



South African Sandplay Therapy Society

This newsletter provides information about the South African Sandplay Therapy Society (SASTS) and Sandplay Therapy as developed by Dora Kalff. It aims to facilitate communication between all SASTS members and to provide access to current research, events, and educational opportunities in the field of sandplay therapy. SASTS is a member society of the International Society of Sandplay Therapy (ISST) that encourages the highest quality of sandplay therapy practice from ISST certified sandplay therapists.

Visit our website at www.sasts.co.za

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SASTS PRESIDENT BRAAM BEETGE



Dear Colleagues and friends

As I was reading the draft of our newsletter that our Vice-President sent me, I was reminded again of how far we have come.

Today we have 30 members from the Sandplay Community in South Africa that have joined our new Society. Three Certified ISST Sandplay Therapists And Teaching Members, four Certified Sandplay Therapists, and twenty-three Advanced ISST Candidates!

As President of SASTS, I am so grateful that we can experience the mutual recognition that we are united in order to learn, develop and transform, personally and professionally, in Kalfjian Jungian Sandplay Therapy. As Sandplay Therapists, we are often left in awe for the experiences beyond words. No wonder Frau Kalff called it a way of life.

In March this year, the Khoisan saying “There is a dream dreaming us” accompanied us to Israel where SASTS was officially announced as a new member society of ISST. It was a great honour for me to represent the South African Sandplay community. Thank you also for your trust in me to be the first South African to represent you as a Board Member of the ISST Board.

Let us not forget Dora Kalff’s words at the end of her book *Sandplay: A Psychotherapeutic Approach to the Psyche* (Black and white edition, Analytical Psychology Press LLC):

“We do our best to compare the course of psychic and spiritual development with flowing water, as we read in the I Ching:

Its flows on and on, and merely fills up all of the places through which it flows; it does not shrink from any dangerous spot nor from any plunge, and nothing can make it lose its own essential nature. It remains true to itself under all conditions. Thus, likewise, if one is sincere when confronted with difficulties, the heart can penetrate the meaning of the situation. And once we have gained inner mastery of a problem, it will come about naturally that the action we take will succeed.

In this work, when we succeed in attaining an inner harmony that determines every action, then we can speak of grace” (p 104).

Enjoy our beautiful newsletter.

I send you all my best,

Braam



The new ISST Board. Photo: Braam Beetge

BUSH TELEGRAPH

ELECTION TIME

On 28 February 2023, the South African Sandplay Therapy Development Group members voted online for the first Executive Committee of SASTS. The following office bearers were appointed:

President: Braam Beetge

Vice-President: Retha Roux

Secretary: Sylvia Clutten

Treasurer: Judith Bredekamp

Braam Beetge is well-connected in the international Sandplay Therapy community and has been instrumental in developing Sandplay Therapy in South Africa. The other committee members were all part of a Founding Member group that have been closely involved in the formalisation of our society over the past few years. The team brings a wealth of skills and a lively passion for Sandplay Therapy.



SASTS President, Braam Beetge, responds to the ISST General Assembly after SASTS's acceptance as a member society. Photo: Braam Beetge



SASTS Executive Committee – Retha Roux, Sylvia Clutten, Braam Beetge, Judith Bredekamp. Picture: Retha Roux

FINDING A HOME IN ISST

On 29 March 2023, the South African Sandplay Therapy Society was officially welcomed as a member society at the ISST General Assembly. What an honour to join this network!

This achievement was made possible by several decades of foundational work. The SASTS Executive Committee wishes to particularly acknowledge the immense contributions by several dedicated teachers that saw our fledgling development group mature into an ISST member society:

Ruth Amman, Martin Kalff, Judy Zappacosta, Gita Morena, Deborah Bedford-Strohm, Anke Seitz, Maria Kendler, Audrey Punnet, Alexander Esterhuysen and Lorraine Freedle.

And of course, our deepest gratitude goes to our founding ancestor, Dora Kalff.

In the beginning...



Deborah remembers

I am honored to be asked to tell the story of my involvement in the development of what has now become the SASTS of the ISST.

My first contact was with Imme Thom in 2007. She had trained in Germany with Sigrid Löwen, as I had, so I had heard of her work and her projects. Imme graciously welcomed a complete stranger from Germany! I came to Krugersdorp with a box of donated figurines and many questions about what was needed. Over the years, I helped to support Imme's work, also in funding her ingenious mobile Sandplay Wagon. When Imme moved for a few years to Hawaii, the wagon moved to the University of Pretoria, where Prof. Carien Lubbe-de Beer and I developed and taught a curriculum for Masters students using the Wagon. Several of these students wrote theses based on this project.

My second connection was in 2009, when I was living in Stellenbosch for 4 months. Here, I met Gillian Barton - we had actually met through a mutual friend of my mother's and had been corresponding through email. I was supervising Gillian on the road to certification for ISST, and she invited Braam Beetge to come to one of the supervisions. Gillian also introduced me to Elzan Frank, who had trained in Switzerland. Elzan then invited me to do an introductory workshop for the Good Hope Psychological services, which I did in 2010. This was the beginning of a long term collaboration with Good Hope in Stellenbosch and Paarl. In 2010 I also met Reyhana Seedat, Cornel van der Merwe and Elana Burger at a group supervision.

The beginnings were humble: my father built me a mobile figurine case, I started a new sandplay collection, Cornel and Elana donated sand trays, and I set up at first in rented apartments. Between visits, the miniatures and the trays lived in Cornel's garage. Soon I realized that there was indeed a continuing need for this, and so I started considering renting office space. This eventually led instead to my buying a house where I came twice or even 3 times a year until the pandemic hit, and to my becoming a permanent resident of the country!

The training groups for ISST certification began as a brainstorm vision with Braam and Gillian at a lunch break in 2009. I developed the concept for a 4 week training which would unite theory and group supervision, and sent it to Ruth Ammann, then the president of ISST. After further discussion, Braam and Reyhana organized a first training group with 5 weeks of training with 4 international teachers starting in 2011 in Gauteng. I taught the introductory week, and brought Imme to present her work in the Shongololo project to the group. By this time, I had helped to connect a German soccer foundation with Imme to create a second project with soccer training, sewing training, a library and mobile sandplay therapy on land between two informal settlements. During this training, Imme, Braam, Reyhana and Gwenda, who were eventually to become the first 4 certified ISST therapists, were all in one room....

Also during this training, the need for continual personal process and for supervision became apparent. At the time, Barbara Turner was coming regularly for an ISST group organized by Celia Van Wyk in Johannesburg and had not yet broken off to form her own international association. But this was not offering enough spaces for process in the country. I agreed to come twice a year for personal process where needed for this first training group, but wanted to offer it in Stellenbosch, where I had lived for 4 months. The first trainees had all done their processes in Europe or in the US, and my vision was to make Jungian sandplay available where it was needed.



Imme Thom's Sandplay Wagon. Photo: Deborah Bedfors Strohm

Cornel, Elana and I decided to organize an introductory workshop in Paarl in late 2013 to see if there was interest: we ended up having to move venues because the registrations outgrew the original space. This turned into a full training group from 2013 to 2016, taught by my colleague Anke Seitz (Germany) and me. Participants in this course came through connections to the sandplay therapists in the Cape. Among them were Retha Roux, Judith Bredekamp and Sylvia Clutten, who eventually became the next certified ISST therapists. Together with Imme, Braam, Reyhana and Gwenda, they have since formed the SASTS.

During our next training group, from 2016 to 2019, Braam had been certified as a teacher and he joined in teaching with Anke and myself, while Gwenda was a co-teacher. One of the participants in this group, Sara van Tonder, a therapist from the Good Hope Psychological Services, developed the idea of a non profit business with psychiatric outpatients who had already started making sand trays and figures. This business, Spring Forward, kept growing until the pandemic unfortunately took much of the wind out of its sails.

After this training group, I had planned on taking a small break, but Braam insisted that there was so much interest that we needed to continue, and so I again organized and did the intake for the next group. By now we had switched venues three times and had found a home in Stellenbosch instead of Paarl. In February of 2020, Anke came for her last seminar in South Africa, as she was teaching in other countries as well. Only a week after I got back to Germany in March of 2020, the airlines closed down because of the Corona Virus.



Spring Forward members making sandtrays. Photo: Deborah Bedford-Strohm



The very last training group I facilitated before the pandemic made travelling impossible. Photo: Deborah Bedford-Strohm

the pandemic, it became clear that it was time for the training to be taken over by the South African teaching members, as I could not travel as easily anymore, and as online training made sense for the current training group: although we were based in Stellenbosch, almost all of the participants were from outside of the Western Cape. After a pause while things were sorted out, this group resumed training online with Braam in mid 2021. I offered a monthly online forum starting in September of 2020, when it became clear that the pandemic was not ending anytime soon....

While preparing this article, I realized that I have been in South Africa 22 times over 13 years, often for a month or even more. I have been involved with training about 50 people in four groups, three of which I organized myself in the Western Cape. I have offered theory, personal process, and group and individual supervision. I have been involved in projects involving short term group sandplay, an outpatient group making sand trays and figurines, and with a nonprofit offering therapeutic services. It has been a long journey, and now the lamp has passed to the founding members of the SASTS.

Congratulations!

Article by Deborah Bedford-Strohm

ASK AN ELDER



Photo: Braam Beetge

In this column we sit at the feet of the elders of Sandplay Therapy to get to know them a little better and to tap into their wisdom.

Retha Roux recently spent a Friday afternoon with Dr Martin Kalf, who kindly agreed to a recorded online interview. Exact wording has been adjusted where necessary to ensure easy reading.

RR: *What do you believe are the core foundations of Sandplay Therapy that an aspiring therapist must get acquainted with?*

MK: I think the basis of Sandplay is manifold and I usually used to express it by referring to the three roots of Sandplay. Based on the work of the founders, one can say there are three roots. The first is the Jungian root (Jungian psychology, to have knowledge and maybe also experience in terms of Jungian analysis, working with dreams and so on). I think that is a very essential and basic foundation.

And then there is what I think was at times underestimated in the history and the new developments of sandplay. I always think it is very worthwhile to become acquainted with the way Margaret Lowenfeld worked, because my mother was starting with her. That's the second root – the World Technique. She really discovered this potential of playing, using sand, using figures. That's a very important source.

The third source is a source that my mother did not mention so often, because at her time it was more difficult. She had to be careful, but she had a deep interest in what I would call contemplative traditions. There are different contemplative traditions, they are not limited to any specific religion or form of spirituality. But she was interested in Christianity and Buddhism and Zen Buddhism. So, in a way, it influenced her way of working with people in Sandplay.

She had this deep desire to understand Zen Buddhism more deeply and she even regretted in her life that she didn't have the chance. She told me towards the end of her life she was so sorry, she would have liked to explore more deeply.

It was satisfying for her when she had these encounters with Zen Masters from Asia and they said her way of doing Sandplay Therapy is very much related and connected with how Zen Buddhism works. Because it is drawing the person to herself, you don't look outside. Sometimes there is moments before a Sandplay when you wonder what is expected of me, what should I do. But they have no real way to look outside to find the answer, they must drop into themselves. Then something can happen. They suggested that in the Zen tradition it is the same kind of idea to help the meditators to go inside to see what is coming from there, you don't look at the teacher, you don't look at books. You really have to create the space where something can come about. That for her was satisfying, because she wanted to go so deep into these traditions. From her youth she had this affinity to study Chinese, she wanted to learn Sanskrit. That's what I call the 3rd root.

Nowadays we talk a lot about the practice of mindfulness, and mindfulness is of course the basic common denominator between different ways of making moments of silence, shorter or more extended periods of silence. That has now been investigated by science, the positive effects of mindfulness are vastly demonstrated – in terms of helping to balance emotion, sometimes even the immunity system gets enhanced, health can benefit, there are even some research pointing out that the aging process can be reduced. All sorts of good things that have been checked and researched and this research is still going on. Certain forms of psychotherapy started to integrate mindfulness, especially the behaviour-oriented psychotherapists – they use mindfulness.

It is interesting that with Dora Kalf, from the beginning it was an aspect. Many clients that worked with her said they experienced very strongly her capability of being present with them. I heard that from different people. It is there from the beginning, so we don't have to search it outside or be inspired by other psychotherapies that

have integrated that. It is a whole field that we can explore and of course it should be separated from religion, in a sense it is kind of a secular practice – you just sit, you relax, you watch your breathing, all those techniques of mindfulness.

Jon Kabat-Zinn has introduced it to many clinics and was very successful with it. If we can use that first for ourselves, as I said I try to do that every morning. Even small moments – I usually speak of small moments of mindfulness.

Some clients may be open to this – to settle down, feel the body, relax, get in touch with their breathing, the rhythm of their breathing or just being more aware of what happens in the body or their feeling. Some clients are very capable of that and hungry for that. Then it can of course enhance the relationship they have with the sand or the relationship they have with you or the relationship they have with their conscious.

Even when you study the Red Book of CG Jung, you read about a series of inner imaginations and some dreams he had. He also mentioned that he did use a certain vehicle, getting ready, then he just sits and speak into his own depths and watches what images are coming.

So, I think mindfulness can be a great gate to open the door to the world of images and the unconscious. Maybe not with every client, and I think it needs to be explored more how it can be done with children, but in many ways it can be introduced into the work of Sandplay Therapy, Not only in the supervision.

We should not give the wrong impression to people that it is something mystical. It is something very practical, it is extremely simple, but it is very effective and if we can do it in this way – it really is a good foundation. That is the third root of Sandplay Therapy – it was there, it can be used, it can be rediscovered, it can be rediscovered in new ways – I am always excited when people have new ways to introduce these things into their work. We don't have to meditate, just a kind of awareness. Drop down, drop into your body and help the clients to also establish a relationship to their body. These are the well-known roots of Sandplay Therapy.

In addition, knowledge or studies of techniques like EMDR can be very useful. Peter Levine's somatic experiencing and his techniques – I even encourage some of my students to do the whole training of SE, because it is very good to combine it. There is really so many ways to connect with the body and to use this or to introduce this or to create space for this. I think a study of Levine's book could be very useful. There are probably many forms of bodywork nowadays. All of that would be useful components of Sandplay Therapy training. In general, Sandplay Therapy doesn't not have to mark itself up and say we do only Sandplay Therapy. Anything that is moving and discovered in the field of psychotherapy and psychology – it is good to integrate.

RR: How do you see the future of Sandplay Therapy? You mentioned earlier we need to be open and open to evolve. Are there any specific new developments that particularly excites you?

MM: As I emphasised before, I think deepening the research and the connection with body techniques. Integrating techniques like Somatic Experiencing and other body work – there are different forms, even yoga. Bringing in the body in a good way – I would feel very positive about that. Of course, we now have the evolving theme of neuroscience – it is manifold and there are also many different opinions in that field. Sandplay could profit more from that type of research and somebody like Lorraine Freedle is very strong in that field. These developments will be positive. Of course, it is unforeseen what new techniques come about that can be helpful in healing, maybe there could also be a bridge to behavioural techniques. Certainly, any Integration of new aspects that evolve in the field of psychology, along with remaining mindful of the three roots of Sandplay Therapy.

Transcription by Retha Roux

Indaba ...

(A word from the Nguni languages meaning discussion, conference, or business)

WHERE EAST MEETS WEST

Three SASTS members travelled from the South for the 26th ISST Congress in Israel. We've asked them to pen down a few experiences.

Braam Beetge

A full circle...

In 2009 Dr Martin Kalff and his wife Sabine visited South Africa to do a 7-day Intensive Sandplay Training. It was the first formal training for a group of South Africans to start their journeys in ISST Sandplay. His wife Sabine did Soul Painting sessions in the afternoons.

Martin's title for the 7-day training was "When East meets West." In March this year we had our 26th ISST Congress just outside Jerusalem, Israel, with the theme "Where East Meets West: Past, Present and Future."



SASTS Executive Members, Sylvia Clutten and Braam Beetge with ISST President Natori-San. Photo: Braam Beetge

What a synchronicity! It felt to me as if we in South Africa came full circle. Our new Society was announced at the General Assembly, and I felt privileged to receive it on behalf of the Sandplay Community here in South Africa.

It was a gift to see old friends again and to make new ones. The Israel Sandplay Society put a wonderful program together which I honoured in my soul garden. I left with a sense that the sand knows...

I attended the Congress with a deep feeling of gratitude and excitement. It also felt to me personally like a full circle.

After the Congress, I visited Martin Kalff in the old house in 8 Hinderzeunen, Zollikon to celebrate our Member Society. I was joined by Nikki and Lorraine Freedle for a day of fun and friendship.



Special time with friends after the Congress. Photo: Braam Beetge

As I drove back by taxi to the Zurich Airport, I started to feel a fresh flow of renewed life energy and thought about the wise words of Judy Zappacosta: "Now and through the years gone by, I still ponder the calls that we answer in our lives, those we pay attention to and those we ignore. It seems important to consider destiny, luck, fortuitous invitations, and how fate intervenes in many different ways. The connection to many life experiences comes from the meaning we attach to them. It seems that just as the ripples of circles upon still waters widen, open and ultimately disappear, we also are challenged to notice and make use of widening circles of opportunities that show up in our own lives."

Thank you, Israel. And thank you Sylvia and Nikki for significant bonding times.



Photo: Sylvia Clutten

“(I)t become(s) alive with meaning.” C.G. Jung

This is my personal embodiment of the tension of opposites through the symbol of *Punica granatum Linn*, the pomegranate, whilst attending and participating in the 26th ISST Congress “When East Meet West” just outside Jerusalem.

Mythologically, this ancient fruit is associated with Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, as well as Herea, the Greek goddess of marriage and childbirth. In love, accompanied by my husband, John, we would travel to where the love of my faith, its birthplace and the world of Kalfian Jungian ISST Sandplay physically converged briefly in time and space.

Here I could safely birth my paper on cultural conscious and unconscious - Joseph Henderson’s extension of CG Jung’s theory - within the safety of an ISST *temenos*. A truly free and protected space in the presence of a loved one, friends, mentors, teachers, colleagues, and the diversity of my Sandplay family.



Presentation time. Photo: Braam Beetge

Yet, outside of this Israeli compound situated on a hill just outside Jerusalem, there was an ever-building tension of conflict, a particular lack of trust amongst the people of this sacred land.

For myself, there was a constant sense of palpable tension between my idyllic perception of the “Holy Land” with the tangible felt reality of conflict in the atmosphere of an ongoing war zone that spoke to just how naïve we sometimes are. In and around this beautiful ‘golden’ city, several impatient, aggressive, and rude individuals were consistently in your face spewing out vitriol.

A grenade is what the French name a hand tossed weapon after its similarity with the scattering property of the pomegranate fruit’s seeds and the working of this specific weapon.

Yet, a serendipitous moment while in Bethlehem would allow for deep reflection and transformation. As we stood looking up at Banksy’s *Rage Flower Thrower*, we were stuck by this incredible powerful anti-war image. A stencil mural on a West Bank wall is of a masked man seemingly tossing a bomb/grenade, yet holds a bunch of flowers representative of peace, love and life advocates symbolically for peace to replace violence.



At Banksy’s *Rage Flower Thrower*.
Photo: Mihau Mihaursin

Among the various holy sites, both the ones we entered in Jerusalem and Bethlehem, a bipolar tension was felt and embodied. From moments of deep tranquility and numinosity within holy places like inside the Milk Grotto to heightened moments of intense fear at the Israeli/Palestine border post - survived only with much prayer, polyvagal resetting before boarding bus 231 back to Jerusalem.

Cross culturally, with its exotic appearance, ruby flesh and prolific seed cluster, the pomegranate is known as a symbol of health and prosperity. The ancient Greeks believed this perennial tree sprang up from the blood of Dionysus, the god of wine offered rich experiences. The only time we could easily engage socially with the local population was while drinking freshly pressed pomegranate juice...the nectar of the gods. A truly rich delicacy we would daily share with each other.

We would leave safely with a set of three beautiful yet fragile glass pomegranate miniatures for my collection tucked in my luggage. A truly transformative embodied experience for both John and I. For myself the death of innocence...and newly rejuvenated life in not only my faith, but in the many gifts of knowledge, wisdom and insight as an ISST sandplay therapist on her way to becoming a teaching member.

“...may our blessings proliferate like [the seeds of] the pomegranate.”

A Jewish Prayer



Nikki Themistocleous

Being my first Sandplay Therapy Conference, the 26th ISST congress was a highlight in and of itself. But traveling with two of our South African board members, Braam Beetge and Sylvia Clutten, and having SASTS announced and officially welcomed into the international community was extra special.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, built on the site of Jesus' crucifixion. Photo: Nikki Themistocleous

Sylvia's presentation, "An African Blessing Way: Birthing a Symbolic Archetypal Ritual in the temenos of the Sandtray" was deeply moving, highlighting not only the magic of Sandplay Therapy, but the depth of the training we have been exposed to. As an advanced candidate myself, I have been privileged to have met many great trainers, South African and international alike. During COVID, most of the international training was done online and meeting these great teachers and therapists in person added an extra highlight, making me feel like a Sandplay Therapy groupie at times.

For sure, another highlight was the Holy Land, and touring the iconic biblical places. While eye-opening and jarring at times, the enormity of being in those places left me silenced and deeply touched. Kneeling at the sight of Jesus' birth, sitting with feet in the Jordan river, walking parts of Via Dolorosa, blessing gifts at Christ's place of crucifixion, leaving prayers at the wailing wall, sipping on pomegranate tea and being kissed by camels (and Braam).



Smooching in public... Photo: Nikki Themistocleous

The 26th ISST Congress was an experience I will never forget.

Webinar Programme

SASTS's online webinar programme offers bi-monthly lectures by local and international speakers from the Sandplay Therapy and Jungian Analyst communities. The programme is **open to all ISST members and students from around the world.**

In February, participants gained valuable insights on the effect of sandplay for a client with physical illness from Judy Zappacosta's presentation: "Dreaming the Body into a new Reality." Dr Linda Cunningham illustrated how complexes may be integrated and transformed



Photo: Lanél Maré

through a sandplay process with her presentation in May. This was followed by a presentation on the symbolism of the swing by Dr Lanél Maré, a SASTS member and Advanced Candidate in Sandplay Therapy.

DIARISE OUR UPCOMING WEBINARS:

31 August: The White Lion as a Symbol of the Self
Presenter: Denise Grobbelaar (Clinical Psychologist and Jungian Analyst)

26 October: Ritual and Ceremony in Sandplay Therapy: Mysteries of a Passage & Pilgrimage.
Presenter: Judy Zappacosta, MFT, CST-T

How should Spring bring forth a garden on hard stone?

Become earth, that you may grow flowers of many colours.

Rumi

INDIVIDUATION EXPLORED



Photo: Imme Thom

Individuation: A 7-week Interactive Online Course with Imme Thom April-June 2023

Six therapists met weekly for two hours on zoom to explore the concept of individuation. Imme's original illustrations simplified challenging Jungian concepts and attendees immersed themselves in fairytales such as Skeleton Woman, The Wizard of Oz and Pinocchio. Imme guided participants to incorporate the principles of individuation practically, facilitating this integration with guided meditation and drawing assignments.

2024 TRAINING

The next 2-Year Intensive Theoretical Training Programme in Kallfian Jungian Sandplay Therapy is planned for the first half of 2024. The curriculum meets ISST requirements and serves as one of the many thresholds towards ISST accreditation as a Sandplay Therapist.

Contact Braam Beetge (braambeetge@gmail.com) to enquire about the application process.

CONGRATULATIONS

One of the Teaching Members of SASTS, Gwenda Euvrard, recently presented a paper at the International Association of Jungian Studies (IAJS). Her paper was so well-received that it was selected for publication in a book "Jungian Psychology and the Human Sciences" by Routledge.



Well done, Gwenda!



A doorway in Jerusalem. Photo: Braam Beetge

The Symbol Shack

Stone

In the beginning of the Earth's formation, stones appeared as hard mineral blocks that made up the Earth's crust. They are important components of the planet - matter that exists objectively in the natural world. Some of the soil components come from weathered stones.

Stones are hard and heavy. They are characterized by their natural, unique, solid, non-deteriorating properties. Stones have a long history on the earth and with technological advancements, we can learn from the material and fossils in the stone about a time predating human existence and know what occurred then.

Stones are indispensably part of human development. Mankind lived in stone caves in the early days. Later, they used stones as economical and convenient building materials that did not require special complicated processes to synthesize or manufacture. They only needed to be mined and polished and provided long-term security with structures that could not easily be damaged.

History and culture spread through stones. The ancients made pictures and recorded important experiences on stone. They carved stones into statues. The Stone Age - when the stones were first used as tools - was a major leap for human development. The use of tools differentiates humans from animals.

Naturally, stones have a certain psychological significance for humans. They symbolize the meanings of time, historical precipitation and refinement.

Stones appear in many myths and legends. In ancient Greek mythology, the humans who perished in the flood, were re-created when the stones that Deucalion and Pyrrha threw over their shoulders turned into men and women. The Omphalos in Delphi, a stone mythically erected by Zeus, was revered as the center of the world.

On the Tibetan Plateau, Mani Stone altars are built with different sizes of stones, slates, and pebbles. These altars are believed to be residences of souls and they are also known as "God Heaps". Creating a Mani Stone altar is seen as a form of prayer in Tibetan Buddhism. People will pick up the stones next to them, put them into a pile, and then



work around the pile for a few laps to pay tribute.

In Japan, large stones along a road may depict deities that protect travelers and villages during transitional phases. In Japanese traditions, the shape of the soul is small and round, and it is therefore believed that a small, rounded stone contains the soul. As the soul grows, the stone grows. Stones are worshipped as holy objects and many shrines also feature stones as gods.

Stones also present as symbols of burden and inflexibility in myth. In Greek mythology, Sisyphus was punished by having to repeatedly push a stone uphill. Medusa petrified those who saw her eyes.

Jung (1964) suggested that stone may be a particularly apt symbol of the Self (p 225) and "of the experience of something eternal that man can have in those moments when he feels immortal and unalterable (p 226)." Some alchemists likened this sense of eternity to the mystical experience of God within one's own soul and it is symbolized by the Philosopher's Stone.

Jung himself had a very deep connection with stones since childhood, referring to a stone from their garden as "my stone". He recalled: "Often, when I was alone, I sat on this stone, and then began an imaginary game that went something like this: I am sitting on top of this stone, and it is underneath. But this stone could also say 'I' and think: 'I am lying here on this slope, and he is sitting on top of me.' The question then arose: Am I the

one who is sitting on the stone, or am I the one on which he is sitting?' The question always perplexed me, and I would stand up, wondering who was what now ... There was no doubt whatsoever that this stone stood in some secret relationship to me." (Jung, 2019, p 34).

As a boy, Jung also painted a smooth dark stone from the Rhine to look as if it had an upper and lower part, keeping it in his trouser pocket for some time before transferring it to the pencil-case in which he kept his carved manikin.

Faithfully and scientifically recording his inner journey for several years was not enough for Jung. He confesses: "I had to achieve a kind of representation in stone of my innermost thoughts and of the knowledge I had acquired. Or, to put it in another way, I had to make a confession of faith in stone" (Jung, 2019, p 267). This resulted in the construction of the "Tower" at his house in Bollingen, as well as in the meticulous carving of his stone monument. One of Jung's last dreams was of a big round stone on an elevated site, its inscription stating: "This shall be sign unto you of oneness and wholeness" (Hannah, 1998).

Perhaps stone's association with humanity is a mystery that cannot be clarified with language. As Jung said, "I can sit on the stone for hours and be fascinated by the puzzles it gives me."

By Luna Chen

Luna was a student of Imme Thom in China. This article is based on Luna's research and symbol paper on the stone. She graciously gave permission for publication.

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A station on the Via Dolorosa in Israel. Photo: Nikki Themistocleous



Photo: Sylvia Clutten