

Winter 2022

# NASCENT STATE

Journal of Intuition

Magazine

The Uses of Intuition

**The Self**

Intuition and the bull

**People Watching**

People as an enigma



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**Stoicism**

And the art of letting go

Winter 2022

# NASCENT STATE

Magazine



Catching the Bull by Tokuriki Tomikichiro

From the Editor

## The uses of intuition

We use intuition to understand ourselves, others, and the world around. Logic forces us to see life in terms of labels and boxes; intuition sees life as a complex whole.

Without intuition, we would have a half-picture of life.

'The Soul is an individual being, and if we ask what that is, we are told to look in upon our Self, and we shall learn by direct intuition better than through any abstract reply.'

William James

The word 'intuition' comes from the Latin 'tueri', which means 'to watch'. The intuitive mind is the watching mind. Whenever we are about to say something inappropriate and suddenly stop, it is the intuitive mind watching over us.

This edition of *Nascent State* magazine is dedicated to the Watching Mind and its application to everyday life. To that end, there is an article about the *Oxherder pictures of Zen*, or the governance of the inner life; an article on *People Watching*, or how we understand and respond to others, and an article on *Stoicism*, or the governance of our affairs in life.

How we react to an event is as important as the event itself. We can only govern our inner life if we can see it. If we develop the watching mind, we will see ourselves, others, and life itself as it is. To see life properly, we have to use intuition.

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Jim Blackmann

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# Intuition and The Bull

*The Oxherder pictures of Zen*



Bob Dylan and Allen Ginsberg at Jack Kerouac's grave in 1975

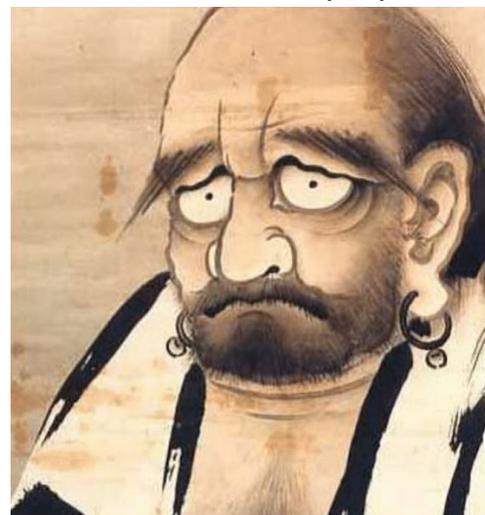
'Synagogue cast on the pavement,  
who vanished into nowhere Zen New Jersey leaving a trail  
of ambiguous picture postcards of Atlantic City Hall'

The above line is taken from Allen Ginsberg's 1956 poem *Howl*. The mention of Zen was not incidental; Ginsberg had a longstanding interest in the subject, and along with Jack Kerouac (who wrote *The Dharma Bums*), he laid the foundations for the Beat Movement.

The Beat movement gave rise to the Hippy movement, and Zen was adopted as part of its philosophy. *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*, a collection of writings compiled by Paul Reps, became a 'must read' for anyone with an interest in the subject. The further publication of *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* by Robert M. Pirsig cemented the association of Zen with youth culture. And in 1972, Yusuf Islam, then known as Cat Stevens, released the album *Catch Bull at Four*, which used one of the *Zen Ox Herding Pictures* on its cover.

Youth culture of the period was an expression

of all that was unconventional, and so it is not surprising that Zen was adopted as part of its philosophy. Perhaps owing to the way it was introduced into the West, Zen came to be associated with a freewheeling and laid-back attitude. And yet Zen is anything other than laid-back, and its early practitioners were often fierce, dedicated and serious-minded people.



Bodhidharma, the founder of Zen

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The founder of Zen, the 6th century Indian monk Bodhidharma, is often depicted with wide, staring eyes because legend has it that he once fell asleep during meditation and was so angry with himself that he cut his eyelids off. His successor, Huike, came to him for instruction, but Bodhidharma wouldn't take him seriously, and so Huike cut off his own left arm and gave it to him as a demonstration of his earnestness. While the veracity of such legends cannot be verified, what it does tell us is that Zen is a very hard discipline.



Huike cutting off his arm

The form of teaching most commonly associated with Zen is the *Koan*, which is an apparently absurd statement put in the form of a riddle. Koans seem to be designed to make it impossible to apply any form of logic to solve them. Some Koans include both question and answer, and yet the answer appears to have no relation to the question:

A monk asked Joshu why Bodhidharma came to China.

Joshu said: 'An oak tree in the garden.'

The apparently illogical nature of the Koan is not a product of bad translation, but is actually intended. To think logically, we have to define an experience, give it a label, and then categorise it. So a carrot is a vegetable and a carrot is not a mineral, which is why we would not look for a carrot in a hardware store. Logic is highly useful for organising our thoughts, but it is also restrictive because it forces us to see the world in terms of right and wrong.

The aim of Zen is to prevent the mind from employing this very logic. This can be found stated directly in the *Hsin-Hsin Ming*, or *Verses on*

*the Perfect Mind*, written by Huike's successor, the third patriarch of Zen, Seng-ts'an, in the 6th century:

Tarry not with dualism,  
Carefully avoid pursuing it;  
As soon as you have right and wrong,  
Confusion ensues, and mind is lost.



Seng-ts'an

From this, we might assume the aim of Zen is to prevent thinking altogether, but this is not so; the aim of Zen is to force the student to go beyond logic, by applying intuitive thinking. The reason for this is that logic is fine for what we know, because we can define and label what we know, but not much use for dealing with the unknown, because we can't define and label what we don't know. So if we are happy with our present knowledge, then all we need is logic, but if we want to learn something new, we have to employ a different form of thinking. That different form of thinking is intuition.

We use intuition to make the bigger decisions in life, because for the bigger decisions, there is often no clear right or wrong. That is why, when we are faced with an important decision, such as whether to change jobs, move to a new town, or begin or end a relationship, we rely on gut-feeling or intuition.

Gut-feeling draws our attention to whatever we can't see directly, whether this is a mood at a meeting, a person's hidden motives, or even when one of our own enjoyments has become an indulgence. Whenever we are faced with an unknown, gut-feeling will tell us there is something amiss. The hidden element is always there; it is only at times of decision or crisis that

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we become aware of it.

Zen is born of an intuitive approach to life. The sparsity of the Zen garden, the silence of the meditation hall and the apparent absurdity of the Koan are all intended to silence the logical mind. In Zen, to see the essential nature of a thing is to see its 'tathata' or 'suchness'. To see the 'suchness' of a thing, it is necessary to silence the logical mind and observe without judgement. If this is done deliberately, it can result in insight. In the language of Zen, insight is called 'prajna'. D. T. Suzuki, who is credited with introducing Zen to the West, defined prajna in the following manner: 'Jnana is ordinarily translated as 'knowledge', but to be exact 'intuition' may be better. I sometimes translate it 'transcendental wisdom', especially when it is prefixed with pra, as Prajna.'



The aim of Zen is to develop the watching or governing mind (sati). Intuition performs the same function. The word 'intuition' has the same root as 'tuition', and like a tutor, the intuitive mind watches over us as we think and speak and act. The development of the watchful mind is depicted in Zen by the Ten Ox Herding Pictures. Our lower, untamed nature is represented by the Bull. The pictures depict the search for the Bull, spotting its footprints, catching sight of it, and then taming it and finally mastering it. This untamed inner nature is quite real; it is the reason why, when we resolve to give up a habit - and

make an effort to do so - we may find the habit comes back worse than before. It is also the reason why, when we find ourselves being - as the saying goes - 'our own worst enemy', it is because the Bull is much more active than we are aware.

To see the Bull, we have to pick up on gut-feeling when it alerts us to this side of our nature. When we make a stupid mistake and say to ourselves afterwards 'I knew that would happen', it is because our gut-feeling was drawing our attention to something we couldn't see directly. Zen is expressed the way it is because it comes from a mind which has sought, seen and mastered the Bull. Its 'laid-back' attitude can only come from someone who is no longer driven by unseen forces. This can be seen in the seventh of the Ox Herder pictures:

Astride the Ox, I reach home.  
I am serene. The Ox too can rest.  
The dawn has come. In blissful repose,  
Within my thatched dwelling  
I have abandoned the whip and ropes.

For all the conflict in Western culture, at a fundamental level we all want to be content. The problem is, if we are unable to see where our lack of contentment comes from, we will not find it. Zen shows us how to find this element and then how to master it. As absurd as it might seem, Zen is not absurd at all.

If we are content with our present knowledge, then logic is fine. If we want something new, we have to apply intuitive thinking. While the study of Zen may require us to learn any number of unfamiliar words and terms, at its heart is intuitive thinking, which is part of our own inner nature. We all have an intuitive mind, and the more familiar we are with it, the more we will understand Zen.

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# People Watching

*People as an enigma*



'That afternoon she wore a green dress and, with her yellow hair, looked like a daffodil. We talked mainly, as far as I remember, about Rudolph Steiner, whose works she had just been reading.'

Edith Sitwell, on meeting Marilyn Monroe

We think we know people - or at least we assume we do until we have reason to suspect that what we see is not the whole person. It is then, and only then, that we look for the tell-tale signs that might indicate what is going on inside - and so we 'people-watch'.

People-watching can be a pastime or a science. We can observe people just as we can observe any other natural phenomena, and if we are observant enough - and thoughtful enough - it can help us to make sense of the enigma that is human nature.

To do this, and to do it effectively, we have to observe people with a degree of understanding. Judging others will only tell us what we already know about them, and will reveal very little about the person inside. To people-watch, we have to regard people a bit like a Matryoshka doll; one for the public face, one for the inner life, and one for

the deeper, unconscious element which is hidden deep inside them. People are enigmas.

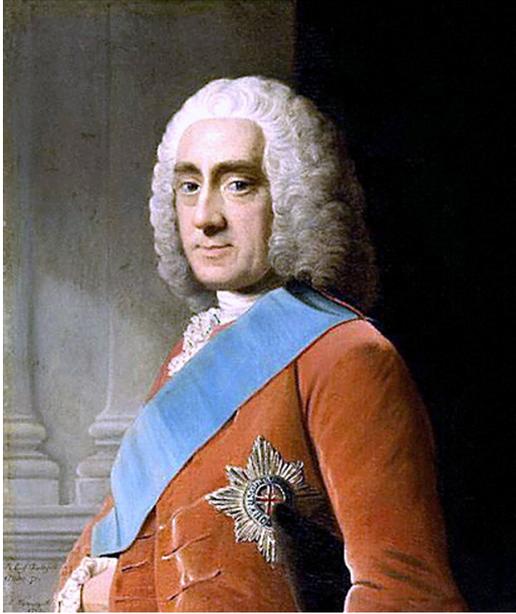


A nest of Matryoshka dolls

Having a public face, abiding by convention, and employing tact and manners are all part of life. There is nothing judgemental about this, but it means that what we present to the world is not quite the same as what is going on inside. After all, we do not reveal all our own inner thoughts to the world; we smile to cover a bad mood, are

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polite to those we don't like, keep secrets even from our friends, and hide our weaknesses from those we don't trust. If we do this, it follows that others must do the same.



Lord Chesterfield (1694 – 1773)

Because tact, diplomacy and manners are a necessary part of life, it is necessary to observe people with a degree of understanding. The statesman and diplomat, Lord Chesterfield, who was well-versed in the art of people-watching, wrote:

‘Few people have penetration enough to discover, attention enough to observe, or even concern enough to examine beyond the exterior; they take their notions from the surface, and go no deeper...’

People-watching is not about judging others, but about understanding them. If we do not understand people, we cannot help them if they are in trouble, or know when they feel pressured into making a decision they don't like, or detect the early signs of a brooding resentment. Reading people is perhaps the most practical form of wisdom in life.

In order to read people rightly, we have to employ the right kind of thinking. Thinking accompanies everything we do; if a person wears bright clothing, or has unkempt hair, or continually fidgets with their hands, our observations of them will be accompanied by a certain degree of judgement. The problem with this is that judgements can be superficial, which is why a commissioned salesman will greet you with a smile, and a conman will make their first

acquaintance by doing you a favour.

In order to think logically, we have to apply labels. The problem with labels is that people don't always fit into neat boxes. If a person is caught telling a lie, they are branded a 'liar', even if the lie was a small one, and told to hide an embarrassment. A person can be a police officer, and also in love. A person can swear when they are with their friends and then blush if someone swears in front of their parents. People are rarely black and white.

To see people rightly, we have to use intuition.

If logic forces us to see the world in terms of labels, intuition forces us to look beyond the label to search for what is hidden beneath it. Carl Jung, in his *Psychological Types* (1921), pointed to this aspect of intuition:

‘Where intuition has the priority, every ordinary situation in life seems like a closed room, which intuition has to open.’



From an intuitive point of view, what is presented is only an indication of an underlying reality, and to gain some insight into what is going on inside, we have to look for the tell-tale signs that might indicate what is not being conveyed openly.

Hugo Munsterberg, (1863 – 1916), who was an early pioneer in the application of psychology to criminal investigations, said that we should pay attention to the spontaneity of the response, any diversion of the eyes, and the involuntary

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betrayal of the emotions:

'If a girl blushes when a boy's name is mentioned in the family sitting room, we feel sure, even if she protests, that he is not quite indifferent to her young heart.'

We are born with a natural degree of intuitive ability. But just as a person born with a musical ear has to learn to play a musical instrument, we can improve our natural intuitive ability by practising it wherever we can. And people give us plenty of opportunities to do this.

The most common form of intuition is known as 'gut-feeling'. We can experience this when, for example, we hear a particular tone in a person's voice, and it does not quite match what is being said. Gut-feeling can affect how we relate to others, even if we aren't fully aware of it.

We can also observe intuitively. This can happen when we observe a person silently, without judging them. The act of silent observation is known in the East as 'tathata', and it means 'to see into the essence of a thing'. If we do this, we may find that thoughts occur to us about what lies behind the facade.



Plymouth Market by Beryl Cook (1926 - 2008)

A third form of intuition is insight, when a thought suddenly occurs to us from out of the blue. When this happens, it is accompanied by what is called an 'Aha!' moment. This can happen, for example, when we have a sudden insight into a person's inner motives and find ourselves chuckling at the thought. Fritjof Capra, who wrote *The Tao of Physics* (1975), explained insight in the following way:

'Another well known example of spontaneous intuitive insights are jokes. In the split second where you understand a joke you experience a moment of 'enlightenment'.'

We don't need a degree to people-watch - we just need a degree of patience. People-watching is something we all do, even if we do it for the most part unconsciously. If we apply intuition to people-watching, we may discover that a person we thought was backward proves to be actually quite thoughtful, or that a person we thought was rebellious proves to be quite orthodox, or that a person we thought was meek and mild is hiding an unkind nature.

People often do puzzling things, and when they do, we can become irritated or annoyed at them, or we can take it as an indication that we do not see them fully. People-watching is a means to wisdom - not just about others, but about ourselves. After all, we are not always fully aware of what motivates us until we stop and reflect on it, and what causes us to do this is often a single, insightful thought. The writer and thinker Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote:

'There is an optical illusion about every person we meet.'

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## Intuition Workshops

Develop:

Stoicism

Self-awareness

Insight

Balance

Judgement

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# Stoicism

*The art of letting go*



The Roman Consul Lateranus was sentenced to be beheaded by the emperor Nero in 65 AD. When the time of his execution came, the axeman could not bring himself to cut off the head of one of the highest-ranking officials in the land. But Lateranus was a Stoic, and so he stretched out his neck for the executioner.

Many people think Stoicism means a kind of fatalism, and that to be Stoic is to simply resign ourselves to our fate. But Stoicism is much more than this. It teaches us to accept that, even though events in the world run their own course, we are still free to decide how we respond to events. Epictetus, the great teacher of Stoicism, put it this way:

‘Some things are in our control and others not. Things in our control are opinion, pursuit, desire, aversion, and, in a word, whatever are our own actions. Things not in our control are body, property, reputation, command, and, in one word, whatever are not our own actions.’

From the point of view of Stoicism, freedom

comes from learning how to distinguish between what we can and can't control. We can't decide whether we live in times of prosperity and peace, or hardship and war. We can't decide whether we suffer a lifetime disability - as Epictetus did - or whether we will be born into a wealthy or a poor family; all of this is beyond our control. But we can decide how we will cope with such conditions. And that is the essential difference between fatalism and Stoicism; we can still be free if we know how.



The Moirai or Fates, Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos

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If we become angry about the events that life delivers, we have to live with that anger. If, however we adopt a Stoic outlook on life, we will find - not immediately, but over time - that the anger leaves us.

In order to be a Stoic, we have to be able to govern our responses to events. If a careless remark causes us to become irritated, or if the slightest hunger causes us to become ravenous, or if a drop of rain causes us to wince, we are not in control of our inner life. This might seem like a tall order - to govern the inner life - but Stoicism is above all a practical philosophy, and nothing superhuman is expected beyond a clear-headed view of life. Epictetus wrote:

‘Begin therefore from little things. Is a little oil spilt? A little wine stolen? Say to yourself, ‘This is the price paid for equanimity, for tranquillity, and nothing is to be had for nothing.’



Epictetus instructing the Emperor Hadrian

The modern era is founded on the notion of progress. Much of what we do, from investing in the future to creating better technology, is based on the belief that we are making the world a better place. And yet this progress is very much a mixed bag; cars have brought us congestion, nuclear power has brought us nuclear bombs, and prosperity has brought us pollution. For all the progress of the modern era, the last century gave us two World Wars and two major revolutions, and this century is not shaping up much better.

Nevertheless, we believe that if we gave up on the idea of progress, we would still be living in mud huts and subject to disease and famine. Even though we know that money will not buy us happiness, we still pursue it in the hope that, somehow, it will.



Progress

Stoicism is not about how much or how little we have, but about how we deal inwardly with what we have. Marcus Aurelius, the Roman emperor and Stoic who wrote *The Meditations* (c. 180 AD), took the view that whatever our station - and he was an emperor - the one area we can control is how we respond to events:

‘To live a good life: We have the potential for it. If we learn to be indifferent to what makes no difference.’

Stoicism isn't an instant pill we can take or an argument to be won; it is an outlook we can adopt and then use it to keep our bearings in life. If we genuinely adopt it, we will find that it becomes pointless to become angry when an alarm goes off in the middle of the night, or when a foolish person expresses a foolish opinion, or when we discover the public finances have been mismanaged. Such things are inevitable; what is not inevitable is how we respond to them.

In many respects, life itself is the great teacher of Stoicism. If we are on the receiving end of unfair criticism, or find ourselves overlooked for

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promotion, or are evicted by an unreasonable landlord, we gain nothing by becoming angry or upset or - most foolish of all - becoming as unreasonable as them. Aurelius also wrote:

‘In a sense, people are our proper occupation. Our job is to do them good and put up with them.’



Marcus Aurelius (161 - 180 AD)

To be a Stoic is not to suffer in silence; indeed, that would be as pointless as shouting to an empty room. We are perfectly entitled to ask our neighbour to be considerate, or to expect the public finances to be well-managed, but if we find that our protestations have no effect, then there is little to do but to resign ourselves to our fate and regain our composure.

It can take time and persistence before the Stoic outlook assists us in governing our inner life, and in a world of instant deliveries, twenty-four-hour news and all-night pharmacies, that might seem too long to wait for an outcome. And yet, like Lateranus and his axeman, we too will one day face death. How we look back on our life will depend on our view of it. Seneca, another Roman statesman and Stoic who was put to death by Nero, stated the following in his *Letters*:

‘Anyone who does not think they have more than ample, is unhappy, even if they are Master of the whole world.’

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