



Visitation  
in a  
Zen Garden

Karlyn M. Ward



## VISITATION IN A ZEN GARDEN

Karlyn M. Ward

il piccolo editions  
by



il piccolo editions by Fisher King Press

www.fisherkingpress.com

info@fisherkingpress.com

+1-831-238-7799

*VISITATION IN A ZEN GARDEN*

Copyright © 2010 Karlyn M. Ward

ISBN 978-1-926715-06-3

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system without permission in writing from the publisher.

Published simultaneously in Canada and the United States of America. For information on obtaining permission for use of material from this work, please submit a written request to:

permissions@fisherkingpress.com

Original version published in *Jung Journal: Culture and Psyche*, Winter 2010, Volume 4, Number 1, Published by UC Press, Berkeley, CA.

*This book documents a visitation in a zen garden, witnessed by the author and her husband, who until this time had thought of the garden as all their own. It links the visit with biology, behavior, wonder, and depth psychology.*

Distributed by

Fisher King Books

PO Box 222321

Carmel, CA 93922

+1-831-238-7799

1-800-228-9316 Toll Free Canada & USA

*For Dick  
longer than forever*

*This morning*

*The venerable old plum tree  
greet me this morning,  
her wizened arms  
full of buds  
as she shelters  
the teahouse Dick built,  
the teahouse quietly nestled  
next to the stone lantern  
that is man,  
and overlooking the zen pond  
where the koi live  
that only we can see~~  
in the backyard universe  
created by our local creator,  
with the earth-stone  
opposite the man-stone,  
and the wooden bridges where  
the zen stream flows out,  
and the heaven-stone,  
now framed by the Torii gate  
into the spiritual realm.*

*Sometimes when I see this creator  
in his garden  
I think this is how the creative force must be,  
surveying his kingdom,  
planting, tending, nurturing, pruning,  
and knowing  
the cycles of its life.*

*kmw 2/14/08*



A zen garden is a sacred, meditative, and symbolic space—a microcosm representing the world. Every detail is meant to quiet the soul. Stepping stone paths and tiny bridges are deliberate means of slowing one down to enhance the meditative experience. In many such gardens, the whole garden cannot be viewed from a single vantage point. Rather, one discovers different views of the garden as one sits in a teahouse, walks on a path, comes around a corner, or crosses over a bridge.

There may be three prominent stones: a flat stone symbolizing earth, a large tall stone symbolizing heaven, and a stone lantern symbolizing the human element.

Some gardens have a *koi* pond and waterfalls; others have a “zen pond” of raked gravel, representing waves in the water. In a well-designed garden, the pond and waterfalls are effective whether or not real water is present. In one such garden in Kyoto, the raked gravel effect was so moving that my husband, Dick, and I each burst into tears upon entering it.

The garden in the back yard of our suburban home is one of the latter, with a raked gravel zen pond. Dick has designed gardens of this style almost all his life. It’s soul work for him. Only in the present garden has he had enough flat space to include a zen pond. In a heavy rain, it can look like a real pond. We like to say that, yes, we do have *koi*, but they are shamanic, or *very* coy. We imagine the *koi* being there in the imaginary water, under one of the bridges or beneath the floating teahouse.

We look at this park-like setting from all the rooms at the back of our home. From one of these rooms, as I’m writing, I see the teahouse (also designed by Dick) and the garden. It’s a meditative place to write.

So it was that one day when, sitting at the computer, I noticed motion in the normally still garden. My first thought, an uncharitable one about the neighbor’s large orange-ish cat, was quickly replaced with shock and amazement.

*A fox was trotting across the zen pond, briskly and with purpose!*

Fox?? In our small suburban community north of San Francisco??

Our home is in a residential neighborhood on a relatively level street with small, standard-size lots. It is in an otherwise hilly older area of town, called Homestead Valley. Nearby, not far from the Pacific Ocean, is Mount Tamalpais, which rises to 2500 feet.

Encounters with deer are routine and frequent. In spring it is common to meet a doe with one or two fawns. Many consider them pests who eat their roses or fruit from their trees. Once I even had a close encounter with a coyote. We passed each other on the road, as one would any other walker. Then, after continuing on about 25 feet, we each turned and stared at the other as if we were both wondering, “Are you really what I think you are?” Another time, crossing one of the tiny bridges in our garden, something attracted my attention to the roof of our neighbor’s two-story house. A new roof ornament? No—a majestic great blue heron. Did our “pond” attract it? Real water is several blocks away.

But fox??

Nine days later, again sitting at the computer, I sensed movement, and looked out just in time to see the fox trip lightly over the stone steps, enter the teahouse, leap catlike onto the counter, down to a chair, and finally *flop* down on the floor, as a really tired dog will do. I ran to tell Dick about the fox in the teahouse. Incredulous and excited, he questioned, “In *our* teahouse?” (It is the only one in the neighborhood.)

So now, he, too, was witness to the fox. The fox exited the teahouse. Grabbing my camera, I headed to an open door and was astonished to see it lying in the sun in the zen pond. It looked up at me, and I quietly soothed, “It’s okay...,” whereupon it put its head down and went to sleep! I took photographs, thinking it must be an extremely tired fox and reflecting on the meaning carried in any tone of voice. Dick and I were thoroughly intrigued and captivated. The fox’s presence felt like a gift, a blessing, a visitation, perhaps some kind of protection.





*The fox listens to a human*



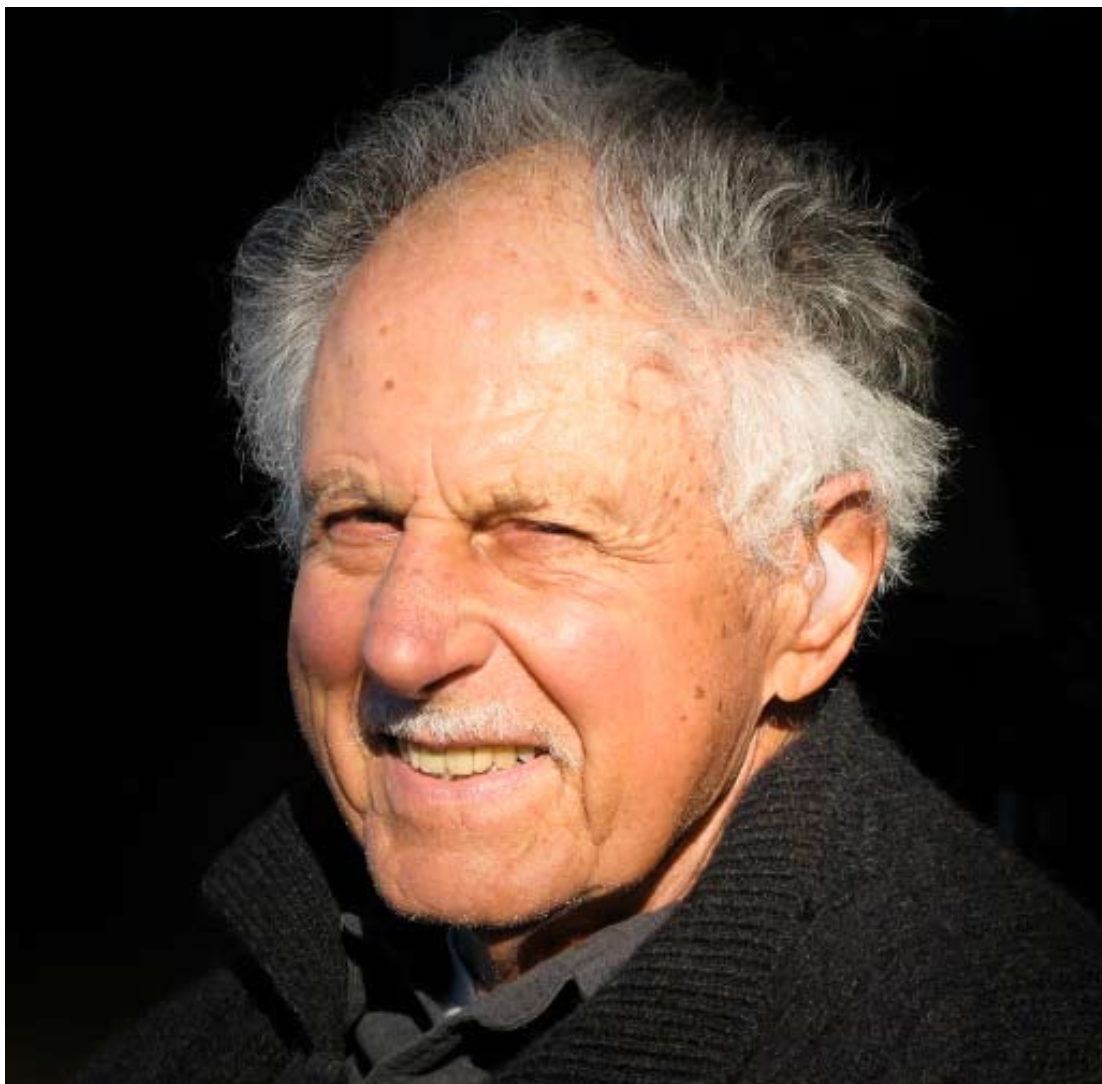
*...and sleeps*

Three days after seeing the fox, we found scat in the zen pond, and the following day, considerably more scat, implying more than one fox. Dick commented that this could get old in a hurry, and I had to agree. Foxes don't clean up after themselves. Later that morning, when I came out of my consulting room at the end of an analytic hour, I found Dick rapt at a window.

“Four kits!” he announced as proudly as any father. My jaw dropped.

He had discovered all four in the middle of the pond, romping and playing with exuberance and abandon, as all small animals do—racing here and there around the pond, into the teahouse, under the teahouse, on *top* of the teahouse, in and out and around the stone lantern, and climbing the old plum tree next to the teahouse. I got my camera just in time to photograph one kit experimenting with the stone lantern, going in and out, and finally draping itself through it!





... *Dick*

## *Bibliography*

Alderton, David. *Foxes, Wolves & Wild Dogs of the World*. London: Cassell Illustrated, 2004.

Jung, C. G., *The Collected Works: Psychology and Alchemy*. CW 12, “Individual dream symbolism in relation to alchemy,” ¶295. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968.

Jung, C. G. 1967. “The spirit mercurius,” CW 13, ¶241.

Jung, C. G. *Letters, Volume I: 1906–1950*. Eds. Gerhard Adler and Aniela Jaffé. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973.

Kalff, Dora. The significance of the hare in *Reynard the Fox*. *Journal of Analytical Psychology* (1957) 2: 183–193.

Michelspacher, Steffan.. *Cabala, speculum artis et naturae, in alchymia*. Augsburg, 1654

O'Connor, W. F.. *Folk Tales from Tibet*. London: Hurst & Blackett, 1906.

Von Franz, Marie-Louise. *The Cat: A Tale of Feminine Redemption*. Toronto: Inner City Books, 1999.

Von Franz, Marie-Louise. *Alchemy: An Introduction to the Symbolism and the Psychology*. Toronto: Inner City Books, 1980.

Wallen, Martin. *Fox*. London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2006.

*With Appreciation. . .*

For the man who created, loves, and maintains our garden, but never imagined he was doing it for foxes, Dick Ward.

For their editorial artistry and appreciation of this little story:

Dyane Sherwood, Editor, *Jung Journal: Culture and Psyche*

LeeAnn Pickrell, Editorial Assistant/Copy Editor

John Cook, Editorial Consultant

For his technical consulting, retouching, and his infinite patience, David Hanks.

For the cameras, Canon Powershot G7 and Canon Sureshot, Z155.

We snapped hurried pictures, and they produced photographs.

For the foxes, who graced and blessed our garden, and who tolerated, and sometimes even seemed to pose, for two humans with strange black things in front of their faces.



Karlyn M. Ward is an analyst member of The C.G. Jung Institute of San Francisco and has a private practice in Marin county, north of San Francisco. She has written and lectured about the psyche and music. Her DVD, *Anchored in the Heart: Redeeming the Dark Feminine*, explores the figure of Mary of Magdala in word, art, and music. Recently she has developed a fascination for foxes and all they represent.



Also by Karlyn M. Ward

*Anchored in the Heart: Redeeming the Dark Feminine*

2006, DVD, produced by Creating Images and available from

[www.anchoredintheheart.com](http://www.anchoredintheheart.com)



You might also enjoy reading the following recently published Jungian titles:

- |  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| <i>Farming Soul</i><br>Patricia Damery   | ISBN 978-1-926715-0-18 |
| <i>The Sister from Below</i><br>Naomi Ruth Lowinsky                            | ISBN 978-0-9810344-2-3 |
| <i>The Motherline</i><br>Naomi Ruth Lowinsky                                   | ISBN 978-0-9810344-6-1 |
| <i>The Creative Soul</i><br>Lawrence H. Staples                                | ISBN 978-0-9810344-4-7 |
| <i>Guilt with a Twist</i><br>Lawrence H. Staples                               | ISBN 978-0-9776076-4-8 |
| <i>Enemy, Cripple, Beggar</i><br>Erel Shalit                                   | ISBN 978-0-9776076-7-9 |
| <i>Re-Imagining Mary</i><br>Mariann Burke                                      | ISBN 978-0-9810344-1-6 |
| <i>Divine Madness</i><br>John R. Haule   | ISBN 978-1-926715-0-49 |
| <i>Resurrecting the Unicorn</i><br>Bud Harris                                  | ISBN 978-0-9810344-0-9 |
| <i>The Father Quest</i><br>Bud Harris  | ISBN 978-0-9810344-9-2 |
| <i>Like Gold Through Fire</i><br>Massimilla and Bud Harris                     | ISBN 978-0-9810344-5-4 |
| <i>The Art of Love: The Craft of Relationship</i><br>Massimilla and Bud Harris | ISBN 978-1-926715-0-25 |

Learn more about the many worthy publications available for purchase at:

**[www.fisherkingpress.com](http://www.fisherkingpress.com)**

In Canada & the U.S. call

1-800-228-9316

International call

+1-831-238-7799



A zen garden is a sacred, meditative, and symbolic space—a microcosm representing the world. Every detail is meant to quiet the soul. Stepping stone paths and tiny bridges are deliberate means of slowing one down to enhance the meditative experience. In many such gardens, the whole garden cannot be viewed from a single vantage point. Rather, one discovers different views of the garden as one sits in a tea house, walks on a path, comes around a corner, or crosses over a bridge. There may be three prominent stones: a flat stone symbolizing earth, a large tall stone symbolizing heaven, and a stone lantern symbolizing the human element. And there may also be foxes!—as was the case for Karlyn Ward.

*Visitation in a Zen Garden* records in image and word what happens when a family of foxes takes up residence in the author's backyard zen garden. Using her analytic experience, Karlyn Ward links the visitation with biology, behavior, wonder, and depth psychology. What could be the meaning of this close encounter with little wild animals "simply" being themselves in her own back yard? What is the symbolic meaning of the fox, and what did Jung have to say about it? Why does the fox "happen" to choose this garden at this time?

Karlyn M. Ward, Ph.D., LCSW, is an analyst member of The C.G. Jung Institute of San Francisco and has a private practice in Marin County, north of San Francisco. She has written and lectured about the psyche and music. Her DVD, *Anchored in the Heart: Redeeming the Dark Feminine*, explores the figure of Mary of Magdala in word, art, and music. Recently she has developed a fascination for foxes and all they represent.



To order books call toll free  
in Canada and the U.S.  
1-800-228-9316  
[www.fisherkingpress.com](http://www.fisherkingpress.com)

