

Ritual 9

Haiku No Mythos

Presented by Roger Weir

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Transcript:

This is *Ritual 9*. And we start a third pair of books. We're using Bashō's *Narrow Road to the Deep North*, and we're using Jessie L. Weston's *From Ritual to Romance*. Miss Weston's book has to do with the ritual that underlies the Grail quest. And that the ritual underlying the Grail quest has something to do with the tarot deck. Bashō's book is a Zen travel journal. And I want to start with Miss Weston and then move over to Bashō for a long time and then come back to her.

Jessie Weston's book came out from Cambridge University Press in 1920. And it caused a sensation among a population of people who were immersed in trying to find a new language to deliver ancient wisdom. And her influence was immediate, like a tsunami. And several of the poets who took up her material, her information, were T.S. Eliot and W.B. Yeats and Ezra Pound.

T.S. Eliot responded by writing *The Wasteland*, which is thoroughly influenced by Jessie L. Weston's characteristic way of phrasing how a ritual comportment sets the base, by which symbols are aligned, and when the symbols are aligned in such a way that the base is related to them in a very special way. The energy flow along the symbol vector will transcend its form and lead to vision. Put into simple terms, a ritual alignment is like a line on the Earth. It's a horizontal. And a symbol alignment is like a vertical. And as long as you have the horizontal ritual alignment and the vertical symbol alignment, you have an angle. And anyone who's a builder knows that if you have an angle, a 90-degree angle, like that you can true a plain and you

can true an angle, which means that you can build solidly. So that one of the archetypal symbols for an architect who knows what he's doing is that Pythagorean angle.

Later on, a version of that will be the 60-degree angle. Not the 90, but the 60. Two thirds of that. Because a triangle made in that way, an equilateral triangle, is also very useful for truing the space of a building. That angle as long as you have the vertical and the horizontal equal. And equal in the sense that the measurable sections of both are equal, you can do all kinds of calculation. And especially a wisdom kind of calculation that will give you a number, a list, a print out, a number of essential figures that one needs to know.

In early antiquity before language was co-opted by the mind to be expressive of ideas lording it over rituals. Early wisdom language always had a ritual basis which was independent and precedent to the symbol. So that one of the great angles that occurred in ancient antiquity and found its summation in Greco-Roman times was an angle that had five sections vertically and five sections horizontally. And in order to keep the ancient wisdom the sections were not numbered but they were given letters. And the letters spelled out a wisdom word, which could be reshaped in a very special way. And the word that was brought was actually a word that comes down to us as tarot. The word has its origins in an ancient part of civilization that's hardly known or understood. Has never been fully factored into to Western historiography. And the historiographic recognition of it is something for the 21st century, things yet to be written.

The word was spelled one way in the, in the angle. And in order to present it so that one could read it at the top, it read s-a-t-o-r, and on the side it read the same way, s-a-t-o-r. Not Sater, Sator, which if you spell it backwards, it reads Rotas. And if you take the plural off, it means it reads Rota. And if you anagram Rota it comes out tarot. And the T is put on the end of tarot to make it a five-letter word. Not just because it's French. So that the secret numerological correspondences keep. So that this, this Sator Rota Square, as it's called, is Mithraic in its origins. Here's a study of an ancient amulet published in the Netherlands about 40 years ago, 30 years ago. *The Mithraic Origin and Meanings of the Rotas-Sator Square*.

So that the tarot comes down to us, the tarot deck, comes down to us in such a way that its ritual foundation was almost never talked about. The only thing that was let out from time to time was symbol talk. And symbol talk without any kind of ritual foundation tends to become metaphorical, and the ideation tends to become fantastic or fantastical. And so, one gets to have ideas that are clouds rather than weather. And that kind of cloudy mentality is usually what characterizes the so-called occult world. It's a potpourri of guessing games, and none of them are right. Because none of them know. They're ignorant. Because they don't know what to do. And you have to know what to do in order for there to be a base so that your thought is clear and the alignment is in such a way that you have an angle of vision that comes out.

And so all of these favorite phrases and so forth have actually they have a technology to them. One can know. You don't have to guess.

Remarkable thing in Miss Weston's book because she was really somebody. Jesse L Weston was like a sage. In her book, when she's writing in the chapter, chapter six on the symbols. She's talking about the lance and the cup of how it figures in Grail mythology. The lance and the cup. And how they're also suits in the tarot deck. And then she says. Page 72, A most remarkable and significant use of these symbols is found," also found in the ceremonies of the samurai. The noble warrior caste of Japan.

"The aspirant was, I am told, still is, "She's writing this 1919, "admitted into the caste at the age of 14, when he was given over to the care of a guardian, at least 15 years his senior, to whom he took an oath of obedience, which was sworn upon by the spear." And of course, in Japanese, this oath of obedience is the archetypal commitment that is, the social glue that holds Japanese society together. The Japanese word for it is *giri*, obligation. It is a ritual comportment of existence. It has no precedent. Nothing precedes it. There is no deal that you cut symbolically or mythically that precedes the ritual obligation once you have contracted for that. And so *Giri* is the archetypal glue for, for Japanese society.

And the knights errant that still carry it today are the yakuza. The gangsters. They are the samurai of the late 20th century. Of the early 21st century. Still there.

This quality. Where the samurai has a commitment based upon an angle. The ritual angle is on the basis of the sword for a samurai. A sword is the ritual basis of it all. And you need to understand that the sword is not just made out of a piece of metal, but there is a whole ritual process by which the metal that will become the sword is folded, is heated and it's bent back and pounded back and folded and melted. And so, you have dozens and dozens of layers, each one of them running one way and then another way. So that the steel of a samurai sword is a many layered molecular baffle for fracture. Anything that would fracture one layer of the metal atoms will molecules will find that the next layer goes exactly the other way. And so, the samurai sword is meant to be a baffle for fracture, thin enough and long enough to be whipped by the arm of the samurai like some great baseball legends do with a baseball bat. Like a Joe DiMaggio. So that the samurai sword already is not a symbol but is a ritual layering foundation for the action of defense in honor of the Giri.

The cup is not so much a ritual vehicle, but a symbol vehicle. And the cup fits in a vertical with that horizontal of the sword. And keeps the meaning of what is defended by the sword. Keeps it integral. Intact.

But there is a special variation on this which Bashō exemplified to the A-plus-plus. You've heard of C-plus-plus in computer language. There's this A-plus-plus ritual language poetry which Bashō originated in the Japanese mode. And he was preceded in this by two great Chinese poets, Li Po and Tu Fu. And it goes back into ancient times. It goes back to; in China it goes back to Lao Tzu in the *Tao Te Ching*.

Bashō was the last male in a line of samurai. He never picked up a sword, but he used language like a samurai sword. He learned to flick the syntax of language like a great samurai would with a sword. To defend in a ritual foundational way, the basis upon which the angle of existence leading to the mind's clarity. So that the horizontal of existence is protected and defended, so that it's a good fit and firm foundation joined to the aspirant clarity of the mind in its symbolic integration of meaning.

There's a lot to keep track of. I know, I know. You think two years is a long time, but it's a very short time for what we're doing. It used to take a whole lifetime to do what we're doing. This is the jet course.

So, Bashō was a samurai with language. And at the point of where there would be just the sheerest glint of the samurai sword, he stopped language from its high poetic word usage and made a haiku. So, that the haiku is the flash of the sword of language. And he used a kind of a prose that was already a like a prose poetry. That haibun syntax, which is a combination of prose and poetry. It's not just that the travel journal is written in prose, and then you have a haiku poem placed in it. It's that already the prose is already has a poetic about it. There's no rhetoric in Bashō at all, ever. And one has to get used to an insight.

Rhetoric has to do with the mind and not with ritual. Nor with art. Rhetoric has to do with logic. It's a mental criteria, and it's for the mind's exercise. And health has nothing to do with existence, has nothing to do with spirit. There's no existence and no spirit in rhetoric. There's only an abstract formality which the mind must observe in its working.

But we're trying to understand why there is an alignment of body and spirit. Why they form an angle that comes together in a way of sublimating the mind and allowing it to not evaporate into nothingness, but to effervescent a vision. And even though there is a less than split second timeless gap of nothing there, that motion between the mind evaporating and the vision constellating doesn't record in time, and so it's like a continuity anyway. One would never know except in high drama that there was a non-touching space in between. For all intents and purposes, it's like a revelation. It's like someone understands. And understanding is always to use a translation of Karl Jaspers term, it's always encompassing. There's an encompassing quality to differential consciousness. It doesn't just include integrally, but it includes in a complementarity much higher. Much better.

So, the Japanese samurai used the sword and the cup in a ritual way, just like it was used in the Grail quest. The Grail Knight always understands this. He's searching for the Cup. And he has only the sword to protect himself on that way. And we will see. There's a very special case,

because the great knight, who does not find the Grail but prepares the ground, is a Sir Gawain. And Sir Gawain is the ultimate protector knight. Not Sir Lancelot. He was never that important. Sir Gawain, he was the one because he survived his own death. And that's what's necessary for our Grail quest. You have to survive your death. And if you can't do that, then you don't do that.

So, there is a secret kind of a quality in here. And she goes on with this and I encourage you; it's only 6.95. Go and find a copy. It's published by Dover Paperbacks. And we'll come back to this.

Now let's go to Bashō. Bashō lived for 50 years. He lived from 1644 to 1694. He lived just 50 years. And at his time, in the kind of Japan that he lived in 50 years was a good, good, long while. His name was not Bashō. It was given to him. Most names are, are given. Bashō means the banana plant. And he lived in this little hut by the Sumida River on the outskirts of Edo. It's now a suburb of Tokyo. And in this little hut next to it, there was this banana plant. And banana plants, as Bashō said, get thrashed by the wind and by everything, and yet they get frayed, and yet they survive. They survive their own death. And he was like that.

In fact, one of his great travelogues is entitled *The Records of a Weather Exposed Skeleton*. And when he became subtle, another little travelogue that's just shamanistic. Oh, that ain't nothing. *The Records of a Travel-Worn Satchel*. Do you get it? He wasn't even there anymore. It's esoteric to be reduced to a skeleton that can still walk around, but it's high Dharma to just have the travel satchel and no one there. Whoa!

And they precede *The Narrow Road To The Deep North*, the great Zen travelogue. Bashō was 45 years old, 1689, and he begins his greatest work. It reads in the great translation by Yuasa, Nobuyuki Yuasa, “Days and months are travelers of eternity.” Days and months. What does Shelley say in one of his poems? Months, days and years which are the rags of time.

Days and months are travelers of eternity. So are the years that pass by. Those who steer a boat across the sea or drive a horse on the Earth till they succumb to the weight of years spend every moment of their lives traveling. There are a great number of ancients, too, who died on the road. I myself have been tempted for a long time by the cloud moving wind filled with a strong desire to travel.

Now, the learning in this is so extraordinarily subtle that it takes a whole lifetime to appreciate where all of this comes from and how it all goes together. It reminds one of the great commentaries on T.S. Eliot's *The Wasteland*, you have to read 200 books before you can realize that the poem is just simply brilliant all the time, because it's scintillating like a samurai sword in action. You don't see the sword. All you see are the peppered speckle flashes is of the dance. Because if you fight a fight, you may win. But if you dance a fight, you always win. You never lose. How can you lose?

The clouds come from a poem by Tu Fu *Dreaming of Li-Po*, "Floating clouds all day move. Wanderer long not arrive." Written at the height, at the pinnacle, of the collapse of the Tang Dynasty ethos. It stands for all time in East Asia as the great poetic expression of how existence and spirit can be severed by a recalcitrant mind. That someone can be so buried in the abstract logic of being right and having the authority that it can snip existence away from the spirit and both spin off and do their own things.

In fact, the popular Daoist funeral ceremonies are to pay homage to the two split off haps, the [inaudible] and the Po. The one part of you that goes back and joins the Earth. The other part that goes up into the air and becomes like those demonic things. And that's why you have to have curved roofs in order to make sure that they constantly slide off and don't stay around the house. And the other, you make sure that they're paid off by burning a lot of paper money. Would you suppose that they're like you, right? They need the money. So, they make it red and gold and really nice. And it's issued in, in balefuls. And do you not think that the demonic dead would know that you're burning counterfeit to them?

No one's ever pointed out that China was always mired in tragedy, until they stopped burning paper money in the late 20th century and started making real progress. And since the 1980's, the Chinese have really made progress. They're coming along. Shanghai is the new New York.

This whole quality of Tu Fu in his poem sets a classic tone and the East Asia aesthetic for a kind of a language which a spiritual samurai would speak. Would speak and would write. Would establish an angle where the horizon of the ritual comportment met exactly the vertical of the

symbolic rising. What is that symbolic rising? That symbolic rising is a rising in orders. We still call them in math powers. And especially we call them because we're used to tens. We call them orders of ten. Powers of ten. The late Charles and Ray Eames did a film called *Powers of Ten*, taking physical reality from the atomic level and jumping it each time by ten, so that you got to the cosmic in just a few steps. And you saw the whole range on a film of what the orders of the universe are by orders of ten.

This going up by orders, jumping by ten is an ancient quality. It isn't just accidental, obviously. But it's a pair of fives. So that five and five make a very special relationality. You can do it many different ways. You can even bring them like this, in which case you get that Sator Rota's angle, which, when filled in by writing it exactly the opposite, makes a Sator Rota square, which is the five by five. Five squared. 25 square, square. By which, if you take an essence of it, You get t-a-r-o and do an anagram of it. You get r-o-t-a. Rota means obviously rotate. And rotation is obviously a circularity. What happens if you rotate a square? What happens if you rotate an angle? You get other kinds of forms.

And in fact, the Sator Rota square, not to drag this on too long, but you can get four archetypal symbols. You can get a cross. You can get a triangle. You can get a square. And you can get a circle out of it. So that there were four archetypal symbols that one could get out of it, archetypal symbolic shapes and that's why there are four decks in a playing card. Four decks in a tarot deck. It's not just accidental. It wasn't just like they said oh, four it's nice. Today four. Tomorrow we'll see. Maybe we'll have a 12-suit deck for serial music.

This kind of understanding is always baffled if you start from symbols. And so, you have to start from rituals. You have to do it in order to know it clearly. And if you don't do it, you will never know it clearly. Because your mind will style it in a logical, rhetorical way that makes sense to intelligence. And the fact is, is that intelligence is abstract and has no direct relationship to existence at all. And has no direct relationship to spirit either but supposes that it does. And that's where the hubris, the pride, comes in. The mind supposes, oh, of course I have a relationship to spirit. Spirit's intelligible, isn't it? No, it's not. It doesn't care. Intelligibility is extraneous to the spirit.

But existence is not extraneous. It has a complementarity. So, spirit and body are good pals. They're good friends. And the mind has to learn to join that family. And it comes up later in the game.

So that what one actually does the ritual comportment has a very important quality to it that becomes evident when it's sequenced. If you have sequenced ritual actions, then the action begins to acquire an alignment along the direction of the sequence and becomes virtually a vector. And a vector is always a great synthesizing of energy. Any time you have a vector anywhere in the universe, it synthesizes energy into form.

Later on, that kind of understanding, that kind of wisdom, becomes a definite aid to an education that uses a line of inquiry as the synthesizing vector in a ritual way, like I'm using. And speaker on this chair, to use a Krishnamurti technique for a second. Speaker on this chair is always saying to you, it's not important for you to understand all the time right away. It's only important to do it. The doing of it is your seal that it really happens. And if that if that really happens, if that vector foundation is really there, the vertical has a tendency because of the nature of integration to all by itself rise. And if it does, the powers are there in a natural way. You don't have to make them up. You don't have to have a metaphysical scaffolding and a doctrinaire abstraction and some kind of jimmied logic. There are infinite number of logics. and the more complicated they become to be more effective, the longer the bug list. And the bug list is the sign of the fracture in the method. It's not workable. It's only good for small time arguments on grade school level. You can't really do complex things with that, but the other is so evanescent in its protean quality of expansion that it can do almost. In fact, I think we can say an infinite activity can do so.

Bashō's *Narrow Road to The Deep North* is a Zen ritual of traveling. And that the sets of events in the traveling are linked together by a haiku. And the haiku is not a part of any of the sets. The prose vector goes just so far, and then it stops. Then it starts up again and goes on. And in between, where they don't touch, the only thing that's there is a haiku. And the haiku doesn't touch either side. The prose that's just ended or the prose that's just beginning. It's suspended.

The I-Ching says heaven suspends its emblems. Heaven suspends its emblems. The stars are not there because they're propped up. God doesn't have to do that. It doesn't have little strings to make sure that those stars don't fall. Where are they going to fall? Not only are the elements suspended, but the universe itself is suspended. So that the suspension of the stars is in harmony with the suspension of the universe. And when we suspend our emblems, our symbols, then they acquire a resonance. In physics, it's called a scalar value. And when you put a ritual vector together with a symbol scalar, then you have a very powerful tandem. Then you have an angle that yields vision that is truthful and measurable. Not measurable to check it out to see if its correlation with materiality holds, but an even finer calibration of truthfulness. It is infinitely fractally true. It is true forever. As fine as you want to grind. It's true. And you can grind much finer than just even the atomic level, the molecular level. Even the particle level. You can go to energy frequencies that are primordial. It's still accurate. And accurate to the nth degree of specificity.

So, what we're doing here in *Ritual 9* is we're learning how to learn by setting the mind aside temporarily. Intelligence can catch up. It's made to catch up. And we're not even bringing feeling into play yet. Sentience and feeling is a very, very intelligent, as we'll see in the myth section. Right now, we're trying to, just for educational purposes, see that ritual comportment. What we do, do has a smarts about it. And the smarts about it emerges as the ritual sequence gains a vector integral by simply doing it. And one of the most primitive ways of doing this is through repetition.

What was the, the song? Just chant the name of the Lord and you'll be free. George Harrison. Over and over and over and over. In the film *Iceman*, the Iceman constantly, constantly focusing hour after hour, day after day, in the very same way. It's a primitive way, but it has its efficacy because it makes an alignment, in this case, a very limited alignment. In Bashō's case, the alignment is that Zen travelogue that not only aligns the episodes in the travel but has the suspended haiku in the non-touching intervals. So that you have all these dots and dashes like a morse code of realization. So that all the while that this is going on, that this is happening, one is unconcerned because it's completely extraneous, whether it's logical or not. It doesn't have to have a mental correlation that holds. That's extraneous. It doesn't even have to have a feeling

correlation that holds. It's a Zen travelogue. Its correlation is from existence to the mystery of nature. And as long as there is a continuity in the doing of it, the energy being transformed to form, builds and accrues and has its ability to...Let's use an economic term. When ritual comportment accrues energy into form, it has a form of power that is able to finance the feeling tone quality of language to make images. So that one begins to afford imagination. An imagination that comes out of the mystery of nature so that one's mythic language is a parallel to the mystery of nature. And when your mythic language is a parallel to the mystery of nature, your imagery has the ability to present something more than car warnings. Do you like it?

Let's take a break and we'll come back.

Five. Ten. Twenty. Thirty. You have to have a sequence in order to have that interval of powers. And that interval of powers doesn't stay on the vector lines, but it jumps to the next vector line, which is, has a place made for it because of resonance. So that scalar values are always resonances that go out. That are generated by a kind of a rotation. So that there's a circularity involved in some kind of scalar frequency, and it will always have a harmonic. And it will always have a music. So that you can do a music on the resonances, and you can do an analysis on the harmonics. And it's good anywhere in the universe. Any star system. Any planet. Any time.

And so, our, our concern here with ritual is not a very small concern, it's major concern. The way in which our bodies do life is important. And it's important to do that without consulting the mind and without preemptively bringing in feelings. So, Zen is all about that. It's about being heron alert to the moment and not getting caught up in the resonances of feeling and the harmonics of symbols but just being right there with what you're doing. What does Yoda say? Don't think, do. That kind of thing. That's the extent of that wisdom there. God spelled G-a-w-d.

Bashō's *Narrow Road to the Deep North* is a Zen travelogue and as the vector of the prose develops, it also develops places where it stops and then starts up again. And in that gap there is a presenced moment, which is the haiku. So, if the haiku and the prose are like dots and dashes, and they make it like a Morse code. But it's a ritual Morse code, not something that needs to be

translated, then into letters to make the words. But it translates into a sense of relationship between existence and the mystery of nature. One and zero. And in that kind of a Morse code of a binary it is possible in ritual to spell out for oneself a strategy of sequential of sequentially. And that strategy of sequentially gives you the line of development. And that's what occurs primordially. That's what Zen is attentive to. And only later does that line of development, that Morse code of existentiality, only later does that become a substrate for the plot line which a myth is. Which a myth follows. So that the story line follows along a trail that's already blazed by existence.

The mind mistakes, though, that the existentials are the check on its symbols. Whereas feeling doesn't make that mistake because it doesn't have that kind of relationship. And as we see, it'll be a big problem with the mind when we get to symbols.

But there'll be a sentience in feeling toned experience that one has to trust and go along with the way in which ritual correlates not with things, but with the mystery of nature. And doesn't correlate in parallels, correlates in connections. So that the form of the right angle, that square trues the surface, it trues the plain and it trues the relationship. And in this case the relationship, the powers that develop are not verticality of the mind or even verticality and orders of language or feeling, but their powers in nature, in the mystery of nature. That the mystery of nature has levels of powers. And one didn't know that until one's capacity to sequence existence was richly refined, so that you could follow along and integrate not only what you're doing, but what you are not doing, and yet still occurs.

So that we'll see at the end of this whole ritual sequence, the interval text, the 13th lecture uses *The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutra* of the Buddha, *The Mindfulness Sutra* of the Buddha. Where the yoga that's developed is to go to the substrate below ceremony. Below where there are costumes and vignettes and dramas and get to the very action that occurs and the very action that does not occur. And that those form a set. And as long as they form a set, they are recoverable later on by a ratioed intelligence. And that's what's rational.

So that miseducating the mind is very much a disease. And a good education always tends to that phase form ordering of how all of this is actually engendered. One stays primordial so that you don't get lost. What does Black Elk say? He said he found that most men get lost in the dark of their eyes. Because if you look at the pupil, at the dark of the eyes, the image is upside down. It's righted by the brain. It's transposed. All perception is transposed. It's always that way.

So, there are not mysteries involved so much, but there's an attentiveness to the exact detail. And this is where one becomes integral to the point where consciousness can become a dimension to time and space. Otherwise, the mind usurps the dimension of consciousness for itself, and it becomes a little tyrant. And we've spent a lot of time in civilization the last 7 or 8000 years, suffering from the results of this, and that's enough of that.

So, an education like this is paying attention to the phases as they develop so that we can get used to literally counting on our fingers until we get used to using all the fingers together in a hand until we can get both hands together. And then we can do a lot. There's a lot that can be done. In fact, everything can be done. There's nothing that cannot be done.

Bashō in his Zen journal, is Zen travelogue, has resonances after him. In Japanese civilization, in Japanese culture and the East Asia civilization, one of the greatest of all the resonances is that the Zen travelogue, instead of having a haiku in that timeless moment of Zen directness, you will have a Japanese print instead of a haiku. And the great, great artist of that was Hiroshige. And the great example was his Tokaido series, *53 stages of the Tokaido* [*53 Stations of the Tokaido*]. Where you have a Zen travelogue with 53 prints, and they present the just the haiku that there is no prose at all. So that you have a very sophisticated presentation by the time of Hiroshige. He did the Tokaido series in 1832. That's like 250 years after Bashō. That's a lot of refinement.

So that the viewer looking at the Tokaido prints in their sequence, in their ritual sequence, can have many journeys. Many prose journeys around those prints. And because of the sophistication, one can take even just one of those prints, one of the Tokaido series, and do the whole journey just from that. One can be refined enough for that.

Contemporary with Hiroshige's Tokaido prints of 1832. He was a young man. He was, he was just 36 years old when, when this quality of insight came out. An older contemporary of his named Hokusai, was a 72 years old. And he had developed his art to the level of refinement that in 1832, at the very same time that the Tokaido series came out from Hiroshige, who was a fairly young man. The much older artist Hokusai came out with *Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji*. And I brought two of those as Japanese prints that are down below here.

So that Hokusai saw in a pioneering way. He, Hokusai, is like Aeschylus in Greek tragedy. He's like really an originator of the development of the way in which the ukiyo-e imagery in the print achieved a Zen like clarity. And only later in his life was he able to bring a number of those together as a matrix. *Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji* is a matrix not centered around the symbol of Fuji, though it can be read that way after. It is around the ritual of a Tiantai, a Tendai, a pure land Buddhism circumambulation of the peak, which takes us back to Kōbō Daishi. Takes us back to Kūkai. Takes us back to the beginnings of that whole mystical sect of Buddhism that came into Japan in the Nara period, right at the time of the founding of Kyoto.

And that that Zen Buddhism came from China. And that in the China, the Tang China of the late seven hundreds, that Holy Land, that Western Paradise, that Amitabha Buddha kind of Buddhism, that Tiantai, that great heaven of Buddhism had a mystical Christian Hellenistic Jewish seed in it. And that the China of that time, of the apex of the Tang dynasty, was deeply influenced by this Western mystical Jewish Christian insight into that the universe occurs as a unity in integration, but that unity occurs as an infinity in differentiation.

And so, one finds in the Buddhism of that kind two elements which are recognizable in the Western tradition and after the Tang dynasty becomes central also in the East Asia tradition. And they're not there really before that.

One of them is that there is such a thing as a Paradise in the West. That somehow in the distant far West, in the infinitely open, challenging deserts of the West is some kind of secret that has to do with a Paradise. And of course, in the ancient West one finds this in Egypt. And west of the

Nile Valley civilization in Egypt is the Sahara Desert. Something out in the center of the Sahara Desert in ancient Egypt that's where the clues are for the ancient Paradise.

And we're not going to go into it now, but we know that this was a very big theme. And the Egyptian cosmology. In fact, the ultimate prophetic center was at Siwa, in the midst of the of the Sahara desert the place where Alexander the Great finally went. When you have all the power in the world, you know where to go. And he went to Siwa to see whether he was related to the divinity or not. Whether he was a Son of God or not.

In China, it so turns out that the Gobi Desert is to the west of the agricultural center of China. And they developed after that the same kind of sense that the clues to the Western Paradise were in the West again, in the deserts to the West. Only in Chinese civilization. What was there in the middle of the Gobi Desert were oases that led on a caravan track. In historical times it was called the Silk Road. But before there was a Silk Road, in very ancient times, it was what I call the Jade Road that ran to the south.

And where did that huge caravan track going into the west lead? It didn't just lead to oases in the desert. It led through the desert. You have oases and caravans in order to get through a desert, to go someplace else. Where would you go? They went to ancient Iran. In fact, dynastic China begins with contacts with ancient Iran. Not the Iran of historical times, but the ancient Iran of Zarathushtra's age, third millennia B.C. And so, you find a great deal of contacts.

And so, the clues to immortality, to the secret meaning of life, were all for Chinese civilization out in the Western Desert. In a parallel, just like with the Egyptian. They realization in the Egyptian that it was in whatever it was out there beyond that Sahara Desert was the key.

This influenced the way in which the Chinese ethos developed. And by the time of Bashō, the Japanese had learned when they were at a mature point of their development, to check it out against the Chinese experience. That they would refine, as Japanese will do, the achievement of a major civilization. And just like they perfected the automobile in our time, they perfected the sense of the landscape journey from the Chinese tradition in Bashō's time.

And in fact, a couple of hundred years before Bashō, the greatest of all the Japanese artists was the one who established the first link after Kōbō Daishi, after Kūkai, in the 700's. And this artist's name is Sesshū. Sesshū. Sesshū means snow boat. There was a legend that he got the name that when he, when he was leaving China, he had acquired so many accolades from the Chinese that they all wrote these farewell poems to him. And there was such a blizzard of farewell poems that was like snow on his boat. But actually, Sesshū had taken that name several years before.

Sesshū was one of these recalcitrant youngsters who could not be controlled. Not that he was autistic, but that he was unmanageable. Like all the legends of the young Jesus which have been covered up. It was just it was you couldn't deal with him because he was beyond what you could deal with. One of the apocryphal stories of Jesus at five is that he was causing trouble to this teacher that he considered was, you know, foolish and superficial. And the teacher was trying to teach him the ABC's and said, you have to pay attention to learn. And the five-year-old Jesus said, if you can tell me what A is, then I'll tell you what B is. Right.

One of the things that the Soto Rotas Square developed in antiquity was the ability to sequence from A to omega. The alpha and the Omega. You don't just learn the alphabet the A, B, but you learn the alpha and the Omega. You learn the whole sequence so that it's a matrix. If you just learn A to B, that's like a two-step. That's a very boring dance. You can do tribal things. You can make it rain. But you need the whole matrix to be able to save all sentient beings. That's bigger than rain.

When Sesshū was born, it was born in 1420. And they finally they, they couldn't handle him. Parents couldn't handle him. So, at the age of 10 or 11, they gave him over to this Zen monastery. And the Zen monastery was like at that time, very decadent. They were like surrogate parents, and they couldn't handle him. But they discovered that he had a tremendous ability to paint. To draw. And the apocryphal story is this that the Zen quote monks, quote Zen monks were so fed up with the young Sesshū that they tied him to this post. And that he was so frustrated that these tears came down into the dust around the post, and he took one toe and

dipped it in the dust, and he drew in the dust a rat. And the rat, the image of the rat was so real that it came to life and gnawed the ropes and set him free. It's a Zen story.

So, Sesshū wanted to become the greatest artist of all time, and he was very good. And he found out that the greatest artists of all time were not Japanese. They were Chinese. In fact, the greatest artists in China of all time were the landscape painters in the Song dynasty, the Southern Song. And so, he went at the age of 49 or 50, went to China. He was by this time a part of an entourage of a very wealthy household. And he went to China and became tutored. He studied for a couple of years. He tutored himself to a style which, in the Southern Song colloquially is known in the West as is the Ma [inaudible] Ma Yuan Chaguan. And they were the greatest landscape painters of the whole era.

And what's interesting, we'll just take Ma Yuan. Ma Yuan was called One Corner Ma. He would give you this fantastic development where he would put everything in one corner and there would be mist everywhere else and openness everywhere else, so that it was the printout. It was the obverse of what in the West was always the esoteric wisdom. Never give the students the whole square, just give them three corners. If they can't find the fourth corner by themselves, then they wouldn't know how to use it anyway. Ma Yuan gave one corner only.

And so Sesshū apprenticed himself to this. And his great style by the time he was in his late 50's, studying the Ma Yuan, not Zen in China. Chan, Chan Buddhism. Zen is a Japanese mispronunciation. But that Chan is not a pure Buddhism. It has a substrate of Dao that not only comes in with Lao-tzu but gets language in a special poetic way by Zhuangzi.

Zhuangzi comes about 200 years after Lao-tzu. And then that special languaging gets transformed completely by a religious genius called Huineng in the time of the founding of the Tang Dynasty in the early 600's. And Huineng is the last Zen master in a line where you could name who it was and number who it was. Huineng is the Huineng is called the Sixth Patriarch. He has Sutra is called *The Platform Sutra* [*The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch*]. *The Platform Sutra*. The foundational horizontal. And that when you have this horizontal, when you have this sequence, when you have this kind of basis, you have an infinite vertical that is

possible out of that. And so, there was no Seventh Patriarch. Anyone at any time whoever gets what Huineng broadcasts, all he needs to do is tune it in. It's in the airwaves eternally. And if you tune it in, you are now, then, there, the seventh patriarch. There are an infinite number of seventh patriarchs. So, we broadcast on station N-e-n-g, which sent out enlightenment forever. And all you have to do is tune it in. It's always on the air. It's like a transcendent Wolfman Jack. Hiya. Hiya. Hiya.

So, Sesshū tuned in this quality. And one of his most famous sequences were four ink paintings of the four seasons. And the final one was winter. And the style of the winter is radical because the jagged push of the lines collects into this energy where the final line goes straight up off the print. I'll bring a, a reproduction of it down in 1900 next week.

So that you have Sesshū showing this tremendous muscularity of the samurai with the brush. Not to write poetry like Bashō did, but to do painting. And so Sesshū's ink painting style is sets the tone for samurai art. The artist. The samurai as an artist. And he also sets the prototype that the great artist, the gunfighter artist, the samurai lone tiger artist always has a companion. And usually has a companion who is like very ordinary kind of a person. Extremely ordinary.

The tradition came out because in a fight, anybody who supposes that they're pretty good in a fight is more danger to you than somebody who knows that they know nothing and will stay out of the way. You get killed more often in fights by inept helpers than you do by people who just stand back and give you space. The origin of this in China comes from Bodhidharma, who came from India, and his companion, [inaudible] is the one who tried for nine years to become a disciple to Sesshū. And Sesshū was busy staring at a blank and, not Sesshū, but Bodhidharma was staring at a blank wall, and finally [inaudible] cut off one of his arms and presented this to Bodhidharma in the 500's. It gets rough, folks.

I think when they wrote the screenplay for *Apocalypse Now* and Marlon Brando tells about the little arms being cut off. It's like supposed to be a semi-Zen parable in a Joseph Conradian sense. We lead very complicated lives, as you can see.

Sesshū had a traveling companion. So that when it came time for Bashō to do his Zen traveling, he had a companion. Sora. And Sora later on, after Bashō died, became a very famous poet in his own right. But when he was with Bashō, he was always like the background figure. He was always just the companion there, but not there to get in the way when there was a moment for the haiku.

And so, Bashō is very much a sophistication in the Zen travelogue of Sesshū's Zen travelogue. And he only did one. It's called *Sesshū's Long Scroll* [*Sesshū's Long Scroll: A Zen Landscape Journey*]. And I brought a little reproduction. It doesn't show it. The original of *Sesshū's Long Scroll* is 60 feet long, and he painted it in one day. Just to show once what you can do. And you only do it once on that level, because that's all you have to do. It's like Huineng, once you do that, it's done not just forever in terms of time. It's done eternally. And time is not a factor.

So that there is such a thing as an eternal moment, which is a non-time hiatus, Which is a zero, which is factored in to the integral of oneness. And that the true nature of oneness is that it is discontinuous in the actuality of there being gaps and spaces that don't record. And because they don't record what does record records as a one. So that one is able to be distilled into fractions, because that is still real. And all the fractions are still related to each other on the basis of the unity. And it's esoteric until one understands that you can just simply build on this basis.

So that we have in our ritual comportment right now, we have the beginnings of a very subtle understanding. That there is such a thing as a sequencing that factors in zeros. Factors emptiness. Timeless moments into it without losing count on the continuity. That in terms of the world, one has only counted one once. But in terms of actuality, there can be any number of discontinuities that don't record, and therefore you can have infinity in any moment of time and space. And if you know that, then you're in no rush to get saved.

In fact, it is so instantaneously true that there never was a time when it wasn't so. And so, it's already happened. And so, you can really relax. Big vacation. That the universe has been saved. So many times, without number that it is Holy already. And that we live in a blessed harmonic of

that, even if we recalcitrantly don't want to believe it. And the only thing that disbelieves it is the aberrant mind of man.

So that there is a quality here which later on will come out when we take a look at the tarot deck a little bit next week. That the tarot has in its sequence of images, in its vector of ritual alignment of images, there are relational gaps that don't record. And if you don't know those, then you don't know how to arrange the notes into a music. And you by default go into fantasizing on a metaphorical level on the basis of trying to link the images by mind things. And that's a real ignorance.

So that the tarot was carried not by fixed, pseudo civilized cultural elements but was always carried by a nomadic people, the gypsies. Carried by them from India to Egypt to Europe, in a grand swath over many thousands of years. So that the Romany way of talking about the Major Arcana is that those images constitute a painted caravan. And that they are the cars in this caravan.

And that in the medieval, the high medieval, ritual comportment of the great cycle this was also the way that mystery plays. Aptly named mystery plays were presented in places like mid the mid of England. The mid of England at that time was exceedingly refined place. And you find things like Middle English *Upanishads*, like *The Cloud of Unknowing* or *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Really high drama stuff. Incredibly refined.

And the mystery plays were presented by the various guilds. And all the guilds of a town would each have their own car. And all the cars together would be the caravan that would go from place to place and present in their sequence what their car had for an image. And the next and the next. And from that you would get the passion play cycle. Not in terms of church doctrine that was logical, but in terms of the ritual comportment of existentiality to mystery. That's why they were called mystery plays.

So that in the high medieval period you find when Dante gets to *Paradiso*, he looks across into Paradise, and the first thing he sees is his spirit guide, true love Beatrice in her car.

So, you have to know a lot to realize that you don't need to know a lot. And someone like Jesse Weston is that kind of a figure. She was just brilliant as can be. She came out of that generation. We're going to use another one of her compatriots, Jane Ellen Harrison. Her, she called it the Prolegomena, Prolegomena, for the study of Greek religion. That is, before you can study Greek religion, this is what you need to know.

And so that whole study has something that comes before it, which you need to do. You can't know it. It's something that you have to do. So that in sacred architecture it was called the pronaos of the Temple of Wisdom. The fore court. And what do you do in the fore court? You don't worship. You purify. You wash your feet, and you wash your head. You wash the, the two parts of the parentheses that is you physiologically to prepare yourself. So that you go in a freshened and in this freshened way, you're available for the osmosis of the zeros. For the nothingness that isn't to ratio with all that is. And that way one begins to be able to actually not just learn, but to do.

Now following Bashō and we're going to come back to all this, and we'll see. We'll understand. From Sesshū to Bashō is very difficult to follow because most of Sesshū's works are not in museums. They're in private collections. Even today.

Wondrously, Sesshū's work has been held in private hands for 500 years. In this country, the United States has the largest selection of Sesshū collection. Because at the beginning of the 20th century, there were three places in the country that were collecting. *The Philadelphia Museum of Art*. *The Philadelphia Museum of Art* in Philadelphia, *The Freer Gallery* in Washington, DC, and in Boston at *The Boston Museum of Fine Arts*. Most of them at *The Boston Museum of Fine Arts* because at the turn of the century, when these things came in, the director, the art director in Boston was a [inaudible], one of the great yogis of aesthetic intuition in Indian history. And he was there in Boston. The curator. He knew what was what. The Bollingen Series publishes three volumes of [inaudible] lectures, along with the Jung things and everything else.

So, Sesshū's work has largely been in private hands, so it's very rare that anyone ever sees it. The book I'll bring next week was published in Tokyo in 1900 and is the only folio volume ever done

from direct engraver from some of these rare things done 100 years ago. And I'll bring it next week.

After Bashō with Hokusai and Hiroshige, with the *Thirty-Six Views of Fuji* and the *Tokaido Series* is the first time that you find a comprehensive pair, like in Hokusai and Hiroshige, a comprehensive pair who begin to present the vector and the scalar together. But individually. Hokusai goes after the scalar resonances. *Thirty-Six Views of Fuji*. Whereas the vector is developed by Hiroshige, *53 stages*.

Now, the reason why Hokusai could do the scalar is because he was an inveterate sketcher. This is the sketchbooks of Hokusai. He used to draw rocks and trees, page after page after page. And when he got to be 90, he recorded in his notebooks that he had finally learned to draw a line. And that he had hopes that by 105 he would be able to do a real picture.

More next week.

END OF RECORDING