



The Well



west of mountains edition

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Autumn Greetings ~

The fall season brings us a lovely transition from summer exuberance to winter stillness. The quieting, turning inward of autumn allows for a shift, a change of perspective. It's a useful transition.

There have been a few changes in perspective since moving to Eastern Oregon. The feature article on *Images and Expectations* describes some of the highlights.

Another forthcoming change is that this will be the final paper version of *The Well* newsletter. Future issues will be sent by e-mail. They will also be posted to *SimplyTao.com* on the *Writing Archives* page.

If you would like to continue receiving this newsletter, please send a message with your e-mail address to me at kc97214@gmail.com. I will also send emails when I will be in Portland to see clients and have chi kung and meditation classes. The first visit will probably be in the next month or so, Friday through Sunday. I'm listening for the natural timing.

Small-town life agrees with me. The connection with nature: rivers, mountains, trees, sky; the slower pace, and the space. There is space out here; a lot of it. It has been a transformative and illuminating few months.

I am very appreciative and grateful for the opportunity to follow this calling. It's clear that this would not be possible without ongoing support from Portland friends who visit, order herbs and have Skype or phone consultations.

Thank you so much!

Cheers!

Kyle Chive, LMT

Images & Expectations

Mid October and second summer provides a few more river trips before season's end. Shorter days are offset by the quality of autumn sunlight - can it even be put into words? Golden rays slant through fall forest colors. Crisp, frosty pre-dawn air followed by T-shirt warm basking afternoons. There is a certain quietness not found in summer.

The last kayak trip was July 1st; it was 100 degrees. Then the river level dropped too low to boat. *I thought* the next journey would be in spring.

October 1st and there are faint callings, come out - the river is rising. Listening. Watching. Feeling the timing come together. Now, let's go.

Returning to the day trips done in spring, meeting old friends at each riverbend: osprey, eagle, kingfisher, trout, water, trees, sun, wind. They are all the autumn versions of what I remember. Essentially the same. Also, different.

Paddling through the Kimberly orchards in spring, trees flowering preparing to fruit. Now they are quiet, dropping leaves preparing to rest and rejuvenate.

The current is slower, hardly noticeable. With less water the bones of the river are more pronounced. Submerged boulders are now formidable gateways. In tricky places, the current weaves an unreadable, twisting path. There is much dancing with, among, bumping up against and off rocks. In very shallow areas, there is also running aground with much pushing, prying and leveraging of paddle, boat, rock and current. Not the *image* I have of kayaking. Definitely the reality of October on this river.

I fell in love with kayaking on the Willamette River. There it took some effort to hit a rock. There was a lot of dodging ocean freighters, barges, tugs, jet skis and dragon boats.

Here, kayaking is as much about rocks as it is water. On two dozen trips this year, I've yet to see another boat.

In Portland I often got on the river 2 to 3 times per week year-round. Here it is once every week or two for a few months in spring and fall. This is kayaking, that is my image. That is what I

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expected. This is what is happening.

A move this big and different is a lovely opportunity to observe images and expectations in operation. It is a very different climate, culture, landscape, sky.

I moved out here to continue kayaking. It's not the kayaking I imagined.

I bought a house to settle in and commit to this community. Within a few weeks a large wildfire came within a few hundred feet of engulfing this entire side of town.

I expected the myriad firefighting resources to contain the blaze. Only an unusual downpour of rain put the fire out.

The deep, indigo starlit sky - Milky Way galaxy splashed through the center - neutralizes any image or expectation.

I expected difficulties fitting in within a rural, very conservative culture. Daily, people say how much they appreciate my being here. My next-door neighbor is a County Commissioner and one of the most conservative, self-proclaimed redneck Republicans in Eastern Oregon. We get along just fine.

Sometimes, it feels a little like whiplash: image and expectations pulls one way, reality leaning in the opposite direction. Like two competing forces of gravity.

These are not new or novel observations on the nature of images and expectations. Many philosophies, religions and spiritual traditions (including Taoism and Buddhism) explore how *thinking* about life is not really what is going on.

Much, or all, of our life can be focused on images and expectations and the resulting reactions when we bump up against reality. Kind of like floating on a river and running into rocks. Hmm... curious.

When clearly seen in full operation, without trying or effort, images and expectations can subside - at least to the point of not interfering with the reality of the moment.

When that occurs, usually spontaneously, it feels a little like those slanting rays of sun, filtered through fall forest colors. There is a spark, a sparkle, a spaciousness to life that is inclusive, touching everything.

It happens easily and continuously everywhere: the Willamette Valley, the John Day Valley, Eastern Oregon, Western Oregon, city, rural, downtown, ranch.

I thought I'd be back in Portland in July, see clients/teach classes. Hmmm... it's now November.



I expected to drive to Bend once a month for groceries; haven't made it yet. Learning to shop at Chester's Thriftway, eat beef - first time in several decades. Wait a minute... eating beef is not the image I have of my *self*! It's tempting to resist... "but, I want Whole Foods, OG, vegan, raw, etc." The resistance doesn't seem as attractive anymore. Friends bring veggies, fresh caught salmon & elk. Letting go of the images, accepting reality.

I'm still sleeping outside, down to 20 degrees last week, several half-inch snowfalls. Little wind, though. This might be another expectation that bumps against reality soon.

I'm reminded of the story of Farmer Wu, who, whatever fortune arose - good or bad - responded with: *maybe, we'll see.*

It seems much easier to clearly see the nature of images and expectations minus any pronouns: I, my, me, mine.

This is *my* image of kayaking in a river.

I expected this to happen or not...

Without the gripping personal attachment, the clamping of self-identity onto, images and expectations are just that, only that. They seem to reduce in size a little, just enough that the brilliant clarity of the present moment's reality is obvious. No effort. No trying. Obvious.

I used to play piano at night, after work. Now I play first thing on rising, dawn spreading light, color, warmth across the valley. First snowfall blankets the valley white. A few deer finish the last crabapples. Two young bucks play push horns tai chi in the snowy backyard as music finds its own natural way.

That's the report from east of the mountains. The hay is baled and the cattle are in winter pasture. There's snow on Canyon, Aldrich and Strawberry mountains. The sun daily sinks a little

lower on the horizon on the way to winter solstice.

The first year goji berry plants are mulched. There may be time to build a few raised garden beds.

The river levels are rising, the temperatures are dropping. There might be another pilgrimage to the river before Thanksgiving.

Maybe, we'll see.

*gray, laden clouds infill valley spaces
snow showers canyon mountain
blue skies in the west
sun enlightens white landscape
and falling flurries*

