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“Zen without bells and whistles.”



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Flora Courtois - A Talk at Koko An, 1977

Many years ago, I had what may have been my first experience with Zen practice in this room. On returning to Los Angeles, I then found a small group very small, maybe five or six people—who were beginning to practice together with a monk named Maezumi Sensei. That was the beginning of the Zen Center of Los Angeles. So I'm most grateful to Aitken Roshi and Anne Aitken for inviting me here to talk to you this evening.

At the heart of our Zen practice there is a kind of radically intimate attention. This absolutely firsthand quality of experience characterizes the beginning of our lives and the end. No "other" mediates between us and the intimate aloneness of birth. No memories, no thoughts, no plans invade this pure innerness with their shadowing images. So too, in the spare simplicity of our death.

Here attention is reality and reality attention.

But in the days and years of our living somehow we lose touch with this clarity and think to possess ourselves in images. In so doing, we fall into a bad case of mistaken identity. We think our living instead of living our thinking. In the language of koan study, we "miss the point" of life and so live at second, third and fourth hand.

Yet the opportunity to be restored to our original, unborn, divine condition is always immediately at hand. There are no real or absolute contingencies.

Every moment, lived in absorbed attention is simultaneously a beginning and an end, at once a birth and death. In such attention, we are radically open to the unexpected, to letting life live us. Any event, however small or seemingly trivial, properly attended, opens the doors to infinity.

In Basho's famous haiku, the plopping sound of the frog jumping into the clear, still pond rises whole, perfect and infinitely mysterious. No time here for meaning to be added or we'll miss the next plop as it comes.

There's a bit of Faust in us all—we feel that the more we learn about something, the closer we are to it. Not so. Any event, fully attended, uproots all our knowing at the source and carries inexhaustible surprises.

In the modern language of instrument design, by quieting all the interfering noise in our system, we then maximize the information in the messages we pick up and transmit.

Yasutani Roshi said that Shikantaza is like standing in a clearing in a deep forest, knowing danger is about to strike but not knowing from what direction. If we focus too much ahead, we will miss it if it comes from below, and so on. Total uncluttered readiness for the unexpected is what we need. If we think we've got it at one moment, we may lose it the next. If we distractedly put a bumper sticker on our car announcing we've "found it," we may just lose it in doing so.

A few years ago, a young couple moved into an apartment across from ZCIA. The girl, Mary, had been in a mental hospital, and several people were concerned because they thought she was getting in trouble again. They had urged her to try Yoga and Zen and other ways to no avail. so I was asked to talk to her. Making no promises, I went across the street to find Mary all crumpled up like a bird with a broken wing, sitting at the end of a sofa in a dark apartment. Sitting down and taking her hand, I said, "Mary, do you want to tell me where you are right now?"



Total uncluttered readiness for the unexpected is what we need.

She said, "Yes." She then told me about a bad nightmare she had had which she couldn't forget, where she seemed to be going down a long passageway, dark and frightening, to a room where somebody pulled her in and closed the door and where she found herself with several threatening figures and no way out.

"All right," I said, "Now, would you like to know where I am right now?"

She said, "Yes."

So I said, "Well, we're just going to listen to any sound that comes along—absolutely nothing else." So we sat for quite a while, holding hands, listening very quietly. Then I said, "Now, do you hear a car go by, a bird chirp, a little boy crying, a plane overhead? Do you see that if we keep remembering the car, we won't hear the bird? If we try to plan what's coming next, we won't hear it. If we even use the word 'listening,' or think, 'I am listening,' we will miss it. Nothing is ever repeated or predictable or the same, but all incredibly fresh if we listen this way. This is listening the way a cat listens or sort of listening with the back of your mind, just letting it do its thing without any hesitation or interference. You can do that, can't you."

Mary said, "Yes."

I said, "Okay, then as long as you know you can, you're home safe, right where you've always been and always will be. You really don't have to practice Yoga, or Zen, or anything else right now. So let's go to dinner, shall we?"

So Mary put on her coat and we went out to a nearby restaurant, where she talked very freely about her experiences in the mental hospital: how the doctors needed sick people around so they could be doctors, and how the sick people needed a hospital and doctors so they could be sick people.

I hear from Mary every once in a while, or I hear about her—I heard about her just a week ago. She's getting along very well; she has a job, no more problems—I mean, no more serious ones.

Obviously, just remembering how to listen is not zazen. The point is that all phenomena, all dharmas, whether seen or heard or felt or whatever, and whether pleasurable or painful, it matters not—all, without exception, open us to reality if we give ourselves to them. The artist loses himself in his painting or his music. "The dance," wrote William Butler Yeats, "is the dance." But Zen says the whole universe is the art, and we are the artists.

"God," wrote Meister Eckhart, "has left a little point where the soul turns back upon itself and finds itself." At another time he described God's little point this way: "The eye by which I see God is the same eye by which God sees me. My eye and God's eye are one and the same." "To have satori," wrote D.T. Suzuki, "is to stand at Meister Eckhart's little point, where we may see in two directions at once—God's way and creature's way."

"Attention, attention, attention," wrote Zen Master Zkkyu many centuries ago, when asked to write down the highest wisdom. But what does "attention" mean, asked his questioner. Master Zkkyu replied, "Attention means attention."

Surely Meister Eckhart's eye, which is simultaneously God's eye, is the inner eye of imminent-transcendent attention. Quieting the busy surface of our minds, we free our inner eye to find that little point which penetrates right to the inner heart of things. ***No need to look for vast, cosmic fireworks, or for a great big impressive way to enlightenment if we do not enlighten each moment with attention.***

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enlighten each moment with attention.

True attention is rare and totally sacrificial. It demands we throw away everything we have been or hope to be to face each moment naked of identity, open to whatever comes and bereft of human guidance.

Nor is the potential for pain to be underestimated. Now we come face to face with the radical fact that there is nothing, nothing however dear, that cannot be taken from us from one moment to the next, nothing, however sinister or horrifying, from which we will be permitted to recoil or separate ourselves. All the dreadful, mute suffering from which inattention shielded us will now be seen and heard.

Another name for such full attention is love. In Christian terms, surely in God's presence the appropriate behavior is to be quiet and listen. And the essence of prayer is attention. To pray is to go directly to God, without intermediary, and *to say nothing*.

I'd like to inject just a few words about the popular use of the word "inner" and also the word "whole." There's been a great deal said in the last ten years about personal growth and about exploring one's "inner" self. Participants at countless conferences have been encouraged to get in touch with blocked feelings, tensions, untapped potential, dreams, etc. Other conferences are held on the "whole person," "holistic medicine," in which psychology plus ESP plus body awareness, and so on, are all added together as if to put Humpty Dumpty together again.

There's no contradiction with Zen practice in all this, provided we realize that the phenomena of the so-called "inner" person—emotions, feelings, and so on—are just as much phenomena or dharmas as the so-called external ones of chasing money or building businesses. They are all equally phenomena, and all equally "outer" in the sense that Zen practice is *inner to them all*.

Nor do we necessarily become "whole" by attending conferences, however useful, where we learn more and more about how to add this to that and that to this.

To be absorbed in emptiness is *not to know it all*. In the radical unknowing of pure attention, we sacrifice ourselves and discover our original wholeness.

Even should we sacrifice our very lives for the good of all mankind and still cling to the self-images which distract our attention, we would be separated from the true reality of our dying.

I believe the word "radical" is appropriate to Zen practice. For the ultimate revolutionary act is not giving up our lives literally, but the direct, immediate seeing, which is our own true nature. Such radical seeing is the heart of Buddhism and Zen practice.

So let us keep our "beginner's mind." Only so we'll we continually discover "the dearest freshest deep-down things."

Thank you. 🌸

Comments by Erik Hansen

This talk was given by Flora Courtois at Koko An, on October 26, 1977. Flora was born on November 26, 1916 and she died February 14, 2000 in Santa Barbara, California. Flora attended the University of Michigan and graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Occidental College. She received a graduate degree in Psychology from USC. Flora was one of the founding members of Zen Center Los Angeles, and founded the Foundation for Integral



Studies in Washington D.C. In recent years, two mediation groups met weekly in her home in Santa Barbara.

Outside the circle of her friends, family and students, Flora is probably best known as the author of *An Experience of Enlightenment*. This lucid and inspiring little book describes her intense and solitary search as a young woman in 1930's Michigan for the true nature of reality. Beginning when she was seventeen, Flora's questioning led her away from books, philosophy and religion, and into a direct exploration of everyday experience, the very nature of perception and sensation themselves. Her search came to consume her entire being until, one day, sitting quietly in her room, staring absently at a pale green desk "in a moment too short to measure, the universe changed on its axis and my search was over." She had never heard of Zen or satori, but Flora was enlightened.

Flora wished to be remembered for her sense of humor. She will also be remembered for her clarity and eloquence, her unique gift for speaking personally and precisely about spiritual practice—in evidence here. 🌸

Postscript: I received an email from Dona Harber in Santa Barbara, who knew and meditated with Flora. Flora had expressed that the highlight of her professional life had been experiments she had participated in, involving biofeedback and mediation. This was work she did with Ed Wertz in his laboratory in the early 1970's.

The flute without holes is the most difficult to blow.

Stupidly steadfast, steadfastly stupid.

*I meet him, but know not who he is;
I converse with him,
but do not know his name.*

The Shout and the Fish

BY ED WORTZ

Often, breaking the wonderful deep silence and stillness of one of our meditation sessions, comes a sudden and startling event: a loud and forceful shout of HA!!!! from me, or the sharp, piercing "crak" as the moktok* or fish is struck by a wooden mallet. These types of punctuation have a long history in the practice of Zen. These sudden sounds function, of course, to arouse the meditators; to facilitate their attention, concentration, and alertness. But often more happens than simply an increase in arousal.

Frequently there is a major shift of consciousness that facilitates both the practice of meditation and the intuition of the spiritual aspects of Buddhist practice. I have asked many of those who practice with me to provide a description of their responses. Julian Werts, Robin Mitchell, and Amy Sedivy have kindly allowed me to share their response with you.

Julian Werts:

Both the Shout and the Fish have very similar effects for me. Each experience of the shout or fish is slightly different but two things happen every time. One is the immediate evaporation of any thought, leaving a clean



slate with a warm stillness. The second is instantaneous clearance of my nasal passages.

Besides these two sensations I have other feelings that I sometimes experience as well. When the fish or shout come at a time when my mind is very still and there are not thoughts or scenarios, the sudden noise goes right through me and doesn't faze me at all. I continue along without much change except for a heightened sense of stillness and peacefulness (I feel good, very comfortable), and the clearing of my nasal passages. When the noise comes at a time when my mind is busy with a thought or scenario, I'll usually jump and be very startled for a second, and then will immediately experience no thoughts, just quiet stillness and, of course, a very open nasal passage. I find the fish to be a great help in bringing my mind back to where it needs to be. I also find that the first few moments after the fish or shout, when my mind is perfectly clear, are some of the nicest moments of the meditation. I really get the feeling of having no thoughts at all, not even anticipating a thought, and that my focus and attention are at peak levels all with effortless ease. I find the fish and the shout to be a very nice part of the meditation, especially when I am caught in scenarios.

Robin Mitchell:

The first time I experienced the shout, I had no idea what was going on. When Ed shouted, I didn't know if this was part of the meditation or if something was wrong with Ed. No one else seemed concerned, but I was, and I even felt similar to how I feel when I have been yelled at. This discomfort threw me off my meditation. Once I understood it and could separate it from other associations, I could reap the benefits. I find that when the fish is struck or Ed shouts it acts like an alert that re-centers my focus. My reaction has changed from being startled to feeling more like I've been given a gentle reminder tap. I feel an incredible sense of warmth travel through my body, rippling from my sternum down through my body in an expanding wave; it is a very nice feeling.

Amy Sedivy:

Why is it that the shout always catches me spinning out in some scenario? I began to believe that Ed knows I'm drifting and he shouts just to catch me and bring me back (my ego loves this explanation). I've gotten over that belief, but I still seem to be in a scenario when the shout (or the fish) vibrates through the room. So, the effect on me is, first, to bring a complete and immediate end to the scenario. Secondly, it produces an utterly clear mind while my body receives tiny fireworks along all my neural pathways. This lasts for some time until words intrude and I begin thinking about how wonderful the experience was; then I settle back into meditation with a bit more calm and somewhat fewer scenarios. The quality of my meditation always improves after the shout or the fish, and stays improved (whatever that is) until the sitting is over.

*The moktok or fish is a piece of wood that has been hollowed out to make a good sounding chamber. It is struck with a wooden stick or mallet. The fish can be either massive or hand held. Usually a very large moktok will be carved to resemble a fanciful fish and hence its name. 🌸

Wondering

. . . Questions Submitted to the Dharma Family Journal

Submitted by Eric Hansen

Q. It seems to me that many of our personality characteristics that cause us discomfort are either very deep-seated or actually physically hard-wired. So what is our capacity to change?



Change: Real and Imagined Difficulties

BY ED WORTZ

Resistance to Change

Psychotherapists in general, and psychoanalysts in particular, tend to view the difficulties of making behavioral or emotional changes as evidence of some form of individual perversity termed "resistance." This expression is frequently used pejoratively to blame individuals for not changing in ways desired by the therapist, family, society etc. On the other hand, resistance to change is actually perfectly normal since all physiological and psychological functions are homeostatic. Homeostasis means that the system observed, if perturbed from its usual state, tends to return to its normal or baseline condition. For example, if we exercise our heart rate will increase and when we stop exercising it will return to its normal rate. However, new baseline positions can be learned by repeated exercise. Another example comes from one of my clients who really likes her boyfriend. He, however, doesn't always meet her needs or expectations. Consequently she frets, fantasizes, tries to understand his motivation, and feels really bad when he doesn't meet these expectations. After a few days of thoroughly distrusting and disliking him she finds much to her surprise that (without any other intervention) she has returned to her baseline behavior and likes him once again as her dislikes, suspicions and bad feelings have vanished. The actual world doesn't change but perturbing events can facilitate her oscillation "between heaven and hell."

This tendency toward homeostatic behavior also helps us remain known commodities to ourselves and others. Our predictability is highly valued by our employers, family, friends, teachers, all aspects of society and actually to our selves. The observation "I don't seem like myself today" is usually coupled with some concern. Actually one of the functions of a society, and certainly the function of "socialization," is to help us have predictable behavior and develop an *experience of self* so that we can "feel like ourselves" and be predictable for others.

There are many other utilities for homeostatic processes "keeping things the same." If our internal, external, and emotional environment remain unchanged then it is much easier to detect important novel events in a given situation. Consider the activity of a pickpocket working at an international airport. The pickpocket certainly doesn't want to work his craft on a traveling businessman who has been through that terminal six or seven times a month. For the businessman the turmoil of the terminal is normal and everything is as it should be. He has become totally adjusted to this environment (he in-dwells completely in this environment) and if he gets jostled in an unusual way his awareness is free to detect the jostle. On the other hand consider someone from, say, eastern Europe, who doesn't speak English, has never been in this terminal before and is trying to catch a connecting flight. It is very important for him to find his way in a timely manner. All the while a myriad of events compete for his attention. He has little or no basis with which to ascertain which of these events actually has significance to him. Consequently he is continuously "distracted" and becomes a very easy mark for the pickpocket. Similarly a tiger hunts roughly the same path over and over again. In doing so it becomes habituated to its environment. Eventually it becomes easier and easier to detect something out of place, something novel. That novelty could indicate either food or danger.

There is an additional consequence of homeostasis which can effect our motivation to change. Since my behavior has a tendency to return to baseline, even after I have worked hard to effect some change, I may get discouraged, think that I am wasting my time and effort, and give up. When you find this happening don't despair and blame yourself. You are observing a natural event that happens for everyone. It seems that two or three steps forward and one back is just how effective change is actually experienced.



Thus there are valid physiological, psychological and sociological reasons behind resistance to change. Keeping our external and internal environment relatively the same makes it much easier to detect changes that have real significance for our lives.

Knowing the predilection for sameness, predicting human behavior, then, is like predicting the weather in Southern California. Tomorrow is going to be just like today. However, overcoming our natural homeostatic machinery, correcting our own experiences and behavior can be done provided we have 1) specific objectives, 2) detailed awareness of the behavior 3) skill and 4) an understanding of how our machinery works.

Secondary Gain

Another concept used to explain why people don't change their behavior, even when that behavior is self-destructive, painful and understood to be not in their own best interest, is termed secondary gain. The idea of secondary gain is that the person who persists in such behavior must be getting something out of it. Thus the concept becomes the label "secondary gain." The most common assumptions behind this concept are that such behavior must be either "attention getting" or provide a source of power.

Since we are all skilled at turning some aspects of misfortune to our advantage it is easy to see how the idea of secondary gain arose. In my experience, however, people only persist in self-defeating behaviors when they really don't know how to do something else. This means they don't have the awareness and skill to exercise that behavior or emotional display voluntarily. You can't stop doing anything that you don't know how to do. Practicing doing the painful experience followed by release and recovery can facilitate the discrimination between self-induced behavior that has painful qualities from behavior that does not. Then our normal self-regulatory systems can, automatically, facilitate the desired change.

Paradoxical Theory of Change

One of the most instrumental aspects in achieving a desired change is the issue of acceptance. Accepting ourselves "warts and all," as they say, is really important. To quote Arnie Beisser, "change does not happen by a coercive attempt by the individual or by another person to change him," but it does happen if the person puts in the time and effort to be "what he is" . . . "to be fully in his current position." In the lexicon of my approach to therapy, to practice doing voluntarily what one does automatically is to attempt to be more fully who we really are. "The paradox is that the more one tries to be who one is not, the more one stays the same."

Really Hard-wired

Many of the behaviors that we exhibit that can become problems for us are indeed hard-wired. Among these are many behaviors controlled by the brain stem. Those that we are the most familiar with are dysfunctions of eating and sexuality. Territoriality is another brain stem function that can pose behavioral problems for us. Territoriality is exhibited when animals ward off others that approach a nest containing young, feeding areas, mating areas, etc. Human beings exhibit territoriality concerning their spouses, children, jobs, arrangements of furniture, sharing kitchens, closets and so forth. And, because of our ability to mistake concepts for actual objective structures, we can exhibit territoriality about "non-observables" such as systems of religious belief, nationalities, scientific hypothesis, etc. The most famous example of territoriality in recent times are the events surrounding O.J. Simpson and his wife. Obsession and stalking are significant indications of territoriality.

When people find themselves experiencing dysfunctional territorial, sexual, or eating behaviors, they may be both appalled and helpless to deal with the experience. Like most problematical behavior this machinery gets triggered, runs its own course and leaves us thinking about it after the fact, often with some chagrin. The imperative of the machinery can be every bit as powerful as other brain stem functions such as breathing. When



we are being smothered, for example, the demand for air has an excruciating imperative.

However, we know that we can modify some brain stem controlled behaviors. Pupillary dilation, heart rate, blood pressure, EEG functioning, diameters of peripheral blood vessels, and sweat gland activity are a few of the many hard-wired activities that are amenable to control. This can be accomplished by using biofeedback techniques. Biofeedback essentially involves awareness of the parameter in question, feedback of information (in real time) concerning minute changes in its expression, along with repeated attempts to, voluntarily, effect the outcome.

Success

Oddly enough, improving can cause difficulties for the change process. For example, one of my clients practicing frustration finds, as we would expect, that after a few weeks of practice he is much less likely to get frustrated or angry and is actually comfortable more of each day. Frustration has begun to disappear from his automatic repertoire. Since his discomfort is greatly reduced, its noxious presence is not available to remind him to practice. Consequently his efforts naturally diminish. When frustration has not been totally extinguished we can expect its gradual return although not to its original level. The recommendation here is to practice "ad nauseum" so that frustration will not rebound to the threshold level of an overt behavior.

The Actual Facts of Change

1. Change in response to circumstance is our normal and healthy way of being. Pathology can be defined as being stuck and unable to change. Worry, obsession, fearfulness, depression, persistent negative self image, etc..... are all examples of stuckness
2. It appears that *any process or behavior* that we can develop an awareness of, either directly or indirectly, is amenable to change.
3. Counter-balances to change, which facilitate our stability, exist and must be reckoned with. 🌸

“Emptiness is not a state but a way...To experience is not a descent into an abyss of nothingness but a recovery of the freedom to configure oneself as an intentional, unimpeded trajectory through the shifting, ambiguous sands of life.”

Stephen Batchelor. “Nargarjuna’s Verses from the Center”, Tricycle, Spring 2000: p.29.



The Diamond Sutta "Transforming the Way We Perceive the World"

By Mu Soeng

Wisdom Publications: 199 Elm Street, Somerville MA 02144:

ISBN 0-86171-160-2

REVIEW BY ED WORTZ

This is without a doubt the best translation of Diamond Sutra. The excellent commentary is cogent, comprehensive and intellectually "available" to boot.

This volume in conjunction with M. Polanyi's *The Tacit Dimension* provides all we need to get a good grasp of the doctrine of Shunyata (emptiness). I would recommend that you start the book by reading pages 132-139 (some of which is quoted below) and then start at the beginning.

"...Mahayana advocated seeing things just as they are, without needing to annihilate or cling to them. In later articulation, the teaching of "suchness" goes even further and says that in their suchness things are perfect and absolute."

"So you should see (view) all of the fleeting world: A star at dawn, a bubble in the stream; A flash of lightning in a summer cloud; A flickering lamp, a phantom, and a dream."

"The core message of the Buddha, configured as the four noble truths, is that human existence is marked by the three characteristics known as dukkha (disease), anitya (transitoriness), anatman (lack of anything worthy of self-identification anywhere in the mind-body system). These fundamental assumptions are open to direct investigation by each one of us in our own experience."

"The core doctrinal question in the Buddhist tradition, in the face of the teachings of anatman and Shunyata, is: what is it that gets transformed? The resounding response of the Diamond Sutra, as encapsulated in its last verse, is that what gets transformed is one's perception or way of looking at the world and at oneself."

"All these three traditions of Mahayana are thus in the service of a wise view that advocates seeing all phenomena as empty, thus allowing clear perception in each moment of encounter with the phenomenal world and also freedom from dukkha that might arise as a result of clinging to an illusion. A complete and thorough understanding derived through wisdom of the nature of conditioned phenomena means that one is able to break free of the hold that these conditioned things normally have over one's consciousness. This freedom is ipso facto a state of nirvana."

"The Buddhist conception of nirvana is synonymous with complete non attachment—whether to the events of our own life or the vast cosmic drama being played out around us. Non attachment is the result of direct insight into the nature of things both psychological and phenomenal. When we view the things of the world through our prajna-eye, we no longer cling to them: through not clinging to them we become independent of them and finally cease to rely on them as a source of happiness. This is the purification suggested by the Diamond Sutra." 🌸



Lambs and Other Images in Meditation

BY AMY JONES SEDIVY

I couldn't resist buying a book I stumbled across on Amazon.com that had the subtitle, "The Apprenticeship of a Quaker Buddhist Shepherd." Mary Rose O'Reilly, a Minnesota writer, spent a year tending lambs with a young man—Ben—as her teacher, and pondering her Catholic childhood that became a Quaker Buddhist adulthood. *The Barn at the End of the World* is her account of that year, and I recommend it not only as an interesting and personal take on Buddhism, but also as an antidote to the busy-ness of our lives (particularly here in L.A.).

As wonderful as the entire book is, no image or anecdote touched me in quite the way this did:

My job for the next two weeks will be 'haltering up' ten lambs for a show and sale. That means tying them in halters every day (after catching them, of course, which takes an hour) and generally playing with them until they become tame enough to lead at the judging. After two hours of merry struggle, Ben said, "If only they knew they just have to stand still."

"That is so Zen." [Mary Rose replies]

As I read this, I got one of those oh-so brief flashes of insight. Yes! That's what happens to me during meditation. All these little lambs are jumping and running around (a different take on monkey mind—lamb mind). And all they have to do is just stand still. An image of lambs standing still on green rolling hills, just happily standing and wagging their little tails comes to me so I try this in meditation. I'm not controlling my jumbled thoughts, I'm just inviting them to stand still. And they do, for seconds at a time, and it feels...well, it feels so Zen.

I've used different images to assist me in meditation. I don't know if I am "supposed to" or not, but they have been effective for me. Early on, I had the image of "putting" the thoughts onto post-it notes and sticking them into the sky; that way, I was assured that I could come back to them later and it made it easier to let go of them in the present. Another image I used was in breathing meditation, in which I imagined breathing down into the earth beneath my zafu, and breathing up into the sky overhead; this seemed to have the effect of "clearing" me while also connecting me to the world outside of my body.

In all cases, the images were (are) useful at the beginning of a meditation sitting, or sometimes in the middle if I have spun out too far in a scenario. They are a way of bringing me back to meditation and they function, for me, as a ritual much like the bell that signals the start of a meditation session. When I see those lambs, when I used to envision the post-it notes (I bet no Tibetan lama ever imagined meditation with post-it notes!), or the huge world-breaths, they are a marker for me, a reminder of what I am doing. They are a short cut, essentially, back to a focus on breathing or listening and a way out of lamb-mind. ❀

*Winter pond bottom
Imagining order in settled leaves
Reviewing my past.*

By Shannon Landis and Ed Wortz