

# SEVEN THUNDERS

newsletter

www.seventhunders.org

May 2023



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Many thanks to all who contributed their time and talents to this publication. Articles may not be reprinted without permission from the author.



## MAZU'S MIND, MAZU'S NO-MIND

by Greg Smith

I'd like to consider two related koans from the *Mumonkan* today. Both involve our friend Mazu, who has been at the center of other koans I've explored in earlier dharma talks. Along with Bodhidharma and Huineng, he is one of the towering figures of the Zen tradition from the eighth and ninth century Tang Dynasty. These two koans, numbers 30 and 33, involve a question often brought to Zen teachers throughout the Diamond Sangha curriculum drawn from the *Mumonkan* as well as *The Blue Cliff Record*, *The Book of Serenity*, and *The Transmission of Light*.

In the first, one of Mazu's major descendants, Damei, asks, "What is Buddha?" Mazu answers, "This very mind is Buddha." Three koans later, he is asked by an unknown monk the same question. This time he answers, "Not mind, not Buddha." What is going on here? Is Mazu once again demonstrating his tendency to engage in hijinks like the time he tweaked Baichang's nose after the latter failed to give an appropriate response to what happened to a flock of ducks they had disturbed on a morning walk? Or, as is also the case with Baichang's twisted nose, something more substantial going on?

Mazu's first response did not come out of the blue. Buddhists have been talking about mind for a long time, starting with the Buddha, himself. After he twirled the flower and Mahakasyapa smiled, the Buddha said, "I possess the true Dharma Eye, the Marvelous Mind of Nirvana, the True Form of the Formless, and the Subtle

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## SEVEN THUNDERS RETREATS & EVENTS

### FIRST SATURDAY SITTINGS

Monthly "First Saturday" sittings will continue online through July. Please see the president's report on page 3 for information regarding returning to sittings at the Trappist Abbey in August. Links to join the sitting online can be found on the Seven Thunders website at [seventhunders.org](http://seventhunders.org). The format remains much the same, with formal group sitting beginning at 9:00 a.m. A talk by the teacher begins at 10:00 a.m., which is followed by opportunities for private interviews with the teacher. Formal sitting ends at noon. There is no charge, but donations for teacher support and Seven Thunders via the website are gratefully accepted. The schedule for the next few months is:

- June 3, Sr. Kathleen Pruitt
- July 8 Sr. Kathleen Pruitt
- August 5, Leonard Marcel
- September 9, Leonard Marcel
- October 7, Sr. Kathleen Pruitt
- November 4, Leonard Marcel
- December 2, Sr. Kathleen Pruitt

### SEVEN THUNDERS REGULAR SITTINGS

#### PORTLAND AREA SITTINGS

■ Monday evenings at Stones and Clouds Zendo, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m., zazen & dokusan. Hybrid events with limited in-zendo attendance and online via Zoom. Registration for following Monday opens at 9 a.m. on Tuesday. Contact [StonesCloudsZendo@icloud.com](mailto:StonesCloudsZendo@icloud.com) to reserve a place. Check [seventhunders.org](http://seventhunders.org) for other details. ✨

#### SALEM SITTINGS

■ For Salem Zen Center's online offerings, email for the Zoom links: [SalemZenCenter@gmail.com](mailto:SalemZenCenter@gmail.com). Teacher: LeeAnn Nail. Tuesday evening meditation & dharma talk from 7:00 to 8:45 p.m. and a Saturday morning meditation & poetry share from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. ✨

### RETREAT SCHEDULE

- July 11 - 15, 2023 – Summer Sesshin at Stones & Clouds, led by Leonard Marcel. Registration information on page 11.
- November 11 – Bend Retreat, led by Leonard Marcel. For more information and to register, please contact Denise Fainberg at 541.213.8001 or [dsfainberg@yahoo.com](mailto:dsfainberg@yahoo.com)
- December 1 - 6, 2023 – Rohatsu Sesshin at Stones & Clouds, led by Leonard Marcel. Registration information on page 12.



### NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTIONS

Published three times a year, our newsletter is a benefit of Seven Thunders membership. Prospective members who would like to receive the newsletter can be added to the mailing list by contacting Jenny Brausch at [livinggreen@comcast.net](mailto:livinggreen@comcast.net). Complimentary copies will be sent for up to one year or until January dues requests are mailed. After that, if membership dues (full membership currently \$30 per year) are not received by March, you will be sent an announcements-only version of the newsletter. Please send membership dues to: Jenny Brausch, PO Box 3119, Albany, OR 97321. ✨

### ZAZENKAI

Held at the Stones and Clouds (*Rai'un*) Zendo in Lake Oswego, led by Leonard Marcel. These will be hybrid events from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., with full in-zendo attendance available upon reservation. More details on page 10.

- September 16
- October 28 ✨

### OTHER PACIFIC NORTHWEST DIAMOND SANGHA GROUPS

#### PORTLAND SITTINGS

■ Ring of Moss Sangha. Zazen: Wednesday evenings, 7:00-8:30 and Sunday mornings, 7:30-8:30; virtually on Tuesday mornings, 6:00-7:00. Contact: Teacher Andrew Mason at [andrewmasonpdx@gmail.com](mailto:andrewmasonpdx@gmail.com). ✨

#### OLYMPIA SITTINGS

■ Contemplative Community at St. Michael's. Monday evenings, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., and every Saturday morning from 6:00 to 8:00 a.m. in the Chapel at St. Michael Church, 1021 Boundary St. SE, Olympia, WA 98501. Contact: Mary Solberg, 360.250.6362 or [msolberg2@gmail.com](mailto:msolberg2@gmail.com) ✨

#### PORT ANGELES SITTINGS

■ NO Sangha. Teacher: Kristen Larson. Zazen: Saturday mornings, 8:00 to 9:30 a.m. For more information, please contact Kristen Larson at 360.452.5534 or [NOSangha@aol.com](mailto:NOSangha@aol.com). ✨

#### SEATTLE SITTINGS

■ Three Treasures Sangha. Teachers: Jack Duffy and Lee Shields. Zazen at *Dharma Gate* (1910 24th Ave S.) on Wednesday evenings 6:30-8:30 p.m. and Friday mornings 6:30-7:30 a.m., followed by breakfast. For more information, go to their website at: [www.three-treasures-sangha.org](http://www.three-treasures-sangha.org) ✨



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT: SPRINGING FORWARD

by Mike Seely

**A**s I hope many of you will recall, Seven Thunders announced that the Seven Thunders' sutra book would be re-published this spring. Thank you to those members who responded to me with requests to purchase new editions. As you will see on page 5, the new sutra books have been completed and are ready to be distributed towards the end of June. Many thanks to Leonard and Teresa for their direct work with the text and the engagement of a printer and binder. I also extend appreciation to those who volunteered to review the drafts offering edits where needed.

### Annual Meeting

Please note that the Annual Meeting will be held on July 15th at the conclusion of summer sesshin. The plan is to hold this meeting in person, outdoors at Stones and Clouds thanks to the Marcel's gracious hospitality. More information below. These last three years have demonstrated that we, as a community, are resilient, resourceful, and remarkably adaptable. We have maintained the spirit of our silent practices creating a

rich communal virtual context. We moved quite agilely to a successful hybrid platform. In many ways we collectively embraced what Meister Eckhart directs us to remember, that "God asks only that [we] get out of God's way and let God be God in [us]."

### First Saturdays at the Abbey

It is in this very spirit that we now will move to more in-person gatherings as the dust of the pandemic diminishes. We will retain the hybrid option as much as possible because of its success. One area where this light, I hope, can poke through the darkness is the re-establishment of in-person First Saturday gatherings at the Abbey. These will resume on August 5th.

However, in the interest of safety for everyone, precautions will still need to be observed. Although it will not be checked, those attending are encouraged to be fully vaccinated and boosted against the known Covid variants. In addition, in order to limit the risk of infection, we ask that those planning to attend at the Abbey carefully and

honestly assess their health before leaving home and ask that anyone who is even mildly symptomatic (including sore throat, cough, unusual sinus/nasal congestion, loss of smell, fever, or unexplained body ache or fatigue) stay home. Symptoms may precede a positive Covid test result by several days or may indicate influenza or other infections that will not be detected by standard testing. While we appreciate the hardship of missing an event that you anticipated and may have made sacrifices to be able to attend, this is the single most important precaution you can take to protect both yourself and others. Masks will not be needed at the abbey.

I appreciate the membership's patience as we have sorted through the various challenges that face us in getting this important offering back on track. More information and communications will follow as these adjustments are accomplished.

May the light of spring be with you, ⚡

## ANNUAL MEETING AND TRANSMISSION CELEBRATION IN PERSON ON SATURDAY JULY 15

**A**fter a four year absence due to the pandemic, and in the hope that there will be no resurgence of any Covid variant, the Seven Thunders Annual Meeting for members and guests will take place once again in person.

The meeting will be held on Saturday July 15 at noon, following the ending of Summer Sesshin. It will also be a celebration of the appointment of Marian Morgan as a fully independent Diamond Sangha teacher.

If you can, please plan to bring a dish to share for a potluck lunch that will start approximately at noon. After everyone has had a chance to eat, socialize and renew acquaintances, we will meet to elect new board members to a two-year term and discuss other topics of interest to the membership.

- Location: Stones & Clouds Zendo garden, Lake Oswego
- Date: Saturday, July 15 2023
- Time: Noon - 3 p.m.

For directions, and to RSVP, please contact Teresa Marcel at:

- Phone: 503.636.9009 (before 5 p.m. on Tuesday, July 11 – as Summer Sesshin starts then)
- Email anytime: [tdmarcel@mac.com](mailto:tdmarcel@mac.com). ⚡





## JAMES MISHALANI, 1934 - 2023

*by Hisham Mishalani, Jane Huyer and Leonard Marcel*

On Wednesday, March 29, longtime Seven Thunders member, Jim Mishalani, passed away due to complications from congestive heart failure.

James Karam Mishalani was born to Alice and Karam Mishalani on March 23, 1934. He completed undergraduate studies at the American University of Beirut, and his graduate M.A. and PhD studies at Brown University. He was an esteemed Professor of Philosophy at the University of Washington in Seattle from 1963 - 1999, beloved by faculty and students alike.

In his retirement, he moved to Bellingham, WA, where he lived out the remainder of his 89 years exploring art, gardening, political action related to social justice, and the contemplative dimensions of Catholic spiritual practice.

He is survived by Susan, his wife of over 50 years, their son Hisham and his wife Lindsey, his former wife Samiha, their son Karam and his wife Krys and by two lovely grandchildren.

Over several decades, Jim eagerly anticipated attending Seven Thunders retreats. Older members remember him as modest, quiet, thoughtful and considerate and having a very deep contemplative practice; and remember, as well, his and Susan's graceful Tai Chi practice during retreat rest-breaks at Loyola Retreat Center in Portland, and at St Benedict's Lodge at McKenzie Bridge. His relationship with Seven Thunders' late teacher, Father Pat Hawk Roshi, was particularly meaningful to Jim.

Jim was also an excellent and extremely gifted iconographer, and his Christ Pantocrater icon, with a quote from John 9:39, graced the altar of our Contemplative Intensive Retreats for many years. We are grateful for Jim's presence with us, then and now.

The pine tree sings, but there is no wind  
Who can leap the world's ties  
And sit with me among the white clouds?  
(Han-shan) ⚡





## PALM SUNDAY CIR 2023

by Nancy Roberts

On this Palm Sunday weekend filled with daffodils, rain showers, hail, and cloudy skies, we launched our zoom meeting links to prepare for Holy Week. Thanks to the leadership and organization of Leonard Marcel, our teacher, Teresa Marcel, our timekeeper, and Mike Seely, our monitor, we experienced a splendid retreat of meditation, prayers, teachings, and interviews.

In the first teaching, Leonard explained that as human consciousness evolves, we lose our childlike oneness with all things. Our ego must die before we can awaken to our true nature. He interpreted the story of St. Dismas, a thief crucified next to Jesus, who looked at Jesus and asked to be remembered. The virtues of humility, faith, hope, and love are part of the contemplative path during which we set aside our willfulness and sense of separation from the Divine. Oneness is revealed to us in an inner experience; this is beautifully expressed in the Song of Solomon, "You seized my heart by your gaze."

In the second talk, Leonard contrasted light and darkness using the example of chiaroscuro, a painting technique in the Renaissance. We move from dark to light in Lent,



partially paralleling the experience of Jesus' life, death, and relationship with the Father. We must let go of fixed opinions and desires and the sense of separateness (the False Self) in order to join the Light, the ultimate reality.

Thank you all for an enriching retreat. ✨

*Effortlessly, love flows from God into woman and man, like a bird who rivers the air without moving her wings.*

*Thus, we move in God's world, one in body and soul, though outwardly separate in form. As the Source strikes the note, humanity sings.*

*The Holy Spirit is our harpist, and all strings that are touched in love must sound.*

— Mechtild of Magdeburg (1208-1282) ✨

## NEW SUTRA BOOKS

by Leonard Marcel

The current version of the Seven Thunders sutra book for Zen Buddhist services that is used for all liturgies during sesshin, zazen, Monday evening zazen and daily services was last updated in 2010. During its meeting this past winter, the Board of Directors decided that a new edition would be timely in order to clarify some translations, add new material and correct the few existing typos. There was a healthy pre-publication subscription response from members which encouraged the Board to proceed with the project.

The newly hardbound books have been completed and are priced at \$30 apiece. They will be available for distribution the latter part of June. Prior to that time, if you have pre-ordered a book, you will be sent an invoice, which will include instructions for payment. Those who come regularly to

Stones & Clouds Zendo can pay in person by check or cash and collect their books. For those living at a distance, arrangements can be made with Mike Seely (ms452mss@me.com) for shipment.

If you have not yet ordered a book and would like to do so, contact Mike Seely at the above e-mail address.

The new edition includes ten additional pages of readings, meal gathas and memorial services. In addition, there are some changes to the translations of Metta Sutra and Song of the Jewel Mirror Samadhi which should facilitate those readings and clarify the meaning of the various passages. For Metta Sutra, the change of wording reflects a shift from a Hinayana perspective regarding the nature of life and death to a Mahayana perspective in which libera-

tion can be experienced within this lifetime rather than beyond it—that the other shore is right here rather than somewhere else.

The two smallest changes, however, are the most significant. In the Purification, the word "evil" has been replaced by "harmful," which casts a wider net. This is to reflect the fact that "evil" is too narrow in its denotation of profoundly immoral/wicked, whereas many of our words and actions, without being evil in themselves, can often be harmful and unhelpful.

The other significant change is in the first of the Great Vows where "save" is replaced by "free." I vow to free the many beings. This is more faithful to the primary teaching of the Buddha who said, in various ways, "I teach only liberation." ✨



## MAZU'S MIND, MAZU'S NO-MIND, *continued from page 1*

Dharma Gate that does not rest on words or letters but is a special transmission outside of the scriptures." In this statement "Mind" is equated with attributes that seem to define what it means to be a Buddha.

When asked about the teaching he could share after he had made his arduous journey from India to China, Bodhidharma said something similar:

A separate transmission outside the  
scripture,  
Not dependent upon words or letters,  
Direct pointing at the human mind,  
Seeing one's nature and becoming  
Buddha.

A few generations later, Huangbo, the teacher of Linji wrote, "There is only One mind and not a particle of anything else on which to lay hold, for this Mind is the Buddha. If you students of the Way do not awaken to this Mind substance, you will overlay Mind with conceptual thought, you will seek the Buddha outside yourselves, you will remain attached to forms, pious practices and so on, all of which are harmful and not at all the way to supreme knowledge."

Later, when the Chan tradition was trans-

mitted from China to Japan, Eihei Dogen wrote: "Mountains, rivers, earth, the sun, the moon, and stars are mind. . . . Just wholeheartedly accept and trust that to study the way with mind is thus mountains-rivers-and-earth-itself thoroughly engaged in studying the way.". Dogen's insights were later reiterated by Hakuin's student Torei in his "Bodhisattva's Vow":

Everywhere is the Pure Land in its  
beauty.  
We see fully the Tathagata's radiant light  
right where we are.

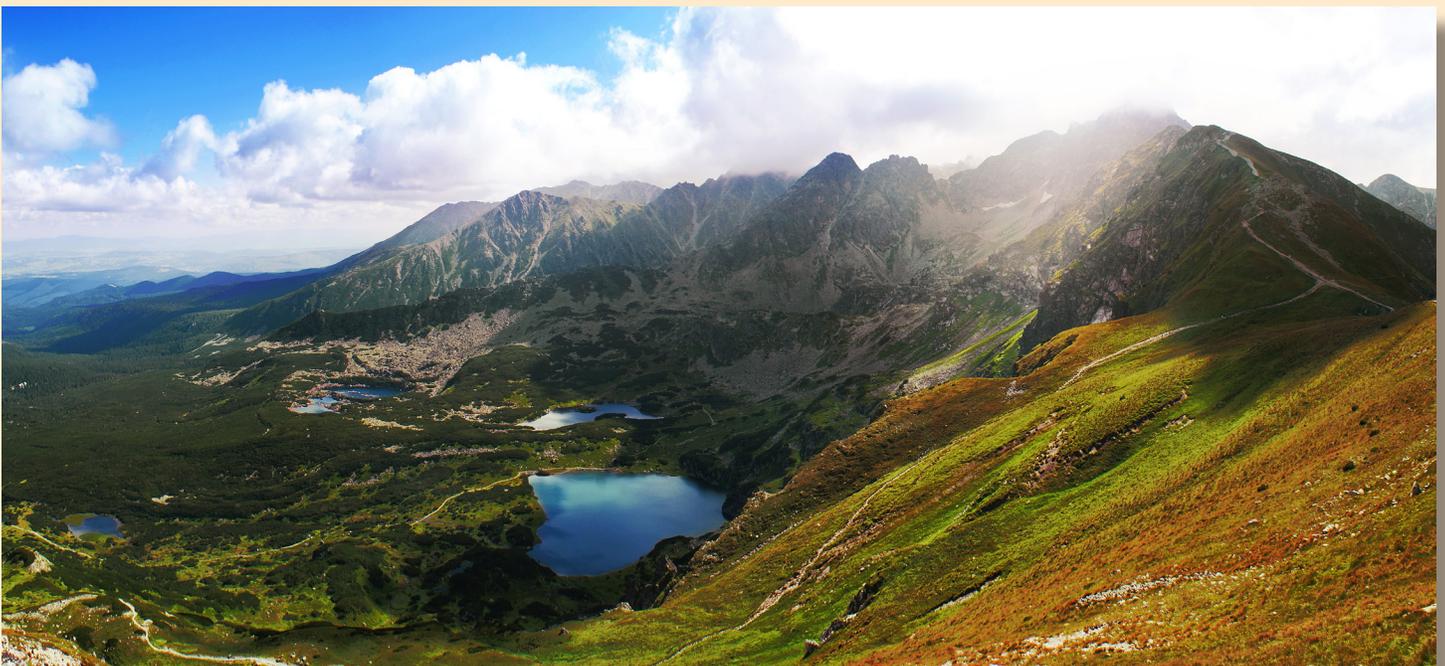
May we retain this mind  
and extend it throughout the world  
so that we and all beings  
become mature in Buddha's wisdom.

In this collection of statements can be discerned a set of attributes that characterizes the mind Mazu says is Buddha. It is not dependent on words or letters, it can be directly pointed at, it lies beyond dualistic thinking, having nothing to do with conceptual thought. Everything is in essence it.

Such a mind is very different from what most of us conventionally mean by this term. Asked where their mind is, people

who have grown up in Western cultures will most often point to their heads given our tendency to associate the activities of mind with cognition and the brain. In Asia, a similar question might result in a response that involves pointing to the belly or solar plexus, since mind is imagined to be located there. In fact, there are more neurons associated with the digestive system than the brain and spinal column. Given the discursive and dualistic nature of thought as we generally define it, common Western assumptions about mind are clearly not related to the vision of mind presented in Buddhist scriptures.

Associating the mind with the solar plexus or what in Japan is called the hara or tanden may get closer to a way of perceiving the world that is not dependent on words or letters. Even in the West, people talk about feeling butterflies in their stomach or acting from their gut. I recall listening to a cello concert one time and feeling as if the music was originating in my abdomen. My experience of music then was more intimate than nearly any other time I can remember. This association with mind and belly may be one of the reasons that Zen students are on occasion encouraged to locate their breathing in the hara and rest their attention there,





## MAZU'S MIND, MAZU'S NO-MIND, *continued from page 6*

but even this is not the full picture.

For example, when Dogen met with Chan Master Rujing, his primary teacher in China, he was initially instructed to place his mind above his left hand held in zazen position at his waist, exactly the position of the hara. He does so during his sitting practice and comes back to Rujing a few days later. At that point, Rujing instructs him "make your mind fill your entire body. Make it reach each of your hundred and sixty bones and joints, each of the eighty-four thousand pores of your skin, so that not a single place is left empty." As reported by Hakuin in an "Informal Talk on a Winter Night" collected in *Poison Blossoms from a Thicket of Thorns*, Rujing's practice instructions locate mind neither in the head nor the belly but throughout the entire body. After a few more days, Dogen comes to Rujing and says:

I did as you instructed, placing my mind throughout my body. Now both my mind and body have fallen away. It is like a brilliant sun illuminating the vast heavens, although its round shape cannot be seen.

By this point, mind is located no longer in the body at all but instead exists everywhere, just as Dogen and Torei Zenji later describe in the poems or essays quoted earlier.

Their experience is not far distant from the vision of deep ecologists like Martin Mueller who in his *Being Salmon Being Human* writes about the interconnected nature of natural systems as this relates to the experience of salmon:

A salmon is a sensing, sensitive being making conscious choices inside a sen-



suous aquatic world she coinhabits with other sentient beings. She is also the unique smell of that one estuary, that place where she once passed from her freshwater youth into her saltwater adulthood. She is the magnetic field that spans from pole to pole and sends waves of recognition through her sensing body on her long journey back home . . . She is her river's topography, its resistance, its moods. She is all that. . . Salmon are who they are in relation to trees, rocks, ravens and rivers.

The same can be said of human beings. As Dogen recognized after his experience of realization, everything is mind existing within a complex field of relationships just as the iconography of Indra's Net with its endlessly reflective jewels suggests. Inspired by Mueller's vision I wrote the following:

Each year the young ash tree and plum grow taller,  
extending branches and thickening trunks  
that reach upwards and outwards,  
populating themselves with red or green leaves

unique to their own species.

Their roots, likewise, thicken and deepen gathering needed nutrients and waters from the surrounding soil, transporting these upwards where they assist in the transformation of sunlight and carbon into substance. Everything I see outside my window has the same capacity, the same intelligence.

We live in and are part of a vast manifestation of mind. Just this.

If all of these capacities are not mind—no different from my own ability to grow or respond to stimuli, I don't know what mind is. As Dogen and Torei suggest, everywhere we look mind or the Buddha or the Tathagata is evident, even in the capacity of water to move downhill or evaporate or condense, or mountains to rise and fall as a result of tectonic forces or the actions of wind and rain. One could well say not only that the Buddha is mind, but that the entire universe is mind.



## MAZU'S MIND, MAZU'S NO-MIND, *continued from page 7*

All of this sounds well and good until I remember the second koan in which Mazu responds to the same question with the opposite answer. Again, he is not alone in responding in this way. Not surprisingly, Mazu's student Nanquan gave a similar answer in Case 27 of the *Mumonkan*:

A monk asked Nanquan "Is there a fundamental truth that has never been expounded for people?"

Nanquan said, "There is."

The monk said, "What is the fundamental truth that has never been expounded for people?"

Nanquan said, "It is not mind; it is not Buddha; it is not beings."

Several centuries later, Daio Kukushi reiterates this message:

To call it Mind or Buddha violates its nature  
for it then becomes like a visionary flower in the air.

It is not Mind, not Buddha,  
absolutely quiet, and yet illuminating  
in a mysterious way.  
It allows itself to be perceived only by the  
clear eyed.

His response is not so different from Wu-men's verse about the koan involving Nanquan:

Scrupulous care dissipates your future;  
no-words truly have an effect;  
though the great ocean becomes a field,  
it cannot be communicated to you.

Despite this, Daio Kokushi asserts,

Wishing to entice the blind,  
the Buddha playfully let words escape his  
golden mouth.  
Heaven and earth are ever since  
filled with entangling briars.

Similarly, when a monk asked Mazu why he persisted in saying that Mind is Buddha, Mazu replied,

"Because I want to stop the crying of a baby." The monk persisted, "When the crying has stopped, what is it then?" "Not Mind, not Buddha", was the answer.

What this suggests is that ultimately we cannot know what either Mind or Buddha is but that something underlies the phenomena we experience both within and beyond ourselves as we go about our daily lives. In this we are like Bodhidharma when asked by Emperor Wu who it is that is standing before him. Bodhidharma answers, "I don't know" and then leaves. None of us can know either who we are or what the universe is, but this does not prevent us from experiencing our true self.

When we sit zazen, we avail ourselves of the opportunity to align our lives with this more complete and expansive identity. It is not an experience we can manufacture, but it is an experience we can invite by setting aside the preoccupations and attitudes that we have attached to our beings in the same way caddis fly larvae attach bits of wood and fir needles to their skin as a form of protection and camouflage. Letting these go is one of the central challenges of spiritual practice. By doing so, we can once more become clear-eyed enough so what is not Tao, what is not Dharma, what is not Mind might reveal itself to us.

That revelation is called awakening or *ken-sho*. Although commonly seen as the end goal of Zen practice, it is more accurately the beginning. The experience of awakening can either take the form of a small glimpse of this broader mind or a full-blown immersion into a vaster and more inclusive form of consciousness. Regardless, the task from then on is to refine our understanding and bring more and more of our lives into accord with what has presented itself to us.

As Daio Kukushi asserts, "If you wish to listen to the thunderous voice of the Dharma, empty your thoughts, exhaust your words, for then you may come to recognize this one essence." The discipline of attending to what is happening without the continuous chatter of our little minds allows us to rec-





## MAZU'S MIND, MAZU'S NO-MIND, *continued from page 8*

ognize the vast mind that has always been there. When this happens, as it can in each moment, our lives become less like a small bead on the wire of time and more like the universe manifesting itself in the small details of our own experience. In a sense, we can share in the exacting consciousness of a doe in a meadow alert to every sound and smell and small motion encountered in the environment around her. Or the exacting consciousness of a mountain lion watching the same deer from across a still meadow.

As this process begins to take shape, zazen becomes less a matter of stopping the chatter and more a matter of immersing ourselves in what is—the feel of the cushion, the position of our back and legs and arms, the slow in and out of our breath as our bellies expand and contract, the flow of air up and down in our lungs, the sounds of rain or wind or traffic from outside the zendo, the prolonged vibration of bells after they have been struck, the unison or discord of voices during chanting, the smell of incense, the arising and falling away of pain, the light pressure of our tongue behind our teeth.

But not only impressions from within and outside our bodies can come to fill our consciousness. So can experiences of awe and wonder and gratitude and love arising out of our deepening awareness of our connection to everything and everyone around us. As gravity leads both particles and planets to be drawn to one another, love seems to operate in the same way in the non-material realm. As our practice deepens, our time on the cushion can increasingly come to be permeated with the buoyancy of affection and kindness. The “Metta Sutra” calls this the sublime abiding during which the Zen practitioner spreads loving kindness “upwards to the skies and downwards to the depths, outwards and unbounded.” Call it what you will, this is where our practice can lead us.

Again as reported by Hakuin, Dogen described it to Rujing in this way: “It is like a brilliant sun illuminating the vast heavens,



although its round shape cannot be seen.” Hearing Dogen’s words, Rujing replied: “Brother Gen, for kalpas on end you have been revolving in the cycle of birth and death. Today you have entered the great and true dhyana where defilements do not arise. Preserve and protect this. Never let it go.” Rujing’s message is for us, as well.

This is what shikantaza or just sitting is all about. And of course, Dogen, just like us, undoubtedly let it go. This is what it means to be a human being with thoughts that arise and fade away. But ultimately there is nothing to let go of because this precious it, what the author of the “Shodoka” calls the “wish-granting jewel,” is us and everything around us. In being so, our challenge and opportunity as Zen practitioners is to come back and come back and come back to our essential nature endlessly in the zendo but also throughout all the locations we inhabit as we go about our daily lives. When asked about what this means, Dogen said that it requires non-thinking, a recommendation that at base seems to require an ever-vigilant monitor inhibiting the natural flow of human thought. That non-thinking, however, is not so much a constraint as an acknowledgement of that which lies below our thought, the fundamental matrix of awareness that we share with all other living beings, the awareness that allows us

to respond to and enjoy the complex and ever-changing phenomena of our lives. That awareness is what it means to be awake, more like a gyroscope than a straight-jacket.

Shikantaza – something that could also be called the experience of “mind” or “no-mind” – is not a discipline that requires an ongoing process of surveillance and interdiction but a complete embrace of the present, reflecting back and yet internalizing our experience of being one small part of and yet the entirety of the universe attentive to itself, attentive and responding in ways that affirm both our existence and the existence of everything around us. As Dan Dickinson mentioned to me a few weeks ago, it is a way to be in the world that is both inclusive and included. To repeat To-rei Zenji, “May we retain this mind and extended it throughout the world so that we and all beings become mature in Buddha’s wisdom.” ✨



## UPCOMING ZAZENKAI

Zazenkai are an opportunity for intense practice with the sangha in a shorter time-frame than either a kosesshin or a sesshin, as they are limited to one day only.

Zazenkai for the remainder of the year will be as follows:

- September 16
- October 28

Zazenkai take place from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. In addition to formal zazen, the day includes a sutra service, teisho, and dokusan.

These will be hybrid events with both in-zendo attendance and online via Zoom, unless Covid circumstances dictate otherwise.

Please contact **Teresa Marcel** at [tdmarcel@mac.com](mailto:tdmarcel@mac.com) or 503.636.9009 to reserve a place for Zazenkai. She will confirm your reservation and, if attending online, send you a Zoom link as well as Zazenkai guidelines a few days before the event.

While there is no set fee for zazenkai, a **donation of \$20** is requested and much appreciated to help cover costs. To offer a donation, please send a check to Seven Thunders Treasurer:

Jenny Brausch  
PO Box 3119  
Albany, OR 97321

Checks should be made out to  
"Seven Thunders."

Zazenkai are followed by a study group, to which all are invited. Study group lasts approximately one hour and is centered on a reading agreed upon at the end of the previous meeting. ✨

## BOOK CLUB MEETING FRIDAY, JUNE 30 AT 7:30 P.M.

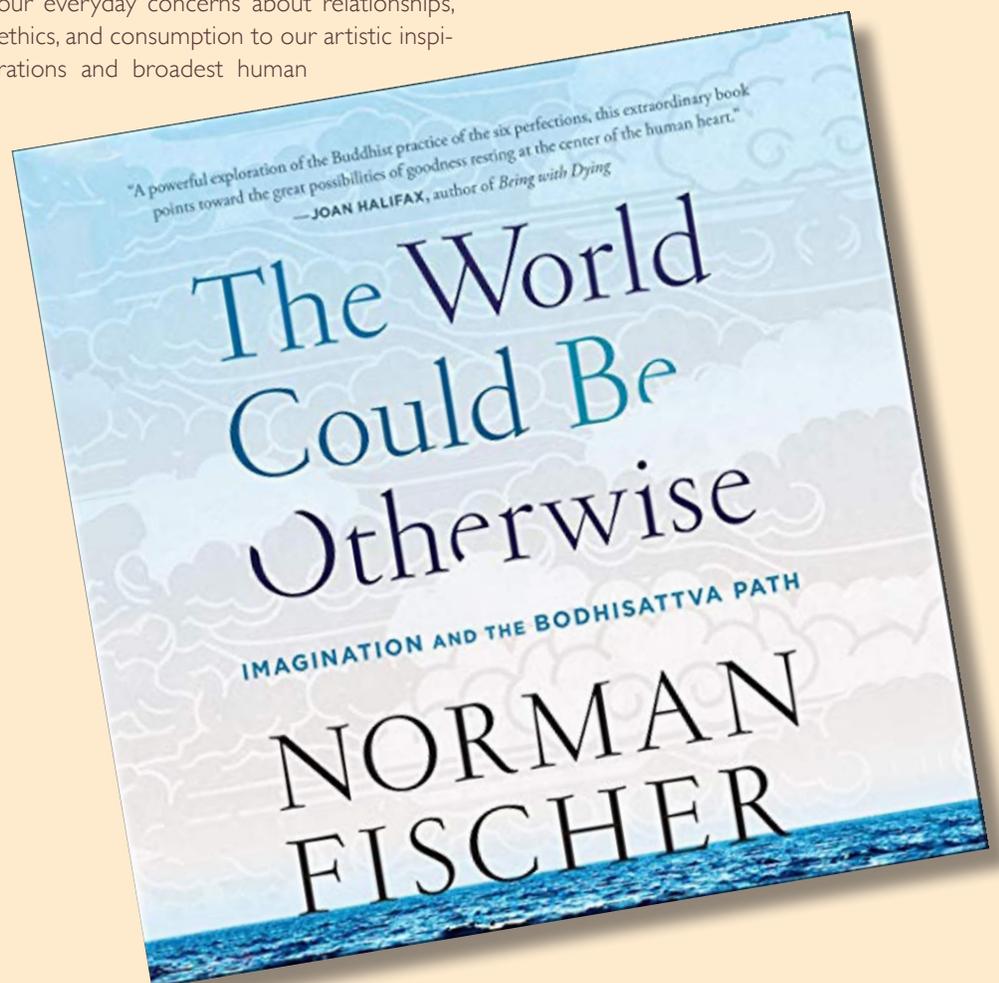
by Greg Smith

The Seven Thunders Book Group will meet on Friday, June 30, at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Greg and Becky Smith, 2140 Volpp Street, West Linn. We will attempt to make this a hybrid event, as well. Our selection this time around is Norman Fischer's newish book, *The World Could Be Otherwise*, a heartfelt exploration of how the six paramitas can guide us as we negotiate the challenges of contemporary life.

**Reviews:** In frightening times, we wish the world could be otherwise. With a touch of imagination, it can be. Imagination helps us see what's hidden, and it shape-shifts reality's roiling twisting waves. In this inspiring reframe of a classic Buddhist teaching, Zen teacher Norman Fischer writes that the paramitas, or "six perfections" - generosity, ethical conduct, patience, joyful effort, meditation, and understanding - can help us reconfigure the world we live in. Ranging from our everyday concerns about relationships, ethics, and consumption to our artistic inspirations and broadest human

yearnings, Fischer depicts imaginative spiritual practice as a necessary resource for our troubled times.

The main lesson I got from this book was the role that imagination can hold in envisioning the path to awakening. Beforehand, even if I could understand intellectually what it could be like to transform into someone completely compassionate or wise, the image in my head never felt "real" to me. Reading this book made me realize that partly this was due to a failure of imagination. Visualizing the end of the spiritual path (though it never really ends) is one of the greatest and most fulfilling acts of imagination we can partake in. ✨





**HYBRID SUMMER SESSHIN AT STONES AND CLOUDS ZENDO JULY 11 - 15, 2023**



The 2023 Seven Thunders Zen Summer Sesshin, led by Leonard Marcel, is planned as a **hybrid event** to take place from 7 p.m. Tuesday evening, July 11, to 10 a.m. Saturday morning, July 15. No more places are available for in-zendo attendance and there is a waiting list, but places are available for online attendance. Both in-person and online attendees will follow the full sesshin schedule (6 a.m. to 9 p.m. on full days).

To attend sesshin at the Stones & Clouds zendo you will have to be fully vaccinated for Covid-19 and be in good health. If attending via Zoom, you will sit in your own space, access the retreat on your own device and provide your own meals. The fee for in-person attendance is \$210 for members, \$240 for non members, and includes all meals from Tuesday evening to Saturday breakfast. For online attendance, the fee is \$130 for members, \$160 for non-members.

The extra \$30 of the non-member fee can be applied to your Seven Thunders membership, should you choose to do so, which then qualifies you for the member rate for all other Seven Thunders regular retreats and sesshin through the remainder of the calendar year. Registration deadline is June 20. Should you need to cancel, all but \$30 will be refunded for cancellation requests received by the retreat coordinator on or before June 27; half the fee will be refunded if

received by July 4; no refund in the last week before the retreat.

Registrations will be accepted on a first come basis. As this sesshin is usually well subscribed, early registration and payment is encouraged. Part-time attendance may be possible as schedules permit.

Once your registration has been received and accepted, you will receive a confirmation from the registrar. If for any reason you find the full fee a barrier to attending,

please check the box on the registration form requesting a "scholarship" or contact the registrar. Affordability need not be a deterrent to attendance. Full or partial scholarships are almost always available. Donations for such scholarships are both appreciated and tax-deductible.

Silence will be observed in the zendo. For those attending online, please make every attempt to maintain silence to the extent possible, as your circumstances permit.

To register for the retreat, please email registrar at [tdmarcel@mac.com](mailto:tdmarcel@mac.com) to signal your intent to attend, and then complete the form below and send it with your fee to:

**Teresa Marcel**  
1333 Skyland Drive  
Lake Oswego, OR 97034.

Please make checks payable to **Seven Thunders**. Alternatively, you may pay the fee online at [seventhunders.org](http://seventhunders.org) (click on the 'Contribute' tab and follow the donation process). Questions? Please contact Teresa Marcel at 503.636.9009 or [tdmarcel@mac.com](mailto:tdmarcel@mac.com) ✨

**REGISTRATION FORM**  
**STONES & CLOUDS SUMMER SESSHIN, JULY 11 - 15, 2023**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Emergency contact name & Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

- I would like to **attend in person**, and enclose full payment of \$210 (the member rate).
- I would like to **attend in person**, and enclose \$240.
  - please apply \$30 to my Seven Thunders member dues.
- I would like to **attend online** and enclose full payment of \$130 (the member rate).
- I would like to **attend online** and enclose \$160.
  - please apply \$30 to my Seven Thunders member dues.
- I request a scholarship of \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- I enclose a donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make checks payable to Seven Thunders**



**ROHATSU SESSHIN DECEMBER 2023**

The 2023 Seven Thunders Rohatsu Sesshin, will be conducted at the Stones and Clouds Zendo in Lake Oswego, OR. This is planned as a hybrid event from **December 1 - 6** with full in-zendo in-person attendance as well as online attendance.

Registration deadline is November 10. Registrations will be accepted on a first come basis. Additional applicants will be wait-listed in case of cancellations. As this sesshin is usually well subscribed, early registration and payment is encouraged.

retreat coordinator on or before November 17; half the fee will be refunded if received by November 24; no refund in the last week before the retreat. You will receive a confirmation from the registrar.

The hybrid event will take place from Friday, December 1, starting at 7 p.m. and end on Wednesday, December 6 at 10 a.m.

If for any reason you find the full fee a barrier to attending, please check the box on the registration form requesting a "scholarship" or contact the registrar. Affordability need not be a deterrent to attendance. Full or partial scholarships are almost always available. Donations for such scholarships are both appreciated and tax-deductible.

To register for the retreat, please email registrar at [tdmarcel@mac.com](mailto:tdmarcel@mac.com) to signal your intent to attend, and then complete the form below and send it with your fee to:

**Sesshin fees are as follows:**

**In-person hybrid retreat:**

member: \$260, non-member: \$290.

**Online hybrid retreat:**

member: \$160, non-member: \$190.

**Teresa Marcel**  
**1333 Skyland Drive**  
**Lake Oswego, OR 97034.**

Sesshin will be led by Leonard Marcel. Space is limited to a maximum of 14 full-time in-person and 10 online. If attending online, you will sit in your own space, access the retreat via Zoom on your own device and provide your own meals. Meals will be provided for those attending in person. Those attending online will be sent a link for the retreat as well as a PDF containing the retreat schedule, all chants, and cautions a few days before retreat begins.

In all cases, the extra \$30 of the non-member fee can be applied to your Seven Thunders membership, should you choose to do so, which then qualifies you for the member rate for all other Seven Thunders regular retreats and sesshin through the remainder of the calendar year. Should you need to cancel, all but \$30 will be refunded for cancellation requests received by the

Please make checks payable to **Seven Thunders**. Alternatively, you may pay the fee online at [seventhunders.org](http://seventhunders.org). Click on the 'Contribute' tab and follow the donation process. Please be sure to enter "Rohatsu sesshin fee" in the note section. Questions? Please contact Teresa Marcel at 503.636.9009 or [tdmarcel@mac.com](mailto:tdmarcel@mac.com) ⚡

**REGISTRATION FORM**  
**ROHATSU SESSHIN, DECEMBER 1 - 6, 2023**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Special needs \_\_\_\_\_

**In-person hybrid retreat:**

member: \$260,  non-member: \$290

**Online hybrid retreat:**

member: \$160,  non-member: \$190

Donation for Scholarships \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Request a Scholarship of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I commit to participating fully in the entire schedule of formal group contemplation.