Bear

Yaquina Bay

Rick Bartow

CASCADIAN Zen

bioregional writings on cascadia here and now

volume one

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still a hapless wild fox, looking for the magic words and powers to free himself from himself and, as such, it was he who was "wastefully fooling with racing boats and playing with monkeys" (S, 199). It was Daer's mind that was elsewhere, lost in abstractions and reliant on magical powers to liberate himself from his enabling causes and conditions.

This was not ascertained by Huizhong penetrating Daer's mind and assessing its contents in terms of their allegiance to Buddhist doctrine. To the contrary, that Daer understood the awakened mind to accord with a doctrinally obedient mind revealed to Huizhong the nature of Daer's mind. "A buddha ancestor and a *tripiṭaka* master are not the same. They are as far apart from each other as heaven and earth" (S, 199). Moreover, there is nothing magical or mystical about Huizhong's capacity to read someone's mind for "the body and mind of Huizhong are not to be understood by those who practice miraculous powers" (S, 202). Indeed, Huizhong's practice "is never about the intention to become a buddha… the activity is dropped away from a birdcage or a fishing net. It is not bound by a birdcage or a fishing net" (S, 202). Daer's very conception of meeting the mind of another is itself trapped in doctrinal ideology—it is held hostage by the Buddha as Dōgen says of such people elsewhere in the *Shōbōgenzō*.

Dōgen recalled the great Zhaozhou Congshen (Jp. Jōshū Jūshin) to elucidate further Daer's failing: "Huizhong was on top of Daer's nostrils, so he could not see Huizhong" (S, 202). Daer's could not sense Huizhong's mind because it was too close to him, so close that he could not see that it is everywhere, nothing hidden.

What is it to see another mind? Dōgen characterizes mind by claiming that "the entire earth is all mind" and "the entire dharma is all mind" (S, 199). Mind is things just as they are in their dynamic co-originating interdependence (*pratītyasamutpāda*). "*Here*, *everywhere*, *right now* is mountains, river, and earth" proclaims Dōgen in *Baika* [*Plum Blossoms*] (S, 585). There is no flight to magical thinking. "To study them is beyond the intellectual reach of the ordinary and sacred. Study mind that is ungraspable" (S, 204). Although it is beyond the duality of the sacred and the profane and infinitely deep and broad, it is *everywhere*, *right now* the causes and conditions of our shared being. "When you practice intimately and return to where you are, it will be clear that nothing at all has unchanging self" proclaims Dōgen in the *Genjō Kōan* (S, 30).

II. PLACE AND TIME

Huizhong's demand: "Tell me *where* I am *now*" has two elements: the *where* and the *now*. The former includes statements like "the entire earth is all mind." This cannot mean merely acquiring information about our place. It is a call to study our mind/the entire earth. But we do not study the whole simply as the whole, but as the interdependent causes and conditions whose operations comprise a bioregion. We study the earth/mind, studying bioregion by bioregion. And as we saw, by study, we mean not merely amassing intellectual capital, but ultimately *zetsugaku*, going beyond and cutting off study, going through study to go beyond study. Mind awakens to itself, which is nothing less than the mind awakening here and now to itself as Cascadia.

We are therefore not *on* the land but *of* the land. We are a living and singular expression of the land that comprises us as right here, again and again. How do we begin to find our place?

First, we have to get ourselves out of the way of place, to not reduce it to the objects that surround us and which manifest in accordance with our interests. It is not enough just to have big ears and learn facts, but to transform those facts so that it is no longer the studying ego in the classroom of the world but rather the self interdependently as the earth in all of its dynamic interdependence. The latter also includes a serious coming to terms with the economics and politics of empire, remembering that empire, not a single one of which was ever long lived, brutally supplanted the cultures and languages and lifeways that had learned how to live *here* for the long term. I write this, for example, on the unceded lands of the Duwamish, who have been here "from time immemorial," that is, for longer than they or anyone else can remember, and who knew full well that the long term was inseparable from a culture awakening to a sense of itself as *of* the land.

Maps often rely on such border thinking and, as such, are implicated in the colonial and imperial practices that divvied up the land as the loot of the colonizers and relegated its original inhabitants to second class subjects at best or to slavery, displacement, and genocide at worse. But can we not learn to think of maps as not recording political borders and domains of conquest, but rather as the layers and porous boundaries of bioregions? In my part of the world (politically what we map as the US Pacific Northwest), David McCloskey has worked for decades trying to map the bioregion of Cascadia with its many strata, each of which edges into the next as the edge relations of geological history, watersheds, Indigenous culture, climate, etc., as well as the boundaries that bring Cascadia itself into relief, despite its porosity. Strikingly this map is not centered on the large population centers (Seattle, Portland, Vancouver, etc.). It disregards state borders and the territories they enclose (the northwestern part of California, western Oregon, western Washington, northern Nevada and Utah and on to the Continental Divide and the Grand Tetons and Yellowstone, as well as the archipelago of southeastern Alaska) as well as the national border between the US and Canada (Cascadia includes much of what we colonially map as the western part of British Columbia).[2]

If deep ecology in its most streamlined sense, as Bill Devall and George Sessions have claimed, is the task of extending the interrelations that comprise a bioregion as discerned in the science of ecology to include non-scientific questions like what manners of habitation, politics, and economics are best suited to a particular bioregion[3], then another remarkable feature of McCloskey's map comes into view. Rather than impose political borders upon the land, the map inverts—we might even say, revolutionizes—our thinking. The many edges that dynamically and porously and even culturally give rise to the bioregion give rise to the bioregional map, which then becomes the edges out of which sustainable and ethical politics and economics can arise. The global crises of economic inequality and ecological catastrophe are not only intertwined at the root, but they demonstrate that our maps are ruinously upside down, a more urgent and consequential testimonial to what Hegel and others called *die verkehrte Welt* (the inverted world). This is to reject the pyramid in which a few powerful capitalists (the upper centile) dominate the rest of humanity, who in turn dominate all other life while dominating the earth as the base of all life. Throughout the Cascadian map site, McCloskey explicitly thematizes the profundity of the problem of boundaries. "Trying to find the edge of a world is a great quest. 'The whole world speaks' says the Oregon poet, William Stafford. But, how does it speak to us? And, how do boundaries articulate differences? Discerning boundaries which 'speak' to us within a border or edge is a profound adventure, bordering on that mysterious region where science and poetry and prayer converge."

Another clue to this sense of space is the Japanese philosopher Watsuji Tetsurō's profound retrieval of *fūdo*, a term comprised of two kanji, (*fū* 風), literally, wind, but connoting the inexpressible as well as customs and cultural practices, and land (*do* 土). The term has been variously translated as "climate" or "milieu," but it is at best misleading to translate it, although, like many other valuable philosophical loan words, it can with the requisite effort be clearly grasped. Fūdo allows Watsuji to retrieve a premodern (i.e., pre-scientific) sense of the Daoist and Mahāyāna *shizen* 自然, which had been in contemporary parlance demoted to a translation of the Western "nature" in the sense of the "natural" sciences. *Shizen* was the Japanese reading of the Chinese term so important for Daoist practice, *ziran*, so of its own, to be like itself, or spontaneity. It is attuned to the place specific self-occurring regimes of mutual emergence, much as we now understand within the dynamics of a bioregional ecology. This recalls a remarkable feature of Gary Snyder's Dharma name: Chōfū, to listen to this wind, or we might even say, to have the mind of this wind. Snyder learned from his Rinzai study in Japan *not to be afraid* of who he, we, and all beings, sentient and insentient, *are*.

Finally, we are no more *on* the land than we are *in* time. Huizhong's demand was to "tell me *where* I am *now*," not to speak of place in general. When we construe the land generally, it becomes a grand being *in* time, having its birth and death, its coming and going. It is rather the

land *right now* (*nikon*), as Dōgen insisted. Rather than the land being itself for the time being, that is, for the duration of itself, it is empty of intrinsic being. It is rather the manifestation of what Dōgen memorably called *uji*, being-time. We are not generally in Cascadia. We are intimately in Cascadia. Each singular moment of Cascadia is Cascadia anew, its differentiation from what it was and its ongoing coming forth anew. Zen names broadly the practice of entering into the intimate *uji* of beings as buddha ancestors, whose mind we appreciate by appreciating neither information nor a general sense of things, but rather this here, right now, a here whose web extends to all of the great earth and to the furthest extent of the universe, but which also is uniquely this moment, *this* here and now. All beings are its practice, each in their own way.

What then is it to speak *from* and *toward* this "where I am now"? It is here that we encounter the great Buddha ancestors, as we find ourselves to be a snowflake on a hot stove. Here poetry does not reduce to the prowess of its forms and the genius of formal innovations. Here and now the mind of the poet, of the spatial interdependence and temporal singularities of Cascadia, manifests anew, again and again.

1. *Shōbōgenzō* (*Treasury of the True Dharma Eye*) edited by Kazuaki Tanahashi (Boston and London: Shambhala, 2010). Henceforth S.

2. See: https://cascadia-institute.org. Throughout the site, McCloskey explicitly thematizes the profundity of the problem of boundaries. "Trying to find the edge of a world is a great quest. 'The whole world speaks' says the Oregon poet, William Stafford. But, how does it speak to us? And, how do boundaries articulate differences? Discerning boundaries which 'speak' to us within a border or edge is a profound adventure, bordering on that mysterious region where science and poetry and prayer converge."

3. See Bill Devall and George Sessions, *Deep Ecology: Living as if Nature Mattered* (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 2007), 65.

Mount Shuksan

Interview with Tetsuzen Jason M. Wirth on Gary Snyder, Dōgen, Jason Wirth & Our Ecological Crisis

August of 2017 I had the good fortune to be invited to a reading to celebrate a new book by Tetsuzen Jason Wirth. A professor of Philosophy at Seattle University and a Sōtō Zen Priest, Tetsuzen's new book is *Mountains, Rivers and the Great Earth: Reading Gary Snyder and Dōgen in an Age of Ecological Crisis*. Gary Snyder and Dale Pendell were the other readers. It was Snyder's first reading in Nevada City, California, in 40 years. Last Friday, November 3, 2017, I caught up with Jason in his Rainier Beach (Seattle) home to discuss the book, Snyder, and the fact that our current ecological crisis has a huge spiritual component. —*Paul E. Nelson*

Paul E. Nelson: *Mountains, Rivers, and the Great Earth: Reading Gary Snyder and Dōgen in an Age of Ecological Crisis*. What an amazing book, and what an important book it is at this time, after a summer when we saw ash from ancient forests landing in spider webs around our house in this neighborhood. This is jump time, right now. We're living in it.

Tetsuzen Jason M. Wirth: It is jump time.

Paul: May you live in interesting times.

Tetsuzen: That is supposedly a Chinese curse.

Paul: Yes, and we know what they mean by that. When did you first get interested in the work of Gary Snyder?

Tetsuzen: Oh, boy. It's hard to remember a time in which I was not interested in it. I would say as a high school student in San Francisco, Gary Snyder was already in the air. We already had a sense. But this vision went two directions that were very important. One being on the west coast of Turtle Island.

The ecological issues, as early as the 1970s and 1980s, were already fore-fronted. Then, too, this all had something to do with Zen. And Zen had something to do with revolution. And Zen had something to do with a different kind of a mind and a different way of living.

Paul: I'm trying to picture that time. I'm guessing you graduated in 1980, or?

Tetsuzen: Good guess. '81.

Paul: '81. What high school did you go to?

Tetsuzen: I went to St. Ignatius College Preparatory in San Francisco.

Paul: Jesuit, sounds like.

Tetsuzen: Jesuit, yes.

Paul: So you're a Jesuit, but you're a budding Zen master in high school?

Tetsuzen: Well, my father was a Catholic convert, so we got a strong impression about this being the way to live from early childhood. That

being said, I will always credit the Jesuits for dismantling my faith and putting me on a different path. I think it speaks well of them as teachers that the result of being under the tutelage of the Jesuits was not that I became more Catholic. I ceased, in a very radical way, to be Catholic at all. And I thank them for that.

Paul: Ceased, maybe, being big C Catholic, but certainly small c catholic.

Tetsuzen: Yes, mostly. Also, a sense that what's at stake in Catholicism, whether you're on that path or not, are the big questions, and these are philosophical questions, these are poetic questions. These are questions that ask us, even transformatively, to think about who we are and how we're going to live, and who we are to each other. Catholicism, at it's best, has made valuable contributions to those sorts of things.

In my text I even call out Pope Francis in an appreciate way. He's a powerful ally, I think, in these questions. At the same time, the Catholics don't have a monopoly on these. The bigger takeaway was living a more mindful, meaningful life. For that, I thank the Jesuits, and for that I'm grateful to be teaching among the Jesuits at Seattle University.

Paul: So, San Francisco 1981 was six years after Gary Snyder had won the Pulitzer Prize.

Tetsuzen: Yes, for *Turtle Island*.

Paul: And that was a moment of validation for the Beat movement. And yet, that validation wasn't necessary in a town like San Francisco. But it would seem to me that would only have amplified whatever Beat presence, celebrity, or influence might have been in that town at that time.

Tetsuzen: For sure, for sure. Again, I want to say, San Francisco, for me, in my memory, and who knows to what extent memory mixes with desire, but as I now remember it, maybe mythologize it in my own mind, we all had a sense that Snyder was a Zen teacher. That that was not something that was part of his Beat reception at a popular level. Those who really knew Snyder's work, of course, would be the first to agree with that. But in terms of the kind of superficial veneer of how it was received, he was a kind of hippie, yeah, Japan-influenced sort of ecologist. I think that just underestimates the importance of the Beat movement for radical ecological politics, and certainly underestimates Snyder.

Paul: You are a Zen priest, and Dōgen has come up in other contexts. For those who never heard of Dōgen, tell us about this Zen monk and poet who lived almost 800 years ago.

Tetsuzen: Dōgen is the best. He's absolutely the best. My relationship with Dōgen is complex, but I'll point to a few high points. One goes right back to Snyder himself. Snyder is good friends with Jack Shoemaker, who now runs Counterpoint Press. But at the time, he ran North Point Press out of San Francisco. Terrific press. It was eventually just swallowed up by FSG. Shoemaker got out of town, wisely. That was the end of that press and end of that experiment.

But one of the things that they did early on, 1985 I think, or thereabouts, and under Snyder's insistence, Shoemaker and North Point published *Moon in a Dewdrop*, one of the first really serious translations of Dōgen's works. That was done by Tanahashi who was at the San Francisco Zen Center, and a bunch of people at the Zen Center. That was seminal. That was when I first read Dōgen. That would have been in senior year in college.

That was powerful. Powerful experience. My own Zen training began in Rinzai. I trained in Tōfuku-ji monastery in Kyoto. My first teacher, Fukushima, was the dharma heir of Shibayama, who was the US replacement for D.T. Suzuki. It belonged to that really privileged—intersecting of course with the Beats—deep reception of Zen in the United States. Fukushima really had his finger on academics who were interested in Zen. He gave us all a very hard time, and said, "Well, you think you can figure this out from books. You can't."

That was a very deep teaching. But when he died, my next teacher, and it was somebody who was in the States so I wouldn't have to keep going back to Japan, was Sōtō. Sōtō ultimately comes out of Dōgen. Sōtō

is a translation of Cáodòng in Chinese. That was the monastery in which Dōgen had studied, where his great teacher was. Rújìng, or the Japanese called him Nyōjo. That was the great Chinese teacher of Dōgen.

Dōgen came back and wrote, in his 53 years, I think one of the masterpieces in the history of Buddhism, certainly, I think, one of the finest works in the history of Zen, and that's the *Shōbōgenzō, the Treasury of the True Dharma Eye*, excerpts of which appeared in *Moon in a Dewdrop*. It's a lifelong study. It's deep. It comes from a very, very deep sense of Zen. Since the 1980s, Dōgen has really emerged as one of the great minds in this Zen path.

Gary Snyder's own path was also Rinzai. He spent ten years in Japan studying Rinzai in Kyoto. He discovered Dōgen also late, through Carl Bielefeldt, initially, who is now at Stanford, who had done an early translation. He also found Dōgen electrifying.

Paul: I'm listening to you, and I'm thinking that the background is our current cultural situation. In an age with internet, space travel, instant worldwide communication, that someone who lived 800 years ago would be totally irrelevant to the life we're living in today. But I suspect that you contend the opposite is true.

Tetsuzen: The opposite is true. One of the things I do when I'm teaching the hard work of philosophy, or the hard work from the Buddhist tradition, is to ask, "Well, this work is an answer for struggles with what question?"

And what was Dōgen's great question? He never puts it explicitly, but what's the big background question if you were to try to say, "Well, what's the experience of reading Dōgen?" I would say it's something like this: "What happens to you when you take the Zen path? What is your mind on Zen? Zen does what to your very manner of consciousness?"

That's part of what makes the *Shōbōgenzō* difficult. There's also other technical difficulties. He alludes to traditions that might be very remote now. The hardest thing is, if you have no sympathy for Zen practice, if you've never tasted Zen practice, there's an element of it that will always be very elusive, no matter how much scholarship you do.

But what makes him so incredibly important right now? I think the prevailing mindset, who we think we are, what we imagine it is really to be a human being, has catapulted the entire earth into a global crisis. This has something directly to do with our sense of ourselves. I would say it's insufficient to respond to the ecological crisis only by giving us new ideas or new information to consider…

Paul: New technology.

Tetsuzen: New technology. I think Tillerson gets it as wrong as wrong can be when he says, "The ecological crisis is an engineering challenge and an engineering problem."

No. We have it because of how we think about engineering. I'm not going to blame engineering. I'm going to blame engineering mind.

Paul: Unless you want to apply the scientific approach to consciousness. So engineering of proper consciousness is what we're after.

Tetsuzen: I would say so. I think there is a real science of Zen. In the deep sense. This is not mysticism. This is not magic thought. Zen is not magic, it's not supernatural. As the tenth Ox-herding picture says, "No spells, no magic, just teach the withered trees to bloom." To bring back what our mind is. To awaken us to what our mind is. To awaken us from the nightmare of what we thought it was.

Paul: So, this is the thesis, again, stated thesis of the book. Can you go to the beginning? Do you remember the first idea you had that you could write a book looking at Snyder's epic poem, his use of Dōgen, and the environmental situation we find ourselves in right now?

Tetsuzen: Yeah. I come at that…that's the great sea, and there's all these different tributaries in my own thinking and my own experience that led me to this sea. One, just loving Snyder. Always being favorably inclined to taking him up in a serious way. I am convinced that Snyder really is on to something that we won't fully appreciate in our generation when it

becomes even clearer to us how catastrophic the prevailing mindset and set of assumptions about what it is to be who we are.

Paul: He said it would take 100 years.

Tetsuzen: He said it would take 100 years.

Paul: I think he says that in…doesn't he say that in *Mountains and Rivers*?

Tetsuzen: It's going to take a long time. And we don't have a long time. I don't sense that Snyder's optimistic that we'll figure it out in time. Or, at least before we could prevent some really catastrophic things. I hope that's not true, but that's just a hope, that's not a conviction or a belief, or certainly not how I would pose a hypothesis based on the prevailing evidence. Deeply entrenched is the mindset that we have to call into question.

But it's becoming clear in my own Zen practice, on my own philosophical path, my own literary path, my own sense of growing up on the west coast of Turtle Island, and then after studying and teaching on the other side of the island, coming back to the west is really a place that—as a place—I think has certain openings and certain powers that speak very loudly to me from these perspectives.

Paul: Your penetration of Gary Snyder is so thorough and so intense, and such a valuable gift to anyone interested in anything approaching this subject. The fact that Gary helped promote the book at a reading in Grass Valley…it was his first public appearance in his county in 40 years.

Tetsuzen: Yes, yes. I am deeply grateful.

Paul: That speaks of some respect that he has for the work that you've done.

Tetsuzen: He's been very kind. I've been immensely grateful. The book is, in some ways, to take very seriously the kind of Zen backbone of Snyder's entire project and its entire sensibility. To my knowledge that has not been done, not in a book-length study. A couple of good articles out there, but really a serious, deep engagement, and then raising it unapologetically against the background of the Earth crisis, that's Snyder's great contribution. I'm very grateful that he saw, at least in me, someone who appreciates what he's doing.

Paul: And is on to something.

Tetsuzen: Is on to something.

Paul: Especially the Dōgen connection.

Tetsuzen: For sure.

Paul: Yeah. The current situation we face, you say in the book, is a result of the poverty of our practice.

Tetsuzen: Yes.

Paul: That's very potent, to put it that way. Can you elaborate?

Tetsuzen: Yes. I think really the Zen perspective is immensely suspicious of the following kinds of intellectual moves: That we have some fixed human nature. We should figure out what it is, and then make our politics based on what we assume to be true about our human nature. That's always a scam.

Paul: What's an example of that?

Tetsuzen: I would say justifications for capitalism. Or, an exact example, capitalism, which will probably participate directly in the auto-extinction of our species. How is it ultimately justified? Well, human nature is self-interested. It has first and foremost, if we're honest, itself as its primary concern. This is what modern philosophy called the *conatus*, the

endeavor to preserve and enhance yourself. That we're self-interested, greedy agents. So, capitalism is a way to take our fallen, greedy human nature and help it enrich everyone. The rising tide that lifts all boats, and all these other scams. Invisible hand. All these ways in which we've abdicated our responsibility for who we are and what we are, and how we are in relationship to the earth.

Zen does not start with human nature. It starts with all of the interdependent relations that comprises who we are. In that way I think it lends itself very nicely to science. To all these kinds of studies that try to understand ourselves more systemically.

The earliest way of naming that in the Buddhist tradition was something like karma. I use that word very advisedly because it's easily misunderstood, and I don't want to come across at the last minute like I'm pulling out some superstitious mumbo-jumbo. But karma is just something like our prevailing background conditions that enable us to be the kinds of creatures that we are. Those are ecological conditions, kind of like a climate if you will. A climate makes possible certain things within that climate. If you shift the climate, you shift what's possible in that climate.

Paul: The climate is shifted through one's practice.

Tetsuzen: I think we can see our karma clearly from the ecological emergency, because our practice is capitalist, self-serving. We like getting rich, and so therefore we retroactively make up a story that justifies what we're already doing. It was not like, "Wow, we discovered that we're a bunch of greedy SOB's. What should we do? Oh, I know. The best way for us not to destroy ourselves is capitalism."

That didn't happen. It was the other way around. It was the fact of capitalism. And when we saw what we were doing, slavery, genocide, empire, exploitation of the workers, total ecological devastation, then we said, "Well…."

Paul: "That's human nature."

Tetsuzen: "That's human nature."

Paul: "It's just the way it is."

Tetsuzen: "It's what we are."

I think that's just bogus. Zen is really to practice deeply on who we can be by practicing deeply on our relationship to these background conditions, improving these background conditions, but also improving our awareness. Our openness. Our honesty.

Paul: It's very interesting that this would be a critique of right-wing thinking, or right-wing ethos, and yet the left-wing is really into an identity politics, which, just even saying that is a loaded thing. But basing things on identity. The impulse, I think, is a very good one, because people of color in this climate, women in this climate, gay and lesbian people in this climate, have certainly gotten the short end of the stick.

And yet, to talk about Pope Francis again, he says the most abused entity or orphan on this planet…I don't think he said the word orphan, but—

Tetsuzen: "The poorest of the poor."

Paul: "The poorest of the poor is the planet itself" which is a living thing.

Tetsuzen: Identity politics, first and foremost, on the one hand I understand and am empathetic to the political expediency that gives birth to that discourse. In limiting its ultimate value, I don't want to suggest it has no value. It might be the best that we can do under anguished circumstances, under a brutal history that we in no way seem willing to confront.

Things are only getting worse on these fronts. So, I get the battle. Am for that battle. I do think, however, that long term, it's not going to serve us well. If the background conditions that make this discourse politically expedient are themselves addressed, identity politics will also

keep us from seeing other aspects of our prevailing problems. That is a more karmic, systemic, Earth-oriented…by that I mean not that we're on the Earth, but we're the bioregional, inter-penetrating, co-evolving, co-enabling conditions of a place. And not just how we appear within a political ideology as we fight for our life. I want to say, people are fighting for their lives.

That political ideology, so long as it's in place, will give rise to these things. But I also dream of a less ideological relationship to each other. A less ideological sense of politics. A less mega-state underwritten by crazy ideology way of being with each other and with non-human animals as the places that we are.

Paul: #heterotrophsolidarity?

Tetsuzen: For sure.

Paul: Your book is part of your practice.

Tetsuzen: Absolutely.

Paul: The lack of academic jargon in the book was intentional.

Tetsuzen: Yes.

Paul: You're a guy who can use jargon with the best of them, and have used jargon with the best of them, but chose not to for this book.

Tetsuzen: Yes. I've never loved jargon. By that I mean, we say in a more complicated way what could be said more straightforwardly. One of the things I love about Gary Snyder is he's deep as all get out, but he believes in straight talk. If you can't say it straightforwardly, and you have to hide in mumbo-jumbo, go back to the drawing board.

Paul: I'm reminded of a bumper sticker that said, "Eschew obfuscation."

Tetsuzen: Yes. It's an old, medieval logical fallacy. Do not explain the obscure with the further obscure. You want to shed light on things. I've been trained of course in super-jargonese as one of the sub-languages of philosophy. One of your foreign languages that you learn is to speak philosophese, but it's of no service to students. It's of no service to the reading public. It's sometimes used to allow philosophers to speak in mantras rather than in clear ideas. Really, for me, philosophy always is about the "what test." The what test has two aspects. Exactly what are you talking about? Then, more importantly, so what? What are you saying, and why are you saying it? You have to be crystal clear about that. What's motivating this discourse? What motivates a lot of philosophy is, "Well, it's what we do. We're philosophers."

We just hide in the crowd of people already doing this, and if we're all doing it, it must be worth doing. But I don't know. I think philosophy is a life and death issue, and if we're not crystal clear about the problems that we're trying to solve, and we're hiding in mantras, or we're writing in a way that only exactly your ten peers working on this problem can read, I don't know.

I think writing is also the art of becoming…this is my mixed Zen metaphor. It's the art of becoming a piñata. You're out on a limb. You're all out there. You're not hiding where you stand. Of course, you are going to be attacked. I say, bring it on. Tear me apart.

Paul: And I'll spit out candy.

Tetsuzen: I'll spill the candy. It's full of candy. You walked right into my trap.

Paul: What is underlying that urge to hide behind jargon?

Tetsuzen: Looking at ourselves. Looking at who we are.

Paul: Vulnerability?

Rune Voyager

Robert's Creek

Ramon Kubicek

Tetsuzen: Vulnerability is power in Zen. Not just in Zen. I think even that's a deep, deep reading of the Christian traditions. The power of Jesus was vulnerability. Openness. Exposure.

Paul: Humility.

Tetsuzen: Humility. Not the Roman power of the sword. It's absolutely the case in Zen. What first appears to be strong, the rock, the mountain, that which shows its power by being able to maintain its place, stubborn, dominating, is in the end shown to be weak. What first appears to be weak, water, vulnerability, is shown to be strong. It washes down the mountains. It gives mountains part of their movement. It's also associated with compassion. Compassion is also the art of becoming vulnerable. Exposed.

But being exposed, that means also in this country exposing ourselves to some very ugly things. I would say one of the deepest fruits, I think, of Zen, and certainly I'll speak my own experience of Zen, is having a mind that becomes strong enough, or at least aware of its own untapped strengths, that it's able really to look at itself honestly.

To be honest about who we are, both as a species…our intense self-regard as a species has been catastrophic for many other species. We're probably in a sixth great extinction event. That's in part because of our species' ego, which Peter Singer once called speciesism.

The difficulty of being on Turtle Island is that we don't call it Turtle Island. We mark it with empire, and don't look at the genocide of Indigenous peoples, who, by the way, lived in a way that suddenly seems pretty good, given that we're about to destroy ourselves.

Our slavery, and other forms not as toxic but still plenty toxic forms of labor exploitation. Industrialization. Look straight on at who we are as a species, as a culture. For men to look at themselves fully and deeply, and to own what it has been to be a man for half of our own species. For white people to look at themselves. For human beings to look at themselves in terms of our relationship to all things non-human.

To look at ourselves in terms of how we relate to the Earth. It's not just there for us. It's not just raw materials at our disposal to use as we see

fit. It's that which gives us birth. Our primary stance should have been gratitude and respect. But that it was not means our primary stance then becomes deep forms of practice by which we also atone.

Paul: A quick sidebar. You made the connection between water and compassion. When we live in this part of the world, water, especially this time of year, November, water is a very real fact of living. Not to mention the fact that here in this neighborhood there's at least two of the city's three perennial creeks. Not to mention that Seattle's surrounded by water. Lake Washington is nearby, the bay is nearby. What do you think makes that connection more especially profound in Cascadia? What are the implications, I think, of that connection?

Tetsuzen: We are the water salmon people. I think that's simply true. Two reflections, one anecdotal and one philosophical. The anecdotal one, I remember going to the receiving of the canoe families when the Squaxin people near Olympia held it, and as the canoes all came in from up and down the Coast Salish historical territory, as far away as Alaska, as all the canoe families had been received, the Squaxin elder asked everyone, no matter what your religion is, to say it in terms of your own path if you need to, but we're now going to thank the water for our life. That sounds eccentric, and magical, and superstitious, but really it's the exact opposite. Not to be able to see that water gives us life, that our body is a majority of water to begin with, to be in Seattle, blessed with rain, and here we are cursing the rain because we're not living in Phoenix-like conditions, this is crazy. It's all speaking to how profoundly spatially alienated our mode of habitation has been in this part of the world.

We look at this land as if it's separate from us. We look at the climate as if it's something that should serve us and fit our preferences rather than thinking, "What are all the ways in which this climate, among its many fruits, is the fact of us? That we're able to be here. That it gives us life." If we imagine that we own it, and can't see it really as the other way around, we belong to the Earth. We are its gift and fruit, not that it's there for us as something that we can carve up and sell and use as we feel. This level of profound alienation is going to be the end of us as a species, I think. But here, especially in Ish River country, man oh man, it's the gift of this place, that as stupid as we are, as impoverished as our practice is, here just pounds at you. As dim as we have been, people begin to start to get it. There is a level of receptivity, however flawed, however wanting, that you can see has begun. It's begun.

Paul: The power of compassion in the water itself works on us.

Tetsuzen: It works on us. The philosophical reflection on water, what's interesting about water as a figure of compassion is that water, which is also aligned in the Mahāyāna tradition with emptiness, because it has no position of its own, because there is metaphorically no form of water… again, we're speaking about water as emptiness, not just the literal fact of water. But you can see easily in actual water, because it has no form of its own, it can take any form. We turn back to identity politics. When the form of who we are means that the form of who you are does not matter to us, you have to insist on the dignity of your form. And well you should, and I think you have no choice. It's that or perish. I get it. But compassion is, "You never should have been in that situation to begin with."

The mind itself is water. So the teaching in Mahāyāna really works like this. The journey inward, to prajñā, to wisdom, to clarity of the mind, to the deep, calm, bottom of the ocean of the mind, wisdom within expresses itself as compassion without, as it moves out. It is the mind being able to hold, and cherish, and appreciate all things human and non-human, that's what compassion is. Humanity sees itself as the only life form that truly matters. Catastrophically, it thinks that. But it's not even true that in thinking that, that all our species matters. Well, actually it turns out very little of it matters.

It's crazy. It's moving more and more in a suicidal direction. This, of course, is the paradox of the climate crisis. You'd say, "Well, selfishness should at least be good for selfish people. At least they'll get more stuff for themselves." But really what selfishness is doing is it's cutting ourselves off from our own species. It's cutting our species itself off from all the

climates that make it possible, that make it flourish. That make it flourish as it co-inhabits and co-shares its way of being with other ways of being. Selfishness serves no self.

Selfishness is self-destructive. But that's how deep this poison runs. Our selfishness is self-destructive, and what is the result? We have politics like the one we have right now, that doubles down on the selfishness, and therefore doubles down almost catastrophically, almost sublimely catastrophically, on the repercussions of what it is to be selfish.

Paul: Shoveling coal into the engine of a freight train careening out of control.

Tetsuzen: That's a crazy thing to do.

Paul: Yeah. You mentioned that Snyder and Dōgen are "critical interlocutors in the emergence of an Earth philosophy, poetics, ethics, science."

Tetsuzen: Yes.

Paul: I'd love to hear…I think we've already been hearing what's at the core of it, but I'd love to hear you elaborate on that phrase, "Earth philosophy, poetics, ethics, science."

Tetsuzen: Yeah. I'm really also very suspicious of the manner in which thinking has taken over a very unfortunate metaphor from capitalism, which is hyper-specialization. The philosophers only know philosophy, they don't know science or poetics. The poets…not the good ones, but the worst of poetry is you just imagine that poetry is just expressing your subjectivity, or.…

Paul: I've heard poets tell me, "I don't like to read other poetry because I don't want it to influence me."

Tetsuzen: Which is crazy. The better a poet you are, the more selfless you are. Only when you're selfless does your poetic voice come out. Only what is singular about your voice comes out precisely when you don't pursue it. When you get out of the way. When you read other poets. When you read science, when you read philosophy. When you read everything.

What I loved about meeting Gary Snyder was having the treat of going into his library and spending some time in it. Of course, he's so extraordinarily well read in everything. That's what it takes. In what way does science need poetry? That's a philosophical question.

But a philosophical question brings dignity back to philosophy when we can think deeply about the relationship between science and poetry. Poetry left only to the wiles of subjectivity is aligning itself with a sense of ourselves completely alienated from an Earth that science, for example, can help us understand. Help us understand how our body shares its own possibilities and its own paths with other life forms. 145 genes in every human being are totally non-human. Just alone our genetic makeup already is not just human. We're not simply human. We're not free-floating subjects out of which magically emerges some poetic creation. We're channeling deeply the earth, what it is to be here now.

I think really Zen without science, without poetry, without philosophy, is impoverished. But so is philosophy that simply philosophizes without rooting itself in science, without thinking deeply about how, finally, will we sing these things? How, finally, will we find voice that helps us more clearly be who we are, and do that by singing where we are?

Paul: When I see that quote, and I when I hear you talk about the intersection of Earth, philosophy, poetics, ethics, science, very much obviously Snyder. That's part of what draws you to him. And then the discussion of form that's in the book, and I'll just read from page 45.

> Wassily Kandinsky: "Form is always temporal, i.e. relative, for it is nothing more than the means necessary today through which the present revelation makes itself heard. Form is the outer expression of the inner content. We should never make a god out of form. We should struggle for form only as long as it serves as a means of expression for the inner sound. Therefore, we should not look for salvation in one form only."

That's one quote. What I'm trying to get to is a notion of this combination that…in other words, a poetics that's also a cosmology. The other quote on the next page is, "To see without eyes is to see freely. Not in the sense of granting one's own ego free license to do whatever it wants, but rather to participate in the sovereignty of nature's own imagination. That is, in the freedom at the heart of the coming to be of form."

So, to discover the form that's already inherent, and to get in sync with that. Gary's talked about the wilderness of the mind. So, he's after that. To me, it's a combination of cosmology and poetics is what you're articulating.

Tetsuzen: Absolutely. The Kandinsky quotes, that's from his book, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* and from early articles in the *Blue Rider Almanac*. As Kandinsky is trying to make a strong pitch for what's happening to art in the very early parts of the 20th century, he's not saying, "All other forms of art were wrong. This finally is the arrival of the true form." That art has no form, if by that you mean art is only the forms of art that it's been. Art is all the forms of art that it has been, and all the forms of art to come. Now, what is art if it's not simply its form? What is this animating artistic impulse that gives rise to all the forms of art that trace all the way back to our shamanic, pre-literate periods? Art is really the oldest of human artifacts. It belonged deeply to who we've always been before we left any other relics of cities, or relics of politics.

What is this spirit? The book itself says the ecological crisis is, for want of a better word, a spiritual crisis. It's not just saying, "Shall we replace the form of who we have been with a new form, a new corrected form?"

"Spirit" is a dicey word, because it says all the wrong things in so many ways. It sounds like you're trying to get away from the world. It is rather a way of trying, in a more Western idiom, to zero in on something that's at the absolute heart of Mahāyāna, which is emptiness. "Ah, Śāriputra, have you not heard? Form is emptiness. Emptiness is form."

Now, Kandinsky, who to my knowledge had no deep reading of the Buddhist traditions, although he was a very cosmopolitan, world culture-oriented person.… This was a period in which they were electrified by African art, and I'm sure they just misunderstood it in so many ways, and appropriated it in infelicitous ways. But still, you can see in their openness to it, this form that so thoroughly challenged European forms, that something besides European form or African form was opening. There was a solidarity with art as showing us the living emptiness of forms. I think that's really key. So how, then, do you see emptiness? Well, you don't see a form of emptiness. The form of emptiness would be nihilism, and that's to add salt to an open wound, that's going in the wrong direction. It is rather to receive forms differently. To see forms not merely as ends in themselves, but as part of life processes.

We can see that already in poetry. Poetry is both the history of poetry, the works that have come into form, and actively and creatively poeticizing. Poetry can be exhausted by no poem and the history of poetry can never have a final period. The history of art can never have a final period. Then what is art? It belongs to art never to be able to answer that question. That is its life.

Paul: Denise Levertov lived the last ten years of her life not far from this present scene. Said, "form is never more than a revelation of content."

Tetsuzen: That's exactly right.

Paul: I think that's accurate.

Tetsuzen: We call that inspiration. We call that creation.

Paul: Snyder's interest in bioregionalism goes back to the 1960s or 1970s. A quote on page 32 says, "When the bioregion is not jeopardized by the manner in which we are part of it, we are our bioregion." Is bioregionalism a thing that was appropriate for the 1980s, and out of date now? Or is it valid for the time in which we live?

Tetsuzen: It's just a word. That being said, I think it's a pretty good word. I think it does a number of things that are very valuable. One, it gets us away from an abstract sense of place. You speak about the problem

of place admittedly in very abstract terms. But in so doing, you say that place is never just generically place. It is singularly, specifically, and also historically singularly places.

When Joanna Macey proposed a council of all beings, Snyder very, very thoughtfully responded that what we need is a village council of all beings.

As in, thinking about a place or Earth simply by saying, "Okay, well, let us think the Earth as Earth," misses the thought of the Earth. The Earth is desert and rainforest. The Earth is 17th century Earth. The Earth is ten billion years ago Earth. The time and place matter, and they conspire together to give us the temporal, spatial uniqueness of the places that give us a sense of ourselves as place. I think that's really cool. In regionalism, you get that. We want to think about place regionally, but the bio, I think you're also getting something deliciously temporal. This place is not another place, nor is it settling into the form of itself. It's alive. It's temporally dynamic.

I'm struck here, when you go to the eastern side of the Cascades, and you come across, right off of I-90, near the Columbia River, the remains of an ancient forest. This fossil forest, including fossilized ginkgos and massive trees. You look at it now and it's just these barren hills in which nary a tree will grow. The Columbia River comes carving through this, this water that's contrasting an otherwise really quite grassy, Palouse-oriented land. This was once a massive forest. Mountains come and go. To think not just regionality as a way in which we think of place in general, but rather to think, "What is this place?"

What is it to be on Earth, here in Ish River country, now? What is practice now? In a way, Dōgen appears not as who he truly is, but simply in a way in which he's only accessible now, which is, you read Dōgen when the imminent collapse of our species is clearly imaginable. Now, here, from what we can see around us, our places are in imminent danger. It can now be what it is. Things are not what they are in a vacuum. There's no such thing as "x" in general. X is always temporally and spatially formed, and it's moving. I'll put it one last way. The Zen tradition is extremely suspicious of our over-reliance on abstraction. You have to do that as a matter of convention. Otherwise we can't get business done, we can't have a conversation. But you're not an abstract sense of yourself. We're not in an abstract place. We're in a living place. Now, here, who are we?

Paul: When you find your place where you are, practice occurs.

Tetsuzen: Practice is being your place. It is being your place. If you think Zen practice is not worrying about President Trump, if you think that Zen practice is just relaxing; it's a form of—

Paul: Navel gazing.

Tetsuzen: Navel gazing. Then Pope Benedict was right. It's just autoeroticism. But that's an unfair critique of Zen, because at its best, it's moving in the exact opposite direction.

Not who are we in general. Here, now, today, this minute. Who are we? And that is a spatially and temporally specific question. What are the conditions that give rise to who we are? What are its temporal openings? Its temporal threats? Its opportunities and crises? That's who we are. In that way, the Zen insistence upon mindfulness is key.

If you could just figure out who we were in general, and that's what we were, if we're just generally this or that, you would not have to be mindful. Mindful means, "Pay attention. Don't simply go for the trans-temporal, trans-spatial answer."

Now, here, what is it to be in Seattle? As we began our interview, with three to four weeks of unbreathable air in Seattle, with ash coming in from almost every direction, depending on which way the wind was blowing. With enough fires that wind could blow anywhere, from any direction, and it would bring in ash. There was so much fire. Fires now, on average, burn twice as much as they did in the 1980s in this region.

Paul: The great strategy of bioregionalism was that we reinhabit where we are. How does that look to you in this neighborhood, for example?

And what are the rituals of reinhabitation? Paint us a picture of what this really looks like, when we reinhabit the place?

Tetsuzen: The word "reinhabitation" gets some people into trouble. So I'll just say one caveat about it first. Indigenous people sometimes hear that, and they go, "Oh, man, it's the second round of domination." If the word suggests that, we need other words to make sure that that is not what we're saying. It's not a second regime of habitation. As a matter of fact, reinhabitation first and foremost begins with a thorough, honest investigation of the historical record and present reality of habitation. Whose lives were displaced? Upon whose backs was this built? Human and non-human? What were the ecosystems in play that are now scarcely imaginable? This summer when I was working on a different project I re-read Muir's *Thousand Mile Walk to the Gulf*. When he gets to Florida, his description of Florida reminds me of no place I've ever seen in Florida. He claims it was true of the whole state, just about. It is unimaginable, the world that Muir walked in.

Inhabitation is also a deep imagination of what this place was. That includes its peoples, and by peoples I mean human and non-human. It's a deep reckoning with ourselves and our culture. That being said, it's also the following. Part of habitation is, you're not in it for the long haul. That where you live is just the raw resources that drew you here. You use them up, and if they run out, if you sully the place, if you kill off all the things that make it possible to sustain life, you move on. It's a form of living in which space is for us to use and for us therefore, if we so desire, to use up.

Paul: Disposable.

Tetsuzen: Disposable space. It's because, as we say, this was said of both land and slaves in this culture, "It is at our disposal." Human beings can be used at our disposal. That's why it was in the constitution of Carolina, when John Locke, the great philosopher, that it was not possible to murder a slave. Because a slave belonging to you could be used at your disposal. Reinhabitation: the land is not at our disposal. Neither are peoples, nor are enabling conditions. Imagine you're going to be here for 1,000 years. Even if you're here for one day. Imagine you're going to be here for 1,000 years and begin to undo the practices of disposability.

Paul: That's a tough sell on AirBnB. Come here for 1,000 years.

Tetsuzen: Yes. But even come for a day. We live at the Earth's pleasure. That's our upside down world. The Earth is here, and we'll use it at our pleasure.

Paul: When I think of reinhabitation, I am heartened by the fact that the one farm in the city of Seattle is Rainier Beach.

Tetsuzen: Right down here.

Paul: Right down by Pritchard Island.

Tetsuzen: And in one of the poorest parts of the city. And we're going to say, "Okay, those who experience city living really as a form of nature deprivation, we'll start here. We're going to teach you to work the land." It's magnificent, what they're doing down there. Rainier Beach is one of the best places to live on the West Coast of Turtle Island, in my opinion.

Paul: What are some of the other examples of what reinhabitation might look like in practice, in daily practice?

Tetsuzen: In this neighborhood, struggling with gentrification. Deeply, deeply understanding how the ecology of this neighborhood is interrelated with the ecology of the city, with the ecology of the region.

Paul: Daylighting Mapes Creek, for example.

Tetsuzen: Daylighting Mapes Creek is a great thing. But also, I would say, struggling with gentrification. Every time some white folks like us say,

"Rainier Beach is a great place to live, because there's so much diversity," we all pour in here, and next thing you know it's the next white neighborhood of Seattle. How are we going to do this in an economy that rewards money and profit? How are we going to make this a neighborhood in which we really hold onto what NPR reported some years ago, that this zip code, 98118, was the most diverse zip code in the United States? In a city that people assume is largely white, because they spend all their time in the north. Really, the real Seattle is one of the experiments in which what it meant to be here will include all our species. The economic range of our species. But also consider all that is here. People. There's lots of raccoons in this neighborhood. What do we do with raccoons? How are we going to live with raccoons? What treaty shall we make with raccoons? And the crows?

Paul: The treaty that you made in your backyard is you feed them, right? What did I remember from that night we had dinner back there?

Tetsuzen: They have their route.

Paul: And you want to respect that?

Tetsuzen: I'll struggle with it. I think the answers aren't clear. But we have to think deeply. Of course, what's thriving in Seattle? It's all the recycler species. Crows, raccoons, and all these things that live off the fat of a disposable society, and they have their place. But the creatures that thrive on the disposability culture are the ones that are ascendent. What else was lost? What else should we be worried about?

Paul: The Pacific Marten.

Tetsuzen: For example. Good luck seeing one of those. Good luck being one of the people who will be able to say that they saw one in your lifetime.

Paul: I'm kidding, I'm kidding, and I've been to the Olympics 30, 35 times. And backpacking many of those times. In the book *Mountains and Rivers*, Snyder writes about ghost bison, ghost bears, ghost big horn, et cetera. He concludes with, "Then the white man will be gone." And he's a white man speaking in this way.

Tetsuzen: Absolutely.

Paul: He's not speaking of skin, necessarily, but he's speaking of a way of being on this planet. He's speaking of a cultural whiteness. Can you elaborate on that?

Tetsuzen: I think that's an extremely powerful passage in Snyder. I think it resonates so deeply with other thinkers, also. On the one hand, he's evoking the Ghost Dance. As people probably know, the Ghost Dance was received by Wovoka, who thought if this dance could be done, all the Indigenous people who had died and been destroyed would come back. The ghost dance led to the horrible tragedy at Wounded Knee. We thought they had exterminated it. A new work just came out that said, "No, it still survives." So deep was this hope.

But Snyder reads this extraordinary hope among Indigenous peoples. The white man would go away, and that the dead would come back. He reads the dead as all Indigenous peoples, so that includes all the species that have gone extinct in this country. It includes all the wounded and vanishing species in this country, which is a lot of them. All the wounded and vanishing ecosystems that, were we to do this dance, were we to sing this poetry that brings together philosophy, and science, and ethics, and deep practice.… Were we to do this dance, and were all of us to do this dance, the dead would come back, as in, a very different world would again show itself. Because what would go away.… And again, on the one hand just literally taking it from the vision that Wovoka had, the white man would go away.

The "white man" has nothing to do with something that is true intrinsically about Caucasian pigment. The fact of whiteness as a scientific fact tells you almost nothing about a person. It's like saying what does the fact that you're tall tell you about a person? Or your shoe size? The fact of whiteness is very different from the idea of whiteness.

Charles Mills, who I don't discuss in the book, but I could well have if I wanted to write a very long book, spoke about this as the racial contract. What shall matter is not the fact of whiteness, but the idea of whiteness. The idea of whiteness shall now designate those who matter as people and shall benefit all those who meet its criterion. And those who don't matter as people, those who don't meet this criterion, are the disposable, the enslavable, the genocideable, the exploitable. This is the immense privilege that all white people inherit, even if you are a counter-signatory. Even if you oppose it, you still benefit from it. The white, capitalist, disproportionately male. The racial contract intertwines with gender contracts, with poverty contracts, with all these ways in which we let the "white man" mean not the *fact* of white men, but the *ideology of power.*

Paul: Control and domination.

Tetsuzen: Control and domination of the Earth, as a disproportion, rewards almost none of us. Including even in the final analysis, not all that many white men. Although they still are beneficiaries to some extent. But with the Ghost Dance, this crazy, suicidal ideology dissipates in an awakening.

We wake up to each other. And not just other humans, but all the life forms with whom we share our being. The Earth itself, in its bioregional, temporal, spatial singularities. All this emerges. The dead come back. I think it's an incredibly compelling vision.

I think that Snyder's masterpiece is also a carefully designed technology of awakening. It is to kill the white man as an ideology of ultimately suicidal, but in the interim, deeply genocidal and species-cidal, if I can make that word up.

This habitation scheme upon which the global world order has been built, Snyder calls the New World Disorder. The New World Disorder comes to an end. Now that's a revolution. The revolution has to happen, not on television, not just in marching, not just through legislation. It has to be, first and foremost, a revolution of the mind. That's hence why I want to insist, that the book insists, that there is, for want of a better word, an unavoidable spiritual quality to the climate emergency.

I don't know what else to call it, and I'm happy to use other words. There has to be some awakening transformation about who we are, and we can mark that as the awakening of the Ghost Dance, after which the white man is dead. Thank God. Everyone should celebrate that. Including those who in fact happen to be white, and male, and those who are the beneficiaries, even in refusing it. They still have to say, "Well, okay, that means I'm going to have to sing that Ghost Dance twice as much as everyone else."

That's okay. That's good Zen.

Paul: I'm really grateful for your time.

Tetsuzen: Thank you Paul, it was really a great gratitude to know you, to have you as a friend, and to learn so much from you in all the extraordinary work that you do and have been doing for years. Thank you so much. What a privilege!

empty bowl

basket two

Kwakiutl

Kwakkwaka'wakw'

West Coast – Nuu-chah-nulth

Ish River –

Salish

Sea

Lillooet

Lillooet

Thompson

Nicola – Kamloops – Thompson Plateau

Squamish

xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam)

Vancouver

Fraser

Similkameen – Sinlahekin

Skagit

Mtn. Valleys – Methow – Wenatchee

Empty Bowl Press

Olympic

Snohomish

Skykomish

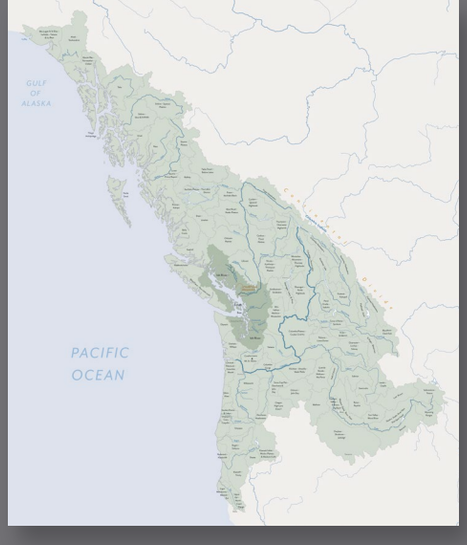
Seattle

Snoqualmie

Ish River

Chehalis – Willapa

Yakama



What the Water Knows, for Sam Hamill

Of Cascadia

I came here nearly forty years ago,
broke and half broken, having chosen
the mud, the dirt road, alder pollen and
a hundred avenues of gray across the sky
to be my teachers and my muses.
I chose a temple made of words and made a vow.

I scratched a life in hardpan. If I cried
for mercy or cried out in delight,
it was because I was a man choosing
carefully his way and his words, growing
as slowly as the trunks of cedars
in the sunlit garden.

Let the ferns and the moss remember
all that I have lost or loved, for I carry
no regrets, no ambition to live it
all again. I can't make it better
than it's been or will be again
as the seasons turn and an old man's heart

turns nostalgic as he drinks alone.
I have lived in Cascadia, no paradise
nor any hell, but both at once and made,
as Elytis said, of the same material.
A poor poet, I studied war and love.
But Cascadia is what I'm *of*.

True Peace

Half broken on that smoky night,
hunched over sake in a serviceman's dive
somewhere in Naha, Okinawa,
nearly fifty years ago,

I read of the Saigon Buddhist monks
who stopped the traffic on a downtown thoroughfare
so their master, Thích Quảng Đức, could take up
the lotus posture in the middle of the street.
And they baptized him there with gas
and kerosene, and he struck a match
and burst into flame.

That was June, nineteen-sixty-three,
and I was twenty, a U.S. Marine.

The master did not move, did not squirm,
he did not scream
in pain as his body was consumed.

Neither child nor yet a man,
I wondered to my Okinawan friend,
what can it possibly mean
to make such a sacrifice, to give one's life
with such horror, but with dignity and conviction.
How can any man endure such pain
and never cry and never blink.

And my friend said simply, "Thích Quảng Đức
had achieved true peace."

And I knew that night true peace
for me would never come.
Not for me, Nirvana. This suffering world
is mine, mine to suffer in its grief.

Half a century later, I think
of Bồ tát Thích Quảng Đức,
revered as a bodhisattva now—his lifetime
building temples, teaching peace,
and of his death and the statement that it made.

Like Shelley's, his heart refused to burn,
even when they burned his ashes once again
in the crematorium—his generous heart
turned magically to stone.

What is true peace, I cannot know.
A hundred wars have come and gone
as I've grown old. I bear their burdens in my bones.
Mine's the heart that burns
today, mine the thirst, the hunger in the soul.

Old master, old teacher,
what is it that I've learned?

CASCADIAN Zen

Cascadian Zen: Bioregional Writings on Cascadia Here and Now, Volume I

Cascadian Zen was typeset in Dante and Adobe Caslon Pro with titling in Albertsthal Typewriter and Franklin Gothic, Han characters in Adobe Kaiti, and ornaments in Mrs Eaves. The book was printed on 80# book paper and perfectbound into soft covers, including a tipped-in fold-out map. A portion of the run was casebound in cloth over boards with foil stamping and tipped-on image.

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