

# **Zen and the Art of Organizational Maintenance**

Ronald E. Purser

*San Francisco State University*

## **Abstract**

This article draws from Zen Buddhism and its arts as a means for reimagining management as a mindfulness practice. Inspired by Zen and its unique aesthetic, this mindfulness practice is referred to as “organizational maintenance.” As a contemplative art, organizational maintenance is theorized as a process which intensifies awareness of dualities and contradictions, amplifying the drive towards unity and expression of Quality. The expression of this drive toward unity in Zen Buddhism has had a profound influence on Japanese arts — such as the tea ceremony, calligraphy, Haiku poetry, and landscape garden design. Decoding the aesthetic principles inherent in the Zen-inspired arts sheds light on how such principles can inform contemporary practices in organizations. The artistry of organizational maintenance and Zen-inspired aesthetics is explored in the example of the late Steve Jobs, whose encounter with Zen was influential in his design sensibilities, mental focus, and trust in intuition. Finally, the philosophy of organizational maintenance is explored in terms of what it means to recover and appreciate a deeper sense of wholeness and Quality in organizational life.

**Keywords:** Zen Buddhism, Zen arts, Zen aesthetics, Steve Jobs

## Zen and the Art of Organizational Maintenance

Zen Buddhism and the arts it has inspired have much to offer in exploring the intersection of aesthetics, mindfulness and organizations. Over the last two centuries, Buddhism has had a strong influence on Western culture. Translated works on Buddhism and Japanese art prints made their way to the West in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, influencing such visual artists as Monet, van Gogh, Gauguin, and Redon (Baas 2005). Many contemporary Western artists, musicians, poets and architects — Wassily Kandinsky, Marcel Duchamp, Georgia O'Keeffe, John Cage, Phillip Glass, Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, Robert Motherwell, Jack Kerouac, Gary Snyder, Allen Ginsberg, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Louis Kahn — were drawn to Zen Buddhism (Baas and Jacob 2004). Why have such luminaries been attracted to Zen? Baas (2005:11) claims Buddhism has appealed to artists because it challenges rational thinking as a path to knowing. Indeed, there is a striking parallel between Zen Buddhist practice and artistic experimentation in that both can radically shift habitual ways of seeing and thinking. Lanier Graham (2010:1), curator of a recent exhibit on *Zen and the Modern Arts* notes:

Most of them (the artists) were not Buddhists, and did not practice traditional meditation. Very few were religious in any traditional way. They were reaching beyond tradition for new forms. However, most of these artists were engaged in a spiritual quest, a secular search for wholeness, and most of them regarded the process of making art as a kind of meditation.

Robert Pirsig's (1974) best-selling cult classic, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (from which the title of this paper is derived), introduced Zen philosophy to millions of readers. Pirsig uses motorcycle maintenance as an evocative object (Turkle 2007) for illustrating how seemingly mundane tasks can be worthy of aesthetic appreciation. The narrator's motorcycle, its maintenance, as well as the cross-country trip he and his son embark on, is a metaphor for the narrator's spiritual journey. The narrator spends a great deal of time articulating how the maintenance of a motorcycle is an art involving both the motorcycle and the maintainer when the interaction between them is of "high quality." Pirsig compares this form of aesthetic appreciation of maintaining a motorcycle to the meditative practice of *zazen*, or "just sitting."

Zen Buddhists talk about "just sitting," a meditative practice in which the idea of a duality of self and object does not dominate one's consciousness. What I'm talking about here in motorcycle maintenance is "just fixing," in which the idea of a duality of self and object doesn't dominate one's consciousness. When one isn't dominated by feelings of separateness from what he's working on, then one can be said to "care" about what he's doing. That caring really is, a feeling of identification with what one's doing. When one has this feeling then he also sees the inverse of caring, Quality itself (Pirsig 1974: 298-297).

Pirsig was neither a Zen master, nor formally trained in Zen. Yet, his depiction of the art of maintenance as being primarily a perceptual faculty, embodied in a "non-intellectual" awareness that is awake to reality before intellectualization divides and splits the world into subject and object, is very much emblematic of the spirit of Zen. Elaborating on this point, Pirsig states, "Reality is always the moment of vision before intellectualization takes place" (Pirsig 1974: 247). American philosopher, F.S.C. Northrop, (1964:335) characterized this as an "undifferentiated aesthetic continuum," encompassing the self, the work of art, and the viewer within a boundless continuum of time and space.

In this paper, I propose the "art of organizational maintenance" as a mindfulness practice which can be cultivated by appreciating, embodying and expressing Zen-inspired aesthetic principles within organizations. Building upon Barry and Meisiek's (2010) notion of aesthetic inquiry, I further suggest that Zen aesthetic principles can foster an appreciation for the processes of artful making — which goes beyond current Western concepts of

“organizational mindfulness” (Vogus and Sutcliffe 2012; Weick and Putnam 2006; Weick and Sutcliffe 2006). Drawing mainly from the work of Ellen Langer and her colleagues (Langer 1989; Langer and Moldoveanu 2000), to date theories of organizational mindfulness have focused on being aware of the contents of experience — employing cognitive functions such as attention, distinction-making, and associations. In contrast, as a contemplative art, organizational maintenance relies much more on intuition, creative insight, and spontaneous action which requires arousing “whole body and mind” seeing, a phrase 13<sup>th</sup> century Zen Master Dogen used to describe the total merging of subject and object, or seer and the seen, of self and other (Loori 2005). Whether doing the dishes, chopping wood and carrying water or designing a product, Zen transforms seemingly mundane activities into a wholehearted performance and fully integrated whole.

As a mindfulness practice, organizational maintenance intensifies awareness, concentration and energy. This intensification brings to consciousness creative tensions and contradictions, amplifying them to such a degree that the drive towards unity becomes irrepressible. It is this drive towards unity which finds expression in and through art. Elaborating on this, clinical neurologist and long-time Zen practitioner, James Austin (1999), highlights that the Zen student encounters many seemingly contradictory elements which must ultimately be reconciled through awakening. Expanded awareness through Zen transcends “either/or” thinking by making an intuitive leap beyond the limits of reason and conventional logic.

D.T. Suzuki (1957), a noted scholar whose works first made Zen Buddhist philosophy accessible to the West states: “The Zen method of discipline generally consists in putting one in a dilemma, out of which one must contrive to escape, not through logic indeed, but through a mind of higher order.” Similarly, Thomas Merton (1968:140) asserts: “Zen implies a breakthrough, an explosive liberation from one-dimensional conformism, a recovery of unity which is not the suppressor of opposites but a simplicity beyond opposites.” Transcendence in Zen, however, is not an escape from existence, but of returning to way of being that is dynamically non-dualistic in thought and action — to see things as they actually are.

### **Zen Buddhism: A brief background**

Japanese Zen originated from the Chinese word *Ch’an*, which in turn was derived from a Sanskrit word, *dhyana*. Often translated as “meditative concentration,” *Ch’an* emerged in China — a movement that placed a great deal of emphasis on the experiential practice of sitting meditation (*zazen*) as a direct means to awakening to one’s true nature, which is beyond dualities. *Ch’an* Buddhism broke with both the Chinese literary tradition and the richly textured metaphysics of Indian Buddhism. Bodhidharma’s four famous points summarize the essence of Zen (Loori 2005:3):

Zen is a special transmission outside the scriptures,  
With no reliance on words and letters.  
A direct pointing to the human mind,  
And the realization of enlightenment.

Zen trains the mind to go beyond discriminative thinking, heightening aesthetic perception and sensory awareness. *Zazen* meditation is emphasized in the Soto Zen tradition, which is referred to as *shikantaza*, often translated as “just sitting.” While sitting in a meditative posture, the meditator focuses attention on the breath, or on the simplicity, naturalness and completeness of moment-to-moment experience. The way of practicing *zazen* has been described by 13<sup>th</sup> century Zen Master Dogen, founder of Soto Zen, as “thinking not-thinking” (Tanahashi 2004). While not suppressing thinking or discrimination, Zen aims to go beyond dualistic perception which depends on mental concepts as intermediary filters for making sense of and explaining reality. Thinking and ordinary discriminative mentation may occur, but there is no more chasing after thoughts — there is just thinking

happening, not “I am thinking” (Fisher 2004). The Rinzai Zen tradition, also sometimes referred to as the Sudden Enlightenment School, is known for its use of koans (e.g., “What is the sound of one hand clapping?”) which depict enlightenment experiences arising in an instant and amidst conversations, daily encounters and everyday activities. For Zen, wisdom or insight comes not from rational, intellectual analysis, but by heeding intuition and instincts (Hoover 1977).

While intellectual understanding cannot be a substitute for Zen practice, and descriptive statements regarding the aim and purpose of Zen are fraught with peril, it is safe to say that Zen awakening amounts to a radical discontinuity and liberation from the anxieties and fears bound up in our ego-structure. The foundation of Zen rests upon these four basic postulates:

1. The nature of reality is inherently nondual, undivided and a dynamic unity.
2. Clinging to the idea of a self that is separate from the world is the cause of pain, stress, misery and suffering.
3. Life and all phenomena, including the idea of a self, are impermanent, fleeting and lack an independent existence.
4. Through great effort and meditative concentration, it is possible to break the bondage of dualistic thinking that is rooted to an attachment to an illusory sense of self, awakening to a non-dualistic way of knowing/being.

The *Ch’an* and Zen literature depicts its masters as earthy, iconoclastic, irreverent, and spontaneously expressive. As Herschock (2005) states:

In the practice of *Ch’an*, the hallmark of excellence is not the ability to transmit a fixed canon or act according to set customs and principles. It is unprecedented and yet skilled immediacy or improvisational genius (p.2).

A unique aspect of the Zen tradition is an ongoing creative tension between rigorous discipline/structure and its spirit of unconventional irreverence. As a historical institution, Zen is regimented and sober, while at the same time incredibly iconoclastic and creative. Many stories in the Zen literature depict its masters as defying convention — cutting off fingers and slicing cats in half, kicking pitchers, grabbing noses of students — in flagrant disregard of monastic discipline and etiquette. Heine (2005) identifies this as the structure/anti-structure polarity in Zen. Similarly, Cox (2003) characterizes the unique institutional arrangements of Zen as optimizing a dialectical tension between the ascetic and the aesthetic. Zen has been organized as a strict and orthodox hierarchy, spawning structured monastic boot camps for the disciplined practice of meditation, yet these same Zen temples became artistic hothouses for Japanese artist-monks during the height of the Kamakura period (1192-1333) (Hisamatsu 1971:23).<sup>1</sup>

### **Zen arts as a state of mind**

The close alliance between Zen and the arts it inspired is based on the premise that the state of mind expressed in artistic creation is the same as that in meditation (Dumoulin 2002). It is in this connection that we see a direct correlation between the register of aesthetics and of states of mind (Cox 2003:76). Ultimately, it is not the performance of the technique that produces aesthetic value, but the quality of attention that is brought to bear on the activity (Cox 2003). In this way, performance and accomplishment in the Zen arts reflect a state of mind, rather than rank, status or authority.

Classical Zen art forms — such as painting, calligraphy, tea ceremonies, poetry and landscape gardening — were seen as both expressions of, and aids to, an enlightened

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<sup>1</sup> In Japan, training in the tea ceremony is organized by the *iemoto* system of hierarchical organization and authority.

mind free of fetters and attachments. Indeed, many of the great Zen masters were also renowned calligraphers, poets, painters and musicians (Addiss 1989; Looi 2005; Waley 1922). According to John Daido Looi (2005:5), a contemporary Zen Buddhist master in both the Rinzai and Soto traditions (as well as an award winning photographer) Zen training and art practice were intermingled. He suggests, "Zen arts, creativity and realized spirituality were seen as inseparable, and a Zen aesthetic developed which expressed eternal truths about the nature of reality and our place in the universe." As a countercultural movement which gave little credence to scholastic or pedantic expositions, Zen monks embraced the role of art as a means by which profound spiritual truths could be expressed. Arthur Waley (1922:22), an early Western scholar of Zen art, viewed these artistic practices as a way to "annihilate Time and see the Universe not split up into myriad fragments, but in its primal unity."

Aligned with this search for unity, Zen draws no distinctions between the sacred and the profane. A famous Zen pronouncement, "ordinary mind is the way," implies an artistry in the midst of mundane activities (Low 2008). Zen practice is not limited to sitting on the meditation cushion, but embraces the whole of life. Such a broad formulation of mindfulness is based on a somatic philosophy of non-dualism, or "body mind oneness" (*shinshinichinyo*) and concentrated unselfconscious activity elicited through a disciplined practice (Juniper 2003). Through repeated engagement in Zen practice, the person is able to loosen the dominance of the ego, and in essence, become one with the activity. In Zen, the overturning of the ego which results in such awakening is called *mushin*, or "no mind." According to D.T. Suzuki (1957), Zen art arises from "no mind," a condition of *muga* (no self/ego), which takes the form of an unmediated expressive act. In this respect, Zen-inspired art is considered aleatoric in its modality, rejecting deliberate composition and tradition-bound representation, in favor of spontaneity, chance, and indeterminacy (Levine 2008).

In the Zen-inspired arts, there is a paradox: intensive practice is required on the part of the artist, but the self cannot be in control or perceive itself as the doer of the activity. Hitting the target is not the goal. Instead, Zen values that side of life that is outside of conscious control and beyond the confines of the intellect. The techniques of the Zen arts have often been dubbed the "art of the artless," valuing what Hasegawa (see Watts 1957a) called "controlled accidents." As Juniper (2003:92) points out, "the role of the artist is that of medium rather than individual. ... It is therefore the spirit of the artist at the moment of performance that is the criteria by which art is judged in Japan."

Perhaps the first Western account of this practice is Eugene Herrigel's (1953) *Zen in the Art of Archery*. In this book, Herrigel, a German philosophy professor, tells the story of how he tried to understand Zen by spending five years just learning to draw the bow and release it without conscious intention or mental deliberation. The instrumental goal of hitting the target was completely irrelevant to the art. Indeed, the art could only be expressed if archer and the bow were in harmony, and only if the bow could "shoot itself" (Watts 1957b). D.T. Suzuki, in the introduction to Herrigel's book, differentiates the uniqueness of all the Zen arts as "they are not intended for utilitarian purposes only or for pure aesthetic enjoyments, but are meant to train the mind; indeed, to bring it into contact with the ultimate reality" (Herrigel 1953:1).

### **Zen arts and aesthetic principles**

In this section, the classical Zen arts — the tea ceremony (*chadō*), calligraphy, sumi-e and zenga painting (*shōdō*), Haiku poetry (*kadō*), and traditional landscape design — are explored as a means to illustrate the aesthetic principles at play in these forms. Appreciating the aesthetic principles at work in the Zen arts provides a window to the unselfconscious felicity and creative expression that is at the heart of organizational maintenance. Such aesthetic appreciation can facilitate new insights which emerge from preconscious intuitions that operate below the threshold of consciousness.

Zen and the arts it inspired permeated Japanese society, giving rise to a distinct aesthetic mindset known as *wabi sabi*. Although a full treatment of this notoriously elusive term is not possible here, *wabi sabi* is often articulated as an indigenous, elusive, and ambivalent feeling by most Japanese. Leonard Koren (2008:7), a Western architect who studied in Japan, notes that it is typically described as “a beauty of things imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete.” While there are many varied translations and interpretations of *wabi sabi*, Juniper (2003:51) best encapsulates it in the following definition:

Wabi-sabi is an intuitive appreciation of a transient beauty in the physical world that reflects the irreversible flow of life in the spiritual world. It is an understated beauty that exists in the modest, rustic, imperfect, or even decayed, an aesthetic sensibility that finds a melancholic beauty in the impermanence of all things.

The spirit of Zen was infused into artistic crafts (*kōgei*) and fine arts (*bijutsu*), known as *dō* (Tao), or ‘the Way’ and included calligraphy, zenga (painting), rock gardening and architecture, archery, and poetry were used as vehicles for communicating spiritual insights in action (Yoshizawa 2009). Through art, the subtle and wordless insights could be transmitted from mind-to-mind — rather than merely explained. In fact, Zen’s notion of “special transmission” legitimized the appropriation of what were once ordinary activities, such as drinking tea or archery, and elevated them to embodied spiritual forms of artistic expression. The Zen artist also placed a great emphasis on understanding the inner nature of the aesthetic object, its “Buddha nature.” While technique is important, the actual execution of the art work may be startlingly spontaneous, once the artist has comprehended the essence of his subject (Lieberman 2012).

The classical Zen arts are presented below as a series of appreciations, along with a short commentary on their main aesthetic principles. Decoding the aesthetic principles operative in the Zen arts provides a way to understand how these principles take form in the art of organizational maintenance. Numerous art historians and Zen Buddhist scholars have theorized the aesthetic principles that are characteristic of Zen art (Addiss 1989; Levine 2008; Munsterberg 1961; Sharf 2007; Suzuki 1959; Waley 1922; Watts 1957a). My analysis draws primarily from Hisamatsu’s (1971:23-38) classic and widely-read *Zen and the Fine Arts*, in which seven aesthetic principles are elucidated as descriptive inherent in Zen art:

1. Fukinsei/Mu-ho. (Asymmetry/No rule).
2. Kanso/Mu-zatsu. (Simplicity/No complexity).
3. Koko/Mu-i. (Austere sublimity/No rank).
4. Shizen/Mu-shin (Naturalness/No mind).
5. Yugen/Mu-tei (Subtle profundity/No bottom).
6. Daisuzoku/Mu-tei (Freedom from attachment/No hindrance),
7. Sei-Jaku/Mu-do (Tranquility/No stirring).<sup>2</sup>

Hisamatsu maintains these aesthetic principles are different ways of expressing a recognition of the “formless self,” or “emptiness.” This recognition is called *satori*, awakening, or true self-awareness, where body and mind fall away (Martin 2011). In theory, all of these aesthetic principles are interrelated, and, are to various degrees, present in all of the Zen arts. However, different arts tend to emphasize some of the aesthetic principles more than others. This is illustrated in the following descriptions of key Zen arts.

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<sup>2</sup>Hisamatsu’s theory of Zen art does not pay sufficient attention to the meditative state of the artist, which, as Suzuki emphasized, relies tremendously on *mushin*, or No Mind.

### *Chadō (The way of tea)*

#### Key Aesthetic Principles:

- (Kanso) Expressing the most with the least. Beauty in elegant simplicity.
- (Yugen) Subtle profundity.
- (Sei-Jaku) Tranquility. Appreciating quiet calm, serenity and harmony.

The tea ceremony (*cha-no-yu*) has had a profound influence on Japanese culture and aesthetics. The principle of simplicity is at the foundation of the Zen aesthetic. Hisamatsu (1971:30) characterizes *kanso* (simplicity) as “being sparse, not cluttered.” The tea ceremony integrates many of the Zen arts: architecture, flower arranging, landscape gardening, ceramics, and metalwork. Tea, of course, was imported into Japan in the 9<sup>th</sup> century by monks for use as a stimulant during their long meditation periods. Eisai is credited with creating the monastic tea ceremony. However, it wasn’t until the 16<sup>th</sup> century, by the time the Zen arts were flourishing, that Senru Rikyu (1518-1591) refined the tea ceremony into a secular offering for the Samurai and Shogun.



**Figure 1. A Traditional Japanese Tea House (photo credit, Mayo Patel)**

The traditional tea ceremony is a vehicle for exploring a spiritual sense of beauty. It takes place inside a very small hut with paper shoji walls and a thatched roof. Within it are a small alcove, a fire pit, two small tatami straw mats, usually one scroll with calligraphy, and a simple flower arrangement. The implements used have a rustic and simple character. Both the setting and the ritual are designed to evoke a sense of reverential simplicity. In this way it is surely a *wabi-sabi* environment that exudes a feeling of caring, quality and appreciation of ordinary, everyday things. Maximum effect with the minimum means (May 2009) is achieved in such a setting. Chadō also exemplifies the principle of *sei-jaku* (tranquility), creating a setting that facilitates a tranquil and harmonious atmosphere that would “guide the guests from their everyday mindset into a special state of consciousness” (Tadashi and Yu 2011:7).

### *Sumi'e painting, Zenga and calligraphy*

#### Key Aesthetic Principles:

- (Shizen) Spontaneous over deliberate; avoidance of contrivance and premeditated behavior; absence of pretense.

- (Mushin) Unforced creative intent.
- (Koko) Austere sublimity. Restraint. Not adding what is not needed. Embracing space.

Japanese painters were heavily influenced by Chinese ink paintings (*sumi'e*). D.T. Suzuki (1959) suggested that *sumi'e* (ink pictures) were a means through which the painter could spontaneously capture on paper his state of *mushin* (no mind), without the intrusion of logic or deliberation. Hisamatsu (1971) articulates *mushin* as "naturalness," also likening it to such terms as "unrestrained" or "no intent." It is interesting to point out that Chinese classical studies integrated writing, poetry and painting. The role of the Chinese scholar was that of a generalist scholar-artist (Watts 1957b). Zen monks emulated many of the aesthetic principles utilized among Chinese painters in the height of the Sung dynasty. These paintings were primarily of landscapes, depicting their feelings of naturalness towards mountains, trees, mists, waters and birds. However, the most distinct aspect of these paintings was their appreciation for space — and the relative emptiness of the picture. Suzuki (1959:309) noted in his later work that the *sumi'e* artist was unique in giving "form to what has no form." Appreciation of space is an expression of *koko*, the aesthetic principle which values restraint, exclusion, omission and is what May (2010) has termed a "subtractive approach."

An aesthetic appreciation of space in the Zen sense is very different than Western conceptions of space as simply being a lifeless container for objects. As Herrigel (1953) describes it:

Space in Zen painting is forever unmoved and yet in motion, it seems to live and breathe, it is formless and empty and yet the source of all form, it is nameless and yet the reason why everything has a name. Because of it things have absolute value, are all equally important and meaningful, exponents of the universal life that flows through them (69).

The accommodating character and active expression of space in Chinese and Japanese landscape paintings also exhibits an active and inclusive engagement of the observer. In contrast, Western landscape paintings utilize unambiguous modes of linear perspective that posit a clear division between the observer and the observed, locating the viewer in a definite position outside of the painting (Purser 2000). In Chinese and Japanese landscape paintings, it is hard to locate the position of the observer (see Figure 2).



**Figure 2. Chiang Yee's *Cows in Derwentwater* from *The Silent Traveller, A Chinese Artist in Lakeland*, first published in London in 1937.**



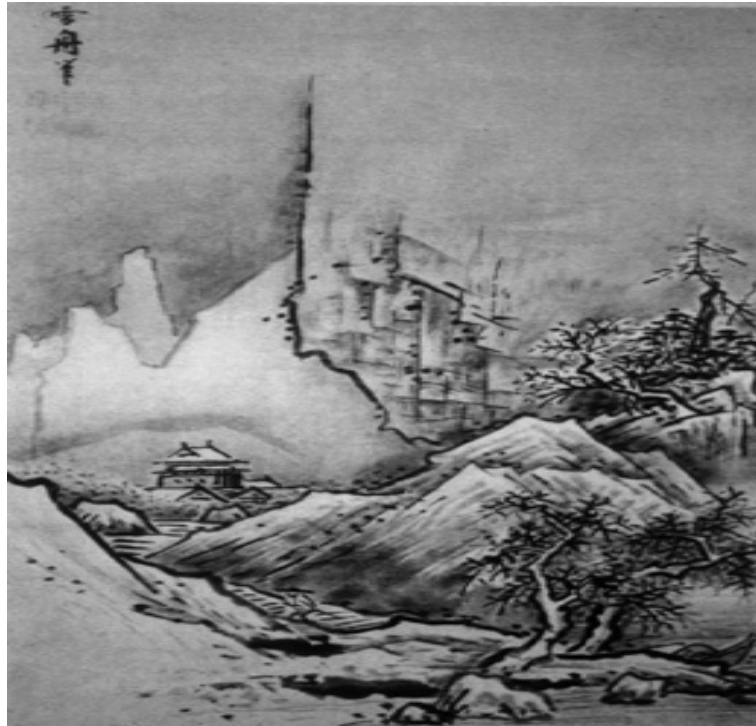
Instead, space is utilized to accommodate the viewer as being within the scene, reflecting the feelings of intimacy and at-oneness with nature on the part of the artist (Barrow 1995). Underscoring this important role of space, Watts (1957) states:

The secret lies in knowing how to balance form with emptiness and, above all, in knowing when one has "said" enough. For Zen spoils neither the aesthetic shock nor the *satori* shock by filling in, by explanation, second thoughts, and intellectual commentary. Furthermore, the figure so integrally related to its empty space gives the feeling of the "marvelous Void" from which the event suddenly appears (179).

Another contrast between Western visual art and *sumi'e* paintings is the degree of spontaneity required in their execution. The use of oil-based paints allows Western artists to revise and complete their works over long periods of time. This can also lead to a quest for realism and perfection in representing images. In contrast, the use of Chinese black ink on silk or thin paper has to be executed in a single stroke of the brush, emphasizing a spontaneous and free movement of the hand. Premeditation, hesitancy, or any afterthought would immediately show. Noting the importance of this, Watts states, "... it is a perfect instrument for the expression of unhesitating spontaneity, and a single stroke is enough to 'give away' one's character to an experienced observer (178)." According to Looi (2005), there is a close connection between the mind of liberation attained in Zen and how it is expressed through the spontaneous action of the master-artist. Spontaneity relates to art in which there is no artificiality or contrivance. The focus is less on technique than on demonstrating one's level of practice through spontaneous capture, authentic presence, and embodied artistic expressions.

Art that is natural expresses the artist's direct experience of reality, the multiplicity of the universe that each one of us experiences every moment, without self-consciousness (Looi 2005:183). This is especially true for Zenga painting where the brushstrokes are very expressive and pronounced, ranging from delicate detail to powerful, bold outlines. Zenga and calligraphy visually demonstrate the aesthetic value of *fukinsei* — the imperfect, asymmetrical, and the so-called "controlled accidents" that are the result of stray brush lines and uneven inking of the paper. The symmetrical harmony apparent in nature is expressed through asymmetrical and incomplete renderings; Zen arts rely on the power of suggestion and for the viewer to fill in the missing symmetry (May 2010).

One of the most notable artists who mastered this style was Zen monk Sesshu (1421-1506), who was well known for Zenga paintings that captured the evanescence of the changing four seasons (see Figure 3).

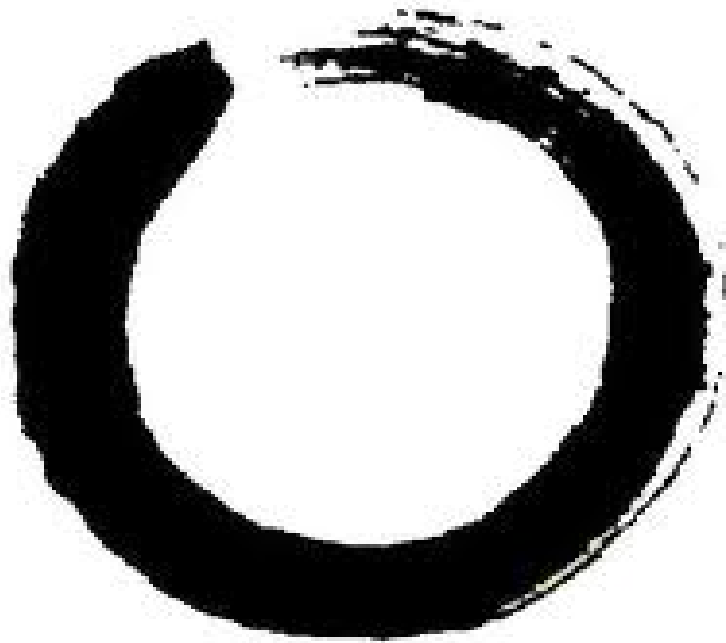


**Figure 3. Sesshu, Winter Landscape.**

Recognizing the spiritual significance of zenga, Loori (2005) states:

Zenga art is asymmetrical, without regular, recognizable geometrical shapes to anchor our eye. The brush lines are usually jagged, gnarled, irregular, twisting, dashing, sweeping. Zenga is bold and immediate, and almost always created spontaneously, in a single breath. In many cases, a zenga painting acts as a visual koan or sermon whose teaching is offered through very concise, direct pointing (176).

One of the most common images in zenga paintings is the *ensō*, or circle (see Figure 4). Note that the circle is almost always drawn in a rather eccentric and irregular way, denoting incompleteness and imperfection. As a symbol of unity and wholeness in Zen, the *ensō* is drawn to express the "perfection of imperfection," the naturalness of the ordinary, and in this way points to the "living circle" that is organic, dynamic and continuously changing.



**Figure 4. A Zen Ensō.**

### *Zen Poetry and Haiku*

#### Key Aesthetic Principles:

- (Daisuzoku) Freedom from habit or formula. Non-attachment. Freshness. Beginner's mind.

There are many aesthetic similarities between ink painting and Zen poetry/Haiku. As an art of expressing the inexpressible, the "wordless poetry" of Zen is known for what it does not say and for what it omits or leaves out. The artistic vision of Zen poets is similar to their ink painting counterparts in that space is accentuated both in the outward expression and inward form of the poems. In the 11<sup>th</sup> century, many Zen poets took their inspiration from Chinese couplets. Noting this aesthetic similarity, Watts (1957b) points out:

In poetry the empty space is the surrounding silence which a two-line poem requires—a silence of the mind in which one does not "think about" the poem but actually feels the sensation which it evokes—all the more strongly for having said so little (183).

Communications between Zen teachers and their disciples are well known for their radical directness and pithy expressions. Poetry was integral to the study of koans in the Zen tradition. This form of "wordless" poetry evolved into what is now recognized as Haiku. The 17<sup>th</sup> century Zen teacher credited with developing and popularizing Haiku as a Zen literary art is Matsuo Basho<sup>3</sup>. His best known Haiku poem was a response to his Zen teacher who posed the following question as the two of them were sitting in a garden: "What is the reality prior to the greenness of moss?" Meditating on the question, Basho (Dumoulin 2002:83) spontaneously composed the following verse:

<sup>3</sup> Basho was actually known for the longer *renga* verses that he composed. *Hokku* were referred to as "starting verses."

The ancient pond,  
A frog leaps in,  
The sound of water.

Basho's poem reveals an aesthetic where one's entire sense-field and body/mind is inseparable from nature and imbued with the immediacy of this "live moment." It is a poetic expression of an unmitigated apperception that is direct, intimate, and expressive of an acute sensual experience. This form of perceptual awareness is also called "bare" or naked attention, or moment-to-moment attentiveness — or "mindfulness" — to whatever is happening, without habitual discriminative thinking and its associated emotional reactions. Describing the Zen "no mind" entry to composing Haiku, Looi (2005) states:

To write haiku, to become this intimate with the moment, the poet must completely disengage, if only for an instant, all of her interpretive faculties. The mind must become one with the world, a detail of the world — the splash, a peach blossom, a neon sign flashing along the highway, the sound of a mountain stream. The poet's craft has to slip through the intellectual filters and instinctively record the image that has been perceived. As Basho said, "In writing, do not let a hair's breadth separate you from the subject. Speak your mind directly; go to it without wandering thoughts." For an instant, the artist opens to the ineffable truth of Zen. With the self out of the way, the world advances a step (219).

Haiku poetry illustrates Zen's valuing of direct, embodied, and lived experience over intellectual concepts and philosophizing.

#### *Traditional Japanese landscape garden*

Key Aesthetic Principle:

- (Fukinsei) Valuing of imperfection and asymmetry. Minimalist control; designing and harmonizing with nature. Not resisting the natural flows and changes of nature.

The compositional arrangements of Zen gardens also follow many of the aesthetic design principles that have been outlined in other Zen arts. The aesthetic values of Zen gardens are in complete contrast to European garden designs which utilize ornate, symmetrical and decorative imitations, or strive for a realistic illusion of a landscape (Maruyama 1992; 1993). Asymmetry and incompleteness are used as suggestive devices, prodding the viewer to supply the missing symmetrical harmony. Zen gardens also take their initial inspiration from the principles of Chinese landscape paintings. The use of large, solitary rocks surrounded by a sea of gravel, for instance, evokes the viewer's active involvement in appreciating the garden as a microcosmic metaphor for the universe. With its use of stark and limited materials, Zen gardens are also a perfect expression of wabi-sabi, offering a minimalist suggestion of "mountains and water" in a very small space (Slawson 1987).

Zen garden design also is reflective of "no mind" (*mushin*) aesthetic principle. The design of a Zen garden is not about the imposition of the gardener's own ideas and intentions, but is intended to follow the design principles already inherently present in nature (Tamura 1935). The aesthetic conservation of naturalness in Zen gardens, along with their adherence to minimalist simplicity, allows the viewer's imagination and sense of wonder to flourish. Zen gardens are places for deepening contemplation, not for passive adulation of the designer's artistry. In this way Zen garden design not only mirrors the spiritual truths discovered and realized from the practice of Zen, but intentionally elevates the role of the viewer as an active agent in co-realizing aesthetic beauty.

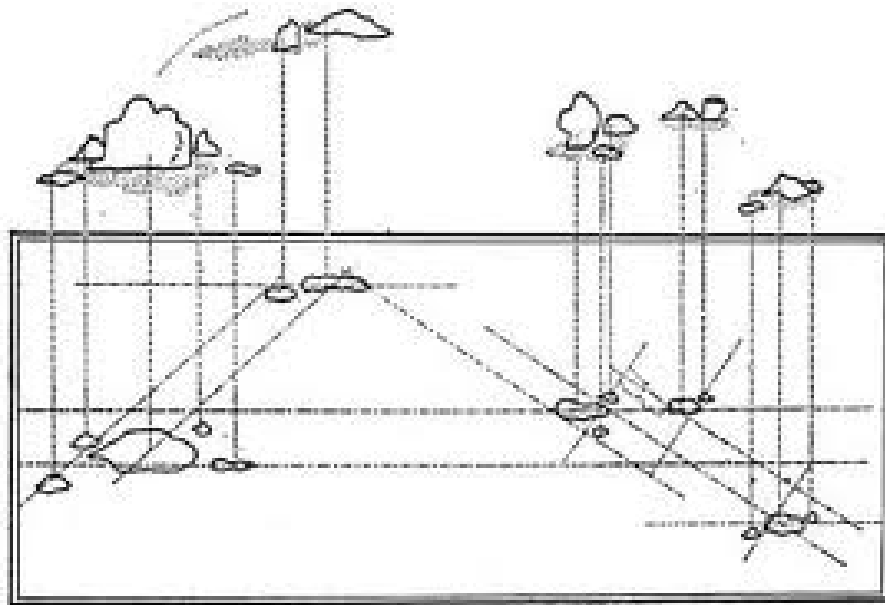
The most famous Zen garden, which has been the subject of innumerable interpretations, is the Ryoanji garden adjacent to a Rinzai Zen temple complex just north of Kyoto City. Originally built in 1450, it was reconstructed in 1486 after a fire. Ryoanji is relatively small rock garden, 10 x 30 meters in size (see Figure 5 below), consisting of 15 rocks of various sizes and shapes that sit arranged in raked grey gravel. The garden is backed by a low stone wall along the perimeter, and is open to the southern side of the main temple hall's wooden veranda. There is no plant life introduced into the garden itself except for the moss that grows by the base of the rocks.



**Figure 5 The Ryôan-ji Zen garden.**

The viewer is immediately impressed by how the rocks are situated within the great expanse of gravel. For some, the rocks symbolize mountains or clouds; the raked gravel, the sea or space. These common interpretations are consonant with the preponderance of mountains and water in Chinese and Japanese landscape paintings.

McGovern (2004) suggests that there is much more at play at Ryoanji than merely being a coy representation of a "landscape-in-miniature." Rather, McGovern examines the deeper meaning of Ryoanji garden by reading it as a text. Texts are not limited to linguistic modes of communications. In other words, signs act as texts which are materially encoded. Different semiotic modes, as McGovern (2004:345) points out — such as "textures, colors, spatial elements and visual composition are all interactional elements which carry specific meanings and activate different dimensions of sensory experience".



**Figure 6. Diagonal line vectors at Ryoanji Zen garden.**

McGovern maintains that Ryoanji makes distinctive use of semiotic materials, and he attempts to discern how this “garden-as-text” is composed artistically by analyzing its modes of lines and spatial configurations (see Figure 6). According to McGovern, communication of Zen sensibilities at Ryoanji are inscribed into a topographical textual form which can be discerned through the relationship between lines and texture. For example, at Ryoanji, no one particular rock or rock configuration is the central object of focus. Instead of fixating on any one particular rock, attention is directed to the relationship between rocks as form, and gravel as space or emptiness. The eye is led into the interaction between form (positive space) and emptiness (negative space), a central tenet of Buddhist insight. McGovern also describes how the topographical placement of the rocks as visual units is suggestive of a correspondence to the organization of written language. The repetitive ordering and regulated visual arrangement of the rocks emulates rhythm and a sense of movement in time. McGovern even sees a direct correspondence of metric patterning in Haiku with way the clusters of rocks at Ryoanji are organized. Calling attention to this, McGovern (2004) states:

Haiku are thus based on phrasing and timing. The Ryoan-ji garden and haiku are both organized in terms of metric units. The garden does this through cluster of rocks configured in visual space. The haiku does this through speech sound configured in rhythmic time. Both garden and haiku place strong emphasis on measured units and realize this in corresponding ways (353).

Ryoanji can also be viewed as visually expressing a koan, since not all of the rocks are visible from any one angle of vision (McGovern 2004). This is interesting given the fact that Ryoanji is part of a Rinzai Zen temple, the Zen sect that emphasizes koan study as a way of practice. McGovern goes into great detail in decoding the visually semiotic organizing principles and constituency patterns as materially encoded at Ryoanji, but space limitations prevents further elaboration here.

### **Steve Jobs, Zen aesthetics and the artistry of organizational maintenance**

The aesthetic principles evoked by the Zen arts are the byproducts of intensified concentration, mindful attention, and enhanced sensory awareness. Embodied and expressed in spontaneous and uncontrived action — whether it be the stroke of an ink pen of the master calligrapher, the graceful movements of sipping tea, or the poetic utterances of immediacy — the Zen arts are unconventional ways of teaching and radically

performative. Moreover, because Zen maintains that spiritual awakening can occur outside of formal meditation practice, and is not dependent upon “words and letters,” the aesthetic dimension is considered an important vehicle for enhancing awareness. Taylor and Hansen (2005) argue that organizational aesthetics has a normative-value dimension — that of enhancing the quality and sensory experiences of organizational life. In this connection, an appreciation and understanding of Zen aesthetic principles can inspire the states of mind conducive to enhancing the quality of attention and design sensibilities in organizations.

This artistry draws inspiration from Zen and its aesthetics as an ideal for organizational maintenance. While this may seem elusive and ethereal, the artistry of organizational maintenance can be seen at work in the late Steve Jobs, co-founder and former CEO of Apple. It is well known that Zen had a profound and deep influence on Jobs. He credited his years of Zen training as having a direct influence on his design sensibilities, style of decision making and way of thinking. When he was nineteen Jobs met Shunryu Suzuki, founder of the San Francisco Zen Center and author of *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*. For many years after, Jobs studied with Kobun Chino Otogawa, head teacher of the Haiku Zendo in Los Altos, and attended retreats (*sesshins*) at Tassajara, a monastery east of Big Sur in the Ventana wilderness. Reflecting on his encounter with Zen, Jobs stated, “I began to realize that an intuitive understanding and consciousness was more significant than abstract thinking and intellectual logical analysis” (Isaacson 2011:35).

At Reed College, Jobs audited a course on calligraphy, and later took lessons from Kobun Chino (Mebly 2012). Jobs attributed his love of typefaces and creation of the unique fonts for the Macintosh to his exposure to calligraphy. Commenting on his appreciation for Zen aesthetics, Jobs noted, “I have always found Zen Buddhism, Japanese Zen Buddhism in particular to be aesthetically sublime. The most sublime thing I have ever seen are the gardens around Kyoto. I am deeply moved by what that culture has produced, and it's directly from Zen Buddhism” (Isaacson 2011:128).

A famous photograph taken by Diane Walker of Jobs in his Woodside, California home (circa 1982) reveals many of the Zen aesthetic principles discussed above (see Figure 7). The photo shows Jobs sitting in his sparse and simple living room with a cup of tea, resembling the simplicity and austerity of the Japanese tea house.



**Figure 7.**Jobs at his home in Woodside, CA (circa 1982). Photo credit: Diane Walker.

Jobs' love for simplicity and minimalism was reflected in his subtractive approach in both design and product development. "Deciding what *not* to do is as important as deciding what to do," Jobs remarked. Furthermore he suggested, "That's true for companies, and it's true for products"(quoted in Isaacson 2011:336). For example, Jobs eschewed on/off power buttons on Apple products and even removed buttons on elevators in multilevel Apple stores. Noting this obsession with simplicity, Isaacson (2011:389) states: "The most Zen of all simplicities was Jobs' decree, which astonished his colleagues, that the iPod would not have an on-off switch. It became true of most Apple devices." Jobs also insisted that the iPhone not include a keyboard. He pressured his product design team to simplify song selection, resulting in the elegant trackwheel on the iPod (which coincidentally resembles the Zen *ensō* circle). Jobs personally became involved in the architectural design of the new Apple campus, an engineering feat of circular glass panels (see Figure 8).



**Figure 8. Aerial view of Apple's proposed new headquarters in Cupertino, California. (Courtesy Foster & Partners)**

Jobs was also notorious for his disdain of PowerPoint presentations, and he eventually banned them from taking place at product review meetings. Recalling a memorable and important meeting regarding the design of the iPod, product engineer Tony Faddel said, "Steve prefers to be in the moment, talking things through. ... If you need slides, it shows you don't know what you're talking about" (quoted in Isaacson 2011:387). After Amelio's departure from Apple, Jobs as iCEO discovered there were nearly twelve different versions of the Macintosh, identifiable through complicated product numbering schemes. Jobs axed 70% of the models and products, simplified the product marketing strategy by killing printers and the Newton — and refocused the product line down to four computers. This became an institutionalized mantra at Apple, with Jobs insisting that product development limit and restrain its focus to just two or three priorities at a time (Isaacson 2011:460). With the iPhone product launch, Jobs utilized the subtle profundity principle by not engaging in the usual marketing hype that occurs prior to a new product release. After his typically mesmerizing product demo talk at Macworld 2007, there was no publicity, no demos for technology reviewers, and no ads (May 2009). Instead, the absence and silence led to the power of suggestion, with bloggers and fans filling in the void.

Jobs saw both himself and his engineers as artists. His passion was emblematic as he insisted Apple products not be merely great, but "insanely great." His style was notoriously uncompromising. Indeed, Jobs' credo "Don't compromise," reflected his



unwillingness to settle for unattractive trade-offs. In many ways, Jobs intensity and style was not all that different from many Zen masters who were uncompromising and demanding of their students.

The artistry of organizational maintenance is in transcending such contradictions and complexities through an intuitive leap that results in creative resolution and more elegant order. It is no secret that Jobs was a creative, complex personality and a bundle of contradictions. Psychological research on the creative personality suggests that individuals (such as Jobs) face an inner multitude of tensions, polarized traits and opposing impulses (Barron 1990; Csikzentmihalyi 1996; Hampden-Turner 1999). Jobs' unremitting passion and care for Apple's products and the user experience was not only an artistic expression, but a form of Zen practice — an alchemical means of reconciling the inner tensions within himself (Kahney 2009). In his final reflections for his authorized biography, Jobs asserted:

My passion has been to build an enduring company where people were motivated to make great products. Everything else was secondary. Sure, it was great to make a profit, because that is what allowed you to make great products. But the products, not the profits, were the motivation (Isaacson 2011:567).

Summarizing the role Zen played in Jobs' outlook, Isaacson states:

He attributed his ability to focus and love of simplicity to his Zen training. It honed his appreciation for intuition, showed him how to filter out anything that was distracting or unnecessary, and nurtured in him an aesthetic based on minimalism. Unfortunately his Zen training never quite produced in him a Zen-like calm or inner serenity, and that too is part of his legacy. (564).

Les Kaye, the head teacher of Kannon Do Zen Meditation Center, practiced Zen with Jobs in the early days. "He got to the aesthetic part of Zen — the relationship between lines and spaces, the quality and craftsmanship," Kaye said. "But he didn't stay long enough to get the Buddhist part, the compassion part, the sensitivity part" (Burke 2011:1).

### **Final reflections**

The artistry of organizational maintenance is expressed in the acts of recovering and recognizing wholeness and non-duality, or what Pirsig refers to as "Quality". In the case of Jobs, both his Zen training and appreciation of the Zen aesthetic manifested as intuition of Quality, expressed outwardly in his genius for product elegance and design simplicity. The experience of Quality is ineffable — beyond words and prior to the division of subject-perceiving-object. Quality is non-dual; it is neither subjective nor objective, yet both subjects and objects depend upon Quality. The Zen arts show that the aesthetic experience of Quality can be one of high resolution and great depth, which points to an experience of ineffability.

Taking a cue from Pirsig's motorcycle journey, the narrator appears to have a major epiphany concerning Quality in daily life. Tracing his steps, the narrator states:

So I backed up and shifted to the classic-romantic split that I think underlies the whole humanist-technological problem. But that too required a backup into the meaning of Quality. ... But now we have with us some concepts that greatly alter the whole understanding of things. Quality is the Buddha. Quality is scientific reality. Quality is the goal of all Art. It remains to work these concepts into a practical, down-to-earth context, and for this there is nothing more practical or down-to-earth than what I have been talking about all along — the repair of an old motorcycle (Pirsig 1974:282).

In this passage the narrator reframes what was initially considered an abstract understanding of the meaning of Quality. He does so by appreciatively attending to the ordinary, down-to-earth, and simple work of maintaining an “old motorcycle.” Quality, its deepest meaning and expression, is to be found at the task at hand — in the seemingly mundane activity of motorcycle repair. Jobs expressed a strong belief in the union of technology and the humanities, which resonates with Pirsig’s insight that the split between classic and romantic knowledge is illusory.

Albert Low (1976), in his classic book, *Zen and Creative Management*, also seems to be pointing to a practice for recovering a lost wholeness, or non-duality:

Many would say that if only they could become better managers, their lives would be more meaningful. It would be truer to say that if we could find our true meaning, we would stand a chance of becoming better managers. Becoming a better manager would be a byproduct of a practice aimed at reaching the source of our most pressing need: the need to be whole and significant (Low 1976:xvii).

Low argues that managers must come to a deep intuitive insight and awareness — what Heidegger (1966;56) calls “meditative thinking” — if they are to realize that wholes are intrinsic, and that the complexity of a whole cannot be reduced without changing its nature. Zen Buddhism, Low suggests, can help managers to see the organic integrity of a concrete situation. And as Pirsig (1974) later reveals in his book:

The real cycle you’re working on is a cycle called yourself. The machine that appears to be ‘out there’ and the person that appears to be ‘in here’ are not two separate things. They grow toward Quality or fall away from Quality together (Pirsig 1974:293).

Pirsig and Low are confronting a primordial dilemma or paradox — the fusion of two incompatible frames of reference — an inclusive, all encompassing unity (Quality) coexisting simultaneously within the world of duality. Conventional logic would reject such a formulation since it is a logical contradiction to say that Oneness (Quality) is also two, or that unity is divided and dualistic.

According to Alexander (1979:26), “a system has quality when it is at one with itself; it lacks it when it is divided.”<sup>4</sup> Applied to architecture, for instance, quality is apparent in the design of homes, buildings, cities, and gardens “that make us feel most alive, most true to ourselves, the most unselfconscious, the most whole, the most complete, the most free” (Sheen 2011). This Quality aesthetic is grounded in felt, sensory experience. As Alexander argues, we can feel the “difference between good buildings and bad, good towns and bad.” Elaborating on this core aesthetic principle, Alexander states:

In the world of living things, every system can be more real or less real, more true to itself or less true to itself. It cannot become more true to itself by copying any externally imposed criterion of what it ought to be. ... This oneness, or the lack of it, is the fundamental quality for anything. Whether it is a poem, or a man, or in a building full of people, or in a forest, or a city, everything that matters stems from it. It embodies everything. *Yet still this quality cannot be named.* (Alexander 1979:28, italics in original).

In terms of organizational maintenance, this means that the development of products must emerge from an aesthetic appreciation of an organic unified whole — a deeply intuitive perception of Quality. Organizations are no different than well designed, good

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<sup>4</sup>Christopher Alexander is a renegade architect whose ideas have been rejected by the mainstream. His contention is that professional architects are contributing to human oppression by aligning themselves with developers whose main concern is efficiency and profit.

buildings which reflect this organic sense of authenticity. Another way of saying this is that organizations and the products they produce are expressions of Quality when they are in harmony with our true nature as human beings (Low 2008). Conversely, if we are divided against ourselves, inauthentic, and ignorant of the oneness of all life, Quality will be suppressed and fail to manifest. Organizational maintenance enables the perception and intuiting of Quality.

As Zen Master Nansen asserted, "Every day mind is the target and the way to the target" (Low 1985). The artistry of organizational maintenance begins by appreciating that any ordinary activity — whether simple or complex — can be approached as an art. Barry and Meisiek (2010) consider artistic experimentation as an advanced method for fostering mindfulness in everyday work life. Trusting intuition, acting spontaneously and decisively, and responding to challenges by being fully present to the circumstances are artistic expressions of Quality which can helpfully be applied to the organizational context.

In the spirit of Zen, the art of organizational maintenance might best be summarized by an image — the last of *The Oxherding Pictures*, "Entering the Market with Helping Hands" (see Senzaki and Reps, 1957). A classic Zen text from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, *The Oxherding Pictures* visually illustrate the journey towards the full experience of awakening (see Figure 9 below). The series of pictures provides a map of the spiritual journey for the lost ox and the fruition of such a search. The ox, of course, symbolizes our true nature and authentic self, or the Zen notion of "no mind."



**Figure 9. Tenth Ox Herding Picture: Entering the Market with Helping Hands.**  
(from Nyogen Senzaki and Paul Rep, *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*. Charles Tuttle).

The sage depicted in this picture has a belly protruding, symbolizing what D.T. Suzuki (1957) calls "diaphragmatic thinking" or "a sort of thinking which is done with the whole body or the whole person." Loori (2005) calls this form of thinking "working Samadhi," which is a mode of expression intrinsic to all of the Zen arts.

The tenth *Ox Herding* picture depicts the self-realized individual who is fully integrated, beyond all opposites, and able to freely relate to the situation at hand, that is, to live in

accordance with the flow of life — what Hershock (1996) refers to as “improvisational social virtuosity.” The verse associated with this ox herding picture reads:

At this ultimate stage of enlightenment, nobody, “even one thousand sages”, can tell any longer whether he is a fool or a clever man, and whether he is sacred or profane. To such an extent has he lost his own identity, whether he is enlightened or unenlightened, good or bad, male or female. In addition, he has completely deprived himself of his beauty gained at any cost. It does not matter to him at all now, if others call him a lunatic or a traitor. He is, therefore, no longer bound to external laws in his freedom, and no longer arrested by any moral codes in his self-liberation. He is capable of acting freely at will in accordance with his varying opportunities and circumstances without necessarily restricting himself to the “good examples set by his wise predecessors” (Senzaki and Reps 1957:252).

This brings us to the conjunction of the Zen arts and the art of organizational maintenance. As I have shown, the spirit of Zen was suffused in the various art forms — whether it be drinking tea, archery, painting, poetry, or landscaping. And just as in the maintenance of a motorcycle, or an organization, Zen awakening — or the deep intuition of “a Quality that cannot be named” — can occur amidst any mundane activity. The tenth ox-herding picture reminds us that the expression of Quality occurs in the marketplace, or in our case, in organizations. Further, Quality derives from a deep intuitive awareness that transcends rational logic, and which is why the mode of expression often disrupts convention and normal patterns of discourse (Heine 2005). Organizational maintenance is an art that enables the expression of Quality — even if such forms of expression appear initially “crazy.”

We have seen this vividly in the case of Steve Jobs, who learned to deeply trust his intuition and nurture his appreciation of the Zen aesthetic. For Jobs, staying true to his vision, and his demanding, uncompromising pursuit of “insanely great products” was his Zen practice. One could even surmise that without Jobs, Apple may not even exist today. Jobs was a master of organizational maintenance. Some critics, however, have questioned whether Jobs was a really a Zen student, given his notorious outbursts and allegedly mean-spirited temper. Contrary to popular opinion, Zen is not a practice of quiescence and passivity. Just as historical accounts show, Zen masters were also notorious for their eccentric behavior and irreverence toward conventional forms of structure. While I am not idolizing or suggesting Jobs was a Zen master, his example illustrates how the art of organizational maintenance is not bound by conventional rules of logic, but instead originates from the transcendent dimension of Quality, or in Zen terms, “No-Mind”.

I have offered a vision of organizational maintenance informed by Zen aesthetic principles as an approach capable of cultivating awareness that can embrace the whole, creatively reconciling the dynamic tensions that are seeking expression through growth and decay. This is an ongoing, natural Zen koan that all executives must face, whether they are aware of it or not. However, by growth, this does not mean simply expansion in size, but greater depth, meaning, and more degrees of freedom, as well as an expansion of human capacities. We see organic growth in nature all around us, which, was the subject of a great majority of the Zen arts. Every organism is willing itself, expressing its nature, growing and becoming more of itself if left unimpeded. Indeed, authentic growth — not maximization of profit — is the true nature of organizations.

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### **About the Author(s)**

Ronald E. Purser, Ph.D., is Professor of Management in the College of Business at San Francisco State University and past division chair of the Organization Development and Change division of the Academy of Management. He is co-author and co-editor of five books including, *The Search Conference* (Jossey-Bass, 1996), *Social Creativity, Volumes 1 & 2* (Hampton Press, 1999), *The Self-Managing Organization* (The Free Press, 1998), and *24/7: Time and Temporality in the Network Society* (Stanford University Press, 2007). His research areas include mindfulness in organizations, social creativity, Buddhist-inspired social theory, and time and temporality. His interest in Buddhism began in 1981 as a student at the Tibetan Nyingma Institute in Berkeley, and began formal Zen training under Sensei Ogui at the Cleveland Zen Center in 1985. Since then he has had studied with several Zen teachers, including Albert Low, Abbot of the Montreal Zen Center, Sensei Al Fusho Rapaport of Open Mind Zen, and is currently a student in the Korean Taego Zen Order, and the Institute for Buddhist Studies.