with its own qualities. I find the ESV, the NKJV, and the NIV to read well, although I have not worked with them; and some might enjoy others. Then there are various Catholic study Bibles as well.
10. His other books, too, are exceptional. See his website, listed below, for these (there are 4 or 5 total) and other resources.
11. Also available on Edward Tufte's website.
12. This is an introduction to Western music, from an American perspective — mostly on classical, but also on chants and jazz, and touching on other forms, from around the world. It is well-written and has some well-presented material.
13. I have only glanced at this book, but it seems to take a dimensioned approach to the subject. It's both readable and expert, and the graphics are relevant. I'm looking forward to a careful study of the book.
14. A caption in the Prologue reads, “Science deals with known facts, philosophy with speculation”. Is there a problem with being about either facts or speculation? Isn't science also about observation, establishing general principles or methods, explanation, creating tools, and other things? (But the Prologue touches on some of this.) How does one ground, in reality? By tracing facts, even if one sees this as a reflection of or indicating the nature of the physical world? Does philosophy miss seeing mountains by dealing with speculation? Again, how does one ground, in reality? Yet, there is the specific meaning ‘speculation’ to philosophy, that one can see. Does philosophy set within a religious premise resolve anything? And, where do awareness, perception, and knowing enter? And, where is the mind, the mind that is before you, in all of this? Perhaps these are touched on, in the book, and by the philosophers. (Kant has come up in a discussion on Zen and philosophy. See *Like A Dream Like A Fantasy* by Senzaki, the dharma talk “Zen And Philosophy”.) And, it seems to me that there is at least a sense of meaning that philosophers work with, or for some, try to find orientation within. Perhaps philosophy/religion is the “reality”, and science is one expression. Although science asks, “What is there”, too. But how this all plays out is probably at once specific and dynamic, and grounded in direct realization. Facts, though, may mean something more fundamental, that one can rely on, to the author's mind. But what is the domain? Nishijima, in his translation of *Fundamental Wisdom Of The Middle Way*, introduces Nagarjuna's four reliable facts, in a striking domain — and these, in Nagarjuna's

hands, may provide a lucid framework for further investigation, for oneself: reason, the external world, the present moment, and reality (this world). Then real action and so forth corresponding to these. So the Prologue is instructive.

15. I want to refer to a koan in the essay “Nanyue Polishes A Tile” by John Daido Looi, in the book *The Art Of Just Sitting: Essential Writings On The Zen Practice Of Shikantaza*, edited by Looi. (2002, Dharma Communications.) John Daido Looi Roshi founded MRO and was its spiritual leader. What does one perceive, in glass? This is an excellent koan, and I’m looking forward to working with it carefully. What is the role of differentiation? That is, I’m not sure I accept the commentary entirely. But Looi was a serious teacher, and perhaps I don’t quite see what he’s saying. My mistake may be that I’m reading a certain surface interpretation, and maybe later I’ll see what Looi is referring to, and resolve the apparent contradiction. Look for training material at this Zen center’s website. I have neither studied nor received training at MRO.

16. Look for their newsletter, along with the rest. They have an excellent brief note on “What Is Zen”. I have neither studied nor received training here.

17. They have some well-presented material, including a good introduction to Zen and zazen, and a list of sutras and chants, and music. Nice tone. I have neither studied nor received training here. Aside from this organization, there are a number of Zen centers, with websites.

Website

There is a related website www.RollYourOwnReligion.net.Untitled (Images)

Lightwave Geometry