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cloud-hidden friends letter

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OUR PAGES ARE YOUR LETTERS

Cloud-Hidden Friends
753 44th Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94121

The "Cloud-Hidden Friends" are a small non-sectarian religious correspondence group. We meet mostly by sharing our thoughts on the Dharma together in our "Letter".

Rather than giving some definition to the word "Dharma", we would rather emphasize the freedom of the individual to come to his own understsnding about such. As a group we would aim more at a dialogue, and would emphasize the spirit and practice of the Dharma rather than some doctrinaire or sectarian formula.

In that spirit we look to Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki and Alan Watts as our "honorary founders". Although they are usually associated with Buddhism, and Zen in particular, their spirit was also a free and universal one, including Christianity, Hinduism, and Taoism etcetera. Their Dharma then seems to somehow belong equally to us all.

In a more universal spirit then we are a zen group. However we might also turn to someone like Thomas Merton to exemplify the kind of openness and dialogue we have in mind. In his later years, he commented that he could see no contradiction between Christianity and Buddhism, and that he had determined "to beseme as good a Buddhist as I can'".

Since our pages are your letters, we ask as our "subscription fee" that you write us a letter now and then in the "spirit of the Dharma". Poems, songs, tales, drawings and sush are all more than welcome. We will try to publish everything we receive, but this might not always be possible. Letters should be of a reasonable length, and if you so request, we will type them up for you. It is presumed we will forgive each other a few typing errors etcetera, since pirfectionism could easily paralyze us.

It is hoped that our letters will somehow help us open our hearts to each other, and deepen our sense of the Dharma. Hopefully in this way too more than a few deep friendships might develop.

It is our intention to be as democratic in spirit as is possible. It does seem that we do at least need a "Clerk" of some sort to do the photocopying, co-ordinating, and mailing etcetera. This role might be thought of as similar to that of the "Clerk" in Quakerism, and it seems a good model for us to follow. Your comments on these matters would be appreciated.

Our phrase "Cloud-Hidden" is taken from the title of a book by Alan Watts. He in turn borrowed it from a ninth century poem by Chia Tao. Lin Yutang translates it as follows:

SEARCHING FOR THE HERMIT IN VAIN

I asked the boy beneath the pines.
He said,"The master's gone alone
Herb-picking somewhere on the mount,
Cloud-hidden, whereabouts unknown."

A.C.D., Clerk

An Excerpt From An Ainu Poem
Sent To Us By Gary Snyder, Wishing Us Well On Our First Issue

did he call out
to the head of the village,
to the foot of the village.

Then
from one house
a woman
came out
in this way:
she came out
carrying
a pot full of dirty water,
and she threw out
that dirty water while
uttering
these words:

"What if it be a god?
Does that mean then
that we are not
to cook meals?" so

saying,
she threw out
that dirty water
and went back inside.

From one house
a woman came out
in this way:
she came out
carrying
a handful of rushes.
That handful of rushes
she dipped in the water
and shook it
straight at my face,
saying these words:

"Suppose it be a god!
Does this mean that
one is not allowed
to weave mats?" so

saying,
she shook
that handful of rushes
straight at my face.
Then
she went back inside and was gone.

753 44th Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94121

FIRST LETTER SENT

Ananda Claude Dalenberg

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE CHILDREN OF BODHI

May everyone everywhere be bountifully showered by the Great Dharma Cloud of Life-Giving Wisdom! May we children of Bodhi be of true heart!

Dear Friends:

Surely our generation has a vision. We could say it is a timeless and universal vision, but each generation and each individual must give it a different expression. It seems to arise more from the heart than the mind, and expressing it is not easy, since no verbal formula is near at hand. But express it we must, and I intend to here take my turn in giving it a good try.

The way I would put it is that "We are all children of Bodhi," or to use slightly different words, "We are all Bodhi brothers and sisters together."

It seems to me that is the spirit of our generation, even though it may be an ideal only dimly perceived, and our words may vary. I might use a Buddhist terminology here, but others might prefer to say "children of God," "children of the Light," and so on. But I think at heart the spirit of it would be the same.

Sometimes, however, our vision seems so far away and unattainable that we begin to have our doubts about the "children of Bodhi." We begin to wonder why we are so isolated into a million and one rivaling sects and organizations, and why at the personal level we are so callous and blind towards each other. Then again it may be true that Bodhi is actually almost everywhere, if we but have the eyes to see it. At least then, let us not be too hasty in our judgment.

In all our confusion, I think this much is clear--It may not happen very often, but to meet another child of Bodhi and to realize we are truly brothers and sisters is surely a beautiful thing.

Sometimes such relationships last a lifetime, but more often it is a fleeting thing, as when two pilgrims' paths cross for a moment. Certainly there is that dimension to all of our lives, and in spite of our best planning we don't really know what the next step may bring.

On our pilgrimage through life, we may meet our Bodhi fellows in surprising ways. For example it might be the fellow sitting next to you on the bus. Or take the old man I met in the park the other day. A simple and unpretentious fellow he was, but I felt an immediate and deeper sense of brotherhood with him than with many who go around giving professional speeches on the subject.

It is difficult to say why that sense of kinship happens. At root it doesn't seem to have much to do with belonging to some particular group or religious organization. It might help somewhat, but something deeper is involved. Nor does it seem to make much difference whether one is a file-clerk, a monk, a landlord, or other of our disguises.

I for one have finally become convinced that what we most need to do is to truly open our hearts to each other. In a world of confusion and doubt, I think we need more the language of the heart. I think we would then find our true brothers and sisters, maybe not everywhere, but at least now and then. Then too, when we children do truly meet, I'm certain we will instinctively sense an alliance hitting the mark so deeply and surely that it will put all else to shame.

I don't think we are nearly bold enough in our vision. We seem to have become defensive, and are so timid and cramped. Sometimes we don't even dare to guess that we are all really children of Bodhi. We seem to prefer to limit such to a few saintly types, and how could that be you and me.

Saint Francis on the other hand was a bold one. He would preach not only to the likes of you and me, but to animals and birds as well. I dare say it was something about how we all, birds included, are children of God. He would not have us doubt ourselves so much. Surely we ought to at least be as good as the birds, although we can't help but occasionally wonder about the merit of our own species.

Saint Francis seemed to have a sense of a deep kinship with all life. In such a spirit then perhaps we should also include robins, raccoon, and deer in our vision. In Buddhism too there is a similar attitude towards nature. I must confess though, I have never seen a temple that truly welcomed raccoon and deer. Usually it is much worse than that, and only members of a certain sect, race, or class are really welcomed, although there may be pretensions to the contrary. Nor are children especially welcomed, except as future contributors to the church, and of course not hoboes and bums. Now I ask you, what kind of "kinship with all life" is that?

Maybe we robins, raccoon, deer, children, hoboes, and bums ought to all get together and make the great open sky our temple. That would be a real revolution for you.

I'm not being just playful here, I'm being quite serious. Furthermore I'm quite convinced that we should make some special effort to include hoboes and bums. After all there were some really great ones in the old days, and it is often rather difficult to tell the difference between a bum and a saint. Someone may look like a bum, but, who knows, he might turn out to be a great Zen Master or something someday, although I do hope he wouldn't then promptly start strutting around like a peacock and giving long-winded speeches.

I find it quite amazing how in the old days so closely intertwined were the meanings of the terms "monk," "hobo," "bum," and often "saint." Go back far enough, and a monk is a homeless wanderer or hermit, a beggar with all his belongings in a sack over his shoulder, and often wearing rags sewn together in some roughly presentable way. His virtue was poverty, and hopefully humility, and both monk and hobo willingly depend on the kindness of the great open sky and their fellow human beings for their physical well-being. And for both too it is an inner nobility that makes all the difference, and nobody can quite explain how it is so.

I keep on thinking about the old "beatnik" days. The name of one of Jack Kerouac's books is the "Dharma Bums." It seems to be a term which so rightly names our own generation of the children of Bodhi, and in its own way blesses us all. I might prefer to say "Bodhi Bum," or "Bodhi Hobo," but that is a minor point.

I must confess I am somewhat enthusiastic on the subject. Indeed I do honestly believe that "Dharma-

bumming," or "Bodhi-hoboing," relates in a very real way to our roots way back when. Take Buddhism for example. Back in the old days in India and China it was possible for Bodhi children to go "hoboing" from one end of the country to the other, and be most welcome to stay at almost any temple as long as they had any kind of room. Hinduism and Christianity have a similar tradition, and many other religions as well. These days, however, such an open and free spirit seems to have just about disappeared in an ocean of restrictive and clannish sectarianism, to my immense regret.

I think we Bodhi children ought to stay closer to the origins of things. These days we are far too civilized. We have all these temple systems to support, moral codes to abide by, dogmatic theological systems, orthodoxy standards to be met, vast hierarchies of priestly rank and power, endless ceremonies and ritual to be performed in only the most exact and professional manner, missionaries to support, and we are all drowned in endless appeals for more and more money to keep the whole thing going. Furthermore, we are becoming so stuffed with the trivia of such it is beginning to come out of our ears. Obviously it is all too much for us, and we can't handle it at all well. We don't need yet more of that kind of thing; on the contrary, what we need is more children of Bodhi, hoboes, and bums.

Now that would be a real brotherhood and sisterhood for you, and a real egalitarian fraternity. For example, have you ever heard of one hobo charging another money for some good counsel even when of the profoundest nature, or charging rent merely because he has enough extra roof to keep the rain off of some poor soul's head? Have you ever heard of a hobo so busy with very important projects that he doesn't really have time for anything or anyone else any more? No of course not. What we need is more hoboes.

I don't claim there is any direct correspondence, but it is certainly interesting that in Japanese the word "hobo" is a compound of "Dharma or Truth" (Ho), and "Treasure or Jewel" (Bo). Thus "Ho-Bo" means "Dharma Treasure" or "Dharma Jewel." Surely we would all agree, what we need is more hoboes!

Another thing in favor of hoboes is that they have a way of sticking up for each other. Perhaps they need to since they do not belong to some powerful or prestigious group. Our own situation is not so different and we might well follow their example. I suppose some would say we ought to be some super-organization or something, but I am inclined to think we ought to thank our lucky stars that we are not. Think of all the trouble it saves us. If we can only stick up more for each other, it ought to work out just fine.

I think in some deep sense we are all "Bodhi pilgrims," or if you prefer, "hoboes." In some way we are all "loners." Someone may be leading a quite settled and successful life, crowded with people and friends, yet in a more inward sense feel quite alone, like a pilgrim not quite knowing where one's true brothers and sisters may be. Another way of putting it is that "We are all born alone and we die alone," as is often said in Buddhism. A simple truth, but actually it takes quite a fellow to really face up to it.

It is surprising too how often the lives of the saints have such a lonely quality. One would think that they would be surrounded by a host of brothers and sisters in the truest sense, but in actuality they so often lead the life of a hermit, and to an amazing degree are wanderers and loners. Yet they are the ones most remembered and loved, perhaps because not far underneath we too are pilgrims and loners.

Herman Hesse's novels here come to mind, for example "Siddartha" and "Steppenwolf." So well do they convey the sense that life itself is a holy pilgrimage. I think too that in essence that is what Jack Kerouac is trying to express in his novels the "Dharma Bums" and "On The Road."

I'm not trying to say that one is completely alone as a pilgrim. On the contrary, there is the deepest kind of friendship, although it is often a momentary thing. We all meet a fellow pilgrim now and then on our journey through life. When it happens, let us open our hearts more to each other.

Indeed what a joy it is to meet another child of Bodhi! Sometimes it even seems to call for a shout of surprise and delight, not that we then need to go around blowing our conch shells or something, for usually it is a much more subtle and gentle thing. But even so, upon occasion let us give in to the urge to hail a fellow pilgrim in some special kind of way. Let us call each other for example "Brother" or "Sister." If it comes from the heart, I'm sure it will go a long long way.

Of course it is the spirit of it all that really makes the difference, and the words we use do not matter so much. We might too hail each other as "Friend," as the Quakers often do, although they seem to be rather stiff about such these days. The Baptists on the other hand are doing quite well, and I am continually amazed at how they call each other "Brother" and "Sister" with such a free and easy warmth and grace, often to the envy of my more pompous and cumbersome soul. I would hope that we Bodhi children might do half as well. I might add that I for one sometimes find it quite easy and natural to say "Hi Pilgrim!" although I am not at all the outgoing type.

Each generation seems to have the right to have a few special vocabulary items that uniquely express its own characteristics. "Children of Bodhi" might be such a term for us. Ideally we might even have some special kind of sign of recognition of our own. Since I have been maintaining that we should all be more bold in our vision, a few of us then are so bold as to propose such a sign for your consideration. In searching for a special word, we have discovered one we feel is quite appropriate, both as a way we might hail each other and as a kind of nickname for the "Children of Bodhi." We propose then that the word "Bo" be our sign. It happens to be a short form of "Bodhi," and it has a range of meanings that seem to fit us amazingly well. Webster's unabridged dictionary offers the following three meanings:

Bo 1: A short form for "Bodhi," as in "Bo Tree."
Bo 2: Used in informal address, meaning "fellow" or "buddy."
Bo 3: A short form for "hobo," and perhaps "bozo."

All three meanings could then be combined to form our own definition of "Bo." The plural would be "Boes." Depending on the context it might then variously mean "Bodhi-buddy," "Bodhi-friend," "Bodhi-hobo," "Bodhi-pilgrim," "Bodhi-bum," and so on.

Such a sign of recognition might be thought of as the beginning of a kind of "ritual" for us. But if we are going to have any kind of ritual it had best be of the most primal sort, and very very simple. Otherwise it will soon require a special class of professional priests to manage the whole thing and, as I see it, that would be the beginning of the end for us.

Fortunately the word "Bo" does have a kind of primal quality. It is often an interjection of surprise, being an alternate form of "Boo!" It even has a sense of

sudden awakening. It also has a scary sense to it, as meeting a hobo is sometimes a little bit scary. Indeed, meeting one face to face is often quite startling, and we might stand a little in awe of them. But we Boes don't really mean to scare anybody. On the contrary, we wish that everybody would join in the fun.

Anyway, we are all children of Bodhi, so let us not be so tight lipped. Let us give in more to the urge to hail a fellow pilgrim with such as "Bo," "Brother," "Sister," "Friend," and maybe even "Pilgrim."

At first glance one might think of us Boes as some new idea, and at least a little bit odd. Actually, however, we are a very old tradition, and have a rich heritage of our own. That may not be very obvious initially, and it requires some personal investigation, but I think it can be very rewarding. For example there may be some true Bodhi-child of long ago with whom one may feel a very special sense of kinship, almost as if he or she were one's "patron saint." Usually we leave such intuitions neglected, perhaps because our rational side is somewhat skeptical about it all. On the other hand the heart knows such realities full well, and here as elsewhere I'd rather trust in the heart.

Indeed, what a joy it can be to discover a true Bodhi-child of some distant century. Take Han-shan and Shih-te for example, what a marvelous discovery they were for me. Two playful lunatic Bodhi-fellows they were, and holy bums. It seemed to me they breathed the very spirit of the Buddha Dharma. Although they were way back in ninth-century China, I feel closer to them than to many of those presently around me. So maybe they are my "patron saints." Anyway the least I can do is to follow my heart and honor them in some special way. I'm sure that almost everyone who knew them would love them.

For me another great discovery was Pu-tai. Who says a wandering hobo need be so dreary and glum, on the contrary, he is a marvelous and happy-go-lucky fat fellow. Just looking at him alone ought to give you happiness and good fortune. He is often called the "Happy Buddha," and is portrayed with a big hobo sack over his shoulder, not filled with his worldly possessions as we more stingy-minded fellows might think, but with a wondrous assortment of goodies and toys for children. He passes them out on his wanderings through the countryside, often pausing to join in the fun himself. It seems to me he might even be the original model for Santa Claus. Children of Bodhi, let's not miss out on this one. Rub his belly, and it will bring you good luck.

We need to open ourselves more to our heritage. I think of it as a kind of voyage of personal discovery. Of course for each one of us it would be different, but that is as it should be.

If we turn to Christianity, I'm sure there would be many more discoveries awaiting. Saint Francis for example might be one that many of us would share, and love. There is a universal quality about him that seems to transcend the boundaries separating different religions. Take us Bodhi-children of San Francisco for example. I and quite a few others are Buddhists, yet we are quite proud and tickled-pink that our city is named after him, and that he is in a way our "patron saint." It is with a real joy that we add a candle or two in his honor. True Bodhi Child!

One way of thinking about our heritage is that it is handed down to us from the past to the present, and only in the most orthodox and official manner, as in apostolic or patriarchal succession. But I have in mind here something quite different. Rather it works backwards from the present to the past. It arises in the present from one's own heart and is "bestowed" upon the past, spontaneously and naturally. It is akin to an act of love, rather than some legalistic system. In this way then we could each find our own sense of kinship with the past, and I'm sure it would be far deeper than any dogmatic formula fed to us on a spoon. Surely it is clear that the "True Children of Bodhi" can indeed be a glorious pantheon.

In one way such a heritage would be universal, since we all can't help but share in such figures as Christ and Buddha. At the more individual level of our own lives we of course differ. But I don't think this is some great problem. I find that if I here listen to my own heart, it willingly leads the way, and I find a deep urge to bow and light a candle or two in honor of Alan Watts and Shunryu Suzuki, who must have been kind and great teachers indeed to be able to penetrate my thick skull. My own heritage would go on to include D. T. Suzuki, Nyogen Senzaki, Miguel Molinos, and more recently two poets, Jack Kerouac and Lew Welch, who were to me Bodhi brothers in the truest sense. Such is my heritage, and to deny it would be to deny my own heart. Why should we deny that we love.

What a joy it can be to feel a sense of kinship with such fellows as St. Francis and Pu-tai. I sometimes even feel an irrational urge to shout to them across the centuries. Here again I think some primal ritual is involved. Again I would hope we could keep it very simple, and not get trapped by some verbal formula. Fortunately, instead of shouting, I find that simply lighting a candle in someone's honor, maybe accompanied by a bow of some sort, to be more deeply expressive of the heart than mere words. Done in a spirit of gratitude and love, it seems a good way for us.

Like any ritual, however, it could also so easily turn into a lifeless formula at any moment. My only answer to that problem is to simply stop when it happens. It is better to wait until the moment again seems right, and then start again from the beginning. That may upset one's schedule, but it is far better to follow the inner spirit than some lifeless form.

One of the things I'm trying to suggest in all of this is that we stay closer to the beginnings of things, and closer to some primal level of reality. That would also imply that we should be more like children. What we need is more children, not professionals.

There is another area of ritual in which I think we should be more direct and childlike, although it usually seems to be a more professional kind of concern.

How does one become a "child of Bodhi"? Traditionally this would involve some rite of initiation, ordination, or such. But since we children are not some kind of organization or religious sect, what are we going to do? There isn't any "place" we can go to for such. Furthermore we are all already children of Bodhi, so there really isn't anything to "join." Yet we need something here. The way I would put it is "we need a ritual that would confirm and deepen the truth that one is indeed a child of Bodhi, and that we are all Bodhi brothers and sisters together."

The trouble with ordinary rituals of this nature is that it all seems to happen so mechanically. Maybe it wasn't always so, but these days the focus seems to be mostly on externals, and not on one's very own life. Often they even stuff you into some uniform and tell you what to think every step of the way. Worse still it may be all gibberish and you are supposed to keep your mind blank, if you ever had one in the first place. Most of us

then have the good sense to avoid the whole thing from the start, although I admit for some it is a beautiful thing.

I think we Boes are looking for something deeper here, although it may be a vague and mostly hidden urge. Anyway it should be something that opens us up more fully to life, not something that closes us down. It should be more harmonious and natural, maybe like a flower blooming.

Well Lo and Behold, we Bodhi children are not lost in the wilderness here, for there does seem to be such a ritual, and it fits our needs almost perfectly. Furthermore it is in a sense a universal tradition existing in Christianity and Buddhism, and in one way or another, in many other religions as well.

What I am referring to here is usually called "self-ordination." In Buddhism for example it is usually found in association with awakening of Bodhi-mind and the great vows one would take as a Bodhisattva. I would call it a primal ritual, naturally and spontaneously arising from one's very own heart, and with one's very own vows. One might take the Buddha as one's witness, or sometimes instead the Great Earth and the Open Sky, which should have its appeal for those among us more naturalistically inclined.

I think many of us in essence have already done something like that in the course of our lives, only in a more natural and less dramatic kind of way. It might be not so focussed, and more scattered into a rare moment here and there, so we might not then think of it as "self-ordination," but that is what I would call it.

All of us take vows too in one way or another, maybe especially as children. For me such an occasion was when my dog Jerry died. I remember it as clearly as if it were yesterday, but it is so personal a thing I don't quite dare or know how to speak of it. Such vows too often seem to be of the silent kind, going beyond mere words. We may not remember them very clearly, but even so they may shape our entire lives.

It is this kind of thing that I think self-ordination is all about, but with an added dimension of ritual. It seems a natural for us children, although I must admit the hardier souls among us don't seem to really need it. I'm of a bit more tender variety myself, so I would much appreciate a little help from somewhere, even if only a little hint and a nudge in the right direction.

One place one might turn to, for such a nudge, is the "Queen Srimala Sutra," which Prince Shotoku Taishi used as a model in introducing a self-ordination tradition to Japan, later coming to flower with Dengyo Daishi. It seems to bridge the gap between the priesthood and the laity, and is equally appropriate whether one is a monk, a grocery clerk, or a bartender. Here the emphasis is on individuality and a freedom from outer forms. In this sense a professional priesthood might not really be necessary to regulate everything, so it soon encountered their opposition, which proved to be quite effective.

An interesting example of self-ordination, in a somewhat modified form, is the "Universal Life Church," founded recently by Kirby Hensley. The ULC will ordain anyone by mail with no questions asked and no obligations, free and irrevocable. The "content" then is very much an individual responsibility. Although much criticized by establishment circles, they now number well into the millions, and with little doubt constitute one of the most amazing collections of dreamers, malcontents, visionaries, squares, kooks, saints, poets, bums, boes, and ne'er-do-wells to ever assemble under one sky. Their goal is to ordain everyone, while leaving one quite free to be a Methodist, Sufi, Socialist, Nembutsu Zen, or whatever.

The ULC, it seems to me, is harkening back to the anti-clerical spirit of the great Deists of yore--Liberty! Equality! Fraternity!

Indeed I find such a spirit to be irresistible, and since I do not see it as really differing from the spirit of the Srimala Sutra, you can add one more to the ULC.

I think that self-ordination, whatever its form may be, is a natural for us children of Bodhi. It almost seems made for us. What are we waiting for, what do you say we go ahead and do it. You can count me in for sure. Let's go! Yahoo!

Some of you might reply "Surely you must be joking, you can't be serious about this 'Boes' thing, self-ordination and all." Well you durn tootin I am! What does a fellow have to do to be serious around here anyway, stand on his head or something?

As a matter of fact I'm probably too serious about it all. I really worry about being a good Bodhi-bum. It was with great relief that I finally figured out that it didn't really have much to do with wearing rags and letting one's teeth rot out. The inner spirit of it all is what matters, and I think the key here is humility. Bums often have this quality with great sincerity. We need a "humility before all," maybe here capitalizing "All." As a Zen priest, I find this particularly difficult, since we tend to be such proud fellows and even elitist snobs.

I think an old rabbi put it perfectly. He was asked why there never seem to be any great prophets or holy men anymore, as there were in the old days. He pondered on it for a while, and then replied "These days nobody bows low enough."

That's the spirit, and in my "nembutsu zen" that is what I'm trying to do, to bow down low before the immeasurable radiance and nameless-name called Amida Buddha. Nor do I think Amida is in essence different from the Goddess Prajnaparamita, who is the Great Mother of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and without doubt of us Bodhi-bums as well. Or call it Bodhi if you will, and so off I go merrily abumming.

It seems to me too that is in the spirit of Jack Kerouac and the old beatnik gang. By the way, for me "beatnik" has always meant "to bow down low enough," to be utterly "beat" before God, or Amida.

This brings me to one other area about which I'm seriously concerned. I'm getting along in years now, and naturally think quite a bit about death and a final resting place for my bones. Ordinarily hoboes and bums are excluded from the classier of such abodes, and come to a very humble end in such as a potter's field, which all is admittedly as it should be in some deep sense. In a way we Boes belong with them, so perhaps we should join our fellows in such a humble end. At least then we would not be tempted by pride. Nevertheless, maybe an exception could be made here, so that we children of Bodhi might somehow establish a special "potter's field" of our own. Several of us feel maybe somewhere in the mountains would be best. We would welcome your suggestions on the subject.

We children of Bodhi are spread out all over the world, and form a kind of homeless brotherhood. We may belong to this or that group, but at heart we are all brothers and sisters. Maybe then at the end of our journey, at least our bones might somehow rest together, if not in place, then in spirit. And if we are here touching the dimension of myth, so much the better.

On a much less somber note, let me close with a quote that adds an interesting facit to our term "Bo." The following little gem is taken from the "Chicago Record," as cited in the Oxford English Dictionary:

> "An' den, wen ye meets one uv yer own kind, ye feels like old pals, 'cause he calls ye 'Ho,' and ye calls him 'Bo.' See?"

Ananda Bo (or Ho) Dalenberg

Marian Mountain
Coastlands
Big Sur, CA 93920

Dear HoBo Friends,

Practicing alone doesn't provide much feedback. That may be one reason why the HoBo dream so charmingly expressed in Ananda Claude Dalenberg's "Open Letter to the Children of Bodhi" caught my fancy. There was something fresh and innocent about this manifesto. There was also something courageous in the call to join a spiritual revolution in which transmission is done away with, where there is no separate priestly class and there are no dues or conditions for membership. Still I must admit I had a few reservations about joining. For the last 12 years of my life I've shied away from group projects.

(During this period my husband Jack and I have lived a semi-recluse life. Summers usually find us on the road where I sit in zazen on the cramped floor of our trailer Samsara. Winters when we are hole up in Nirvana--a small cabin in the Ventana Wilderness behind Big Sur--I spread out my straw mat in a spacious 10 X 10 foot sitting room. In the distant past I raised a large family, pursued a number of minor careers, and devoted a half-dozen years to traditional Zen Buddhist training under the guidance of the late Shunryu Suzuki Roshi.)

It took several months of gentle nudging by the editor before I was finally persuaded to write "a little something" for the first issue of the "Cloud-Hidden Friends Journal". Since I tend to ramble, and have already used up more space than I intended, I'd just like to offer one suggestion here for your consideration:

In the "Open Letter" Ananda gave tribute to a few HoBo spirits to whom he felt indebted: Alan Watts, D.T. Suzuki, Jack Kerouac, Lew Welch, Saint Frances, Pu-tai, and Han Shan. It seems to me that this list might make a good start for a HoBo Dharma Linage. Drawing up our own Dharma Linages seems to fit in nicely with the practice of self-ordination. One name I'd have on my list of HoBo Patriarchs is Shunryu Suzuki Roshi. Although most of Suzuki Roshi's last life was devoted to transmitting the traditional form and spirit of Japanese Zen Buddhism, Roshi was open to other possibilities. When I confided once to Roshi my dream of someday living in the mountains as a Zen hermit (a practice not encouraged by most

contemporary Zen masters) Roshi clapped his hands delightedly and said he thought that would be a wonderful life. Anyone who has read Shunryu Suzuki's book, ZEN MIND, BEGINNER'S MIND, can get a sense of Roshi's HoBo spirit. For instance, on page 32 he says: "The best way to control people is to encourage them to be mischievious. Then they will be in control in its wider sense."

Another name I'd choose for my Dharma Linage is Nyogen Senzaki, a Zen monk who brought Zen to California in the days before D.T. Suzuki and Alan Watts popularized it. Senzaki refused to hold the position of a Zen priest or to have any connection with Headquarters in Japan. When an abbot of a Japanese Zen monastery critisized Senzaki for ordaining Americans without a license from the Japanese government Senzaki upheld the principle of self-ordination which he said had been practiced by the first Zen monks and nuns in Japan. Sensaki believed in dealing with Buddha directly without the necessity of middle men, high priests or temples. "The ordination of a Buddhist," Senzaki proclaimed, "is not under the control of any sect. Anyone who has been ordained a Buddhist for ten years, no matter what sect, has authority to ordain others."

And finally (for now) to my list of Dharma Heirs I'd add Tosui, an eccentric Zen master Nyogen Senzaki and Paul Reps introduced to America in their wonderful book, ZEN FLESH, ZEN BONES. (If I had to choose just one Zen book to take with me to a desert island it would be this one.) Tosui was a Zen master with a large following but one day, at the height of his popularity, he quit the lecture business and retired to live with some beggars under a bridge. When my Dharma brother, Ananda, wrote me that he had retired from Zen Center and planned to devote his time to the spiritual support and encouragement of an assortment of religious dreamers, malcontents, visionaries, squares, kooks, saints, poets, bums, Boes, and ne'r-do-wells I had the strange feeling that Tosui was alive and well and living in San Francisco.

With Gassho,

Marian Mountain

Robert Breckenridge
1315 Spring
Calistoga, CA 94515

Dear Friends:

Ananda has suggested that I might write something about "practicing the Dharma at a Hot Springs Commune".

Everything in our life is, in one way or another, a practice of the Dharma, of course. Mostly we have the unfocussed messing around in Samsara. Fearful and believing in our separateness, we gradually educate ourselves struggling with illusions. At times we concentrate our study with the ways of religion, meditation, yogas, psychology, etc. which are more direct.

So I could write about all the things of my life at Harbin Springs (Heart Consciousness Church Inc.). Most of it would be details of my involvement with illusions and I don't have the literary skills to make them worth telling, but I'll mention a few events because they point towards reality and then I'll get into what I call my practice.

Julie, my daughter twelve years old, lived with me the past year and a half. Now I am in my cabin at Harbin Hot Springs surrounded by boxes and bags, packing my stuff, leaving. I have found photos of Julie: Julie on the porch, Julie in the swing, Julie holding her stuffed unicorn, Julie naked by the baths, Julie smiling, Julie, Julie, Julie. Memories of our year here fill my mind. Things we did together, the school we made for ourselves, cooking, eating, studying, playing, laughing, fighting, walking talking swimming, crying..... holding, hugging and saying again and again: "I love you!" "I love you too!" "I love you, so much!"

Last week she went to Calistoga to live with her mother and attend a regular Junior High School. We will see and visit and call each other saying "I love you!" "I miss you". I have been grieving, of course, for it is this year with Julie that I have remmembered how to love and be loved and I miss her very very much.

Now, I am packing to go to Denver to visit my 82 year old mother who lives alone and has become ill. She needs help but won't ask for it. Doesn't want to be a "burden" on her children. It won't be easy. Like most Americans of my time I found it proper to go off and leave my parents, visiting only occasionally for short periods, putting an end to that parent-child kind of love that I have shared with Julie. I guess I did it so I could grow up or something like that. I have followed a way quite different from theirs.

So it has come full circle: Mother/Son-Father/Daughter. I have learned that those words "I love you" can be true and that love is not an illusion but real. And I go to Denver to do what is right.

Ananda and I became friends at the Academy of Asian Studies in 1955. We talked and talked and adventured our way together at the Academy and then at the East-West House until we parted ways (not without resentment) in Japan in 1959. I pushed away from him as I had my parents because he was a big brother figure to me and I wanted to go my own way. We saw each other only occasionally over the years and were not close. Joining with him then in the Bodhi-Friends Mission is like another return, another full circle. We have had these discussions and board meetings and there is a kind of light that emerges: Brotherhood, a manifestation/creation of Love which is real. And so I say "Ho" to you "Bo". hello Brothers.

The Bodhi Friends Mission U.L.C. is a Zen Buddhist Quaker-Christian organization with room for a few other traditions and practices, no doubt. How does one get into the focussed and concentrated with this kind of organization?

"Buddha loves me this I know, 'Cause the Sutras tell me so."

???????

Or perhaps we could let the inner light speak out as we sit lotus position in the Zendo ??? We could write scholarly works on the relation of Buddhist and

Christian philosophy. There are probably unlimited ways to follow the ULC creed of doing what is right and fitting that within the Bodhi Friends Mission.

Even before Ananda came to me with the Bodhi-Friends idea I had happened upon a Buddhist-Christian sort of way called the "Course In Miracles" ($30 post paid from The Foundation For Inner Peace, P.O. Box 635, Tiburon, CA 94920 , allowing for a few weeks for delivery). There are three volumes: Text, Workbook and Teachers Manual (we are <u>all</u> Teachers). The course is Christian- Quaker in the sense that it uses terms such as God, Holy Spirit, Atonement (At-one-ment), Peace, Happiness, Love, Grievance, Forgiveness, erc. It is Buddhist in the sense that it emphasizes that ego and the world are illusory. The workbook is a progression of meditations with statements that could be called mantras designed to lead one toward the realization of illusion, and toward reality. From ego to Self or, as some say, from mind to Mind. There is no dualism of God and Devil good and evil. God is love, light, truth, peace, freedom, happiness. Everyone is totally forgiven in eternity. Suffering, fear, time, darkness are not real. They are illusions that we have made.

There are 365 lessons. The course would last a year if you did one a day. I miss days fairly often, get stuck, forget, etc. I'm on lesson 96 today. Readers of my letter are no doubt spiritually inclined, so I'll share parts of this one with you. This is from the Workbook:

> "Spirit makes use of mind as means to self-expression and the mind which serves the spirit is at peace and filled with joy. Its power comes from spirit, and it is fulfilling happily its function here. Yet mind can also see itself divorced from spirit and perceive itself within a body it confuses with itself. Without its function then It has no peace, and happiness is alien to its thoughts..... Our hourly five minute practice (today) will be a search for Him within your mind. Begin with saying this:
>
> <u>Salvation comes from my one Self. Its thoughts are mine to use..</u>
>
> Then seek its thoughts and claim them as your own; real thoughts you have denied, and let your mind go wandering in a world of dreams to find illusions in their place. Here now are your real thoughts. Salvation is among them: find it there."

(Readers can now do a five minute Course In Miracles with me. Any comfotable position is good. Repeat the underlined statement, close your eyes, listen for the thoughts of the Self.)

I'll close with a statements directed to all the Bo's who read this:

Fear is the opposite of Love
It arises from the illusion of separation
And can be put aside
Time and Death are illusions
We are eternal
Peace Happiness and Truth
Live within us.
We are totally forgiven
Salvation is guaranteed

and Ho! to you all BO-Brothers

Breck

c/o C.H.F.
753 44th Avenue
San Fransisco, CA 94121

LETTERS RECEIVED

Y.M.
9-1-82

Dear A.C. (as in athletic club: Jock), and the Cloud-Hidden Friends:

1) thanks for the Brief on Quakers - appreciate!

2) True Quakerism and Zen are not necessarily, by definition, liberal. Quakerism has always been strongly conservative (in its core meanings) and Zen is extremely disciplined. (the Sufii can be added to this list also.) They advocate, stand for, symbolize and are - unstructured, each in their own WAY. They all reach for the truth hidden within (exotericism versus esotericism).

EXO- outer
tero- ic (study): tero: to break through, to get away
ESO- inner as in determine or terminate

ESO TERO : to break through to the inner (hidden)

EXO TERO : to finalize: determine. to terminate the search:
to find (break through to) the terminus, boundary, parameters
to get away from the innder (chaos) to the outer definitive (order).

3) You cited Bishop Hensley, ULC, concerning real freedom. The advent of the age of Aquarious to the Western World was heralded by the impact of Freud on the scientific mind. Like Kepler and Darwin, in their respective fields, Freud was the Harbinger of of the truth that command of the human organism does NOT lie in the human mind: that we do not consciously control our behavior.

The dominant concepts of the Victorian age follow from the Reformation, the age of Reason and the advent of science: das intelleckt uber alles. This dependence on the brain, reason and the mind and the coordinate ignorance of the unconscious, archetypes or heart has led to ideas, then ideology, then propaganda and to today's ultimate disillusionment. We are now in the midst of a conflict between those who adhere to the conscious, exoteric, dogmatic, ideologic, cold intellectual WAY and those who FREE up their intuition, study and examine their own unconscious, see into the esoteric and who have freed themselves from dependency on any ideology or dogma, NO MATTER HOW TRUE.

Psychology and Zen (Buddhism) therefore come together in this new age with the joint saying that true freedom can come only after dealing in the depths of one's own unconscious. This requires leaving ALL ideologies and dogmas behind. To be free, we must cultivate the "skills" required to look (see, perceive) beyond, to look within, to perceive at depth. Martha Graham advocated dsicipline to the point of slavery-and when we have trained the body to obey our command accurately, we will then be finally free to perform anything we WILL."

4) It seems to me that one requires tools in order to become free. Meditation is one tool, reading scriptures is another, having a guru, teacher, master, guide is a third . But none of these is of use to he who is ignorant of the basic tool: how to look under the surface. This skill resides in every child but is conditioned out of him by the agents of his culture-society. He is taught, in the Western world, to accept the surface-image (exotericism). And his skill at IN-SIGHT atrophies. In many cases, fear is instituted, inculcated and indoctrinated: fear that peeping under the dogma or ideology is unpatriotic which earns the crucifixion (pardon the mixed metaphors).

I am talking about LIFE as distinguished from EXISTENCE (can YOU SEE into the hidden difference?). The skill is the ability to be the tracker. one must be ready to track down the devious trails of truth that starts with any overt evidence. Let me give you a ferinstance: RED MEANS DANGER. That

continued

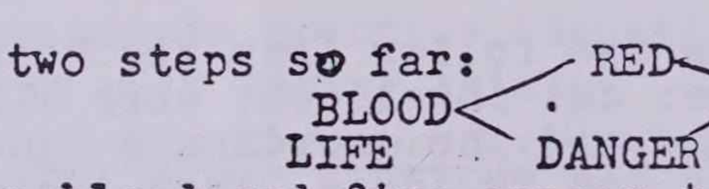
is an exotericism. How did RED get to mean DANGER? The exoteric answer is: "Look it up in a dictionary.": i.e.: somebody (authority) said (dictated) that red means danger. That is slavery. To the free man, the SEEKER. the tracker, Quaker, Zen master, Yogi, SEE-ER knows that all meanings come because something deep inside man (esoteric) knows and accepts the intuitive truth.

So what doees Red mean? My"religion", if I really have one, says that the adept should never tell the answer to anyone. Why? Because all these answers lie always within the looker, the seeker, the perceiver, and not external to him.. If I tell him, I am external and lead him to think that I can tell him the answers. But I can use this as a teaching tool to demonstrate the skill of which I speak. Itis not something which I ever learned from a person directly or from books. It has taken years to FREE this innate aptitude which I had, all the while. SO: FOLLOW - the tracks that I leave here.

First red is an abstract: it does not exist. A cardinal exists and has a distinctive color, but the color is an abstraction taken from the bird. So if red doesn't exist, where in life can it be found? Any "savage" or "primative" knows the answer: FIRE. But for modern man, fire is hidden in the depths of our centrally heated buildings. Even a gas flame is blue. But sit by a fire every day of your life and the question "Where is Red found?" is hilarious. And in addition, why red indicates danger follows from the "hot" in fire.

So - FIRE. Where else is red found in life? Answer: BLOOD. But be careful. Blood is invisible - until it is spilled. And blood splashed on the ground quickly turns black. It is fresh and only fresh blood that is red, and arterial blood is redder than venous blood. It is venuous blood which we shed in our daily scrapes, bumps, cuts, and knocks in life. But the bright RED shed by a cut artery signifies (symbolizes, indicates, means) DANGER. And the injury which fire can do means that red flags our caution.

So we have two steps so far:

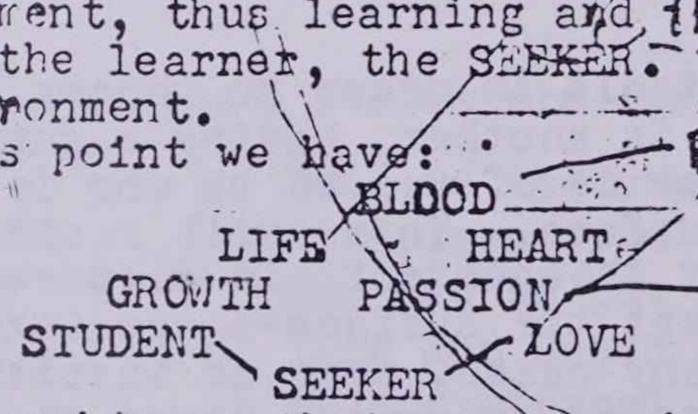


and I have added "life" as a step from blood. Now let us take some more steps. When blood and fire appear together, is there a joint meaning? What DOES"life"mean? Is a sedate, sedentary, cold unemotional existence what LIFE is? Or does LIFE, by definition, require passion. What is the color of emotions when we use the word "passion"? And a passionate person is always a danger to his environment, whether love or in the realm of ideology and belief.

And I slipped one in there. Did you take the step or must I still spoon feed you? LOVE follows from the sanguine (bloody) LIFE full of fire. One who is ALIVE WILL LOVE passionately. The RED HEART of our valentine symbol is not accidental. HEART is the central organ of the BLOOD system. Fresh blood is still hot with the Fires of Life.

Any being alive must grow. Life equals growth for nogrowth is only death (which is cold - without fire). Thus life is dangerous for even yeast will grow and conquor the earth (unless it overpopulates its nutriments or pollutes its environment). Passion motivates the SEEKER to experiment with his environment, thus learning and thus growing. Red is the color of the student, the learner, the SEEKER. And his experimenting can be dangerous for the environment.

At this point we have:



And when the SEEKER becomes the passionate SEEKER, he will look within all the dogma and ideology and become the one who exposes the exoterics; and they will see him as their enemy: he is in DANGER.

This is not the end of the trail, it is only a beginning. This technique of tracking, this skill of searching for the logic behind the surface is the first requirment to learn anything.

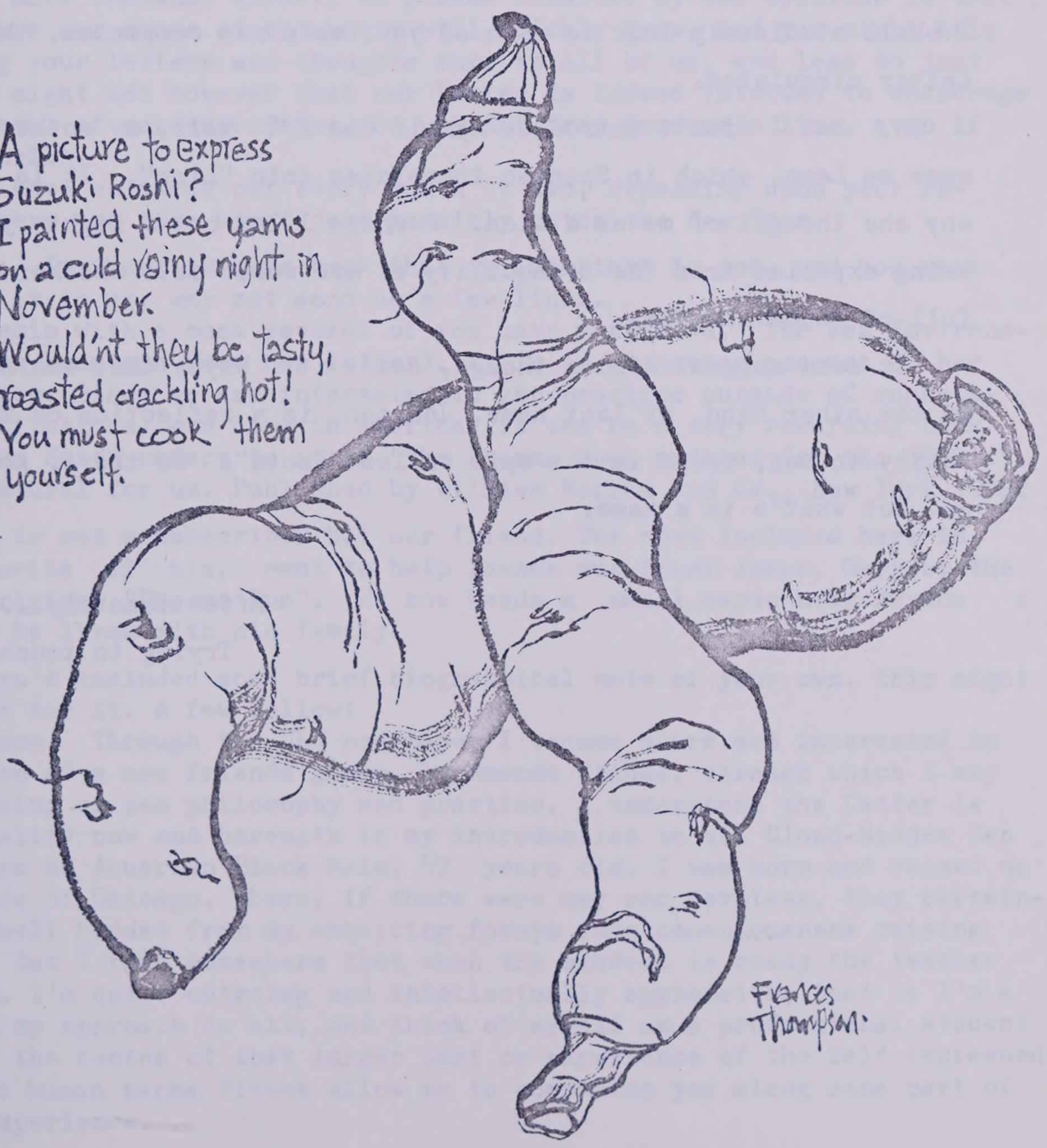
YELLOW MOUSE

Frances Thompson
236 Cypress
Pacific Grove, CA 93950

Dear Friends:

I've been considering painting a picture of Suzuki Roshi, and it made me think of- a cup of tea, a rock, a bamboo rake, and the sweet potatoes. At Tasajara monastery when I first began to clear the land between the swimming pool and the cabins for a garden, Roshi came out and stood in the dirt and the sunshine and said that it was a very healthy place for plants, and let's grow sweet potatoes, so I planted some. But there is not a long enough hot season at Tasajara, and the nights are too cold to provide the even heat sweet potatoes need, so all we grew were lots of green vines.

I bought some sweet potatoes from the store to draw, but their shape is not as interesting as yams, so yams turned out to be the picture. Roast yams are big in Japan , I hear.



Leon Johnson #C 37890
Box 2210-21801
Susanville, CA 96130

Dear Friends:

The good news that our Letter would soon be a reality leaves me with eager anticipation to satisfy a desire I have had for a long time- to learn more about zen experience.

Quite a few years ago I was introduced to Zen and Eastern Religious Philosophy through reading the "Way of Zen", by Alan Watts, and through a course "A Survey of World Religions". Herman Hesse's "Siddartha" and "Steppenwolf" further stimulated my interest, and I feel that zen is more suited to my religious temperament. So, being a novice to zen ways, I shall studiously look to each of you, as a zen companion, through each Letter circulated.

Oh, but I didn't introduce myself did I ? Well, my mother chose to name me Leon, which in Spanish translates into "Lion". It is beyond me why she thought of me as a Lion. Perhaps I let out a mighty yell at being expelled from the tranquility of one world into another which is full of sound and fury.

It does suggest Africa though, don't it? Maybe that was her intent? On the other hand, my last name, Johnson, is a reflection on man's inhumanity to man, bound in the epic called "Roots". So there, now you know me. But what's in a name.

Affectionately.... Leon J.
Trying to touch myself

NEWS & NOTES

1. Clerk's Corner: Several of you have asked if there is any formal connection between our Letter and some Zen group, or perhaps the Universal Life Church, of which several of us are ministers. No, there is none, although admittedly there is some confusion on the subject. At the moment we are being sponsored by the "Bodhi Friends Mission, U.L.C.", but that is mostly for tax-exemption reasons. In any case our future is wide open, and what happens next is mostly dependent upon what all of you want.

   We have extra copies of this issue, so if you would like to send a copy or two off to friends, let us know. We probably do need to spread the word a little bit, although in our own case size may be a dubious virtue.

   One of the advantages of our kind of group is that our expenses are minimal. We even have the luxury of not having to always be asking for money. This is quite unusual these days, when every religious effort seems to be almost immediately translated into endless appeals for more and more money. Let us all give away something instead.

   We have a kind of "equal time" policy for our Letter. As clerk then I must apologize for taking up so much space with my own Bodhi letter etcetera. In part this was unavoidable since we had to start with something. What we intend however is a more communal effort, so please consider my own opinions in that light. I'm sure our sense of community will quickly grow, and you might help by addressing your letters and thoughts more to all of us, and less to just the clerk. I might add however that our Letter is indeed intended to encourage a personal level of correspondence. So why not drop someone a line, even if just to say hello.

   We hope to have an issue out every month or two, depending upon your response. The next one then might just possibly catch the New Year.

2. Book Corner: If there is some book that is important to you, and you want to recommend it to us, why not send us e few lines.

   We might begin with a book several of you have mentioned, "The Zen Environment" by Marian Mountain (see her letter). It is an absorbing account of her own life in zen. Since we are interested in zen practice outside of monasteries and institutions, and here in America, it can be a very rewarding book indeed. Huston Smith refers to it as "the Dharma Bums updated for the 1980's". It seems a natural for us. Published by William Morrow and Co., New York, 1982.

3. Gary Snyder is not a subscriber but our friend. The poem included here is an Ainu favorite of his, sent to help launch our first issue. Gary by the way is an original "Dharma Bum". He now heads a small zendo near Nevada City, where he lives with his family.

4. If you haven't included some brief biographical note of your own, this might be the place for it. A few follow:

   Leon Johnson: Through the ULC newspaper I became aware and interested in the formation of a zen friends group, by Ananda Claude, through which I may learn something of zen philosophy and practice. I understand the Letter is almost a reality now and herewith is my introduction to all Cloud-Hidden Zen Friends: I am an Aquarian Black Male, 47 years old. I was born and raised on the Southside of Chicago, where, if there were any zen devotees, they certainly kept it well hidden from my enquiring forays into consciousness raising activities. But I read somewhere that when the student is ready the teacher will appear. I'm quite outgoing and intellectually aggressive; that is I'm a Humanist in my approach to all, and think of myself as a professional student in quest of the center of that larger part or experience of the Self expressed in wholistic human terms. Please allow me to companion you along some part of our human experience.

Ananda Claude Dalenberg : I was born on July 2, 1927. I was brought up in the Dutch reformed Church, but was not a very "religious" type. Later I met Alan Watts, and that was a big change for me. I studied philosophy and religion for a number of years and then went to Japan in 1957 to study Zen. A year later I met Shunryu Suzuki at Zen Center in San Francisco, joined the priesthood, and practiced there until recently. I am now married, and am the proud father of twin daughters.

In 1981 I became a minister in the Universal Life Church, not as a rejection of zen, but as a natural next step on my religious pilgrimage. In a deeper sense I believe the ULC is quite harmonious with zen. In such a spirit, together with Robert Breckenridge and a few friends, we have started a small group in the ULC called the "Bodhi Friends Mission". It seems to be the right thing to do.

Frances Thompson was born in Japan, came to the U.S. as a little child and forgot all about it. She drew pictures all her life and studied art; she looked at bugs in ponds and studied biology; she read about Zen and Buddhism and was deposited at the door of Sokoji Temple in San Francisco by a miraculous series of events. She was at Tasajara for the first training period and stayed three years, being a gardener and a temperamental Tenzo. Thinking of her training makes her burst out laughing. Now she lives in Monterey County and is mainly interested in fame and gain. She practices brush painting, grinding her inkstone to powder while gazing at the mountains and rivers. She grows flowers, publishes books, gives tea parties, wastes time and stares out of windows a lot.

6. The "Cloud-Hidden Friends Letter" lettering and drawing that appears on our front page is the art work of Frances Thompson.

7. If you have any smaller things, such as a haiku or a little sketch or two, please do not hesitate to send them in. Such would be ideal too for filling in a bit of empty space here and there. I suppose we could borrow from things in print, but it would be much better if it were our own stuff.

A.C. Dalenberg, Clerk

Cloud-hidden friends letter

ISSUE #2
1983

OUR PAGES ARE YOUR LETTERS

Cloud-Hidden Friends
753 44th Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94121

The "Cloud-Hidden Friends" are a small non-sectarian religious correspondence group. We meet mostly by sharing our thoughts on the Dharma together in our "Letter".

Rather than giving some definition to the word "Dharma", we would rather emphasize the freedom of the individual to come to his own understsnding about such. As a group we would aim more at a dialogue, and would emphasize the spirit and practice of the Dharma rather than some doctrinaire or sectarian formula.

In that spirit we look to Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki and Alan Watts as our "honorary founders". Although they are usually associated with Buddhism, and Zen in particular, their spirit was also a free and universal one, including Christianity, Hinduism, and Taoism etcetera. Their Dharma then seems to somehow belong equally to us all.

In a more universal spirit then we are a zen group. However we might also turn to someone like Thomas Merton to exemplify the kind of openness and dialogue we have in mind. In his later years, he commented that he could see no contradiction between Christianity and Buddhism, and that he had determined "to become as good a Buddhist as I can ".

Since our pages are your letters, we ask as our "subscription fee" that you write us a letter now and then in the "spirit of the Dharma". Poems, songs, tales, drawings and sush are all more than welcome. We will try to publish everything we receive, but this might not always be possible. Letters should be of a reasonable length, and if you so request, we will type them up for you. It is presumed we will forgive each other a few typing errors etcetera, since pirfectionism could easily paralyze us.

It is hoped that our letters will somehow help us open our hearts to each other, and deepen our sense of the Dharma. Hopefully in this way too more than a few deep friendships might develop.

It is our intention to be as democratic in spirit as is possible. It does seem that we do at least need a "Clerk" of some sort to do the photocopying, co-ordinating, and mailing etcetera. This role might be thought of as similar to that of the "Clerk" in Quakerism, and it seems a good model for us to follow. Your comments on these matters would be appreciated.

Our phrase "Cloud-Hidden" is taken from the title of a book by Alan Watts. He in turn borrowed it from a ninth century poem by Chia Tao. Lin Yutang translates it as follows:

SEARCHING FOR THE HERMIT IN VAIN

I asked the boy beneath the pines.
He said,"The master's gone alone
Herb-picking somewhere on the mount,
Cloud-hidden, whereabouts unknown."

A.C.D., Clerk

Joel Weishaus
1115 Copper N.E.
Albuquerque, N.M.
87106

8 Dec 82

Dear Cloud-hidden friends;

We live in an exciting time, excellent time to realize the essence of things. This because of the immense scientific changes we experience almost daily, changes that affect our view of the world even before we can integrate yesterday's revelation. So we stand back and breath slowly and deeply, and finally laugh, even as the best scientists laugh, finally.

When I was older than I am now, I got it all mixed up. I had given up on life, not the force of life, but the fact of life. I wanted only to find the Truth. I wanted to be a Zen hermit, or a furabo (fu=wind, ra="a piece of tattered cloth", bo=monk). I wanted only to sit in zen, and make poems. Of course I wasn't sitting correctly, as I was running from my self. You can't sit and run at the same time.
This was all made easier, ironically, by the time. The Haight-Ashbury was thriving, the "Love-in," the "Be-in," all the would-be personalities donned spiritual garb and gab, and their attendants danced around them with starry eyes and muddy feet.
In this rare atmosphere I followed The Way, or thought I did, sitting in cold groves, monasteries--here and in Japan--, warm zen centers and friends' apartments...finally finding my dream isolated cabin in the mountains of Lake County, Cal., spending a year there.
It was in that cabin, alone, no where to roam, that I admitted I had been running, not sitting. And that it's easy to be a saint, much more difficult to be a man, to accept a life that does end, to accept paradox and pain, to accept ego hurt, to accept my self.
I left my cabin, and now, eight years later, it's only a fond memory. I think of how wonderous, magical that time--the '60s and early '70s--were. I think it was an honor to have walked the streets of San Francisco then, when long hair meant "friend," and we were changing the world's culture, if only a little. But, as my friend Marian Mountain wrote, "There is nothing deader than yesterday's enlightenment." Anyway, it is an honor, too, to be living today.
Now, I've lost most of my hair, and I live twelve hundred miles inland, this beautiful New Mexico. I live, I work, I dream, I love, getting high on my everyday mind.
One's death is the rarest of gems; one's life, however, is the setting.

Love & Gassho,

):(

Tom Thompson
5 Thunderbird Dr.
Naugatuck, Ct. 06770

Dear Friends:

I have an half an hour to write this letter before I mail it on my way to work. The first thing to say is I really am enjoying the first issue of Cloud-Hidden Friends Letter. A great idea! A letter from old friends. And it is interesting to see that Robert Breckenridge is from Calistoga, as I used to live up on the mountain there about ten years ago. In a little hut. Use to open the door, sit on my porch, do meditation and watch the animals. It was partially there on Mt. St. Helena that I learned that animals really like the energy meditation gives off and that they have no fear of people that meditate. I think of Hanshan meditating with tigers, yogis with cobras, me with deer, racoons, and chipmunks.

Speaking of yogis, the way that I follow is Siddha Yoga. Please be clear that Siddha yoga is not necessarily Hinduism, or especially the Siddha Yoga Dham of America Foundation. For me, it is the fun process of spiritual evolution and realizatiom that includes anything that works, including Zen/Zen Buddhism, especially in the non-tradition that Cloud-Hidden Friends represents. In my relationship with my Guru, now moved on, he enabled me to realize in reality so much of what was once theory and speculation. Baba Muktananda was my Zen Master in the truest sense in that he had the same Mind as Bodhidharma. Why did Baba come to the West? Ho!

What else? I was born in 1949. I work part-time as a Psychiatric Technician. I teach Yoga and Meditation at the Woodbury Yoga Center which pretty freely follows the teaching of Baba Muktananda, Dhyan Yogi Madhusudandas, but remains free of their organizations. We were once called an outlaw Baba center. It was taken as a compliment. Our aim is to liberate ourselves and others, not perpetuate belief systems or organizations.

I am also first and foremost a single parent of a five year old daughter. Her Her name is Kelly and she is a radiant being. Her mother is still around at times, but she is married to someone else now. Kelly is with me.

Well, my half hour is up. you can figure how many words I type a minute now. Not a hell of a lot. I think I'll wait and mail this tomorrow.

TOMORROW- On the way to work, I was thinking how Baba Muktananda once told me that the true name for all the various religions and sects in India is not Hinduism, but Santana Dharma, or Eternal Truth. Baba says that Santana Dharma includes everyone and everything because it is the Truth of Ultimate Reality or God. In it there is no maya as all things are truly Satchitananda or BlissConsciousnessBeing. Baba quoted the Upanishads or Vedas- "Truth is One; The paths to it many." When I spoke to Baba about my conflict with Zen and Siddha Yoga, he said that basically there was no difference esoterically, only exoterically because of the different cultures they are now practiced in. Both aim at true attainment of the Self. I practiced with Baba because he showed me that Self.

Working in Psychiatry is very interesting. Way back when I was in college in Indiana, I was going to medical school to become a psychiatrist because I had the impression that a psychiatrist knew all about the Mind, and the meaning of life. Fortunately I very quickly found out this wasn't so and went on to find some people who did understand the human predicament (among these Suzuki Roshi- I have many good stories to tell of hitch-hiking Indiana to San francisco, getting busted by Highway Patrol for No Thing, etc.etc. etc. doing Zazen in holding tank- but now is not the time to tell them).

Now I work in a small In-Patient unit of a small general hospital. We have a pretty open- minded staff for a psych unit but one thing that does really bother me is a good percentage of our patients are not truly mentally/emotionally ill and do not need psychiatric help. It is true they are depressed and upset, but no more so than you or I have been when we began searching for meaning in our crazy lives. Their depression is healthy and spiritual, the neurosis of great

continued

saints, but we do not support it, we medicate them, run them through group therapy, tell them not to think about such things, shrink their heads down to size and return them to family, friends and work as moronic as all others.

Every once in a while someone escapes all of this. I have sent a few people to meditstion centers or zendos with good results. It is hard to do, as many of our clients have pretty rigid religious upbringing (as does our staff) and thus are frightened of questioning the belief systems they were raised in. It was frightening to me when a patient told me that the only way she could escape the guilt of her religious conditioning was through suicide. What this young lady needed wasn't a psychiatrist but a good deprogrammer. She had been a member of a cult, a socially acceptable cult, her entire life and couldn't break free, because her conditioning was being subtly reinforced by everyone- including the psychiatrist! Psychiatry doesn't make you free, but rather a good cog in the wheel. At least that is how it works around here. Her priest was called in and instead of helping her transcend the dogma of her religion, he told her that suicide was one af the worst of all sins and that she would definitely go to Hell if she did it. Now she is drinking herself to death but that is acceptable with in her tradition. Its funny, but there is still hope for her. She may eventually turn to AA, which can really help her get free. AA is a true HOBO religion. It is pretty funky, but ultimately their message is that it's all up to your s/Self. Attain that s/Self and there will be no need to drink. It works for millions! And many alchoholics are Dharma Bums who took to drink instead of zazen. I know quite a few who do both, William James said in the Varieties of Religious Experience -

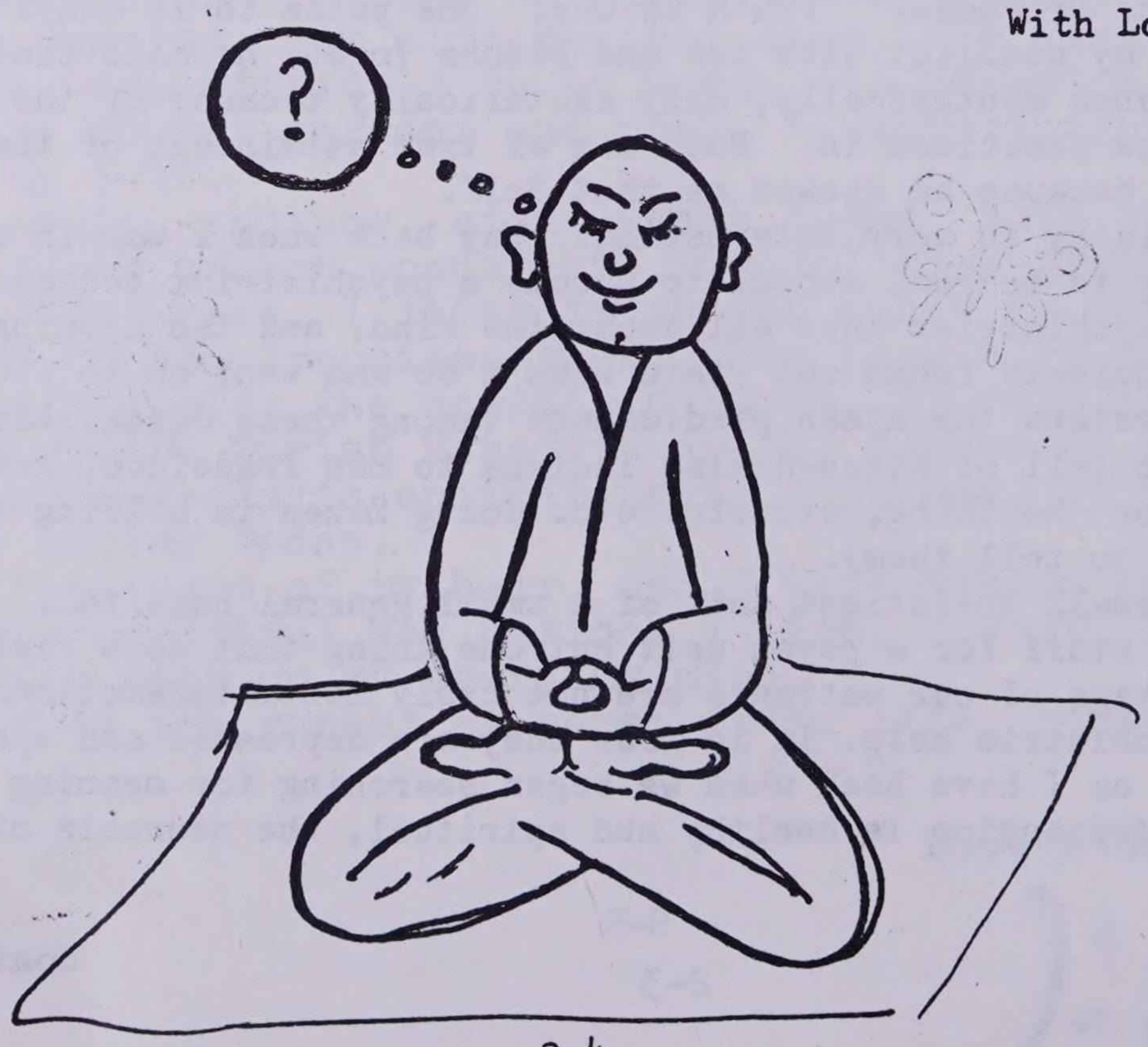
> "The sway of alchohol over mankind is unquestionably due to its power to stimulate the mystical faculties of human nature, usually crushed to earth by the cold facts and dry criticisms of the sober hour. Sobriety diminishes, discriminates, and says No; drunken-ness expands, unites and says Yes. It is in fact the great exciter of the Yes function in man. It brings its votary from the chill periphery of things to the radiant core. It makes him for the moment one with truth... the drunken consciousness is one bit of the mystic consciousness."

The next time we see a drunk (or are drunk ourselves!) we will remember that all we are experiencing is a frustrated Buddha-Bo who hasn't discovered zazen,-or AA. HöHo.

Well, I'm being called to meditation and besides I've rambled on enough. Flow of Consciousness/Play of Consciosness. I wish the Cloud-Hidden Friends Letter much success. It is very good to be in touch with so many fellow travellers on the Way. We are all HoBoes in this life. The Great Way is not difficult.

With Love-

Tom



Marian Mountain
Coastlands
Big Sur, CA 93920

Dear HoBo Friends,

Radio and TV advertisements seldom move me to action, but now and then I find myself responding emotionally to a clever sales pitch. When you hear one of those masterpieces of persuasion sponsored by the telephone company I wonder if you experience the same gut-wrenching as I do.

"Reach out and touch someone. Call up and just say, 'Hi!'"

Who among us doesn't fall short of our ideal image of ourselves as warm, loving, thoughtful friends? And what easier way to give ourselves a few psychological brownie-points than to pick up the phone and call someone? Especially someone who lives 2500 miles away? If your long-distance phone bill has escalated to the point where you are thinking of claiming Ma Bell as a dependent on your 1982 income tax you might want to consider an alternative to the telephone habit. How about cultivating the long-neglected art of letter-writing?

"Reach in and touch someone." That's what happens when we sit down to write a personal letter. Reaching out touches the surface of the relationship. Reaching in touches the deeper levels of the collective heart/mind. Even if you are in the habit of exchanging letters with friends and relatives in other parts of the country you may not be aware of how much an occasional letter to and from friends who live in the same town or the same house can add to the quality of the relationship.

Because letter-writing brings us closer to both our inner self as well as our outer self (the other person) the open letter format of THE CLOUD-HIDDEN FRIEND'S JOURNAL seems to be an ideal one to foster deep spiritual relationships. Another advantage of the open letter format is that it encourages equal participation from everyone involved in the project. There is no division between an elite staff of writers and a common crowd of subscribers. One disadvantage (one which could restrict participation) is the widespread extent of letter-writer's block. My estimate of the extent of letter-writer's block is based on a limited survey of my own family where four out of five of my grown children suffer from this disease. If you happen to be one of those average Americans who find it difficult to write personal letters to close friends, and couldn't conceive of writing an open letter to a publication such as this one, I have a suggestion that may help you overcome your problem.

continued

This is an exercise Freud developed to help professional writers who were blocked. The exercise trains your fingers to follow the flow of your thoughts. The secret is not to stop writing. Write down everything that passes through your mind. Don't worry about punctuation or whether you are making sense or whether the thoughts are important or relevant. Don't censor anything. If no thoughts come to your mind DON'T STOP WRITING. Just write: "Nothing is in my mind. My mind is a blank. All I can think of is that I hear that plane passing overhead...."

If you practice automatic writing you can train your fingers to keep writing through the blank places in your habitual thinking process. Soon your thoughts will begin to flow again. Something exciting also will happen. You will discover that these mental blanks are not really empty but are simply quiet pools in the ordinary rippling flow of the surface mind. If you concentrate on these quiet pools, always keeping your fingers recording even the most insignificant, or repetitious, or apparently blank spaces between thoughts you will begin to be aware of new shapes and feelings floating toward the surface of your consciousness. These under-thoughts are usually hidden by the surface chatter of our minds. One of these new feelings or ideas may capture your attention long enough to take shape as you begin describing it. You transcend your writing block by immersing yourself in it completely.

What I have been describing is a way to encourage the creative free-flow of ideas for the first draft of a letter. Unless you are exceptionally talented in expressing your thoughts you will want to write at least a second draft of any open letter intended for publication. In the second draft you can eliminate unnecessary repetitions or extraneous ideas, correct your grammer, punctuation and spelling, improve your choice of words, and perhaps rearrange whole sentences or paragraphs to change the emphasis.

After you are reasonably satisfied with your letter you may want to set it aside to reread a day or two later. At this time you will be able to read it from a more detached viewpoint to see whether it says what you intended it to say. This ability to refine and clarify ideas is one of the reasons I prefer writing to friends rather than phoning them. Another reason is cost. I happen to think that the 20¢ stamp is a great bargain.

What do you think about it?

With palms together,

Marian

Tim Aston
Box 76
Heriot Bay
British Colombia
Canada, VOP 1 HO

Dear Friends:

Just received CHF Letter #1 and appreciate it greatly. Here by the North West rainy winter coast the voice of the Dharma is like a light in the forest. The chanterelle mushroom is past, the last of the turnips and carrots are stored. Snow on the high mountains.

Born July 27, 1942, in a small logging community in north east Washington. As a childhood i had the hills and fields, streams and sweat lodges of the Colville, Spokane and Nez Perce Indians to grow with. After high school i followed the will full path of a child, drifting in and out of jobs and cities, bars and honkey tonks from 1st Ave. Seattle to North Beach San Fransisco, and south to Guerro, Mexico. In 1965 i drifted into San Fransisco Zen Center and the first true direction i had had in my (physical) adult life. Then i had to face the painful realities of growing up and like the child i was i kicked and screamed yelled and cried for the next three years, then 1 1/2 years at Tassajara monastery. I have three beautiful children- Gabriel age 10, Ramona and Melissa age 9.

After I left Zen Center, i wandered here and there for many years searching for the meaning of practice in Buddhism, and allowing my ego, vanity and pride to lead me hither and yon in the world of "spirits", "devils", and sense-object attachments and in a "hell-world" i held only the tools that i knew from memory not practice, and they were the Bodhisattva's vow and how was i to express it in my daily life. This, o this my ideal, and in my muddy-water trying to attain, i fell, striving to apply i stumbled- this was my spiritual struggle, how to help others when it seems i am too weak to help myself.

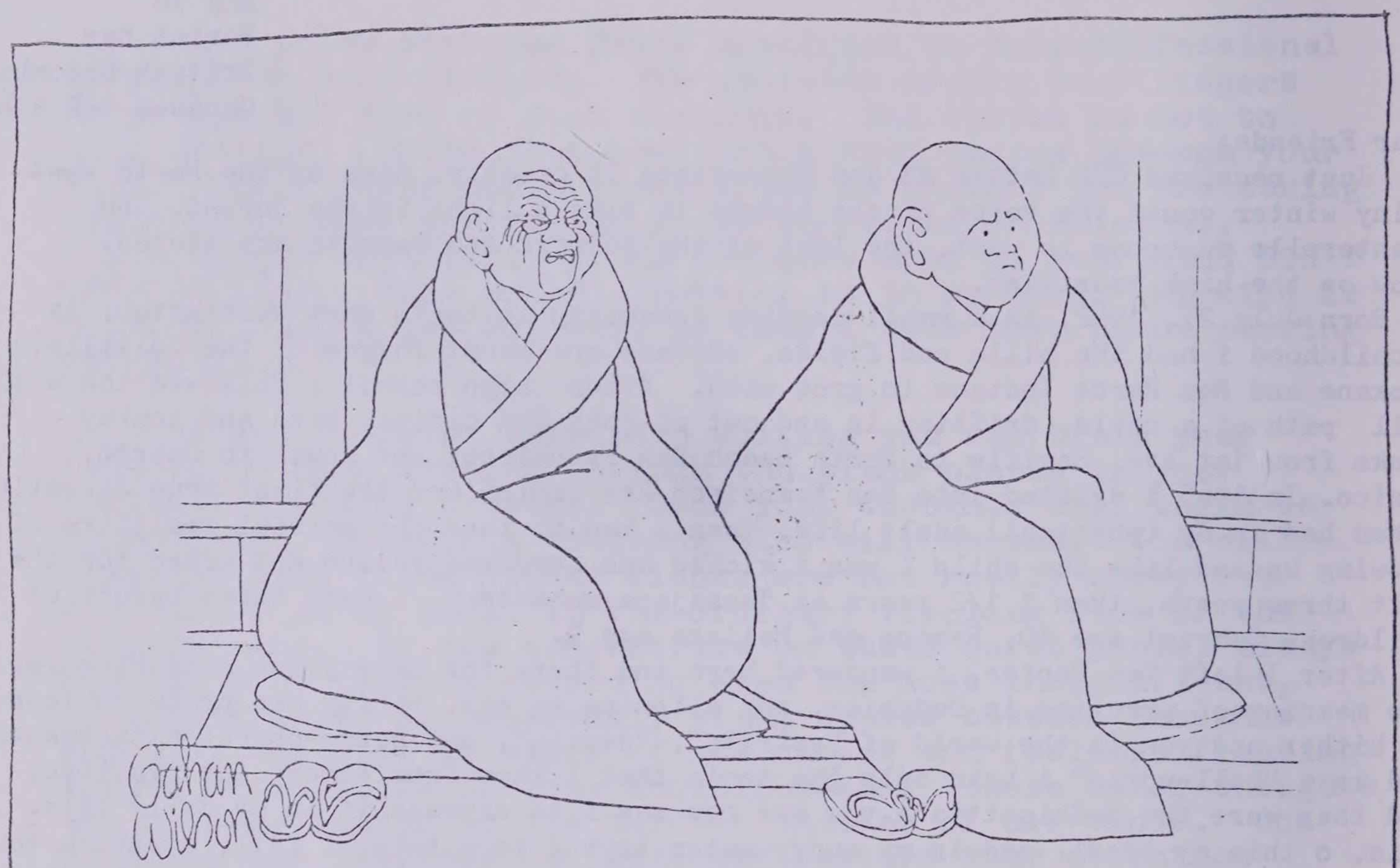
In a way, it seems i've actually learned so little outside of what it takes to sustain my pride, feed my fears and add to my confusion. and these plus resentments nearly killed me. yesterday i started a letter in which i said one very true thing, "And what we were taught in Zen practice was to recognize illusion for what it is and not be caught by it." Quite plainly, written there on paper, it seems quite simple, yet by knowing this i was caught by the knowing of, and the knowing of by the way of Pride- as i said it nearly killed me, by seeming to know illusion.

There are no goals in Buddhism and to attach to one is to erect an obstacle and with obstacles come fear, anger, resentment, guilt, sense of failure and other "hell worlds. That became my problem or if you will "koan". Yet only now, today have i recognized the koan/the same as before how to help others? And the answer Help others! And the koan How to?- and this is life practice.

Ho!

Tim Bo

Frances Thompson



"Nothing happens next. This is it."

Dear Boes

Here's a cartoon from the New Yorker, 1982 (or maybe 1981?).

I can't help but point out, re: Ananda's Open Letter (page 4 of issue #1) about the good ole' days in China when "it was possible for Bodhi children to go 'hoboing' from one end of the country to the other, and be most welcome to stay at almost any temple ...", that <u>someone</u> provided the wood and bricks to build the temple, and someone built it, and someone grew food every day nearby, etc., that someone being starving wretched peasants working the land belonging to the temple. I'm sure that "a day without work is a day without food" was a romantic exception, and that most monks were upper class and never dirtied their hands. (It was unusual that Hui Neng couldn't read, and

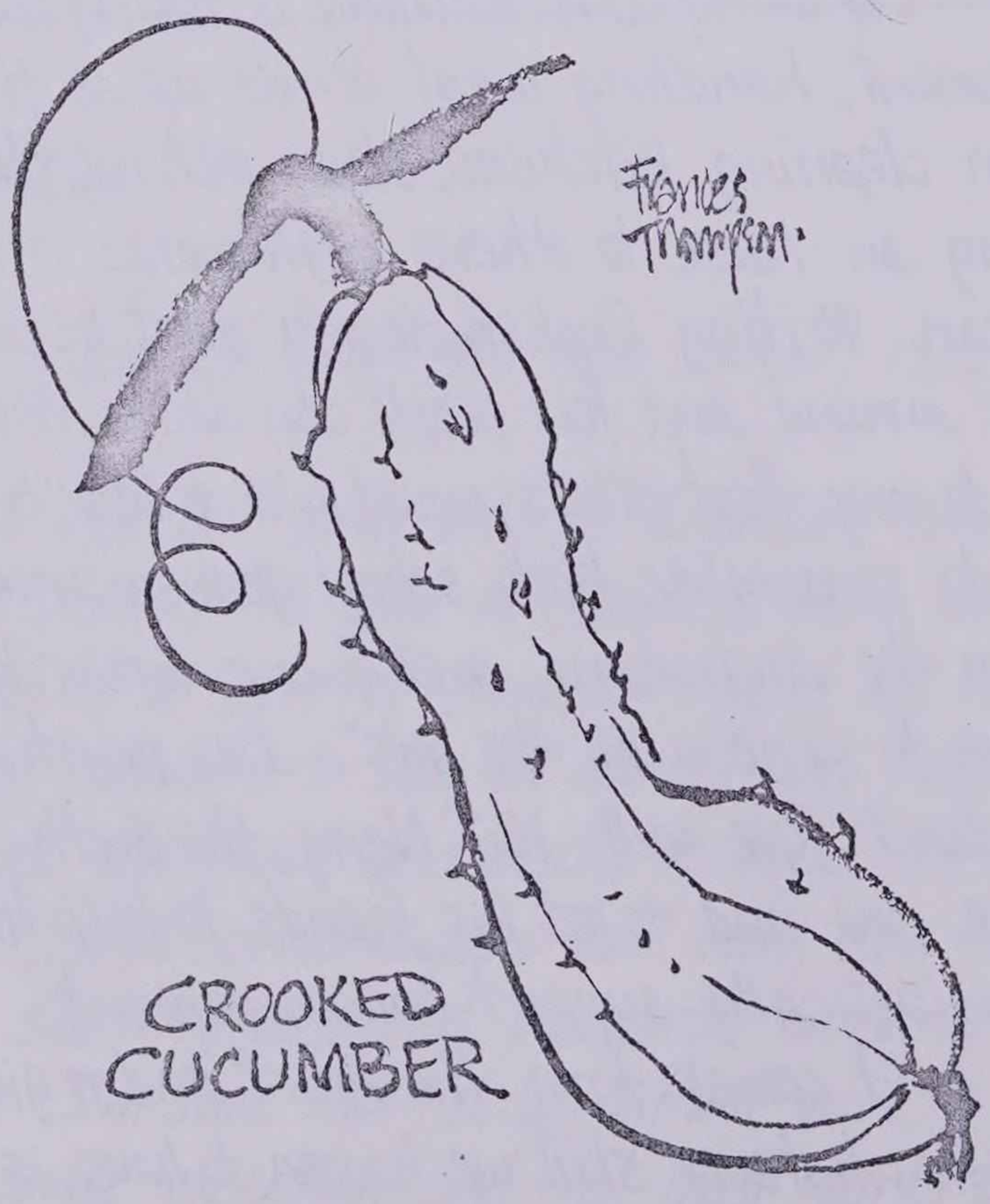
who but the very upper classes were literate way back then?). The revolutionaries did the Chinese people a favor by demolishing the whole exploitive system. Too bad they threw out Zen and Buddhism with the landlords, but how much enlightenment could you see if you were pulling a plow with your starving body, your baby had just died that morning, your little hut of a home was taken over by the landlord because you couldn't pay the tax on the pig trough and all the people who were killing you were JUST SITTING in a big room and ringing bells now and then?? Surely asking each participant in a zendo to contribute a little money or effort for his or her space is a more just system.

Also, I'd like to give Ananda's idea - "pirfectianism could easily paralyze us" a push from the other direction. Eido Tai Shimano Sensei (now Roshi, I think?), when visiting Tassajara from New York Zen Studies Society, was hanging around the kitchen one day and he said, "Don't even think about enlightenment, look behind the stove, is it clean there?" Certainly Zen training is taking care of each thing at each moment; handling what comes up as thoroughly as we can. When cleaning kitchens, clean behind the stove. If communicating an idea to others with words is the task, we do as best we can. Writing English clearly must be one of the most difficult skills around and few people can do it. Many people have something to say that others would like to hear, or read. So we go ahead, trying to remember high school grammar, maybe looking up a spelling in the dictionary, and if our typewriter won't type "m", we have to write in all the "m's". I'm printing this piece because I don't type well. Hui Neng, the Sixth Patriarch, was illiterate and had to get his friends to help him read and write. I enthusiastically support our agreement that any Way, as long as it comes from the heart and is given from one to another with whatever skill we happen to have, is

just fine. I also happen to feel quite strongly in support of some vigilance here, so as not to slip over a fine line and begin to do things sloppily, letting the grease build up behind the stove and calling it "spontaneity", when in fact what it is is not caring very much about other people - the people who have to look at the stove or read a sloppy page.

I don't want these criticisms to be taken as a criticism of the Cloud-Hidden Friends Letter altogether, which I think is a great project. I'd like to thank Ananda Claude for getting it started, and thank all you other Boes for your communications, which I enjoyed reading.

Ho! Frances Thompson.



(Note: Shunryu Suzuki's Buddhist "nickname" meant "Crooked Cucumber. Ed.)

MARIAN POIRIER
9111 35th NE
Seattle, Washington 98115

Dear Ananda and Friends,

Not knowing anyone in San Francisco, your letter was most intriguing lieing on top of a stack of mail awaiting my arrival. Therefore, opened first. I both enjoy and welcome the experience of sharing with fellow travelers.

My voyage through this universe has been filled with blessings. I have had wonderful contrasts of love and hate, and light and dark, alone and crowded. The gift of aloneness in the mists of tragedy has set me apart in that I have gained so much strength from the shocking experience of fear. Somewhat similar to the young tree that is lovingly shakened by the wind to encourage growth to its root base for stronger support. I am loved. My passion for life and learning has also added to my personal strength and in developing "centering" techniques for quieting my mind.

Dreams have become one technique and also my best friend. As they come to me in forms as a means to awaken me to my true spirit, they are not always gentle, however, always with a message. Once this last summer, I was coming awake to the thought that ....MY GREATEST FEAR OF ALL IS THAT THERE IS NO FEAR ! I had based so much of my lifes' thought in past years on working my way from what might be fearful that to realize that there <u>is</u> nothing to fear and thereby take responsibility for my actions, was very fearful in itself. That must make me responsible for all of what I do - everything that I do is exactly for me to do and live with. Living with that thought, holding it for a moment, is still exciting. Much similar to being excited in reading, at a later time, Alan Watts' "Security of Insecurity". It makes sense to me.

As time has passed, the experience of watching others make the choice of living in fear saddens my heart. Then, they are all doing what is best for them to do and that is what is best for us all. Sometimes in watching people fall into the traps of fear, I think of the purpose that the weeds in my vegetable garden serve. In pulling out the weeds, the soil is irrigated and there is room for water and sun to flow in an through the earth. All is well and as it should be.

Children have passed through me to this life that constantly nourish my spirit - pushing me to continued growth. They are young girls of brilliant light and color showing me fresh expressions of their reality - full of illusions such that are similar to my own. The girls know the value of sharing energy and passing on vibrations of love and truth. We are loved.

Having reached a celebration of 36 years, I am excited about finishing college and looking to careers unknown with confidence. <u>Finally,</u> the confidence that I have learned nothing more than the value of sharing and serving my fellow traveler and receiving love.

Looking forward to our sharing with each other and wishing you good health, I will close for now.

YourHobo friend, Marian

continued

It occurred to me that I might also share these thoughts with you, originally from a letter to Marian Mountain :

As I consider water to be a very spiritual entity, I walked with the girls to a very spiritual place today. It is not far from our house; water running through a part of a playfield. Rocks in the stream allow the water to become vocal. The flow of the water does not question why the rocks interrupt its flow - the life of its passing is strong and continuous. Some of the rocks appear to cause pain to the water - I hear an almost crying sound and then at the same time, laughter.

My mind left the image of the water and its journey, to travelers in life's stream. Some finding laughter from life's disturbances and others pain. Without either, my fellow travelers would all go unnoticed, flowing swiftly through a cradled existence.

When I cup the water, it comes without question, then escapes to return on its mission. It will stay as long as I can convince it that its mission is complete. How is it different with people - much, and yet, very little.

Am I convincing the water to stay, or is the water convincing me that I hold it?

When I have a very high thought, am I holding the thought OR is the thought convincing me that I have had a hold of its completeness?

Such is life - life has rocks. Do I have a shape or sound without the rocks? Or do I believe to feel the rocks of life so that I will have a shape and sound and the sound is the rocks convincing me that I made them?

Marian

Norman Moser
2110 9th St. #B
Berkeley, CA 94710

For the Cloud-Hidden Friends:

SPIRITUAL JUDO

The usual assumption about power is that their is only one kind-- physical. Spiritusl power exists too, though the two are af course not unrelated. I don't mesn only the kind of spiritual power you find in church, synagogue or temple. Spiritual power sometimes manifests it self mysteriously in the arts, in the streets, in the schools, and occasionally in politics or the martial arts as well.

" Intelligent passivity can shape events quite as much as activity. Intelligent yielding is the key to guerrilla warfare", says Chris Humphrey, WHOLE EARTH, INNER SPACE, in a passage derived from the Tao Te Ching. Just such intelligent yielding has helped me through several curious encounters in my life, including four violent incidents in the past couple of years living on my own in Santa Fe, Austin and elsewhere.

Not commanding respect for a tall, muscular build, I had to develop other ways of handling situations, and quickly, in childhood and teen years, instinctively resorted to the kind of "intelligent yielding usually called judo, though I didn't know its name then and still have not had one lesson in it.

There are various sorts of power, and what spiritual power teaches has specific relation to physical situations. The best spiritual teaching counsels not to look away from physical reality but to specifically open your eyes to it-- to where you are, who you're with, what's going on, etc. This can come in handy when confronting real or supposed opposition. It makes you very alert and quick. You can't pretend. If you do, you not only make a fool of yourself. You quite possibly endanger yourself as well.

Best not to be fooling around with violent people, of course. If, however you mistakenly or accidentally find yourself amongst people who are not brothers or do not comprehend your way, you then have to bring your powers to bear, whatever they are. For well over a decade I lived in San Francisco, Los Anglee, New York, usually in ghettoes. Yet at no time did I carry a weapon and seldom was attacked-- and never by blacks,

But there is a different breed of people where I am living in recent years. Apparently they do not understsnd my outspoken style. My method has still held up miraculously well, with assistance from my own brand of judo, even with an increase in incidents. Unlike burly poet Charles Bukowski, I still do not "carry steel"

Can't resist a story told on Bukowski. Having little respect for zenmasters, at a party he followed one down steps to the street haranguing him for his phony (gentle?) manner. He regretted it, he said later. The master 'threw him' and calmly walked off. Bukowski has a healthy respect for zenmasters-- if not zen itself-- ever since.

Zen is in fact largely the art of spiritual judo, and Watts or someone else describes it this way. You lean into or backwards with the student's sally and throw it back out to the universe or back onto him, This is exactly how I try to live my life, though I have never formally been a student of Zen. Some people don't need the temple, it seems. The trick is to roll, revolve, constantly evolve, turning yourself inside out as you go.

(originally published in THE SUN, 1978)

--Norman Moser

A LETTER FOR ANANDA AND THE CLOUD-HIDDEN FRIENDS

Dear A.C. (Aceydeucey):

As I have mentioned before, I always write for publication. Any restrictions of publication must be made clear when one communicates in writing. I have written a couple of stories and a book under c copywrite, but I don't expect any restrictions on my letters. I fully appreciate the risk; I accept that and so I write for publication all the time.

Probably my extensive experience in the courtroom allowed me to unify my "public" utterings with my "private" opinions. I have such trouble separating these now that I have a hard time selling my book: it is truth: truth must not be prostituted: the efore it is not for sale.

After all, when one bends over and grunts, he emits - from either end :BULLSHIT. The effluent flowing out of the south is really no different from the ideology or propaganda flowing out of the north. Incidentally the metaphor is from the Amer-indian: North is the intellect and south is growth (where fertilizer is relevant).

These words (and ideas) are not crude dirty 60's language but highly sophisticated sacred terms: A monk once asked Ummon what the Buddha is. Ummon answered:"a shit-stick." A better translation of the Japanese might be "ass-wiping stick" or more freely:"corn-cob".

And since I choose my words rather carefully, I am rather offended by editing of any kind. BUT, I bow to the inevitable here too, rather then be attached to a pride or an emotion - but that does not deny my intent I intend what I write and hope others honor it (the blacks use the word "respect").

I don't believe you had communicated the intent of "Cloud-hidden Friends". I suppose your central concept is creating that dialogue which will form a network - of which I approve heartily and join eagerly/

It is curious that your "Cloud-Hidden" letter arrived the same day that I was working on RinzaiRoku #13:"The Buddha-Dharma needs no skilled application." to which Schloegl added the following footnote:

> "It is, and acts, of itself. It needs no help to do so. We intend - and intentions, however good, are fundamentally directed by the I, ego, self and thus NOT the Buddha - and they obscure the acting (or activity) of the Buddha (center). The sun shines - that is its nature. Clouds may obscure it to our eyes, but the clouds do not affect the sun. In Zen practise, those obscuring clouds need to be worked away so as to become aware of the sun (or the moon)."

This ties in nicely with the distinction exo/eso teric: that which is hidden within or behind the clouds. Does your choice of label infer that the Friends are to hidden behind clouds; are the Friends that which obscures the Buddha; or are we to discover the cosmic energy flowing amongst the Friends???? I expect the "adept" to track the "truth" through and behind the mists and clouds of ambivalent mind.

continued

continued

Is the adept to be believed when he says that it never seriously occurred to him to inquire concerning the unconscious conditioned loading he has put on a word - especially a word in a question of great emotional value to him???

Don&t ta ke offense - that is the nature of the self: to fear exposure: the stripping away of th Clouds of Doubt. Confidence and security comes from the realization of that which is hidden behind those clouds. Then the body, being, existence - what I call identuty - becomes (in truth, IS) a tool for usuage in conveying meaning. What I am referring to is that I exploit elements which you provide in order to communicate - but I don't wish to offend - that only shuts down communications, and the dialogue.

I use the word "adept" as a stage between "disciple" and "master" in which the adept is more than a novice or learner, but less than perfection, a sense of accomplishment, the one who has arrived. The adept spends years practising and tests himself continuously on others until he does arrive.

I have been studying a book of vipassana (Kundalini) also and that same day your letter arrived, I was at this passage:

" - yet through words we can look beyond and see their meaning, without carrying the words with us. Sariputta, when he was a young man, met a monk called Assaji walking for alms-food during the time of the Buddha, and he thought him very wise and believed that he would be able to speak and explain the details of the Buddha's teaching. But when asked, Assaji perceived a great intelligence in that young man, and said that he was still new to the Teaching and could not explain it at length. So Sariputta asked him not to bother about the words, but to please tell him the meaning. This Assaji did. And later he became the right-hand disciple of the Buddha, the disciple of great wisdom.

"So the meaning is far more important than the words, but the words could lead to the meaning. I do not reject this view. But the essential thing is not to cling to words, and not to acquire fixed ideas about their meanings and definitions. We have to approach each word anew, with a fresh mind, a mind free from beliefs and biases which would otherwise block our seeing. If we are open enough, we will be able to see and understand the new, and something within us will tell us what is true." :DHIRAVAMSA

If one listens to his own bullshit - then only one truth exists: he has beclouded himself alone - for he is obsessed with clouds: exotericism, dogma - and is unable to see the light. The Amer-indian sez:"Sit right down in the center of your Lodge (of being) and look out (eastwards) from the darkness and await the rising sun. And, just in case your lodge is not oriented eastwardly, then take up the rocks of your law and rollup the skins of your lodge on all sides - let the pure air come in from the Prarie (life and the Ten directions) and bathe in the Great Spirit."

Our communications (the CONversations of Friends or friends) must be a dialogue. My definition of a dialogue is a continueing response by the listener to what the speaker has said.

On

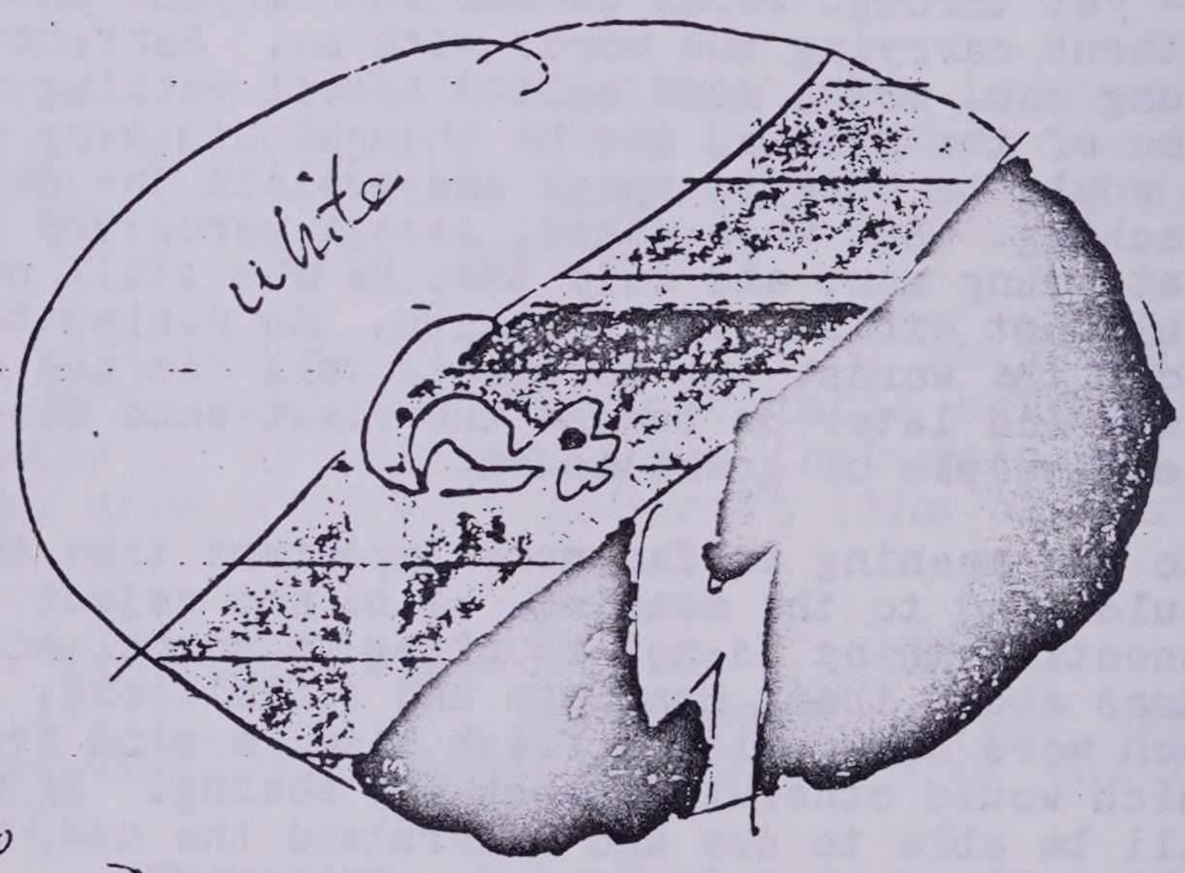
continued

I am in the process of unsticking myself from a global obsession with the woes, tribulations, evils, inequities and inadequacies (of the world) of our present bureaucratic culture of mass-mediocracy. I have always been IN this world intimately, but also intimately OF it. I have cared passionatley and deeply for truth and justice - only to learn that coping, dealing with, competing against or effecting change or reform is not merely complex or difficult, it is actually impossible by any means. My problem is the obsession of creating Heaven on earth (the Messiah complex or syndrome), when, as Jesus said:"The Kingdom (heaven) is already here, within us.

Damn - its hard to let go of all of this world. Right now, I am still thoroughly OF this world but only periferially IN it. And every time, I dip back IN it, I become frantic with frustration, anger, even hate (look what they did to my world!). That is a deep add thoroughgoing NOTOK attitude towards all men and the physical world. Knoing is great but is less than half the battle. Realixing is better andnecessary. But ACTUALIZING is the essence of the search. And it is on this POINT, upon which -I SIT.

any articles by me or other trash or want me to put some-
for you - let me know and I'll tailor something for you.

Thank you for your ear and the opportunity to lay my trip.



y. W.

(loosey goes this time)

HoBo Friends:

I am not a real poet (that class of humanity having many heads). My poetical aspirations are called, "Sanity Papers". The last stanza is a death - bed verse and moves me deeply, although where it really comes from I do not know. I believe in mixing life with an overdose of imagination as reflected in the letters of the cloud-hidden friends.

My wife and I visited Shunryu Suzuki Roshi shortly after our marriage. And when we had declared ourselves SHIN Buddhists, a zen student said, "Shin is for ignorant people; zen for the intelligent!"

My wife replied, "That is why you are zen and I am shin." I waited for Roshi to offer an appropriate sermon, but the old monk merely laughed and laughed. Hopefully, HoBo friends will include the poet, Issa, and the myokonin of this muddy world in their spiritual lineage.

The motive for writing this letter is to urge someone on this unwieldy staff to write a review of Will Petersen's excellent journal, "The Plucked Chicken". Here is an old dharma friend, a man of zen complexion. Always, I have considered myself a proletarian of Amida's Great Assembly, but never a HoBo until Ananda the Clerk, at a very late date, found that *Long Life is Not Old Age*. My Buddhist career began 30 years ago with a fist full of Koyasan icon picture-cards, and now approaching the end of life smelling of incense.

Elson B. Snow, Editor
Wheel of Dharma

BUDDHIST NUNS

. . . . that hear the world's cry and avoid
the wind and flame of discontent . . .

Ordained on floating platforms
they are well versed
having dignity
and well mannered
in the cold or heat
of the seasons,

In their youth
the pure land is visited
and they return
with original speech and
beautifully decorated with
ornaments unseen in this world,

Even a dense cloud
covering the earth
leaves the mind undisturbed
motionless as a withered tree
refraining from cereals
living on pine seeds,

Course shelters sustain life
and skies turn golden color,
a trembling is felt:
"there are strange figures
appearing and disappearing
like shadows and cloud",

Gift of a silver urn
to hold relics of
remaining ashes
and before morning
the entire mountain is
covered in heavy snow.

ho-onko, 1982

Ananda Dalenberg
753 44th Avenue
San Francisco, CA94121

Dear Cloud-Hidden Friends:
Dear Yellow Mouse:

Dharma Greetings To Everyone!

Yellow Mouse, in his last letter, comments on the meaning of the "esoteric" and the "exoteric", and in a fine phrase refers to those "who have freed themselves from dependency on any ideology or dogma, NO MATTER HOW TRUE".

That got me thinking about a dilemma I have been wrestling with for years. I think of it as a kind of Zen koan problem . I keep going back and forth between being a layman and being a priest or monk, even though I feel I must choose one side or the other once and for all. The choice is difficult because I believe that neither way is superior to the other, and that both can be the fullest expression of the Dharma. Furthermore I find them equally attractive. The way of a layman is a more natural and free one, out in the big wide world with everyone. Yet as a priest I identify with institutions, temples, Sacred Scriptures, rituals, a peaceful and cloistered environment, and so on. Nor am I able to integrate the two sides, as I think they ultimately should be. Instead I just flop around between the two, and in a not at all graceful manner.

I have recently begun to think however that I am caught here by what is actually a social problem, not a religious or spiritual one. Obviously in some basic sense monk and lay lifestyles are social forms. It may then be a fundamental mistake to exaggerate their religious importance. Surely that would be an easy enough mistake to make, considering the amount of propaganda there is on the subject.

I then find it very helpful to start over again from the beginning, and rethink the whole problem in terms of the esoteric and exoteric- the inner heart of it contrasted with an outer fixed and definite form. In that context it is quite clear to me that what I really seek is the esoteric, or "inner heart of it". It is also clear that the categories of "monk" or "layman" both belong to the outer exoteric side. I then have been needlessly flopping around between the two for years, although I may have had no real choice but to go through the whole thing. All along I have known I should "seek within", and I keep on repeating it to myself, but somehow it is hard to listen.

Turning to Buddhism, I think it would be fair to say that the heart of the Teaching is represented by the term "Prajna", maybe best translated as "Compassionate Wisdom". Without Prajna all the teachings, practices, and rituals are said to be worthless. The way I think of it, Prajna is the "Spirit that gives the Breath of Life to the Teachings." Without Prajna we are left with just so many lifeless and empty forms. Unfortunately even in such a sorry state they are still quite capable of leading us around by the nose for years, and at the same time requiring enormous amounts of energy in order to merely survive.

Another good translation of Prajna might then be "Spirit", especially in its root sense of "spirare" or "to breathe" as the vital essence of life. The "Holy Spirit" then would be the vital essence of the spiritual life. It is interesting that its symbols are wind, fire, and water, with their qualities of movement, change, penetration, non-resistance, and vitality.

All depends on Prajna or Spirit. Even the outer exoteric depends upon it, and soon would dry up and blow away without it. That is slowly becoming more and more obvious to me. I hope then too my exoteric concern with "monk versus lay" also soon dries up and blows away. Then I could more easily get on to the heart of it.

For some reason I don't really understand, it seems somehow necessary to give up the outward form in order to realize the inward meaning. Maybe this is because the outer is almost by nature something fixed and unyielding, and thus is

continued

something we can wrap up, possess, and make a part of our own ego structure, something we can use as a base for power, fame and gain. But in the spiritual path we obviously have to give up all of this. I think that is why Yellow Mouse's phrase about those "who have freed themselves from dependency on any ideology or dogma, NO MATTER HOW TRUE" keeps on ringing in my ears. I take that to be not some theological statement but a matter for practice, a kind of ever on-going yoga.

I must confess though I am not yet willing to go all the way. Under the category of ideology and dogma, to be included would be such as Buddhism, The Four Noble Truths, attaining Enlightenment and so on,"no matter how true". So dearly do I love those old teachings. Yet I know that in holding on to them I may be strangling the Breath of the Spirit from them.

I think that too is the thrust of the Heart Sutra. For me it is a Sutra about giving up the externals to reach the inward heart of it all. In particular I'm struck by the line "No cognition, no attainment, with nothing to attain the Bodhisattva depends upon Perfect Prajna". Here Prajna is the Heart, the Breath of the Spirit, upon which all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas solely depend. The full title of the Sutra might then be translated as "Heart of Great and Perfect Compassionate Wisdom". However, as I have confessed, I'm not very good at giving up the externals.

Even so I'm quite convinced that "Heart" is what it is all about in Buddhism, and the same goes for other religions, whether Catholic, Taoist, Navajo or whatever. When there is Perfect Prajna, I'm sure that the exoteric externals will just naturally follow along behind, and both will be in harmony. Maybe at that point too our individual external differences will not be so much a problem, but instead a source of delight.

While pondering upon all of this, a playful verse kept occuring to me, of which I could only remember a line or two. Also, it didn't seem to have much to do with the esoteric and exoteric, so I neglected to look it up. However finally I did so, and it does seem to relate somehow:

He taught them laws and watchwords,
  To preach and struggle and pray,
But he taught deep in the hayfield
  The games that angels play .

Had he stayed here forever,
  Their world would be wise as ours-
And the king be cutting capers,
  And the priest be picking flowers.

G. K. Chesterton
"The Song of the Children"

SMALL TALK, NOTES AND NEWS

1. Clerk's Corner: The response to our first issue was more than anticipated. Perhaps an issue every two months will not be enough. I'd estimate the next one will be out in about two months. This issue is a little late, although please note it not far from the Chinese New Year. Happy New Year!

We now all have had at least some chance to know each other. I find it quite amazing how much a letter can reveal of someone. Some of you I now know better than many people I have seen almost everday for years. Presumably our correspondence will in some ways begin to reflect that fact. Now we may have more of a sense of being a group- not in the abstract, but of real live individuals instead of a sea of unknown faces.

This page is mostly intended for "small talk" instead of mighty spinnings of the Dharma, as in the first section. It might include news items, changes of address, soybean recipes, scholarly notes, book recommendations, organizational politics and concerns, propaganda, and so forth.

Please consider typing your letters single-space. The number of our pages is somewhat limited, and we need your cooperation in some kind of "equal time" policy.

Many thanks to those who have sent along stamps. We even have received a small check or two. I have said that our budget can get along quite well without such. However that statement may be tinged with too much pride and willful independence. Actually we need each other.

We still need fillers for an empty quarter of a page here and there. Poetry, small drawings, favorite quotes etc. would do just fine.

I'd greatly appreciate it if you would send along the names of a friend or two who might be interested in receiving a complimentary copy. I've tried other ways of spreading the word, but this would be best. Not that we aim at having hundreds of subscribers, because in a way smallness is our virtue.

2. The poem Gary Snyder sent in honor of our first issue is one of his favorites. However it is not exactly one of his own, but a translation of an Ainu original. My apologies, I thought it was so good it must be his.

3. Also apologies to Francis Thompson for two mis-spellings, here corrected as "monastery" and "temperamental".

4. Robert Breckenridge writes that he is now back at Harbin Springs. His address there is in c/o Harbin, Box 782, Middletown, CA 95461.

Ananda Claude Dalenberg, Clerk

cloud-hidden friends letter

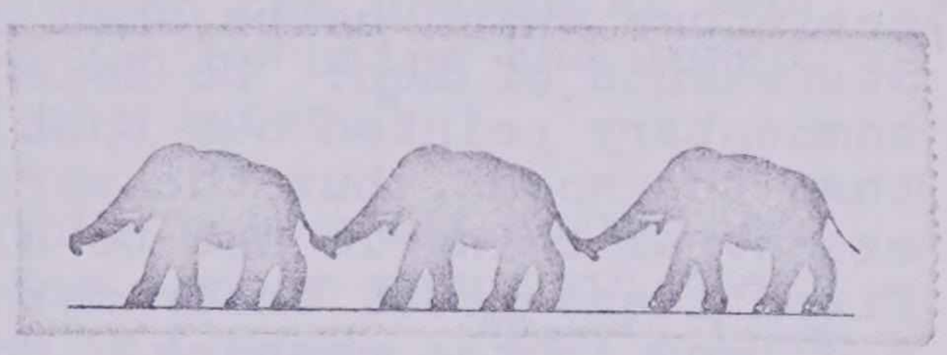
Cloud-hidden friends letter

ISSUE #3

1983

OUR PAGES ARE YOUR LETTERS

Cloud-Hidden Friends
753 44th Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94121



The "Cloud-Hidden Friends" are a small non-sectarian religious correspondence group. We meet mostly by sharing our thoughts on the Dharma together in our "Letter".

Rather than giving some definition to the word "Dharma", we would rather emphasize the freedom of the individual to come to his own understsnding about such. As a group we would aim more at a dialogue, and would emphasize the spirit and practice of the Dharma rather than some doctrinaire or sectarian formula.

In that spirit we look to Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki and Alan Watts as our "honorary founders". Although they are usually associated with Buddhism, and Zen in particular, their spirit was also a free and universal one, including Christianity, Hinduism, and Taoism etcetera. Their Dharma then seems to somehow belong equally to us all.

In a more universal spirit then we are a zen group. However we might also turn to someone like Thomas Merton to exemplify the kind of openness and dialogue we have in mind. In his later years, he commented that he could see no contradiction between Christianity and Buddhism, and that he had determined "to become as good a Buddhist as I can".

Since our pages are your letters, we ask as our "subscription fee" that you write us a letter now and then in the "spirit of the Dharma". Poems, songs, tales, drawings and sush are all more than welcome. We will try to publish everything we receive, but this might not always be possible. Letters should be of a reasonable length, and if you so request, we will type them up for you. It is presumed we will forgive each other a few typing errors etcetera, since pirfectionism could easily paralyze us.

It is hoped that our letters will somehow help us open our hearts to each other, and deepen our sense of the Dharma. Hopefully in this way too more than a few deep friendships might develop.

It is our intention to be as democratic in spirit as is possible. It does seem that we do at least need a "Clerk" of some sort to do the photocopying, co-ordinating, and mailing etcetera. This role might be thought of as similar to that of the "Clerk" in Quakerism, and it seems a good model for us to follow. Your comments on these matters would be appreciated.

Our phrase "Cloud-Hidden" is taken from the title of a book by Alan Watts. He in turn borrowed it from a ninth century poem by Chia Tao. Lin Yutang translates it as follows:

SEARCHING FOR THE HERMIT IN VAIN

I asked the boy beneath the pines.
He said,"The master's gone alone
Herb-picking somewhere on the mount,
Cloud-hidden, whereabouts unknown."

A.C.D., Clerk

Marian Mountain
Coastlands
Big Sur, CA 93920

Dear HoBo Friends,

In the second issue of the Cloud-Hidden Friends Letter Yellow Mouse quoted a passage from a commentary on a Buddhist scripture which helps shed light on the second of the Four Statements of Zen: "No dependence on words or letters." The commentary pointed out that "the meaning is far more important than the words, but the words could lead to the meaning...The essential thing is not to cling to words, and not to acquire fixed ideas about their meanings and definitions..." Words can lead to the meaning. Words can also lead to the wrong meaning. Take the word "Zen" for example. Last fall Ananda and I discussed the use of this word in an exchange of letters. Later he asked me if I'd share the highlights of that discussion with readers of the Cloud-Hidden Friends Letter. Ananda wrote:

"The word 'Zen' is a problem to me in at least one respect. In Japan it was crystal clear that it meant an institution with very specific forms, and not a philosophy. For example a student of Zen is someone studying with a Roshi, and a Roshi is someone approved by the head office and licensed by the government, and who claims a direct patriarchal transmission (literal) from the Buddha himself. Without this there is no 'Zen', and the priests are willing to agree on this point (to my surprise). I'm not a student of a Roshi now, so what does that make me? In the very literal eyes of Japanese Zen, I'm completely out of it. 'Zen' is their word not ours, so I feel obliged to respect its meaning."

Unlike Ananda I haven't studied Zen in Japan but I'm sure that he was representing the situation accurately. It was a disappointment to hear that most Japanese priests had formed a fixed idea about the meaning and definition of the word "Zen" and were clinging to it. By insisting that their students respect them, and at the same time by failing to practice what they preached (no dependence on words or letters) the Japanese priests put their students into a double bind. I wrote Ananda back:

"I don't have any problem acknowledging and respecting the institutionalized, Japanized meaning of the word 'Zen' but I don't accept the definition of those Japanese Zen priests as the only one. Zen began in India with the definition and form of dyanna, evolved and was redefined in China as ch'an, and again evolved and was redefined in Japan as Zen. Not to allow dyanna-ch'an-zen to evolve and be redefined in America would be

continued

to bind it like the feet of ancient Japanese ladies. This doesn't mean that I am opposed to the Japanese expression of Zen in this country. When Japanese Zen is wholeheartedly Japanese Zen and American Zen is wholeheartedly American Zen then there is no problem. Eventually some American Zen practitioner may coin a new word to represent American or Western Zen but until that time it seems to me that the word Zen is the most useful term we have. In THE ZEN ENVIRONMENT I tried to indicate the difference between the universal and the institutional meaning of the word Zen by using the lower case for the former and capitalizing the later."

Here is my rationalization for this temporary solution: Gramatically the upper case is used for proper nouns or the names of specific individuals, places or things. "Zen", like "Catholic" refers to a specific religion or institution or philosophy. The lower case is used for common nouns and is applied to anyone of a class of persons, places or things. The word "catholic", refers to a universal spirit rather than a specific religion or philosophy. There is also a poetic association that seems appropriate in making a distinction between Zen and zen. Zen is proper and zen is common. American zen practitioners can show <u>proper</u> respect to the institution of Japanese Zen by capitalizing the word Zen. American zen practitioners can admit to some differences without giving up their <u>common</u> heritage with Japanese Zen by using the lower case to refer to non-institutionalized zen. The same principle can apply to other religious or philosophic words such as Buddhism and buddhism.

The honorary founders of the Cloud-Hidden Friends Letter represent the best of both worlds: D.T. Suzuki transmitted the <u>proper</u> spirit of Zen and Alan Watts transmitted the <u>common</u> spirit of zen.

With Palms together,

Marian



"When a frog becomes a frog, Zen becomes zen."
Suzuki Roshi

Irv Thomas
P.O. Box 48
Canyon, CA 94516

To Cloud-Hidden People:

If I may be so brazen as to plea admission to your circle - not being a Buddhist of any persuasion or anticipation - I consider myself, however, a somewhat unread Taoist, so perhaps I can claim entry on this account? In any case, there is a richness to your interweaving of voices that draws me in.

I particularly wish to respond to the good message from Frances Thompson (who writes from where?) which brings up the point about 'responsibility' that is so often heard in criticism, not only of wandering monks, but minstrels and social miscreants of every cast. Frances notes that "..someone provided the wood and bricks to build the temple, and someone built it, and someone grew food every day nearby, etc., that someone being starving wretched peasants working the land that belonged to the temple," ..and on in that vein.

Each of us, I think, carries the burden of a particular life - and each life is a burden. For some this burden must be expressed in labor, for some it must be expressed in wandering, for some indeed it must be expressed in the constant soul-search that results in writing. It is not that some do the work of others, but that each pursues a uniquely private travail. And each, I suspect, is equally rewarded at the interior point of discovery.

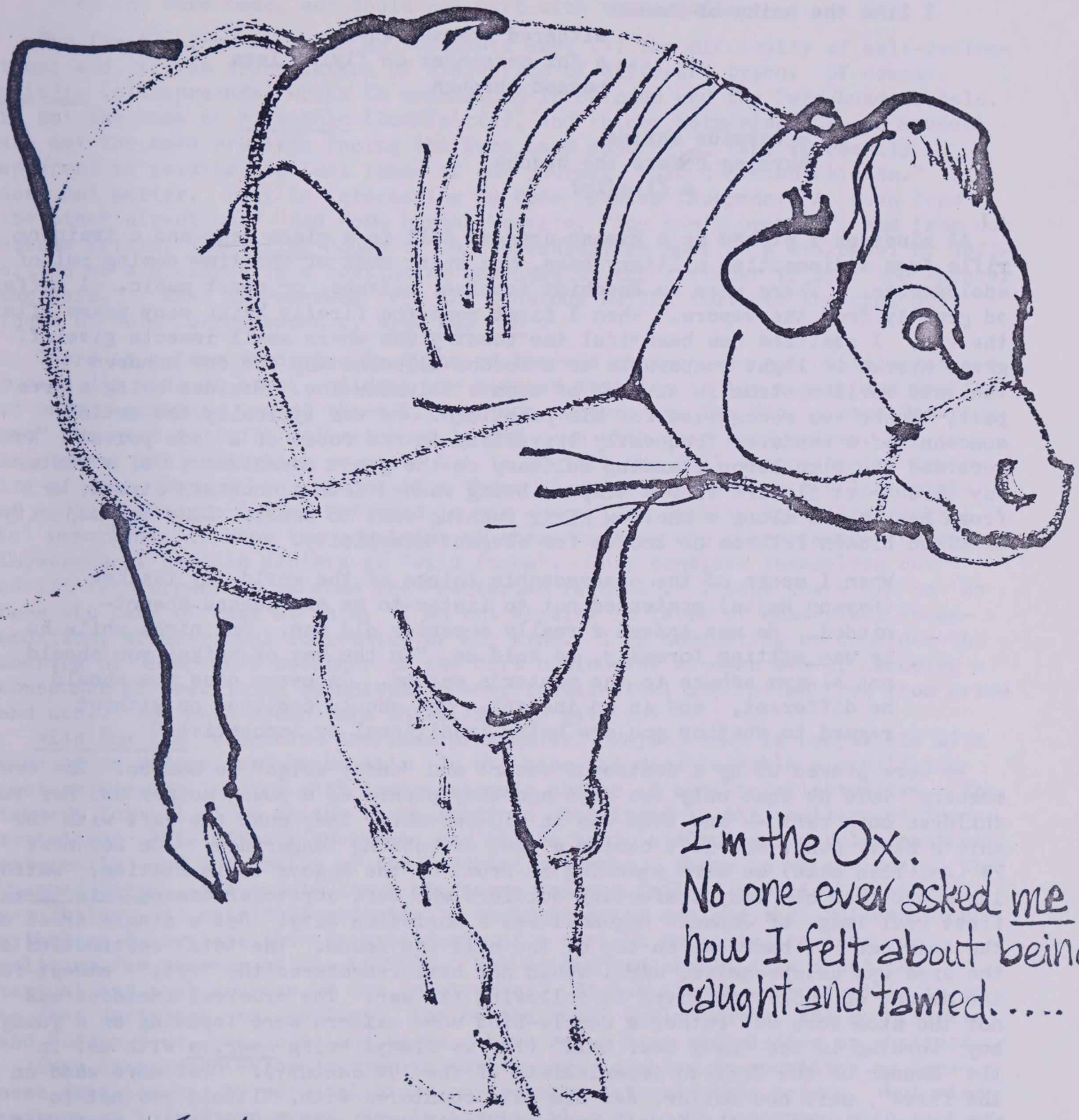
If one is terribly concerned about what is called responsibility, then that is this one's point of attachment to the illusions of world - perhaps the habit of judging others where one cannot ever know the life that goes on inside others. Many interior burdens are far heavier than the simple exterior one of a day's labor. And many who carry these have, literally, no room in themselves, nothing to spare, for the labor that is such a simple measurement of things to others.

Always, the safest rule is to look not at the inequities of life, but to your own apprehension of these. Therein lies the nugget of your own Truth.

I don't know what this ho-bo business is all about, but having lived off and on as one over the years of my life, I suppose I'm as entitled as any to claim it.

Yours, on the road..

-/RV



I'm the Ox.
No one ever asked me
how I felt about being
caught and tamed.....

Frances
Thompson

Frances Thompson
236 Cypress
Pacific Grove
CA 93950

Elson B. Snow
194 Palisades Dr.
Daly City, CA 94015

To the Cloud -Hidden Friends:

WILD FOX ZEN

I like the haiku of Buson:

withered grasses where
a fox messenger on flying legs
passed through

at a wayside shrine
burning before the buddha
a firefly!

At nineteen I picked up a kimono-dressed doll in a glass cage and a training rifle from a dismantled military base, and spent most of the time coming out of adolescence. There were no Buddhist temples, netsuke, or court music. I suffered greatly from the vapors. When I first read the firefly haiku many years after the war, I realized how beautiful the country was where small insects give off great sparks of light comparable to a Buddha illuminating the one hundred thousand world-systems in showers of cosmic illumination. Besides being a great poet, Buson was recognized for his paintings. He was typically the artist, somewhat of a wanderer frequently travelling in the robes of a Jodo priest. He recorded the blue heron standing solitary on the great marshlands; of a winter-day thrown-out flowers from a temple, being washed down a mountain stream; or fresh new leaves along a shallow river running west to east.. Like the majority of cloud hidden friends he looked for elegant simplicity.

> When I spoke of the unseasonable things of the world, my teacher (Hayano Hajin) pretended not to listen to me and looked absent-minded. He was indeed a really superior old man. One night while he he was sitting formally, he told me, "In the way of haikai you should not always adhere to the master's method. In every case you should be different, and in an instant, you should continue on without regard to whether you are being traditional or innovative."

We were picked up by a destroyer escort and "under weigh" to Sasebo. The crew members told us that only two days ago they picked up a young mother and her two children on a raft -- and this was in mid-December! They sunk the raft with the ship's heavy guns, and left behind a pool of bobbing tangerines. On December 7th (American date) we were standing in front of the Nagoya train station, watching a wretched old lady comforting soldiers who were stretcher cases; this is the first real image of Japan. Nagasaki was a Christian city. Not a single trace of the American POW barracks on top of the hill was found. The total destruction of the area was unimpressive, and I would not have remembered the "city" except for the amount of publicity given it following the war. The cruelest incident was not the atom bomb but rather a double-bind some sailors were imposing on a young boy working in the "navy beer hall" (for we always bring America with us, in the manner of the British imperialists of the 19th century). "Put more wood on the fire!", said one sailor, and his mate countered with, "I told you not to put any more wood on the fire!" Back and forth until the boy silently responded with tears streaming down his face.

> One day, when Genshin was a young boy, he met to Bonze drinking clear water collected in small pools. Responding to the boy's questions, the monks told him there were no preferences in the buddhadharma. "If so", said Genshin, "why are you drinking the pure water, and not from the muddy bank which is more convenient?" Later in life Genshin became the head of Tendai and wrote his famous work, "Ojoyoshu," finely illustrated and appreciated by Chinese Buddhists. These scrolls depicted hells and all their gruesome details beyond description.

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> An old lady visited a scholar and was asked if she brought a gift. And she replied, "I was in such a hurry that I did not have time." When told to leave behind at least some klesas (bonno), she curtly reminded the emminent teacher that she was taking all of these klesas with her to the Pure Land, and could not part with these gifts.

The first things we learn as Buddhists are; (1) the difficulty of self-reflection; and, (2) an appreciation of dialectics of different types. Of course, shinjin (cittaprasada) which is emphasized in Shingon and the Pure Land schools, is not the same as bodaishin (bodhicitta), and things bothering the zen student are not the same problems facing the Pure Land adherent. This is readily apparent in reading the last issue of our journal, "Cloud Hidden Friends." It does not matter. What is interesting is HoBo Frances Thompson, "A push from the other direction." And HoBo Norman Moser's, "You can't pretend"; and from our dharma friend, The Yellow Mouse : "Our communication must be a dialogue. My definition of a dialogue is a continuing response by the listener to what the speaker has said." Aha! Expressions from the previous LETTER that are the crux and theme of this correspondence, WILD FOX ZEN !

There is a long tradition in China of learned masters who got quite upset and took a dim view of bodhi children who refused training in the vinaya and scoffed at sutra learning. One of these illustrious masters was Tzu Min, a rare "journeyman" who went to India and returned loaded down with Pure Land sutras, not to supplement zen meditation practice but to instill the full comprehensive teaching of Sila, Dhyana, and Prajna (The Three Learnings). Whatever the life-style of my HoBo friends (often referred in our Journal as "fellow Travelers"/dogyo), it is important to know the complaint of these masters who characterize the mental looseness of certain zenists as "wild foxes". They consider themselves cut adrift from organized sanghas and "sectarian formula". I hope there are no Ho Boes who take offense at this. I am not arguing in favor of ecumenical accommodation, or spiritual compromise of any kind. I am suggesting we consider the meaning of Thompson's metaphor of the dirt behind the kitchen stove, assuming a consensus of practicing Buddhists to keep intellectual aspiration free from grime and dust. How much klesa are we willing to give up?

Wild Fox Zen resembles American pragmatism. Maybe that is compatible with some of us HoBoes, and maybe not. In any case, it does resemble a nihilistic posture keeping in step with the passionate chorus of anti-intellectualism. The tragedy for all of us on the North American continent is the swelling of fundamentalism. This affects everyone, and shapes basic attitudes and relationships externally and internally of the Buddhist movement. There is an antidote: The Diamond Sutra , the quintessence of dharma conduct full of altruistic wisdom, aesthetics, and spiritual medicine. I would be going against the "Hidden Cloud" mythology to explore the appropiateness of a certain morality, ecology, or politics for readers of the LETTER ; but we can and should talk about the textual and oral sources of our involvement. It has always sounded silly to me to fear doctrines and ideology. For me the Four Noble Truths, the Bodhisattva and Buddha vows, eko, ojo, and karma, have never been speculative or abstract.

Deep ignorance (avidya/mumyo) is surprisingly complex in recalling my Japanese experience. My personal biography reveals not only this poison, but also poisons of hatred and greed. How is it possible not to be concerned with koan activity or at least in agreement with some of our sages in the past, "Hell is my natural abode"?

Cloud Hidden Friends Letter could well be the right juncture for the dharma to enrich the sangha. Like the problem of the middle ages, East or West, I am stuck on the polarization of individuality and universality. But I know the place to look is in the dialectics of Nagarjuna and Vasubandhu, and in the inspiration of Mahayana Sutras. Wild Fox Zen is an illusion. The Hidden Cloud is what arises out of encompassing emptiness.

Elson

I would be delighted to receive correspondence in Esperanto from some unsuspecting HoBo reader. gassho.

ZEN GARB

what should a Zenist wear?
loose underwear,
loose clothing everywhere,

a loose mind that strays
and plays
without supervision,
no tightness anywhere,
nothing to be
pulled into.

EVEN HERE

sitting in vast desert wilderness,
so far out even buzzards turn back,
that hot coal of a man, Jesus,
a fried fish here...

sitting tall in aloneness,
snug in the silence, when

a spanking new customized
tapedecked stereo blasting off-
the-road buggy comes

sailing along with beautiful
American sunbaked couple,
the boy leans out:

EXCUSE ME, SIR.
IS THIS WHERE THE GRATEFUL DEAD
IS PLAYING TONIGHT?

Joel Weishaus
1115 Copper N.E.
Albuquerque, NM
87106

Breck (Bob Breckenridge)
Harbin Springs P.O. Box 782
Middletown CA 95461

Dear Cloud Hidden Friends,

How fortunate! It seems that there is a Post Office up on that mountain where where the master(s) went herb picking. Issue #2 pleased me so that I knew I'd want to get another letter off soon and here it goes following Marian Mountain's system for overcoming writer's (ego's?) block.

I mean I have trouble writing from the heart because it seems so many sentences have to start with "I" and "I" seems to keep me in an illusion usually called "ego". This "I" is (believes it is) 52 years old and has had a very full 52 years of experiences, adventures, misadventures, thrills spills, chills, fame, shame, and blame, guilt, suffering, despair, perspirations, illuminations, liberations. A full lifetimes worth, I imagine, but here "I" am happily contemplating each new day's adventures.

"Everything is a lesson God would have me learn" (Course in Miracles Workbook Lesson 194)

This "I" who is happily contemplating might be a different I? I mean there is always the "I" who can observe contemplate, report, etc. all these lessons. And can observe contemplate, report, etc. on these observations, contemplations, reports, etc. Or is it just something created by grammar to provide a subject for a sentence? No! I have been listening very carefully and there's someone else involved in all of this. It is true what all these books and teachers have been saying. Another "I" (soul, God, spirit, Buddha, heart) comes along, and occasionally penetrates the screen I keep Him hidden behind. He is definitely a person. He can talk with my voice but He certainly doesn't have the same ideas I have. He's not afraid or worried and after listening to Him for a while I begin to notice that "I" am getting less worried myself. This gets a little complicated. There's this "I" (heart, spirit, God, Buddha, guru, master, etc.) who's usually behind the screen, this other "I" who has preferred to believe He's not there and doesn't want to listen to him (invents distractions, excuses, forgets) and this "I" who is learning to listen to Him. Maybe I should not be writing this. It's not very clear to me who's who and besides maybe I should keep it secret, and I might get egotistical about those "I's". I mean it sounds like I might think I'm something special but actually I'm writing about all this because I'm sure there are other "you's" in you and if you haven't found the big You I want to encourage you to listen to You!

Whew!

Marian Porter wrote, "My greatest fear of all is that there is no fear!" Seems odd at first but actually it isn't. The part of us that believes we are separate, alone, vulnerable, subject to death, etc. is rather crazy and quite mistaken. The ego believes that fear is necessary to maintain its existence.

Many thanks to Frances Thompson for the New Yorker cartoon. A copy shall be enshrined in our front office and imbedded in my memory.

Ananda, these dogmas of No Dogma puzzle me. I can't find the way out of there.

continued

I'd like to mention to all of you that Harbin Hot Springs is a "New Age" community/business operated by the Heart Consciousness Church. (No practices or dogmas enforced). We have a system whereby visitors can come and camp or take a room and do work exchange for the rent. Hot, warm and cold pools, massage, nudity, 1100 acres of hilly country land, entities and oddities. If any of you are travelling this way or looking for a place to settle in, I'll be happy to send detailed info.

I enjoyed Tom Thompson's discussion of AA. We have four or five AA members in our community. They have switched from drinking to <u>other</u> spiritual practices which are more satisfactory for the long term adept. Another connection with Tom about Mental patients. Last year Harbin & the Esalen Institute tried to establish a Spiritual Emergency Center here at Harbin where certain "psychotics" could receive non-drug treatment and care during their rather chaotic forms of spiritual emergence. We haven't been able to establish this center yet, but Esalen continues to fund and operate a Spiritual Emergency Network which puts people who want and need this kind of treatment in touch with people who can offer it. The address is:

S.E.N. House
Esalen Institute
Big Sur CA 93920

Truth, Love, Peace, Joy!

Breck

Robert C. Finch
P.O. Box 219
Basile, La. 70515

To Cloud-Hidden Friends:

EARTH BREATH

In winter's exhale, there exists waiting,
The crystal wombs of a slower age...

...Till full-breathed summer's heat
Bursts forth Earth's entropic ends.

Expressing my thoughts, this poem, finds me in search of Earth's breath, which are in the seasons. So many of us live day to day, week to week...so few live by in, the seasons. Letting exhaling be autumn, inhaling be spring, I am seeking to co-ordinate my body to Earth's breath.

Of course, summer in the Northern Hemisphere, is winter in the Southern Hemisphere. And so in exhaling I remember the fading of transitory life, and growing eternal life. (Inhaling-fading eternal life, and growing transitory life.) And of course the opposite, presents a very equilibrious solution.

I found the First Issue a very full meal of meat, yams, drink, and desert, for the mind and spirit... I have found myself as a pilgrim in this land, and am soon embarking on another sojurn, this time on an 800 mile trek, through the mountains of central California. Ananda has called it a pilgrimage with naturalistic overtones, and searching for inward meaning... I agree, but isn't all of life this? Perhaps a good graveyard is where the giant trees grow....

R.C. Finch

Marian Poirier
7282 29 NE
Seattle, WA 9815

March 19, 1983

To My Hobo Friends,.

As Spring opens around me, once again I watch the universe as it springs forth with messages for my spirit. Knowing we are all one with the flow, I look to nature as my silent and knowing teacher. Examples of her lessons grow around me seasonally calling my attention.

Contrasting my own thoughts, the trees as they open into color, never grow with a comparative mind as they bloom into new life. Similarly, as toddler children develop in creative play, they are "open" to all without comparing- never closed by shyful self-consciousness.

Stephen Levine in his book, "Who Dies", speaks of "closing the heart around our physical pain. Stephen speaks of closing our heart as something other than our true nature and that it is in the struggle with our fear, thereby closing our hearts, where the pain gets its energy. If this closing is really not our true nature, where then did we come by it? Our persistence to remain separate from not only each other, however from the flow with the universe also increases the growth of the comparative mind.

I have never seen a tree closed or flowers or streams closed to growth.

I have never seen grass stopped by sidewalks - no matter what the difficulties. Once they start on their journey, there is never any question but to complete their task.

As I ponder this question of our differences, the word CHOICE comes to mind. We have choice as a curse, as a gift, as a tool....whatever and for on and on. CHOICE... what a simple word for some heavy stuff to add to what we already use to separate ourselves from the natural flow of life.

continued

continued

Were we to take choice out of thought before we learn (re-learn) the pease of an open heart - we might have a life with closed vision and nature. Perhaps it is the lesson of having an open heart that is what our journey is all about.

Closing or opening seems only to describe the unnatural behavior of the limitations of speech. The language of the"chattering mind."

The tree does not need to be told what season it is - it just goes <u>with</u> what is at present. The tree lives quietly <u>in</u> its pure natural unspoken harmony with all that is at the very present moment. Watching trees grow green during periods of warm days even though we might be in the middle of winter. The tree cannot grow in its yesterdays nor in its tomorrow. It can only grow in its <u>todayness</u>....What a lesson for us to learn from. I laugh to think of a tree wondering where its fruit has gone to live after parting from the tree. "I hope my little apples are all right without me." "I think that my branches should be bigger next year." "Well, I think that my cherries are prettier than yours." They never struggle with closing their hearts with the wants and desires of comparisons. They are just open to everything at the very moment. They live in the presentness of time. They live in the middle of a relationship with time and "what is".

The minute we try to FIND our relationship - it is in that <u>trying</u> that we loose the <u>nowness</u>. It is in the trying, that we think of the choices of a relationship with ourselves, to others, and to life. Thereby, we set ourselves apart.

Spring comes to us as a lesson to add to our knowing from the same nature we all are apart.

Ho!
Marian Poirier

FROM YELLOW MOUSE

TO THE CLOUD HIDDEN FRIENDS

409 ATKINS AVE.
LANCASTER, PENNA.
17603
FEB. 15,1983

DEAR A.C. ELECTRIC:

WHICH IS, BY THE WAY MY WAY OF SAYING THAT I REALLY GOT A LARGE CHUCKLE (FOR SEVERAL DAYS) OUT OF YOUR CHRISTMAS CARD RETURN ADDRESS AND THE ADRESSEE Y.M.(C.A.) - LOVED IT!

Which is also my way of presenting the information that I now have gotten my new toy - or perhaps my new information tool. Yes, I bought myself a new Apple computor and word processor. I am now putting in hours daily to try to learn how to work the damn thing. So you can expect the next editions of my writings to start com ing your way shortly (more than you ever wanted to know about [?]).

As I told you previously, my wife and I returned east to care for her mother who was in her terminal stage. Well, she passed and we are now dealing with the estate settlement. WHAT FUN!!!!!!!!

The purpose of this epistle to the Bayareans is that my copy of the CHFL was missing the finish of Tom Thompson's letter: the back of page 2-3 was blank. His letter was excellent and I really want the ending. So please send page 2-4, if you will please. I'd appreciate it greatly.

While I'm at it, let me thank you for the poem "Searching for the hermit in vain", its always a dream to partake of that again and again. And likewise to Joel White (for purity)house (or lodge) for his pure and innocent open sharing: giving others the opportunity to find insight which is true love: the giving of oneself.

For your use and edification, I enclose a copy of a piece that I put on the machine a week ago as practice. "Desire" was important to or for me because I had always had a problem with the Buddhist: "Our basic problem is desire" and "The cure is to rid oneself of all desire". My problem was both the translation of the the Buddha's ideas into english and my own problem of interpretation: when I "have to" take a leak, I "desire" to take a leak.

So there you are and see you later. Let me add to Joel Weishaus' "furabo" Suzuki's: the "I" is merely a swinging door as we sit here breathing.

LOVELY !!!!!!!!!!!!!

YELLOW MOUSE

PS: Yellow is the color of enlightenment: the Amer-indian sez:

When man sits in his lodge, looking out from his night, he faces the rising sun whihc will give light to his world. Obviously, thus the direction is east.

This metaphor is valid for the Amer-indian always placed his teepee (or lodge) on the ground so that the entrance faced east. And the man of the house sat against the side opposite facing the entrance: or he faced east from the darkness within.

continued

DESIRE

EXPECTATIONS: the act of expecting.

Expect: to look forward to the possible occurrence or appearance of - to consider likely, reasonable, certain or due.

ex (out) + spectare (to look at): to look at that which is out in front of one - approaching - with no reservations as to the liklihood or probabilities.

DESIRE: to wish,long for,want,crave:desiderare: [SWEID]: to shine - sweidos:sidus: sideral: stars - this came from:usage in augery: to see the shining (stars) + con (together) = considerare:
to observe the stars carefully - with de (the intensive meaning completely, also down from the stars) + siderare = or to investigate in the sense of the strong motivation for the results of the investigation (in augery) thus to long for.

Thus an intensive motivation for some prediction or wish to occur here on earth;that is in concrete terms.

WANT: simply, a lack

WISH: a desire or longing including the striving for, seeking after, hoping for, to be or become accustomed to, that is the hope to attain such, even to the point of love, obsession, craving, etc.

NEED: a condition where something is desired, required or wanted - a general term without emphasis on urgency.Originates from [NAU]: the negative: death or to be or become exhausted or ended -
need:ned: distress (to the point of being a corpse or plain dead boredom) -sometimes gets connected to or confused with [NE]: naught, none, nil - thus want.

Thus Desire emphasizes the longing, craving, obsession, compulsion, addiction or driving unconscious force

WHEREAS

Need lacks (wants) urgency (that drive inherent in 'desire') and does not distinguish between lack and desire, although it indicates the negative: a source exhausted.

CONCLUSION: There are two routes:
i) WANT or NEED
wherein we must distinguish between actual lack and a lack which has arisen to consciousness, whether it is actual or imagined: A FELT NEED;

2) but it does not become DESIRE or WISH until the psychological drive complicates matters: addiction, craving, obsession, love.

Y.M.

Daily Prayer

Blessings
liberation
salvation
grace
tenderness
consciousness
sensibility
humanity
animality
spirituality
sexuality
Adventurousness
risk
courage
Determination
will-power
follow-through

Holy cleansing magical vibrations!

Patience
humility
humour
warmth
and Love
to All Sentient beings

in ALL Four Directions
of the
U
n
i
v
e
r
s
e . . . !

Om ni padme hum

Zen-poem

rocks here
flowers there
they are
along the banks
mixed with one another.

the waterfall comes closer
in the afternoon sun,
the stream rushes.
Now that I am here,
nothing to say

Norman Moser
2110 9th St. #B
Berkeley, CA 94710

Ananda Dalenberg
753 44th Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94121

Dear Fellow Pilgrims:

I am one of J. Krishnamurti's admirers, and I've been reading him again recently. Each time what he has to say seems to be more relevant. For one thing he makes quite a case against becoming anyone's disciple, and he seems to have little use for what might be called "guru-ism". I presume he would be equally critical of "roshi-ism" in Zen. I can't say that I actually disagree.

On the other hand, the relationship between master and disciple seems to me to be almost archetypal, whether it is Hindu, Catholic, or whatever, and often is a deep and beautiful thing. Indeed as a student I have experienced a bit of such a relationship myself, and am enormously grateful. Certainly I don't think anyone should be denied such.

What I find surprising is that usually we only think about the master/disciple relatioship in two ways, either we are for or against such. Surely there must be a third viewpoint, or fourth or fifth.

My own viewpoint centers in a kind of vow I have taken, and I'd like to share it in some way with you. To begin with, it is my faith that "Everyone has the Buddha-Nature", or to put the same thing a little differently, " There is that of God in every one". It seems to me that the inevitable conclusion to that is that everyone is my teacher. My vow is to take everyone as my teacher.

By "everyone" I mean all sentient beings and all of nature. The sky for example is profoundly important to me.

One might ask if animals and dogs should also be included. My guess is that is what the old koan "Does a dog have Buddha-nature is all about. At least I hope it is about actual dogs, and not merely a literary and symbolic device.

I feel obliged here to give a little personal testimony on the subject, concerning an actual dog, namely one Sassafrass Dalenberg. She has in some very real way often been my teacher, and I trust that I have sometimes been hers . Being an old dog she doesn't put up with much nonsense, and doesn't even find Joshu's "Mu!" at all interesting. With her I have to get right down to the bottom of it.

I must admit I am having a hard time trying to follow my vow. I find for example that in recent years I have acquired an active dislike for the term "Roshi" with its sanctimonious overtones. In fact if I could muster up enough courage I'd eliminate the word from my vocabulary and use the term "Sensei" instead, a simple word meaning "teacher". It is important to me because of this vow I have taken.

I have tried to present a third viewpoint here, as a possible alternative to the more usual master/disciple variety on one hand, and self-reliance as represented by Krishnamurti on the other. But these are viewpoints, not absolutes. As a matter of fact I think they reflect different character types, and what is good for one is not for another. Also no one is 100% one or the other forever. At different stages in our life we are different people, which is no doubt as it should be, being of the nature of life and growth.

In any case these three or four or more viewpoints surely do not need to be such rivals and be so antagonistic towards each other. Often it seems to be more a matter of politics or some power trip than anything else. There are already more than enough people out there trying to lord it over everyone. I for one would much rather be just an old hobo.

With palms together,

Ananda

LETTERS RECEIVED

Richard W. Boerstler
206 Maplewood Street
Watertown, MA 02172

Dear Cloud-Hidden Friends:

For some years I have been filling "The Well With Snow" in collecting and gathering the below anthology. However perhaps it will all end with this introduction and one selection. After all, how long can one go on, "selling water by the river" ?

THE HALF GODS

An Anthology Of Liberation

"Only those concerned with the problem of life and death should enter here-
Those not completely concerned with this problem have no reason to pass this gate".
(Inscription on the main gate of Eiheiji, Japan, The "Temple Of Great Peace")

"When the half-gods go, the gods arrive". - Emerson

"Not knowing it is near, they seek it afar. What a pity! It is like one in the water who cries out for thirst. It is like the child of a rich house who has strayed away among the poor". - Hakuin

"There is a paradise on earth. It is in us". - Reps

PREFACE

This collection of poems sayings and spiritual harvestings was gathered during several decades of seeking and searching. The reader should not expect to find any answers here, only high velocity glimpses into the universe. Usually the answer is contained within the question. Thus most of the pages record queries and questions of those seekers who have climbed the hills before us.

It is, however, quite probable that one of these questions will become lodged in our throat like that oft-reported red-hot iron ball that can "neither be swallowed nor spit out. If this does occur it has been said that enlightenment may be on the horizon. (??)

If so this outrageous gathering of medicines and matching diseases may have served its purpose. It is important to remember that while we follow various paths the inexorable laws of cause and effect will be our inconceivable partners on every turn of the path regardless of the conceptions we may have about what is going on.

My comments about the various quoted texts will be brief and personal. As Coleridge has said, "If I have been able to see any vision on the horizon it is because I have been carried on the shoulders of giants".

INTRODUCTION

What type of liberation are we talking about? Someone has said that he had rid himself of the disease of a lifetime, the disease of categories! In a time when Moslem is killing Moslem, when Semite is killing Semite, and when an auto license plate in the United States carries the motto, "Live Free Or Die", we need to learn more about another kind of freedom and another kind of liberation.

The liberation that I have sought could be described as attempting to trace our origins back to a spirit of undifferentiated oneness, our source, which might be called the "Spiritual Mind Of True Oneness" - In the course of many years of searching I came across the third Zen patriarch Seng-Tsan (d. 606). Here

continued

in a document called "Believing Mind", we may catch a sight of the liberation of which I am speaking. Here the concepts of likes and dislikes, of one religion over another one, the preferences of one race against another race are dealt with at their root source. One translation calls the struggle between "for or against" "the mind's worst disease".

This most celebrated statement of Zen in Chinese literature begins: "The Perfect Way (Tao) has no difficulty except that it avoids preferences". Here a first century look is taken at the duality of subject and object and we come to know ourselves as we really are: small or large, oneself or another, all being one, with no past, present, or future. This early holistic writer said, "When the ten thousand things are seen in their unity we are back at the origin where we always really were". Further quotes from "Believing Mind will be found later on.

The Mind will be seen as the only reality and the container of both samsara and nirvana in inseparable unity. Here (in the Mind) we may let go of all dualistic attachments and especially of the concept of the existence of the ego (I, me, mine).

"Hopefully in some of these selections the mind will be found to be one with ultimate wisdom we are seeking- immaculate, clear non-dual, timeless, uncompounded, the unity of all things".

Here the reader may may give a hearty laugh at my efforts in wasting many years in seeking what was never lost! What a joke! One could ask, "Why do you go with the Buddha to seek the Buddha ? Doesn't one 'use mind to grasp the mind!' Don't you realize that if you cease thinking and forget thought, the Buddha will spontaneously appear!"

Two similar stories illustrate this point: A great crowd had gathered to ask the master the pivotal essentials and to reveal a little of the great design . The master said "A bubble floating on the water displays the five colors, at the bottom of the sea a frog is croaking, the moon is bright". And, stepping into the public hall his reverence said "Having any sorts of knowledge can not compare with giving up seeking for anything, which is the best of all things. Mind is not of several things and there is no doctrine which can be put into words. As there is no more to be said the assembly is dismissed".

There is no reason to read any further in this book. Close the covers tightly together and return it to its place on the shelf. Walk briskly out in the fresh air and join the king who is cutting capers and the priest who is picking flowers.

SELECTION NUMBER 1 & 01 :

"The choice is always ours,then let me choose the longest art, the hard Promethean way, cherishingly to tend and feed and fan that inward fire, whose small precarious flame, kindled or quenched, creates the noble or the ignoble men we are, the worlds we live in and the very fates, our bright or muddy star".

-Aldous Huxley

I believe it is Victor Frankl who says that it is the choice of our reaction to the world that can never be taken from us. When all else is gone including our health and our freedom we can still choose our attitude to what happens to us.

When all that is seen is truly recognized to be nothing but the manifestation of Mind, how can discrimination regarding being and non-being arise?

- Lankavatara Sutra

All suffering arises from our trying to cling to fixed forms, objects and ideas instead of accepting the world as it moves and changes. This world of ceaseless change and incessant motion contains nothing worth clinging to. The practice of recognizing that change is the only constant usually may only be achieved in a contemplative environment. One can hardly say that the world (both East and West) of 1983 is <u>contemplative</u> . And yet Victor Frankl would tell us this is the one true choice no one can make for us unless we allow it.

Richard

NEWS & NOTES

1. Clerk's Corner -- Everything seems to be coming along fine with our Letter. We seem to have settled down to an issue out every two months, the next one coming along about the first of July. Thanks to those of you who have sent along the names of a person or two who may be interested. It certainly helps to have others waving the flag a little bit. I've gotten a few requests from New Age groups to have a copy sent to their library, and I'd like your reaction to this. I can think of some pretty good reasons both for and against.

2. Books Etc. -- Richard Boerstler has been working for some time with the terminally ill, trying to find ways to help them face death. He has written a book on the subject:"LETTING GO, A Holistic And Meditative Approach To Living And Dying". If you would like a copy, it is available, for $1 postage, to the C.H. Friends. Write 208 Maplewood St. Watertown, MA 02172. One of the quotes in the book is this fine one by Alan Watts:

> Some people are always afraid if they let go, the devil will take over first, unaware that <u>not</u> having let go <u>is</u> the devil already in full control. For ordinary self-control is the dominatiom of one's behavior by the selfish self: its love is assumed, pretensive, and dutiful; its righteousness is hypocritical; its chastity issues in cruelty; its spiritual ideas are highbrow ways of inflating the ego: its profuse confessions of sin are subtle ways of one-upping more ordinary people and its beneficence has an odd way of arousing resentment in its recipients.

Joel Weishaus has tracked down an unpublished manuscript by Thomas Merton, and has managed to get it published, including Joel's explanatory notes and an introduction. "Wood, Shore, Desert" by Thomas Merton; Museum of NM Press, P.O. Box 2087, Santa Fe, NM 87503.

Marian Mountain's book, "The Zen Environment" is now also out in paperback, $3.95, published by Bantam.

3. BROWN RICE

I stumbled on a method of cooking brown rice that works better than any other method I've tried. My husband Jack, who is a scavenger, came home with an old iron pot without a lid. I couldn't find an iron lid for the pot so I bought a pyrex lid. Now when I cook brown rice I don't have to lift the lid to see how its coming along. (I've always been told that you must not lift the lid while cooking rice but never was able to time it perfectly so always resorted to peeking.) Now when I see through the pyrex lid of the iron rice pot that the water is evaporated but there is still moisture in the pot I turn off the heat and let the rice steam for another 1/2 hour. Never fails.

Marian Mountain

4. Marian Poirier has a new address: 7282 29 NE, Seattle, WA 9815

5. Joel Weishaus is wondering if anyone has seen Pat de Sercey.

Ho!

Ananda
Clerk

cloud-hidden friends letter

ISSUE #4, JULY-AUGUST 1983

OUR PAGES ARE YOUR LETTERS

Cloud-Hidden Friends
753 44th Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94121



The "Cloud-Hidden Friends" are a small non-sectarian religious correspondence group. We meet mostly by sharing our thoughts on the Dharma together in our "Letter".

Rather than giving some definition to the word "Dharma", we would rather emphasize the freedom of the individual to come to his own understsnding about such. As a group we would aim more at a dialogue, and would emphasize the spirit and practice of the Dharma rather than some doctrinaire or sectarian formula.

In that spirit we look to Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki and Alan Watts as our "honorary founders". Although they are usually associated with Buddhism, and Zen in particular, their spirit was also a free and universal one, including Christianity, Hinduism, and Taoism etcetera. Their Dharma then seems to somehow belong equally to us all.

In a more universal spirit then we are a zen group. However we might also turn to someone like Thomas Merton to exemplify the kind of openness and dialogue we have in mind. In his later years, he commented that he could see no contradiction between Christianity and Buddhism, and that he had determined " to become as good a Buddhist as I can ".

Since our pages are your letters, we ask as our "subscription fee" that you write us a letter now and then in the "spirit of the Dharma". Poems, songs, tales, drawings and sush are all more than welcome. We will try to publish everything we receive, but this might not always be possible. Letters should be of a reasonable length, and if you so request, we will type them up for you. It is presumed we will forgive each other a few typing errors etcetera, since pirfectionism could easily paralyze us.

It is hoped that our letters will somehow help us open our hearts to each other, and deepen our sense of the Dharma. Hopefully in this way too more than a few deep friendships might develop.

It is our intention to be as democratic in spirit as is possible. It does seem that we do at least need a "Clerk" of some sort to do the photocopying, co-ordinating, and mailing etcetera. This role might be thought of as similar to that of the "Clerk" in Quakerism, and it seems a good model for us to follow. Your comments on these matters would be appreciated.

Our phrase "Cloud-Hidden" is taken from the title of a book by Alan Watts. He in turn borrowed it from a ninth century poem by Chia Tao. Lin Yutang translates it as follows:

SEARCHING FOR THE HERMIT IN VAIN

I asked the boy beneath the pines.
He said,"The master's gone alone
Herb-picking somewhere on the mount,
Cloud-hidden, whereabouts unknown."

A.C.D., Clerk

LETTERS
RECEIVED

Tom Thompson
Woodbury Yoga Center
122 West Side Rd.
Woodbury, Ct. 06798

Dear Cloud-Hidden Friends-

In early April, I had the great, fantastic experience of finally seeing a person I have held in high esteem my entire life-Gary Snyder. Gary did a poetry reading at Western Connecticut University, at times accompanied by Paul Winter. It was a beautiful evening, at times reminding me of the old Beat coffee house readings in Greenwich Village. At any rate, to actually see Gary in the flesh was a very important experience for me and I'll try to tell you all why.

I grew up in Westchester county suburbia during the fifties and sixties. Somewhere along the line I began to slowly realize that I did not want to commute to N.Y.C. every day,or become a businessman, lawyer, doctor, etc. I wanted something else, definetly something else, but at the time there seemed to be no options or alternatives. If you didn't want to do what everyone else wanted to do, you were crazy. And the prep school I attended was a huge cloning machine for Harvard/Yale puppets. Somewhere along the line, like so many of us Cloud-Hidden Friends, I realized I was going to take the road less traveled by, but there were no guides along the road, and the first few miles were terrifying. I knew I was going somewhere, but I had no idea whwre.

One day somewhere in the sixties somewhere in Woodstock, N.Y., someone gave me a copy of Kerouac's Dharma Bums. I read the book from cover to cover in a matter of hours and it did not take me long to find out that Japhy Ryder = Gary Snyder and that Gary Snyder was alive and well, at that point in Japan, I believe. Just to know that someone else had taken the road less travaled by and had made it and was leading a worthwhile life meant everything to me. Although I do not know him personally, Gary was one of my first guides on the path.

And so that night in April, I went to see him. I did not introduce myself to him, afterall, what was I going to say? Instead, I simply had his Darshan. As I said, it was a calm, beautiful evening.

It was like going back to the beginning and seeing clearly that I have definetly taken the right road. As one of our honorary founders, Alan Watts, said of Gary Snyder (I don't remember the exact quote, but its in Alan's autobiography),"Any universe that manifested Gary Snyder can't be all bad."

To continue on this line of guides along the path, and some thoughts Ananda's letter in issue 3 stirred up, I find myself in an interesting predicament. As a teacher of Yoga and Meditation, I am often asked about the necessity of a Guru, Roshi or spiritual teacher along the path. The only honest answer I can give is that a spiritual guide is necessary and not necessary. The problem with a Guru is we begin to think they have something we don't have, an experience, knowledge, understanding or level of spiritual evolution. And so, instead of discovering out true nature, we tend to look to them for answers. But a true Guru is a finger pointing to the moon, and will warn the disciple not to mistake the finger for the moon it is pointing to-and the finger should be pointing right at YOU!

My experience is that my Guru, Swami Muktananda, helped me awaken to my true Self, but upon awakening I discovered that that Self or Buddha nature was already always present and already always available to everyone. So,in fact, what did he do for me? Nothing. And I am eternally forever grateful to him for it. As Harada Roshi indicated, all teachers are selling water by the side of a river. All true teachers are cosmic compassionate con artists selling us the rights to our very nature. I for one was dumb enough to be conned and I'm glad I was. How do we tell an honest con artist from a dishonest con artist? One Buddha by the name of W.C. Fields said, "You can't cheat an honest man."

My Guru is dead now; I feel no need for a replacement. I tell those that come to the Center that they are what they are looking for, and that they'll know that if they slow down ,drop their chronic searching and are quiet enough. The way to do is to be. Let go. Flow, don't row.

You might say that I got to the point where I realized, through the Grace of my Guru, that Gurus are not necessary.Ho! The paradox of spiritual life,

I'd be interested in hearing other people's experiences with or without guides on the path. Are they necessary or not?

Lots of Love - Tom

LETTERS
RECEIVED

Richard W. Boerstler
206 Maplewood St.
Watertown, Ma. 02172

Dear Cloud-Hidden Friends,

In my previous letter I was so intent in saying that I, me, mine was into another piece of writing that I never shared anything concerning my own endless searching.

In 1947 after four years of learning how to juggle concepts in a conventional liberal arts diploma mill I took a job in the casualty insurance world investigating the hows and whys of auto accidents, house fires and other catastrophic happings including on-the-job employee deaths. For sure my occupation must have intensified my search for meaning and identity. For example, once I arrived on the scene of a fatality caused by a roof collapse even before the medical examiner. I can clearly recall the smell of death amidst the timbers and plaster. To condense these searching and knocking years it seemed that I was following some faint foot path from the woods of Protestant materialism through the fields of the Quakers to the plateaus of the Catholic mystics, then to mountains of the zen masters. This has led me to approach the endless shining void and trying to keep " don't know mind" Better not to have typed one word on this page & to gulp back my words than possibly lead some reader to the gate of hell. Is it not enough to say,"Joy in the morning and sleep at night, what else?"

Meanwhile back at the establishment I found these growth experiences were looked upon with suspicion and fear by my male companions and I withdrew from any meaningful contact with them except in gestalt groups I was doing. There I could give unconditional love and caring to both men and women. Night after night, group after group I knew the care and concern of"the everlasting arms" when I needed them and when I needed to give them. I am now recalling the circle of beautiful faces and I am filled with indescribable warmth. It was then that I found I could not raise my consciousness without the compassionate female mind coming to catalyze it. Thus a synthesis of my feminine and masculine energies was completed . These are usually fragmented in early family life and are now threatening our universe.

I will continue to nourish and be nourished by other beautiful and transcendent relationships which gave me myself and others. Lao Tsu says it best," It is true I must begin with myself but I must never be an end in myself. Thus I will endlessly become myself." and " He who, being a man remains a woman, will become a universal channel."

Much peace,
Richard

P.S. If there are any C.H.Friends coming to Boston this summer or later you should know that the Cambridge Buddhist Association, a cloud-hidden group for 23 years has a beatiful new home at 75 Sparks St Cambridge Mass. The Roshi is Maureen Freedgood, a most unusual woman. Come and sit with us if you are in the area.

LETTERS
RECEIVED

Rene
C/O C.H. Friends
753 44th Avenue
San Francisco, CA
94121

Dear Cloud Hidden Ones,

Having survived both the North Beach and the Haight-Ashbury realms of New-Age alternatives, it is with particular interest that I respond in kind to this non-sensationalized Cloud-Hidden letter. In my serialized view of the last 30 years, I have tended to look at the late 70's and the 80's as a kind of reassertion of the acculturation thrown off by the counter-culture in the 50's, 60's, and early 70's. In the last 15 years I have been extremely put-off by the commercial sensationalism surrounding the alleged wholistic growth movements in California and lesser imitative centers of experimentation the world over. I suppose a Buddha for every Body is basically a good thing, but how basic are all these admixtures of real and imagined discipline propagated by media exposure and re-interpeted indiscriminately by the national populace without intimate guidance. Your letter is probably a creative attempt by Ananda Dalenberg to dive deeper into a mysterious spirit, obscured by a commercial ornamentation (Sears & Roebuck Devotion) and create a more original form in which to practice. Trungpa's use of the analogy "re-plowing the south forty ", comes to mind. It seems only natural that Buddhism, after beginning to flower in America, should Mahayanaize its own hybrids and begin to relegate the "iron-(computerized) bird that flies" to historicity.

Using the U.S. Postal Service for Non-Sectarian Plot-less-ness appeals to my space-age bandit psychology -- "Not-robbing the empty bank, even though there is tremendous opportunity for advancement". Pure Bodhisattvaism! The Post Office deserves exactly what it gets - Letters!

In writing to Katagiri Roshi the other day some poems occured, which, I suppose belong rightfully to him now, but since I kept copies of them and this is cloud-hidden communion, I would like to share them with you.

It should be remembered that these poems are written in prison where the subtlety of Buddhistically cultivated psychology and relationship are practically non-existent except on a misappropiated, paranoid and self-preserving sort of level.

Even Shunryu's worst student
Is visited by the Master
His crooked-finger Gassho,
As fine as any Lover

Katagiri came First
To the great cold North
Now there are Buddhas
In all the snow-banks

Winter comes and goes,
But the Buddhas never move
Will such treasure go unnoticed
In the barren landscape ?

Continued

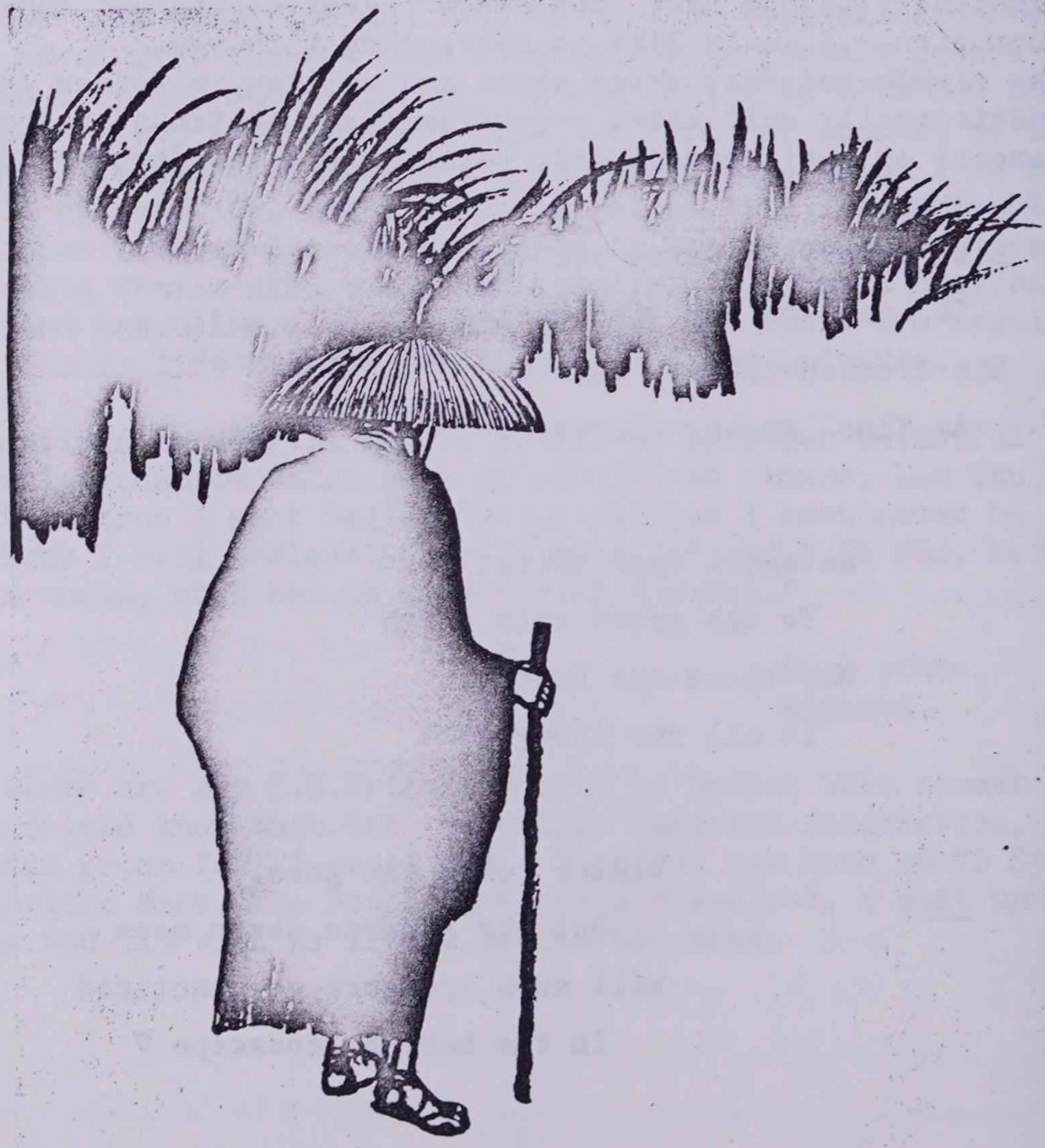
Although Suzuki Roshi and Katagiri Roshi are the teachers I have been closest to, I have never had much to say about them, even to my self. Katagiri once said, "It is enough to say 'Good Morning', and then get on with your life". I would guess this means not to get stuck looking for some special meaning or relationship. If it comes, it comes.

Suzuki Roshi was the first dead person I ever saw in my life. From Sesshin I went upstairs and bowed to the floor within inches of his body. Although I participated in the tremendous grief felt by everyone afterwards, something in me remained untouched and didn't accept him as my teacher.

I wanted to do something, to make some personal statement. Rinzai Zen was more attractive with its aggressive approach and esoteric koans. To echo Katagiri's meaning it has taken me many years to catch up to this Soto Zen Practice that "just came to me quite naturally" in the course of my life. To "just sit" is a tremendous koan without resorting to various ways that might be more appealing or "right" for you. Anyway, it is about time I said something about my greatest teacher. This great gift of transmission he gave us all took a while to mature in me. Perhaps it just sat and waited for me to get tired of the treasure hunt.

Cloud - ridden

Sandstone, 6-9-83



Yellow Mouse
6-16-83

CLOUD-HIDDEN FRIENDS LETTER:

RESPONSE TO ISSUE #2:

ACE DAHL (your lead-in section): "(Merton) commented that he could see no contradiction between Christianity and Buddhism - -"
DISAGREE.

I point to Tranactional Analysis language of OKness. The doctrine of Original Sin (as used by the capital C-hristian) indicates that each one of us begins life as evil, sinful, ab-initio BAD: ergo: NOTOK. Eric Berne stated catagorically that we are born Princes and we are turned into frogs later: thus we are born OK. Buddhism tries to get us to concentrate on our center and the truth of the acceptability of that core "truth". "We are our own only problem, so sit down in the center of your Self and solve the problem: realize the truth."

I conclude that the contradiction between all of the churchs' (read: institutional) Christianity and Buddhism is a vast void and that never the twain shall (or can) meet. The corrupt usage of "origonal sin" is far to deeply ingrained in the Christain ethos and psyche to accept the "truth".

Of course, Christianity is NOT what Jesus brought to us. Even the name is corrupt. When HE said, "Beleive on my name", he was referring to YHSWH, which as you can see, implants S (pronounced sh) in the Tetragramation: the HOLY name of God (not geehovah). Thus we get the ancient Joshua (the same), but (if YHWH is Yahweh) said Yahshweh (say it!). But, more important, what does it mean? If YHWH = I AM THAT I AM or I AM THAT WHICH I AM, then adding the Hebrew S (which means "HERE" or "ON EARTH" or even "NOW"), makes the name = IAM HERENOW WHAT IAM. That is the Buddhists 360 degree total awareness of the here and now without attachment to thE past or future. Or true dogma would make that man Jesus = GOD ON EARTH.

We can see, of course, then that we have no trouble "believing" on this truth that there is in Everyman, the indefinable, the inaffable, IAM and THUS he is, of course, by definition, OK, which contradicts CCCChristianity.

For clarity, I call myself a Jesusian, as distinguished from a Christian. I am a follower of Jesus, while they are followers of Christ. The word Jesus is ancient Hebrew; the word Christ is Greek for the Anointed. Which idea do we subscribe to? I trust that man; I find joy in his word; I BELEIVE he was right, correct. If I do so, then I MUST (it follows automatically) be an opponent of the institutional Christ followers.

To conclude: we either stand on the concept that God caused man to be BAD: NOTOK or we stand on its contradiction: God made exactly what he wanted and what he made is, was and will always be acceptable unto him. No place in between, no compromise, exists or can exist. We believe in, trust, love God or WE DO NOT. Its a simple as that.

TO Joel Weishaus: White House: Domain of Purity:
You might try capitalizing self as Self depending on whether you are indicating the little self (ego or what I call identity) or the larger Self (the center or point at which the cosmic energy, force, power enters and quickens us).

continued

continued

TO Tom Thompson: BlissConsciousnessBeing: The word "Being" catches me. Study brought me the answer: BHEU: to be, exist, grow. Use the black language's "bes", "Bees" as in: "Where's Momma?", "She bees in the kitchen". It is a valid African tense: the existing continuance tense. He doesn't say she IS IN the kitchen, he says that she normally is to be found in the kitchen. English has no way of stating that (at least not in "proper" usage.) But this IS the meaning of "BEING". What is a "being"? It speaks of the continueing existence of the thing referred to. A human being refers to that which is "being" human. (See LIVE below)

Once again, this is a gerund and not a "thing". A "being" is, by definition, A HAPPENING, and not some materialistic THING. This problem is found in all of our western linguistics: we search to find God: necessarily a thing (God is a noun and used as an object in that sentence.) But we (Buddhists) know that "God" is a force, energy, power. "God" is NOT a "thing", but an energy flow (that power that "gives" each of us life). As we "Know" and use electricity, but don't know WHAT it is, the same with God. They are NOT a WHAT. ELECTRICITY, GOD, LOVE, etc are verbs; happenings, not things.

LIFE = LIF: the state characteristic of living organisms;
growth; the interval of time during which a thing
exists and/or functions
ALIVE = ONLIVE = ONLIFE = ANLIF = AN + LIF = LEIP
AN: concerning the ground or basis of;
or about the state, condition, process
or occurrence of; near, against
LEIP; to stick, adhere
= LIBBAM = LAIBJAM = LAEFEN = LEAVE: to have remaining,
still left, to go away from; to abandon
or forsake, to stop doing or useing
= LIBEN = LIFIAN = LIFE: to continue or still be here
= LEIPH = ALEIPHEIN = the anointed (with oil): truly here
THUS: the process and state of BEING truly still remaining

Thus "LIFE" is not a scientific process which starts with the intake of food, passing through the stomach and the nourishment of the cells to the muscle action in the doing of whatever the brain has directed: the view of modern science and its culture. No, it is ENDURING, BEING HERE (and inferentialy, not somewhere else.

TO: Francis Thompson and his Crooked Cucumber: (love that!!)
GREAT !! JESUS sez: "Cure the Lame." and "It is your faith that cures you."
If "I" am OTHER than straight, then I am LAME. And THUS, I AM NOTOK.

The "crooked cucumber" is obviously different - OTHER - and STILL OK. WOW !

Truly the body deserves a name, choose what represents the truth. Was Suzuki crooked ? Is a cucumber unstraight? Are YOU (WHO?) BEING (happening, right now) NOTOK ? ZAAAP ! So, I'm Yellow Mouse.

And back to dear "part the clouds so we can see" Claude:
" - a <u>social</u> problem -. Obviously in some basic sense monk and lay lifestyles are social forms." No, it is the DISTINCTION between them which is the social form: THIS or THAT, y'know?

continued

continued

" - the heart of the (Buddhist) Teaching is - 'Prajna' - translated - Wisdom, Spirit that gives the Breath of Life to the Teachings - Spirit - in its root sense of 'spirare': 'to breathe' as the vital essence of life)".

First: What is the difference between a live body and a freshly dead one, between a running-around lively person and one whose bodily functions have just immediately ceased? Answer: the "spark of life" has left it in the dead one. Whatever label used for this concept, we can have no doubt that such a "spark" must exist. To keep away from dogma, we can call it: that energy which, when present, permits life, and when absent, denies life. Thus it is some form of energy, force, power.
This is not some theological statement nor is it any kind of dogma, ideology, etc. It is a fundamental truth about life. And all men must subscribe to this inevitable truth. We all understand this, but we find it difficult to actualize it. The reason is that we do not exist in the absence of "it". We, like the fish, cannot be aware of the water we swim in, for we cannot stand off separate from "IT" for in such case, we would be dead. What happens is that "we" (WHO?) transform that energy into matter, consciously or sound asleep. You see, "IT" is not someTHING which we might manipulate: a tool external to ourSelves. IT IS US.

PRA-na; Pra-krit = PRA = PER: before, in front of, earlier, forward, through, first, toward, chief; a prefix in all indo-european languages which includes and preceeds, Latin, GreeK and Sanskrit.

DHARMA from DHER: to hold firmly or support
= DHER - MO = FIRMOS, FIRMUS = FIRM
= DHR - ONO = THRONOS = THRONE: to be firmly supported
= DHER - MN: that which is firmly established
THUS statute or law = in Sanskrit: DHARMA
= DAR (old Persian): to hold = DARIUS: holder (of the throne or realm?)

Related DHE: to set or put
= DHE - TI: thing laid down or DONE, law, DEED
: a judgement, DOOM, DEEM (dhe-ma)
= DHE - KE: to do or a doing: FAKEre = FACERE (latin)
= DHE - DHE: THESIS (greek): a thing placed or proposed
: DADHATI (Sanskrit) he places

YELLOW MOUSE

Dear Cloud-Hidden Friends:

After reading the CHF Letter a few times, and laying it down for awhile,(a couple months. Time is relative.), I really didn't have much to write about. Not that I do now, but I did center in, last night on Yellow House. And since Y.M. you approve of dialogue in the Letter, I thought I would greet you first.

To Y.M... On the nature of the CHF Letter. So far, I have seen a lot of semi-nostalgic deification of the process on attaining Zen. Its some kind of romantic notion, which each of us holds, that as we get older, we get wiser, and to the religously oriented, it is a real ego-substantiation action, to believe that as we get older, we are getting "purer".(This is the reason I didn't have much to write about until now, concerning the CHF.) I think this nostalgic attitude, is used to generate hope, and serves as a foundation, for the future. I would like to see the Letter, rather than a hope-of-attaining, ego-centric exercise, to one of modification. I like the word modify, rather than getting better and worse. I think the lessons of the Mantras, are the breakthroughs, which the members gave as examples in #I, &2, are good modifiers. In describing Zen, hidden beyond the clouds, one may write about the clouds of darkness(their events, and processes) and reach through in a narrow ,narrow line for a Mantra, which shines like a ray from the sun(Note:A Mantra about mantras.).

Y.M., is an event evil?, is a purpose evil? I say no in both cases. Consider all events modifications, rather than problems, evils, failure, etc... This eliminates good/evil complexes. Thereby Heaven and Earth are united. And there is no need to bring Earth(evil) up to Heaven(good),or bringing Heaven(good) down to Earth(evil).

Y.M.- Its hard to approach a moving target. Trying to set my sights on a person moving from exo to eso and back again, is tough. Hard to find you at any one moment. Are you running and hiding? Using the extremes as your means of escape? Many thoughts can cloud THE ISSUE, and feed an illusory ego(which you say you just can't quite let go-Earth.). Again many thoughts are violent. Its hard to tell if its against yourself or everyone else(Note: You acknowledge a,"NOT OK attitude towards all men and physical world".). It makes you hard to approach Y.M. (Even your name sends symbols of somebody running and hiding, keeping you anonymous) I love aloneness too. And I don't believe God made man because He was lonely. Well you've thrown a challenge for someone to invade your territory Y.M., and break h through the extreme absolutes you hide behind. Well, here I am. I must agree with everything else you had to write....

For everyone else, and Y.M. too, I have a Mantra.... I find water very spiritual too. There is a lake, high up in the mountains. It is deep, and intensly blue, and very cold, from the freshly melted snows on neighboring peaks. I am that lake, and I still the cloudy surface, so I may see deep to the stillness below, until finally the watcher enters the water, and is dissolved, and flows through the outlet....

TAT TVAM ASI,

Robert C. Finch

Robert C. Finch
P.O. Box 219
Basile, La. 70515

Marian Mountain
Coastlands
Big Sur, CA 93920

Dear HoBo Friends,

Ananda's clear statement in which he shared some of the background details of his personal vow to take everyone and everything as his teacher is, I feel, worth expanding upon. Ananda said his vow was an outgrowth of his faith in the Buddhist principle that everyone and everything has (is) Buddha-nature. I was surprised when Ananda first wrote me about this vow because he said he hadn't had much success in arousing interest in the vow among his fellow Zen practitioners. The realization that everything and everyone is my teacher had been one of the important developments of my own zen philosophy and practice so I had assumed that most mature Zen students would have had the same kind of realization. Instead of responding to Ananda's vow with disinterest I would have expected them to greet it with enthusiastic support. As I thought over the matter I remembered that my own realization hadn't developed fully until after I had left my Zen teachers and fellow Zen students and had struck out alone on a kind of zen pilgrimage. Perhaps the attachment to a formal Zen teacher is so powerful that it tends to blind students to the existence of more subtle zen relationships.

This tentative hypothesis of mine can be supported by Buddhist scriptures and stories. The first example that comes to mind can be found in the life of Buddha. It was only after Buddha left his two gurus, and left a small group of friends with whom he had been practicing asceticism that he came to the enlightening realization--under the Bo tree--that everything and everyone had Buddha-nature. Another example can be found in the life of the great Zen Patriarch, Joshu. It was only after Joshu's Ch'an master died and Joshu started out on a pilgrimage that Joshu took a vow to become the student of anyone he met on his journey who had something to teach him about Buddhism--even if it was only a small child. And there is a wonderful story in one of the Buddhist scriptures about the pilgrimage of a monk named Suddhana who discovered over 50 teachers among ordinary people he met on his journey. These ordinary people helped Suddhana expand the incomplete understanding he had acquired from his formal Buddhist teachers.

Ananda speculates that Joshu's famous koan of MU (Does a dog have Buddha-nature? MU!) is about real dogs and not merely literary or symbolic dogs. I had an experience in the early years of my Zen training which convinces me that Joshu's dog is real. After a particularly warm and supporting talk by Suzuki Roshi in the livingroom of my Los Altos home, I felt as if I had been accepted into the infinite arms of the Cosmic Buddha. After Suzuki and the other students left I took a long walk. It was a beautiful spring day. "This is Nirvana," I

thought. Suddenly a small pug dog ran out of the yard of a house I was passing and bit me on the leg. Instantly my emotional high was deflated. I cried all the way back home to Samsara but I have always been grateful that Joshu, in the form of a small pug dog, taught me something unforgettable about the difference between my illusion of Nirvana and the reality of Nirvana.

I can sympathize with Ananda's dislike of the term "Roshi" with its sanctimonious overtones. Sometimes I think that a true Roshi is a reluctant Roshi. Shunryu Suzuki, for instance, never thought of himself as a Roshi. He always called himself Sensei or Reverend Suzuki. It was only after he was scolded by Alan Watts for not using the word "Reverend" correctly that Suzuki reluctantly agreed to allow his students to address him as Roshi. Suzuki Roshi wasn't attached to the position of Zen master. He said, "A master who cannot bow to his disciple cannot bow to Buddha." And he also said, "Sometimes we may bow to cats and dogs." A student once asked Suzuki, "You are our teacher but who is your teacher?" Before Suzuki had a chance to reply she answered her own question. "Oh, I know! Okusan, your wife, is your teacher." Suzuki chuckled and agreed. Another student told me of the time she attended a lecture in San Francisco and watched Suzuki carelessly knock over a vase of flowers on the altar. The student was impressed by how calmly Suzuki accepted Okusan's scolding in front of a large audience of students and visitors. It was an enlightening lesson for everyone. A zen teacher of mine once summed up the essence of the Diamond Sutra as: "A is A because A is not A." A Roshi is a Roshi because a Roshi is not a Roshi.

Then there is the other side to the insight or vow that everyone and everything is our teacher. Everyone and everything is also our student. When Joshu took his vow to become the student of everyone he met who had something to teach him about Buddhism he also took a vow to teach everyone he met what he had learned about Buddhism.

I have an idea that most of the contributors and readers of the LETTER have had at least one interesting experience in which someone or something other than a formal master, guru, or priest gave him a valuable spiritual lesson. Marian Poirier gave us a charming example of how an apple or cherry tree can be a teacher to human beings. I'd like to hear more personal anecdotes supporting (or refuting) this viewpoint.

With palms together,

Marian Mountain

LETTERS
RECEIVED

THE RITUAL,
Taking Leave of a House

to Reb

Once again I sit
in the cavepit of a house
when there is more dark
than light and hold together
the remaining ties of a raft.
Is that the wind outside
or is that wind in here?
No heat now, house,
mice scattering in the morgue
like windblown winter leaves.
Another weft of the journey, ended.

The keeper of the house.
This house doesn't need me,
doesn't need anyone.
Is it keeping me
am I keeping it?
From this end locked in.
Sail, sail,
shores yet to reach.

The line I follow,
longer than me.
Longer--not bigger.
I always did like large mouthfuls,
now it's swallow my cracker lump,
no salt, no milk.
It swallows me.

Never mind,
paddle, paddle,
just begun
to weave.

1.20.66 San Francisco/Page & Ashbury

NORM MOSER

Alan Marlowe
P.O. Box 956
Boulder, Co.
80306

Extraordinary Ordinariness

Being a kind, concerned; Father; Son; Brother; Husband;
Lover; Friend; Neighhbor; Citizen; Wife; Mother; Daughter
Sister;

Being a gentle; decent; fearless; softspoken;
Precise; genuine; simple; wholesome; humble;
Aware; sensitive; tender; loving; mindful;
Honest; caring person.

Being a devoted student; teacher, servant. A
Moral; mortal; thorough; tamed and trained
Human being.

Being an insurance salesman; An old man in a
Cave; A secretary; a doctor; a gardener; a
Carpenter; a Lawyer; a farmer.

Being a patient; disciplined; generous; joyful;
Energetic; inspired; ready to listen and hear;
Non-aggressive; intelligent, awake man or
Woman.

Babies sounding the bell of wisdom, teething on the Vajra
Of Skillful means.

Having recieved the Ordination of Ordinaryness, I can continue my studies and practice for the pleasure they bring me. What do we find then? Awakeness, experiencing the workings of MIND-PERCEPTION-EMOTIONS. Seeing things as they are, simply and directly, without grasping, rejecting, or prejudice of any sort. Sharing that experience of being with ones world. Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Still, one cannot forget the process that leads to this simplicity. The path or way to this Castle of Miracles. Unravelling with great effort, step by step the fabric of dualistic understanding takes many years and good teachers. The effort continues and gratitude demands that we share the pleasure of our discovery with others. So we reach out from our mountain tops.

Best, Alan Marlowe

A, C. Dalenberg
753 44th Avenue
San Fransisco, CA
94121

Dear Friends:

The Buddha once said "Noble Friendship is the entire Holy Life". There are of course many other ways to sum up his teaching, but this one represents an ideal particularly close to my own heart. I must admit however that it would be very difficult for me to then explain why I am not a better friend myself.

That same ideal is I think found in a somewhat different form among the followers of Maitreya Buddha- the future Buddha who will hopefully be coming soon. What his teaching will actually be no one really knows, but his name "Maitreya" means "Friendliness". I think of him then as the "Buddha whose essence is Friendliness", and with him will come an "Era of Friendliness". His many faithful followers pray that that Era may come soon.

I don't know very much about faithfully praying and such, and what I do know has come to me only in my later years. As a child I had some religious experience, as most if not all children do, but I never felt very pious, and never took prayer very seriously. Even upon becoming a Zen priest, I would only go through the motions, and the significance of prayer continued to elude me..

Its meaning for me came as a kind of sudden discovery, rather than as a gradual development. I was one day reading about Maitreya and how the faithful had over the centuries carved on rocks in the mountains of Tibet, China, and Mongolia the inscription "Oh Come Maitreya Come!". It suddenly struck me that it was a prayer, and I realized it was not only theirs, but also my very own, and that at the bottom of my heart I have been repeating it over and over again for years, but without quite realizing it- "Oh Come Friendliness Come!". It even made me feel quite pious, maybe for the first time, it being an emotion not very popular among self-reliant Zen types.

I began to think then that maybe too I had a few other prayers half or almost totally hidden, and Lo and Behold indeed I do. I suspect it has taken me so long to discover them because of a very large overdose of ego and self-pride.

I also have come to understand the meaning of the Maitreya prayer in a more universal sense, not limited to just mankind. It should also mean friendship with all life everywhere. I don't quite know how to explain it, but I think too that it should mean to be a friend of the Great Earth, and of the Great Open Sky.

Trying to be a friend, but with a long way to go,

Ananda Claude

LETTERS
RECEIVED

May 17, 1983
3217 Humboldt Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55408

Ananda Claude Dalenberg, Clerk, and Cloud-Hidden Friends,
753 44th Avenue
San Francisco, California 94121
Dear Claude and Friends,

What a pleasure to hear from you and read the collection of letters in issue one! I deeply appreciate your effort to send out Dharma words in a new form. Over the last few years I too have pondered the appropriateness of hierarchical priesthoods in this late twentieth century secular society. How can they possibly touch the hearts of the American people? But then can any social form do any better? I have no answer other than to be here and sit tight.

In the Midwestern heartland
Hot summer and cold winter
Wet spring and crackling fall.
Today the crabapple trees on my block
Blossom glorious pinks and reds.

Yours,
Erick Storlie

B i r d s & D o t s

B i r d s

Norm Moser

4-14

NEWS & NOTES

A. C. Dalenberg
Clerk

1. Here is issue #4, along with apologies for being a little late. The next issue is planned for early in September. I am worried about the quality of the letters we have been receiving. I think it is far too high, so much so it might intimidate those not so adept in verbal skills. Maybe one of you Bodhisattva types could volunteer to write a real dumb letter, so we could all breathe a lot easier. As a matter of fact, I have often found stumbling and awkward letters to be deeper and more moving than the more polished kind.

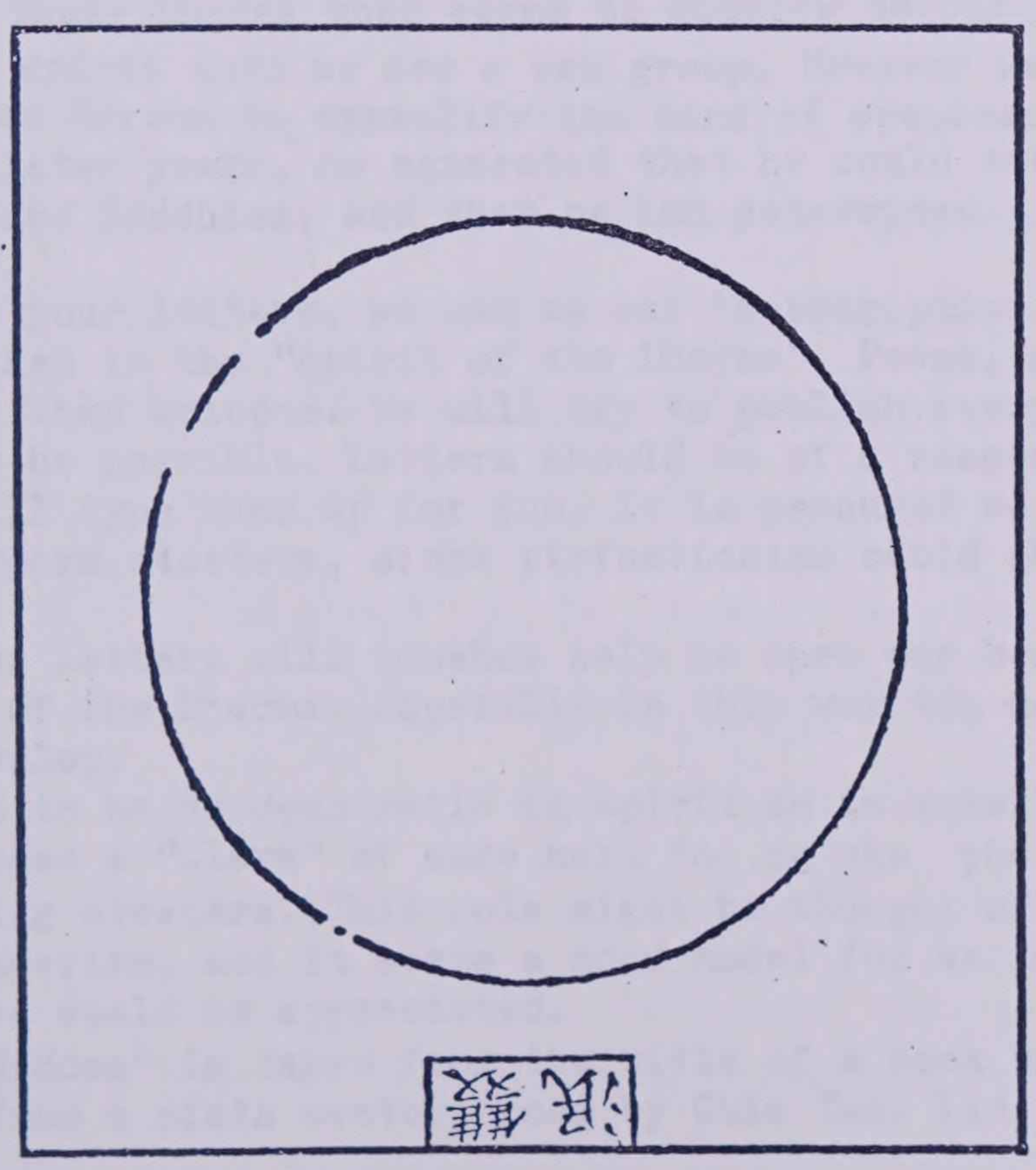
   You may have noted that there are quite a few references here and there to Suzuki Roshi of San Francisco Zen Center. This does not mean, however, that the C. H. F. Letter is intended to have some sectarian identification. On the other hand our Letter is not intended to in any way conflict with belonging to some religious group either.

   It would be appreciated if your letters are of a reasonable length, in harmony with our "equal time" policy. Also please make side margins wide enough to be easily stapled.

2. We received very little personal news this month. Please feel free to send us such. Come to think of it that would also include me. During the past three months my one daughter has had scarlet fever, chicken pox, a month long unusual virus, but the other daughter has only had chicken pox. Also our dog died, plus three gold fish and two hamsters. I'm feeling fine.

3. Tom Thompson's new address is Woodbury Yoga Center, 122 West Side Road, Woodbury, CT 06798.

4. Oxherding Pictures # 10. Translation by Daisetz T. Suzuki.



BOTH VANISHED

Both the man and the animal have disappeared, no traces are left.
The bright moon-light is empty and shadowless with all the 10,000 objects in it.
If anyone should ask the meaning of this,
Behold the lilies of the field and its fresh sweet-scented verdure.

Cloud-hidden friends letter

ISSUE #5, SEPT.-OCT. 1983

OUR PAGES ARE YOUR LETTERS

Cloud-Hidden Friends
753 44th Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94121

The "Cloud-Hidden Friends" are a small non-sectarian religious correspondence group. We meet mostly by sharing our thoughts on the Dharma together in our "Letter".

Rather than giving some definition to the word "Dharma", we would rather emphasize the freedom of the individual to come to his own understsnding about such. As a group we would aim more at a dialogue, and would emphasize the spirit and practice of the Dharma rather than some doctrinaire or sectarian formula.

In that spirit we look to Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki and Alan Watts as our "honorary founders". Although they are usually associated with Buddhism, and Zen in particular, their spirit was also a free and universal one, including Christianity, Hinduism, and Taoism etcetera. Their Dharma then seems to somehow belong equally to us all.

In a more universal spirit then we are a zen group. However we might also turn to someone like Thomas Merton to exemplify the kind of openness and dialogue we have in mind. In his later years, he commented that he could see no contradiction between Christianity and Buddhism, and that he had determined "to become as good a Buddhist as I can'".

Since our pages are your letters, we ask as our "subscription fee" that you write us a letter now and then in the "spirit of the Dharma". Poems, songs, tales, drawings and sush are all more than welcome. We will try to publish everything we receive, but this might not always be possible. Letters should be of a reasonable length, and if you so request, we will type them up for you. It is presumed we will forgive each other a few typing errors etcetera, since pirfectionism could easily paralyze us.

It is hoped that our letters will somehow help us open our hearts to each other, and deepen our sense of the Dharma. Hopefully in this way too more than a few deep friendships might develop.

It is our intention to be as democratic in spirit as is possible. It does seem that we do at least need a "Clerk" of some sort to do the photocopying, co-ordinating, and mailing etcetera. This role might be thought of as similar to that of the "Clerk" in Quakerism, and it seems a good model for us to follow. Your comments on these matters would be appreciated.

Our phrase "Cloud-Hidden" is taken from the title of a book by Alan Watts. He in turn borrowed it from a ninth century poem by Chia Tao. Lin Yutang translates it as follows:

SEARCHING FOR THE HERMIT IN VAIN

I asked the boy beneath the pines.
He said,"The master's gone alone
Herb-picking somewhere on the mount,
Cloud-hidden, whereabouts unknown."

A.C.D., Clerk

RECAPTURING INNOCENCE

Properly functioning, Homo Sapiens is a curious creature and early-on starts asking questions. As time passes, he may get the feeling that he is not getting the right answers; then one day he suspects that he is not asking the right questions. Exit, the age of innocence.

With great care, he goes forth anew, armed with a fresh set of questions and soon finds out that not only are the answers still wrong, but that he is made to feel guilty for even asking.

With a little luck, he may discover a thing called dualism. Webster gives the word little praise, but the Taoists know much about it, as they know much about all simple things. Briefly, it suggests that man, by nature, is a dualistic creature who cannot conceive of anything except in terms of something else. We cannot go to the West without coming from the East, nor can there be an up without a down, or love without hate. We are reminded that some primitive people, somewhere, have no word for war. I submit that they have no word for peace either. There are no nice days in Honolulu because there are no bad days; in fact there is really no weather there as New Englanders know it.

Expanding on this simple theme is the "one-ness of opposites" so well expressed in Allan Watts' writings. Up and down are just different manifestations of the same thing, like the head and the tail of a coin. The term "altitude" is used to embrace the concept of up/down, as is "longitude" for east/west. Love and hate are not really opposites at all. They both imply involvement as opposed to the alienation when one is not loved or hated, but ignored.

We often feel alienated when we think of our "selves' as opposed to our environment. The Taoists know that self and environment are one and the same thing. The Taoists are at peace with their universe, feeling much a part of it. Many of the people who gave us wrong answers, know nothing of these things and have set up barriers between us and them. But we can get the answers ourselves by turning the coins over, one-by-one.

continued

Like the coin, the guilt that others try to hang on us can be turned over to discover innocence. Ask someone what innocence is and they will probably come up with a definition for ignorance. This would suggest that you can not be informed without being guilty of something. I don't buy that, and neither did Plato who stated that the unexamined life was not worth living. Neither did Allan Watts when he suggested that the ideal life was a circle, starting with the savage (the child) and ending with the sage (second childhood?) rather than climbing the ladder of success which leads straight up and ends only when you are lost beyond hope.

I submit that innocence was lost only when you stopped building sand castles on the beach and started wearing bathing suits with labels. I think that innocence can be recaptured, but this is only the latest of my series of rewarding applications of dualism. I think I might wind up on the beach (where it all started anyway), building sand castles, not caring if the tide destroys them, but caring very much about the color of the sky, the sounds of gulls, the coolness of the air around me and the warmth of the sand beneath me (and hang the labels). I may be in the company of a child. We need not speak, we are not opposites, but mere reflections of one-another; two sides of Allan's coin.

Without me, the author, there would be no you, the reader and vice-versa. Without us there would be no communication. Without them there would be no us.

Many thanks to them: Cloud Hidden Friends.

John A. Walsh
9 Country Club Rd.
Acton, MA 01720

7/8/83

Dear Ananda; and All Cloud-Hidden Friends:

Seems you have been a lost old friend, with whom I am breaking into your domain,with this letter. I have thought many times of writing, although there is little to be said, that has not been said.

Updating you on sojourn efforts,.These have been temporarily delayed. In part because of last years heavy snowfall. To wit : It is still on the ground in the elevations I would be traveling. However, I did get to California to check these things out, and spent IO days investigating situations. California has changed dramatically in the year and a half I have been away. In fact, so much so, I am inclined to stay away, and be more a continental drifter, than coastal climber.

A new possibility has extended my outlook, with the purchase of a trailer. A semi-nomadic life, like a "rollin stone", agrees with me.

Due to continuous movement, I have been unable to complete a 4th rewrite on a paper to CHF. It will save, wherever it is at.

I have found the Middle Path has taken me to the object of my concerns. That concern is Wisdom, and its unifying ability. Wisdom has won out over my selfish desires.

A concept has crystalized clearly in my mind. The "Common Life", or "Spirit", shared in all beings, animate and inanimate. A fondness for flowers, animal lovers, and "back to nature" ways, manifest the connection of all reality. And the different individuals are more like shades and colors of the karmic processes. This brings equality to all of Creation. To carelessly step on an insect, becomes the same as to carelessly kill someone in a car "accident". It is time for the Western Mind to move on from its Dark Age thinking of man as the center of the Universe. All life is important, and self-justified.

In the lower realms of thought, I have found the dualistic mindset of Wisdom/Knowledge. Wisdom being a unifying aspect, and knowledge being a diversifying aspect of the mind's manifestation. I suspect that people with extreme aspects of this manifestation to be the cause of much of the world's(humanity's) violence. Again the balance of the Middle Path exceeds my expectations.

.... Just finished brewing some comfrey tea. Care to join me?

Unity in Each, Each in Unity,

Robert C. Finch

In Reply to Tom Thompson's Letter, CHFL #4, Winter 1983

DANCING UP THE MOUNTAIN

1.

Toes snug in thick socks,
boots bound around ankles,

knees flexing & genuflecting,
chest flying outward lungs

crashing against ribcage,
head rising above it all.

Climbing within one's self
while planting boots

in bootprints planted,
skirting wire

of watershed land
to flat open space

where tracks suddenly circle:
the hiker had to dance.

2.

Leans a backpack,
woolen cap atop,

no arms through packstraps,
no head in hat,

just voice from somewhere
hailing me, and my reply:

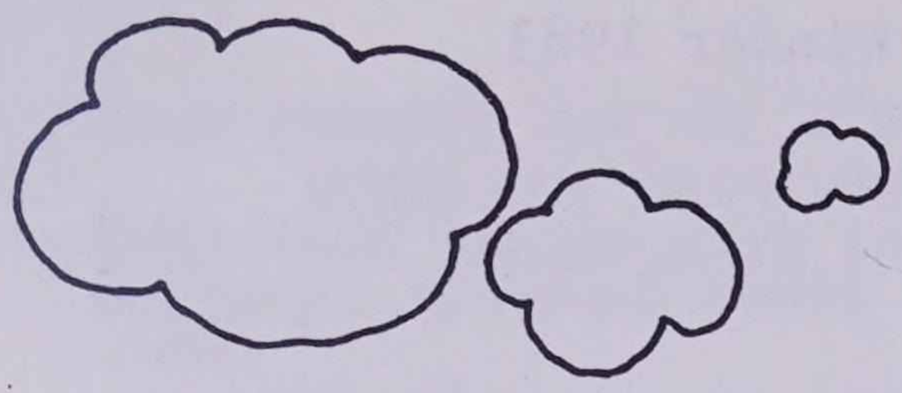
"Guess it was you
I followed up here!."

comes the retort:
"I was following someone else!"

Following eachother
to nameless peaks,

exchanging visions,
exchanging lies.

-Joel Weishaus



Joe Lawrence Lembo
P.O. Box 99444
San Francisco, CA 94109

Dear Cloud-People:

I am hovering in your midst because of Marian Mountain. I had written her a letter to praise her book, The Zen Environment, (which I found "empty and marvellous"). And she sent me my first copy of this HoBo chainletter.

You may be wondering who I am? Good question. So am I. By way of introduction, let's just say I'm a "Professional Bohemian," i.e. an Artist, Writer, Photographer, Folk Musician, Masseur, and Fellow seeker.

The greatest influences in my life have been (and still are:) Walt Whitman, D.H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, Alan W. Watts, and Joan Baez. All Bodhisattvas in their own right. They've all contributed to my well-being and have "filtered & fibered my blood," as Whitman would say.

My roots are what you may call "tangled." I am 36, born and raised in Paterson, N.J. (Hail, Ginsberg & William Carlos Williams) by an Italian Catholic father and Cherokee mother who was brought up in a fundamental southern Pentecostal household. I spent most of my childhood attending a Methodist church (because it was conveniently located), but since moving to California 6 years ago, I began to think for myself.

I came upon Buddhism quite naturally and by accident. About 3 or 4 years ago I was hitting bottom, so to speak. I went on top of Russian Hill to watch a lunar eclipse. As I was sitting there gazing at the moon -- watching the heavenly bodies coalesce and merge into one -- the moon appeared to me as the yin & yang. Up to this point I had absolutely no prior knowledge or interest in Eastern philosophy. After that I was very calm and flowing with the Tao. Later I read that the ancient Japanese also viewed the eclipse of the moon as the yin/yang -- that's how they got the idea to render the symbol.

Then I wrote to Henry Miller and asked: "What are the best books to read on Zen?" He simply replied: "No special books -- just follow your nose." (That, in itself, was a Zen answer, altho' I didn't realize it at the time.) So I read every book Alan Watts ever wrote and studied Zen until it dawned on me there was nothing to study. Smile.

I am currently interested in Tantra. However, I feel one should not hold on to any specific doctrine or religious practice. Then it becomes dogma. Too much ritual is like the "spiritual clap," i.e. like admitting you are not where you should be. It is because we want to be that we are not, then you finally give-up (or wake-up) and discover you have been there all along. Alan Watts used to say, "Life is like water. The more you try to grasp it the more it just slips through your hands." If you want to have running water, you must let it go.

continued

But, alas, when this old world starts getting you down, you do need to be reminded that you are the Buddha, and all of his doings are your doings and vice versa. It's good to return occasionally to your favorite Zen books. It's a form of refreshment. But rebirth can only occur in the void, i.e. when you have stopped trying to make it happen.

Non-attachment is the key. And this includes attachement to oneself. As you all know, it is the self that suffers. So if you do away with the ego, there is nobody left to suffer. While typing this letter I had a satori. I was going to list some of my artistic accomplishments and some of the famous people I've met. But then it dawned on me that there REALLY IS NO SELF, or else why would I be trying to inflate, reaffirm, applaud, exhault who I am through what I've done and who I know? Think about it. I am nobody without these things, I don't even exist. Thank God.

So I shall not bog you down with any autobiographical claptrap. But I shall continue to dance to the rhythm of life, wearing hand-me-down shoes from other Dharma Bums. Even if I have to patch em.'

Watts once wrote, "the high art, the upaya, of a true Bodhisattava is possible only for him who has gone beyond all need for self justification, for so long as there is something to prove, some ax to grind, there is no dance."

Anyone who is a fan of Whitman, Lawrence, Miller, Watts or Baez is cordially invited to drop me a note. (Also friends of HoBo's are especially welcomed). Alors, I leave you with some Haiku I wrote.

Namaste,



Full moon eclipse perched
on a hilltop high, gazing:
yin and yang satori.

No other place is
different: it is just the
Whole, thus rearranged.

My life: a fleeting
moment etched on film, O' so
transparent am I.

O' futile struggle,
death of ego: this new mind is
cresting with the waves.

The bottle washed
upon the glistening shore,
without a message.

The sunny beach now
writing haiku, these sand swept
thoughts: the way of Zen.

Those who awaken
their Buddha-nature shall not
hunger after truth.

Marian Mountain
Coastlands
Big Sur, CA 93920

Dear HoBo Friends,

A dharma buddy wrote me recently: "I notice these days you seem to be mentioning Suzuki Roshi more and more." This, along with a note from Ananda in the #4 issue of the CHFL explaining to the readers, that the numerous references to the late Suzuki Roshi of San Francisco Zen Center did not indicate any kind of sectarian identification, got me to pondering. Should I make an effort not to mention Suzuki Roshi so often in my letters? I quickly abandoned that possibility. Trying not to mention Suzuki Roshi in a letter which attempted to expound some point of dharma was like being ordered not to think of the word hippopotamus for the next 5 minutes. (For new readers of the CHFL I should explain that Suzuki Roshi was my first Zen master. It has been almost 19 years since we first met in this life and a little over 12 years since we parted. But for me the living presence of my Zen teacher is just as strong today, perhaps stronger, than it was during the period of our physical relationship.)

An old friend and mentor of mine used to have the same problem as I have. Whenever we got together for a discussion of spiritual matters (usually after a lecture given by Suzuki Roshi) she would bring up some anecdote about her late tea master. She often repeated these stories. I didn't mind the repetitions because something wonderful always happened when she talked about her tea master. I could feel, in her enthusiastic description, the living presence of the man himself. There had been some kind of transmission between the master and the student that could be passed along to a third person who had never met her master in "real" life.

I hope everyone who was fortunate enough to have been a student of Suzuki Roshi won't feel hesitant to share anecdotes of him in this open forum. I also hope students of other Zen masters or other spiritual teachers can be persuaded to pass along lots of stories of their own teachers. After all, transmission isn't just some formal ceremony. It is transmitting, at every opportunity, the living presence of our teachers.

Here is a short lesson that Suzuki Roshi passed on to me in a private discussion about 16 years ago. He said: "Zen teachers don't really get started until they are 60. Before that time they have too much ego." Having reached the magic age of 60 this spring I would like to confess that though I haven't noticed much difference in the size of my ego in the last 16 years, I don't attach as much importance to it now.

With palms together,

Marian Mountain

LETTERS RECEIVED

Yellow Mouse

TO THE CHF:
(1) Tom T: There was a fellow in Phila., named Baba Guru (?) who was asked by an interviewer what a Guru was. He said:" A Guru is someone who gives permission, where no permission is needed."
But your "finger pointing to the moon" brings up Gutei's finger: Gutei raised a finger whenever he was asked a question about Zen. A monk began to imitate him in this way. Whenever anyone asked him what his master preached about, he would raise the finger. Gutei heard about this, seized him and CUT OFF his finger. The monk cried and fled, but Gutei called out to him. The monk stopped and turned his head to Gutei and Gutei raised up his own finger. In that instant the monk was enlightened.
THANX: "All teachers are selling water by the side of the river." LOVE IT !
As for the NEED for GUIDES on the path or Way: We have had our awarenmess conditioned out of us by society at large; but we are active and willing participants in the process. Thus we happily kill knowledge of our TRUE Selves. With such obsession, addiction, compulsion, we need some kind of stimulating input that encourage us to open (like a flower) and live (awaken).

(2) Richard B: "Joy in the morning and sleep at night" Let me add: "Eat when you are hungry and walk where you list." That's freedom, true liberty.
In your quote from Lao Tsu there is a semantic hook with which he has played you (like a fish). = "I", "MySelf".
(3) Bro Finch: TOUCHE !! Now that is what I call a valuable dialogue. The notes that follow herein are the chaff. I will be sitting on this needle of violence for some time assimilating. Thank you, Thank you.
"Its hard to approach a moving target". The metaphor is not "approach", its "shoot". You certainly tried to nail me down. Its true that I try to move rather fast. I ask you: just what am I ? Well, I guess that depends on what you are saying. According to the "truth"(?), I am not a thing but a movement: n'est pas? As I live, I MUST grow and therefor I change. Do I have power to do otherwise ? I can try to stabilize myself but failure to grow is death - I'm not quite ready for that yet. But why should, ought, need I become STILL. We both know one answer to that one. But is it a stillness IN the body or OF the body ? WATCH IT ? You may be the one who NEEDS me to be made rigid (like rigor mortis) in order for your understanding to be certain, secure.
"Anonymous" BOSH !!! Tell me: Is ROBERT anonymous? Who is Robert ? What does that tell me? That this government, society, culture has registered you as one of those ROBERTO's tells me zilch. Is a FINCH short, fat, blonde; does he have a hot temper. What do these traditional names mean anymore? Did your mother really choose RRRRROBeRRRRt (roll the r's) because she hoped you would actualy be brightly famed: from Old High German (AD 300) HRODEBERT = HROD: fame + BERAHT: bright from the roots (indo-european BC 8000) KAR: HARD = HAROD = HROD, mighty, bold, praised, + BHEREG: shine, white, BHEREGt = BRIGHT; = KHAROD-BEREGHT = ROBERT.
The Native American has a different theory. Whereas the white man goes through life hiding who he is, the warrior creates a shield for himself and on it he paints his life. He exposes who he is, where he came from, what he aspires to and where he is going. That "others" can't read his shield is not his problem: he is not responsible for the problems that they have; he IS deeply responsible for his own Self, problems, behavior. So, the Chief sits down in the center of his lodge and smokes a pipe to - ? the Great Spirit. These. my friend, are words of ZEN.

continued

continued

I did not answer, yet, the middle paragraph about evil. We kmow that (a) it is only man who judges good and evil. We know that Shiva, the God of dsstruction is the God of Creation: one can only create by destroying. Even growth in understanding destroys old ideas. On the other hand, evil comes into existence whenever there is a purpose, goal or acheivement which is frustrated or thwarted. Buddhism uses the word "Desire" to say the same thing: We must eliminate all desires. But have we arrived at enlightenment: have we rid ourSelves of ALL desires, including desires for good ???

(4) Marian Mt. (is that Marian Meru?) Marian = a devotee of the Virgin Mary; also a variant spelling of MARION = either masc. or fem., goes back to Middle English from the Old French where it is a diminutive of MARIE from Latin MARIA from the Greek MARIAM from the Hebrew MIRYAM (moses' sister) defined = REBELLION (about BC:3000)
The words "formal Zen teacher" by definition means stress on dogma which demands adherence, which necessitates rigidity which makes for obedience and kills the very spontenaity advocated by the masters.
You said that "ordinary people helped Suddhana expand the incomplete understanding he had acquired from his formal Buddhist teachers". Of course, with "ordinary" people he was free to expand. Luckily the teachers had not destroyed his ability to expand.
In your little dog story, you admitted that you EXPECTED TO BE LOVED. Correct me if I'm wrong, but Zen Masters (the one (Rinzai) who grabbed the stick and hit back) move faster and depend on nothing, expect nothing and respond to everything. They might have kicked the dog before he could bite them. The Native American might have eaten him for lunch.
THANX for the :"A is A because A is notA". Its exciting: The "A" has four different meanings, thus: "A" is concept A because thing A is not concept "A".
WONDERFUL !!!

YELLOW MOUSE

P.S.
In Phila., each business day (about 220 per year), there are at least four Juvenile courtrooms operating, each with a list of 60 cases. Thats 240 times 220 or 53,000 cases (each gets listed an average three times so there is actually only 17,000 completed per year). If you consider just the 16,000 young (9-18) black (less than 5% white) males who are thrown up against the bar rail and shouted at by officers in a ritual they can't understand, you begin to understand the word: jeopardy. Its about 240 kids terrorized every day.

But Phila, is only ONE such city. You can multiply this by 100 for the nation. Consider this: 24,000 in one day; the court operates an average 6 hour day, lets say. 6 X 60 = 360 minutes into 24,000. Each and every minute of every public working day, there are 67 kids terrorized in this nation. If that doesn't make you weep, you can't be reached. And this will not cease until one comes along who will cut the Gordian knot with a noise that noone will like. Lets hope it is Buddha or Jesus and not another Hitler or Alexander.

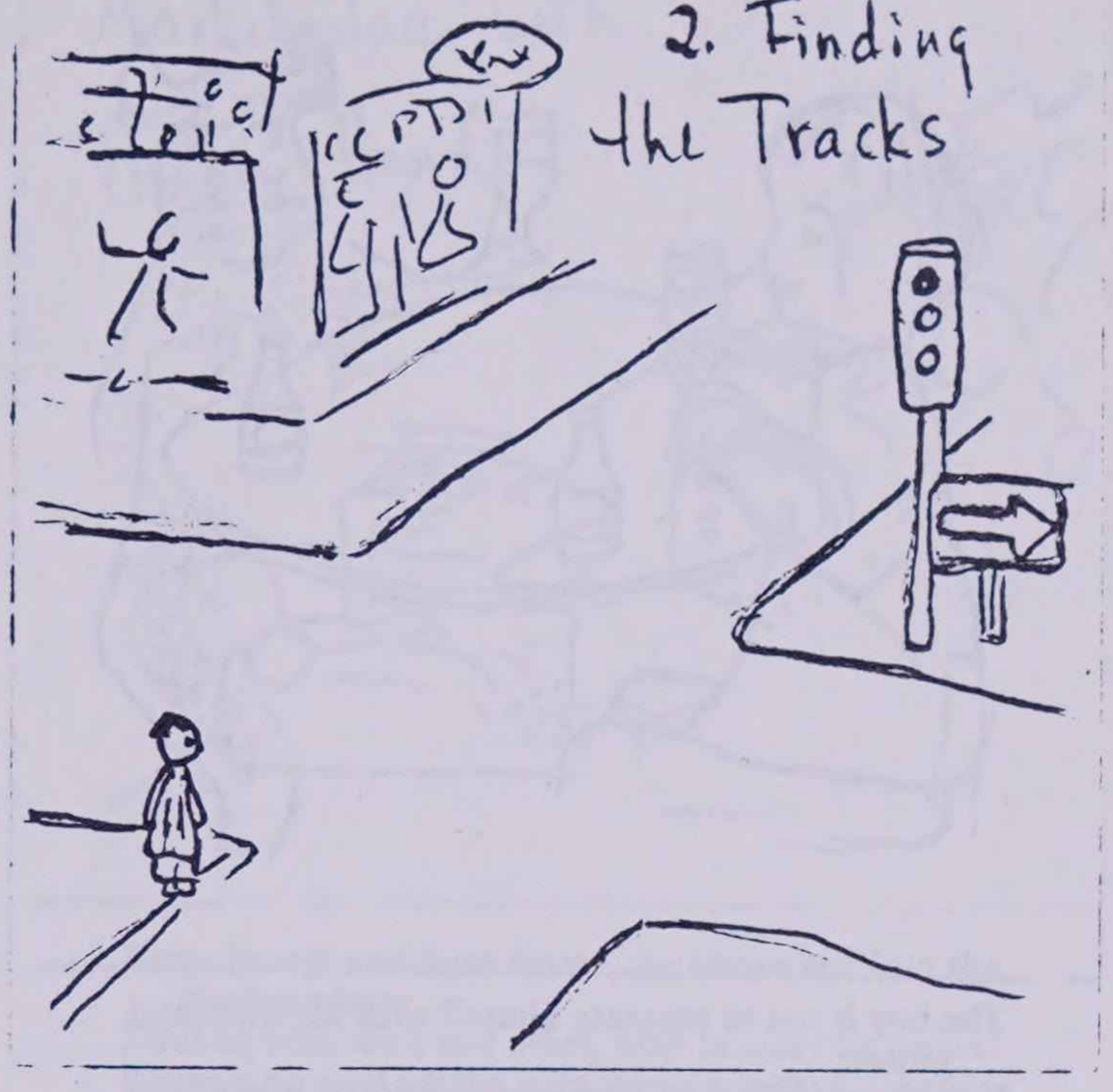
Y.M.

Mrs. R.M. Pirsig

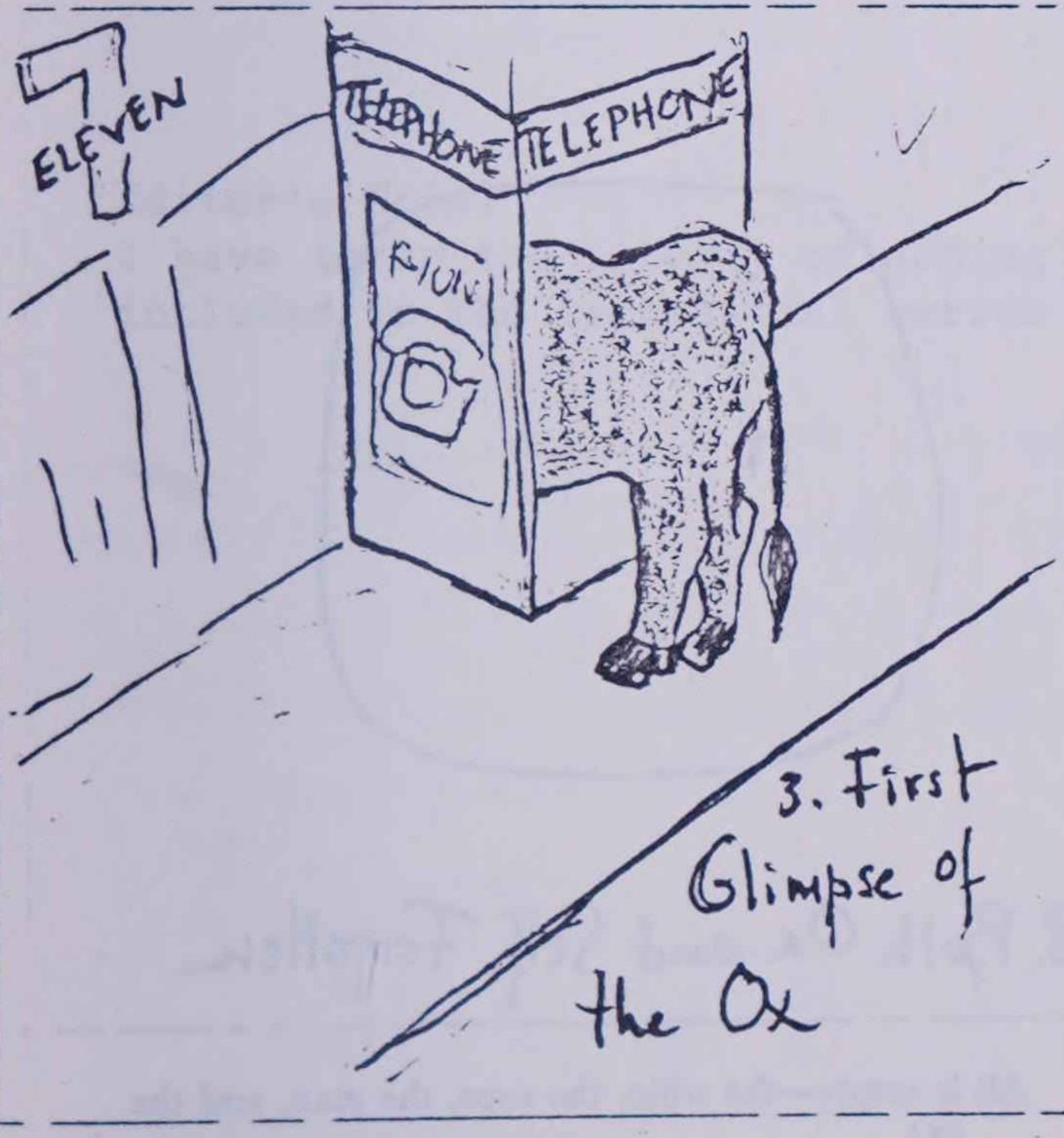
TEN OXHERDING PICTURES, for the Cloud Hidden Friends:



Alone in the wilderness, lost in the jungle, the boy is searching, searching!
The swelling waters, the far-away mountains, and the unending path;
Exhausted and in despair, he knows not where to go,
He only hears the evening cicadas singing in the maple-woods.



By the stream and under the trees, scattered are the traces of the lost;
The sweet-scented grasses are growing thick—did he find the way?
However remote over the hills and far away the beast may wander,
His nose reaches the heavens and none can conceal it.

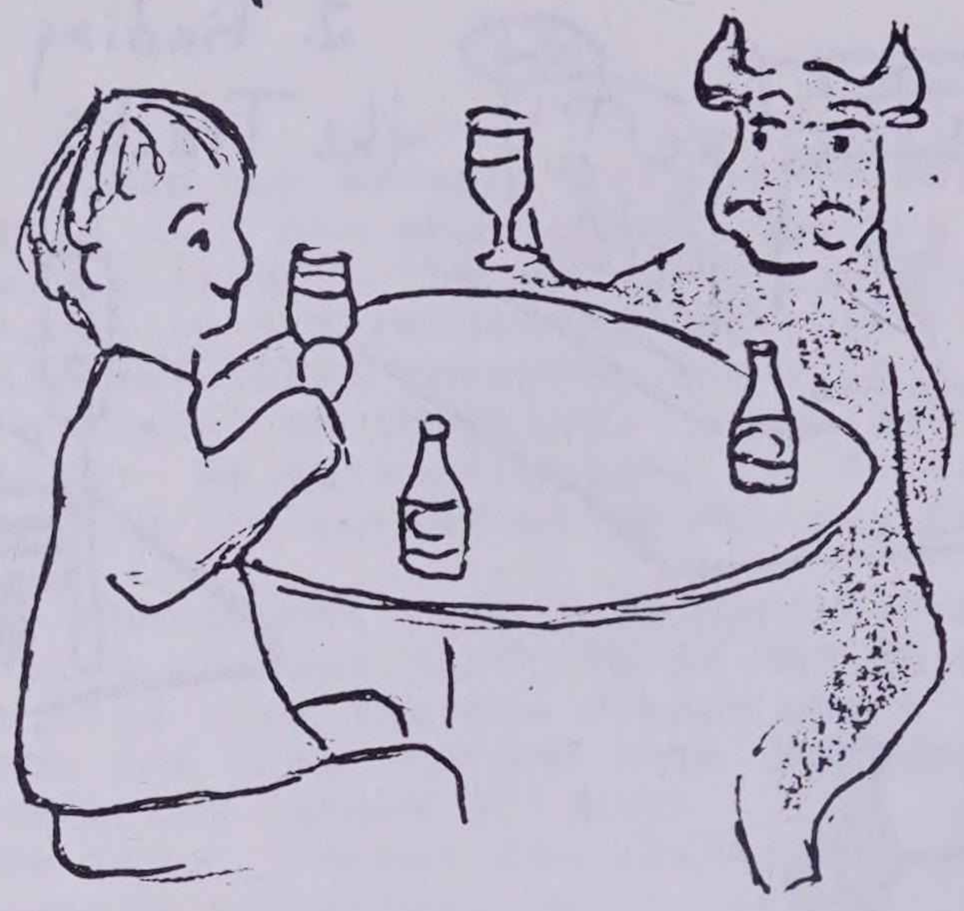


On a yonder branch perches a nightingale cheerfully singing;
The sun is warm, and a soothing breeze blows, on the bank the willows are green;
The ox is there all by himself, nowhere is he to hide himself;
The splendid head decorated with stately horns—what painter can reproduce him?



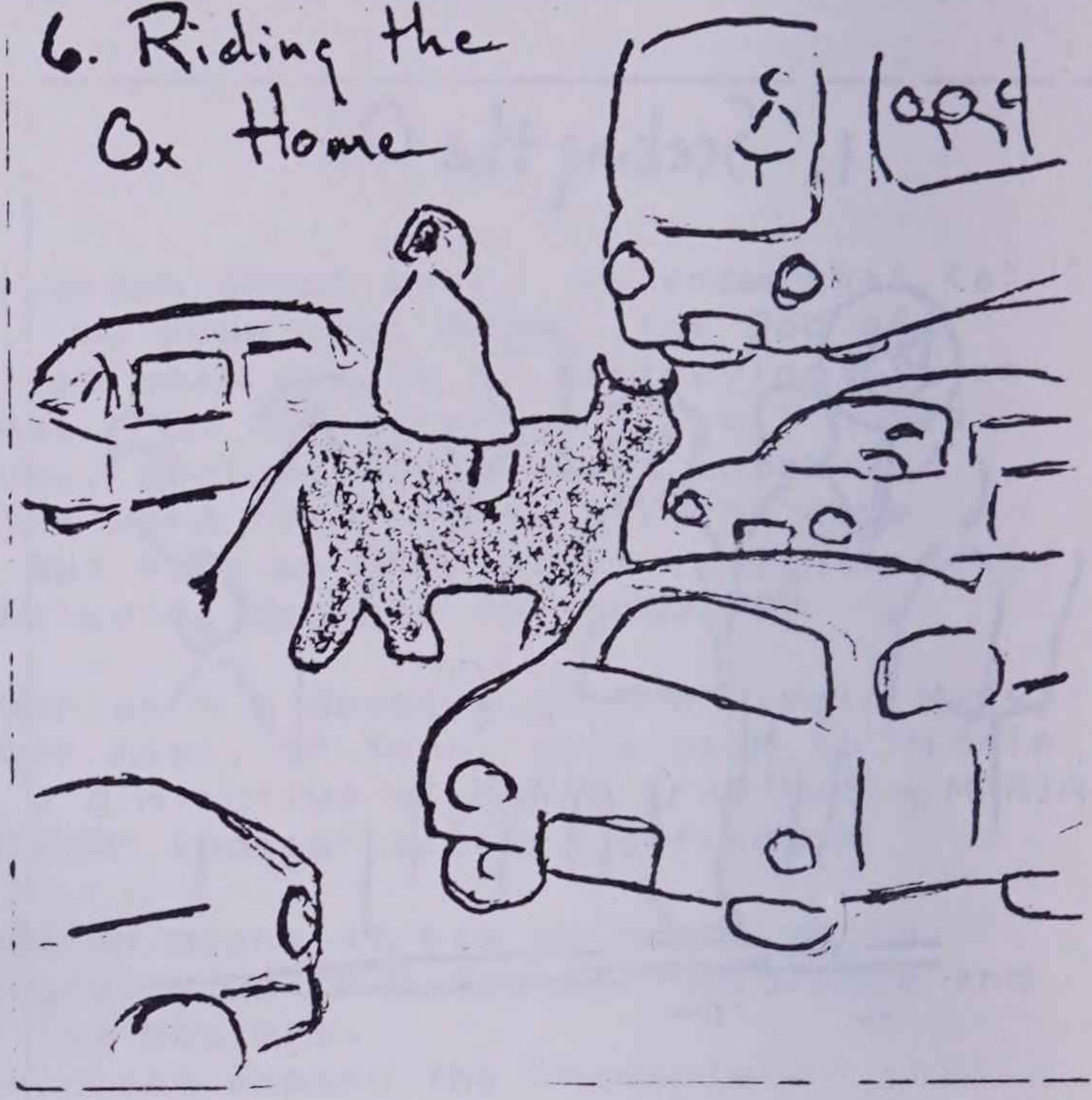
With the energy of his whole being, the boy has at last taken hold of the ox:
But how wild his will, how ungovernable his power!
At times he struts up a plateau,
When lo! he is lost again in a misty unpenetrable mountain-pass.

5. Taming the Ox



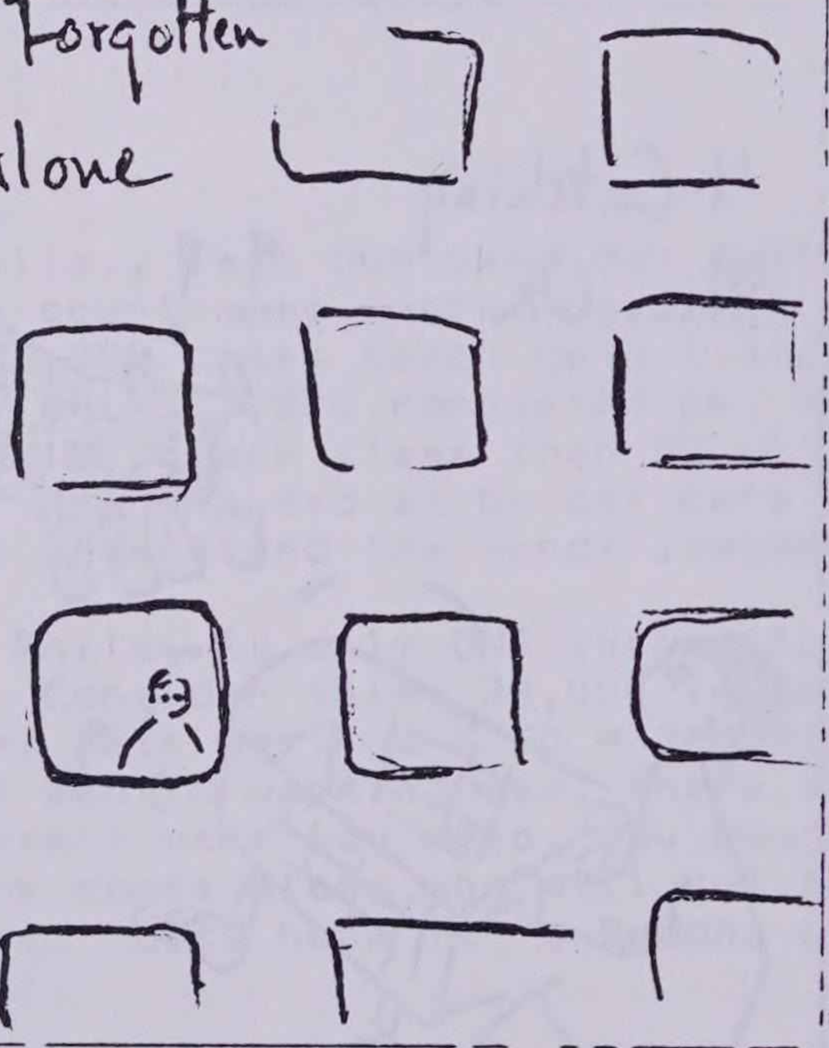
The boy is not to separate himself with his whip and tether,
Lest the animal should wander away into a world of defilements;
When the ox is properly tended to, he will grow pure and docile;
Without a chain, nothing binding, he will by himself follow the oxherd.

6. Riding the Ox Home



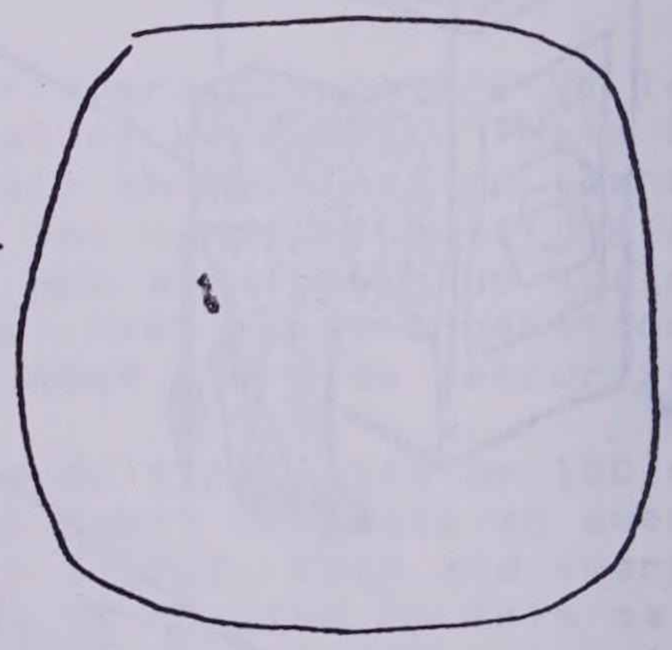
Riding on the animal, he leisurely wends his way home:
Enveloped in the evening mist, how tunefully the flute vanishes away!
Singing a ditty, beating time, his heart is filled with a joy indescribable!
That he is now one of those who know, need it be told?

7. Ox Forgotten Self Alone



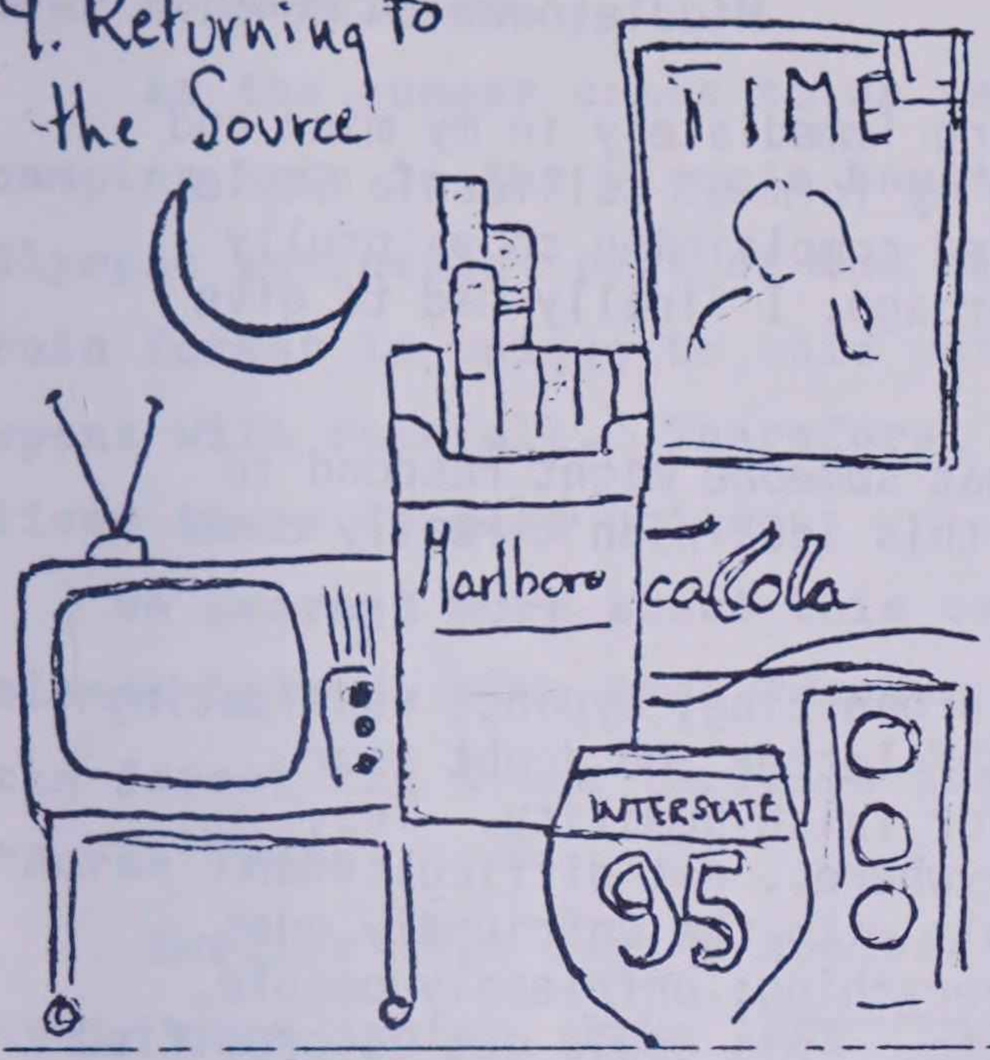
Riding on the animal, he is at last back in his home,
Where lo! the ox is no more; the man alone sits serenely.
Though the red sun is high up in the sky, he is still quietly dreaming,
Under a straw-thatched roof are his whip and rope idly lying.

8. Both Ox and Self Forgotten



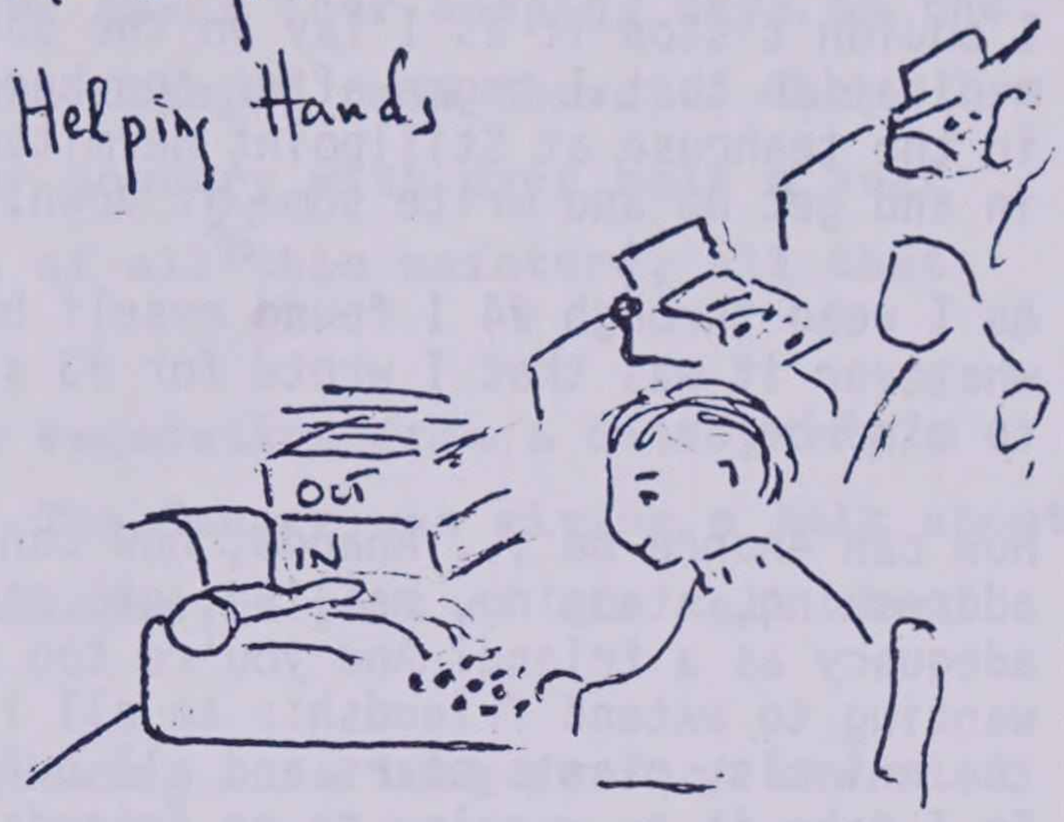
All is empty—the whip, the rope, the man, and the ox:
Who can ever survey the vastness of heaven?
Over the furnace burning ablaze, not a flake of snow can fall:
When this state of things obtains, manifest is the spirit of the ancient master.

9. Returning to the Source



To return to the Origin, to be back at the Source—
already a false step this!
Far better it is to stay at home, blind and deaf, and
without much ado;
Sitting in the hut, he takes no cognisance of things
outside,
Behold the streams flowing—whither nobody knows;
and the flowers vividly red—for whom are they?

10. Entering the Marketplace with Helping Hands



Bare-chested and bare-footed, he comes out into the
market-place;
Daubed with mud and ashes, how broadly he smiles!
There is no need for the miraculous power of the gods,
For he touches, and lo! the dead trees are in full
bloom.

From Mrs. R.M. Pirsig
c/o W. Morrow & Co.
105 Madison Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10016

Editor's Note:
I have taken the liberty of adding the 10 verses by Kakuan that are usually included in the traditional series (from D.T. Suzuki's "Manual Of Zen Buddhism").

Ananda

LETTERS
RECEIVED

-

Robert Breckenridge
Harbin Hot Springs
P.O. Box 782
Middletoown CA 95461

Dear Cloud Hidden Friends,

Issue #4 of our letter brought me to responding immediately in my mind and I couldn't stop it as I lay on the sofa doing my form of California Style meditation that I began after the knees started complaining so painfully in the teahouse at Stillpoint Hermitage a year ago. I finally had to give in and get up and write some of it down.

As I read through #4 I found myself hoping that someone might respond to whatever it was that I wrote for #3 although this idea hadn't really come to mind before . . . . . .

How can Ananda be ... Ananda, how can you be organizing, typing, duplicating addressing, stamping, mailing, etc.etc. the chf letter and doubt your adequacy as a friend? And you're too honest for false humility. Yes, wanting to extend friendship to all life everywhere.. not difficult for the animals, plants stars and all but difficult with the unfriendly ones. So I take it to wanting to be friends with everything; unfriendly people, our enemies, injustice, greed, suffering, death. This could get us crucified or something it seems but I think I've found a way out that works pretty well but not perfectly for me; It's one thing to make judgements, another thing to take action. We can take action without judgement & condemnation. Let's all be friendly with Ronald Reagan, for example, and possibly vote for someone else.

I really got involved with Marian and Tom talking about Gurus & Masters. Tom asks,"Are they necessary or not?" Is this a guru's question or a disciple's? Lot's of teachers ask good questions. But I'm giving an answer so maybe I'm the guru now. All of us cloud-hidden friends can take both sides bouncing the ball of wisdom between ourselves. Take it a bit deeper and we can in ourselves be both master and disciple. The inner teacher, inner guru, the Holy Spirit, the Tao, the capital "S" Self is in touch with true wisdom, never lost it, never will. But sometimes we don't know how or refuse to listen and any person or event that pushes us back to listening is the Guru/master so what in the material world or who is not our teacher?

So this circles back to the issue of friendliness. That blankety blank @#***###XXXXXX so and so who did such and such to me is a teacher too when I can get "hurt" forgive, learn something and be friendly while getting out of the way if necessary. Not so easy to do this all the time. This reality that I live in is simply not being run according to my ego's plan all of the time but I can often remember that there's probably something else of value in it.

Here I am floating along on my cloud as you folks float by on yours. Hearing your songs I pick up the tune, add a few notes and a riff or two of my own. This responding a kind of verbal cloud hidden spiritual jazz session. Beep peep tink bop diddy boop whoosh zing zing ziiiinnnngg. But of course when nature calls we best get back to earth.

Brock

LETTERS
RECEIVED

MARIAN POIRIER
7282 29th NE
Seattle, Washington
98115

Dear Hobo Friends,

As the summer comes to an end, I am fondly thinking back on a great camping trip to the Olympic Mountains. We spent four camping days on the Olympic peninsula, part of the time in the Olympic rain forest. The rain forest is unique to this part of our country with over half a year spent with rainfall. Therefore, because of all this moisture, all that lives there is also unique.

We learned more about this evergreen vegatation from a dear young, blonde-haired, blue eyed "Ranger Rick". The Ranger was giving a talk about the forest and I was thrilled that he encluded in part of his talk about "Nurse Trees".

Earlier that day, I noticed trees growing in a long perfect row with their root system, like long fingers, wrapped around and down to the ground from fallen trees. These fallen wooden skeletal remains appeared to be like planter boxes of decaying wood forming long rows of fertile peat moss. What had happen was that the fallen trees had shallow root bases, the result of fast growth, and then pushed over during a high wind. As they fall to the earth, they take smaller trees with them; making room in the forest for more sunlight.

The seedlings then drop onto these fallen trees and begin to grow in the soft moss covered bark. Finding both moisture and warm sun, the young parasites grow quietly upward toward the forest opening and the blue sky.

As so often happens, I find this nature story to be such a kind and gentle lesson. A lesson for this spirit that gets caught all too often in the STRIVING TO LEARN...ALSO TRYING TO TEACH.

Perhaps in thinking for a moment about this little story of the "nurse trees", I really don't need to go or do anything to learn to go to "The Light"- all that I really need will come to me. The only responsibility I might really have is to use energy on my journey. The fuel for the journey will come from my environment.

With fond regards,

Marian

LETTERS RECEIVED

7/27/83

To All, Cloud-hidden Friends:

Being on the unemployment line now, again, has allowed me to take one step backward , and two steps forward. The clouds of maya are falling away, back to earth. I am finding myself naked.

Since material productivity is encouraged in the present system of things, most people unquestioningly submit themselves to the present order, as has been the case throughout history. We have taught to build and save, only to see these earthly pursuits disappear in times of crisis, and the end of life.(Most of us have seen retirees shrivle up and die, or stricken with disease and loosing the material fortunes of a lifetime.)

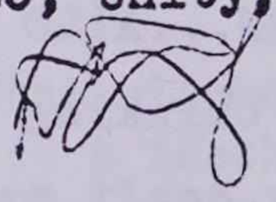
One thing I have noticed,that those running through this economic maze, during these hard economic times, are running faster, to their end. And for those whose hearts are not wholeheartedly in the race, soon find themselves weary, dropping out, and changing direction. But it still amazes me to see how many, including myself, taking part in this deception, and being part of this employment scheme.

A second thing I have noticed, and which is becoming clearer with each change in my life is that the longer certain elements of my life are unchanged, the more blinded I become, to maya. For I am realizing that even though we are taught to be robots on an assembly line, mass production economy, that there is never any action which is repeatable. Even though one goes through the motions of getting up, going to work, coming home, each moment is totally different, and precious unto itself.

Most people turn to religion, when things get tough. And I find it ironical, that through this time of economic crisis, that the talk of things getting better, should actually be more people are taking comfort in religions.(Of course religion opiates..., Perhaps it would be better if those in power were to tell the people that unemployment should be encouraged, just to get people to religion, and to round out the edges of the people racing faster for materialism....

Robert C. Finch
P.O. Box 219
Basile, La. 70515

Peace, Unity,



Gary Snyder
Kitkitdizze
18442 Macnab Cypress Rd.
Nevada City, CA 95959

ON THE ROAD WITH D.T. SUZUKI

(An excerpt from a book, perhaps to be published some day in Japan)

I clearly remember when I first read a book by D.T. Suzuki, it was in September of 1951, and I was standing by the roadside in the vast desert of eastern Nevada hitch-hiking the old Route 40. I had found his book a few days earlier in a "meta-physical" bookshop in San Francisco. I was on my way to enter graduate school at Indiana, and here by the highway in the long wait for another ride I opened my new book. The size of the space and the paucity of cars gave me much time to read, Essays in Zen, First Series. It catapulted me into an even larger space; and though I didn't know it at the moment, that was the end of my career as an anthropologist. It took a semester to finish up affairs at Indiana. Back on the west coast in the spring, I found a few others who had been touched by D.T., including Alan Watts, and we shared our discovery with yet others.

The ground was already prepared. I move in circles that were acutely critical of the direction of American politics and economics, but were also painfully leaving the hope of an ideal Socialist world behind. We were post-Stalin, and found some inspiration in the relict Syndicalist-Anarchist traditions of the Finnish and Italian workingmens' societies of San Francisco, and the teachings and example of Gandhi. As working poets and artists we were repelled by the neo-conservativism in fashion in the academies then. We got our poetics from William Carlos Williams, Ezra Pound, D.H. Lawrence, Gertrude Stein, Wallace Stevens, William Blake, and folksongs. Most of us were reading the Chinese poetry translations of Arthur Waley, Witter Bynner, Florence Ayscough, and of course Pound. We were exploring haiku and further Zen through the books of R.H. Blyth. We were people of the far west, loving our continent for its great wild beauty, feeling no ties to Europe. Our politics and aesthetics were one. Dr. Suzuki's exposition of Zen gave us an idea of a religion and an all-embracing view of nature to augment that of scientific Ecology, which had already begun to insruct us.

We took Dr. Suzuki as our own, and didn't realize at the time how unique he was: a Japanese man thoroughly at home in English, writing with a full cosmopolitan command of the occidental intellectual tradition, and presenting a compelling, creative picture of a school of Buddhism that barely knew what he was up to. And moreover, a school considered moribund by many Japanese and actively disliked by some leading Japanese intellectuals! All that came later.

For us, in our energy of the fifties, early Buddhism, Lao-Tzu, Gandhi, Thoreau, Kropotkin, and Zen were all one teaching. We stood for original human nature and the spontaneous creative spirit. Dr. Suzuki's Zen presentation of the "original life force", the "life-impulse," "the enlivening spirit of the Buddha"-- the emphasis on personal direct experience, seemed to lead in the same direction. Some of my colleagues of those days took all this to mean no constraints at all, even in matters of form and manners. Fellow poets Lew Welch, Phillip Whalen, and myself read in Zen the call for commitment and discipline, at least up to a point. For some of us, the Berkeley Shinshu Church's study group-- hosted by the gracious and wise team of Rev. Kanmo and Jane Immamura, gave us our first taste of the living Buddhist tradition. That and further reading in D.T. Suzuki led me to re-enter Graduate school in Far Eastern languages and take courses in Chinese and Japanese so that I could travel to Japan and try traditional Zazen practice.

The daily realities of a Rinzai sodo came as something of a shock, but I survived and worked out ways to stay with my teacher. I had playful thoughts about how Dr. Suzuki had lead me into this, but absolutely no regrets. What hurt me was the incomprehension of Japanese poets of my own generation with whom I could share a few hours comradely talk until the subject of Zen came up, and then I lost them. Eventually I came to understand that many Japanese identify Zen with authoritarian-

ism, feudalism, and militarism, and why. I also came to see that Dr. Suzuki's presentation of Zen is in many ways a creative leap out of the midieval mentality that brought Zen to that point, a personal way of pointing Zen in a fresh, liberating direction, without even saying so. D.T. Suzuki gzve me the push of my life and I can never be too grateful. Now, living again in America, I see the evidence of his strong, subtle effect in many arts and fields, as well as in the communities of Americans now practicing Zen.

Finally I got to meet him: Rainy season of 1963, at a little dinner party at Ryoko-in, Kobori Roshi's temple in Daitoku-ji. I went along as one of Mrs. Ruth Sasaki's reseaechers. Burton Watson, Phillip Yampolsky, Seizan Yanagida and Dr. Yoshitaka Iriya, leading Zen scholars, were also there. I took the opportunity to ask Dr. Iriya once more about the walking route over the mountains from Kyoto to to the Japan Sea, a four day trip. He had completed it as a young man on the occasion of deciding to make his life work Chinese literature. Dr. Iriya sketched some forks and passes for me. Then I got to bow my head to Dr. Suzuki and say a few stumbling things, and I almost wept. And I had to leave quite early, for before dawn I was starting on my walk to the Japan Sea. I carried that powerful face (and those eyebrows!) with me the whole trip.

Gary Snyder
20 July, 1983

NEWS & NOTES

1. This is our fifth issue, and out a little late. I would like to ask a favor of all of you for our next issue, even though as clerk I should be less presumptious. The Alan Watts Society For Comparitive Philosophy is sponsoring a celebration to coincide with the tenth anniversary of Alan's transformation-passing-death. It is planned for Friday evening Nov. 18 and Saturday Nov. 19 at the Palace of Fine Arts in San Fransisco. It would then seem quite appropiate if our next issue were devoted to Alan. Might I ask then all of you who feel the urge to join in to send in letters of appreciation-celebration, hopefully before Nov. 7.

Some of you have begun to correspond personally as a result of our Letter, which is part of the whole idea. Let's have more of it. I was about to try to design a post card as an aid in that direction, to be included in this issue, leaving you with few excuses to not dash off a note to someone. However I was soon reminded that I am not at all an artist.

Also, by the way, it would be a good idea if the title and design on the front page of our Letter were changed every year. Some of you may be interested in coming up with a 1984 version. Frances Thompson kindly did our 1983 version, and it would seem fair that others lend a hand.

To some extent, the concept for our Letter is derived from the old style Quaker meeting. They had no formal doctrine, clergy, or sermons, such being not essential since "There is that of God in every one". The meetings are mostly silent, with people standing up to speak if the spirit so moves them. The only qualification is , as I understand it, that one speaks directly from the heart. In a way we are attempting to do the same, but in the form of letters, with the kind assistance of the post office. Anyway the object is not to clam-up, but to communicate.

In our last issue I requested that maybe a few of you might volunteer to send in a real dumb letter, so we could all then relax and not worry about being so perfect all the time. Thanks to those of you who have responded.

2. Rene Pittet address, omitted in Issue #4, is 79862-022 A, P.O. Box 1000, Sandstone, Minnesota, 55072

Ananda C. Dalenberg
Clerk, C.H.F.L.

cloud-hidden friends letter

cloud-hidden friends letter

ISSUE # 6 1983
A Special Issue in Honor
of Alan Watts, 1915-1973.

OUR PAGES ARE YOUR LETTERS

Cloud-Hidden Friends
753 44th Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94121



The "Cloud-Hidden Friends" are a small non-sectarian religious correspondence group. We meet mostly by sharing our thoughts on the Dharma together in our "Letter".

Rather than giving some definition to the word "Dharma", we would rather emphasize the freedom of the individual to come to his own understsnding about such. As a group we would aim more at a dialogue, and would emphasize the spirit and practice of the Dharma rather than some doctrinaire or sectarian formula.

In that spirit we look to Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki and Alan Watts as our "honorary founders". Although they are usually associated with Buddhism, and Zen in particular, their spirit was also a free and universal one, including Christianity, Hinduism, and Taoism etcetera. Their Dharma then seems to somehow belong equally to us all.

In a more universal spirit then we are a zen group. However we might also turn to someone like Thomas Merton to exemplify the kind of openness and dialogue we have in mind. In his later years, he commented that he could see no contradiction between Christianity and Buddhism, and that he had determined "to become as good a Buddhist as I can'".

Since our pages are your letters, we ask as our "subscription fee" that you write us a letter now and then in the "spirit of the Dharma". Poems, songs, tales, drawings and sush are all more than welcome. We will try to publish everything we receive, but this might not always be possible. Letters should be of a reasonable length, and if you so request, we will type them up for you. It is presumed we will forgive each other a few typing errors etcetera, since pirfectionism could easily paralyze us.

It is hoped that our letters will somehow help us open our hearts to each other, and deepen our sense of the Dharma. Hopefully in this way too more than a few deep friendships might develop.

It is our intention to be as democratic in spirit as is possible. It does seem that we do at least need a "Clerk" of some sort to do the photocopying, co-ordinating, and mailing etcetera. This role might be thought of as similar to that of the "Clerk" in Quakerism, and it seems a good model for us to follow. Your comments on these matters would be appreciated.

Our phrase "Cloud-Hidden" is taken from the title of a book by Alan Watts. He in turn borrowed it from a ninth century poem by Chia Tao. Lin Yutang translates it as follows:

SEARCHING FOR THE HERMIT IN VAIN

I asked the boy beneath the pines.
He said,"The master's gone alone
Herb-picking somewhere on the mount,
Cloud-hidden, whereabouts unknown."

A.C.D., Clerk

Bridge Breckenridge
Harbin Hot Springs
P.O. Box 782
Middletown CA 95461

This friend of mine was telling me that life is a lot easier if people think you're a little bit crazy so I decided to change my name from "Breck" to "Bridge". This was about two days ago so right now I'm having a little trouble remembering what my name is but I think I'll get it down in a couple of months.

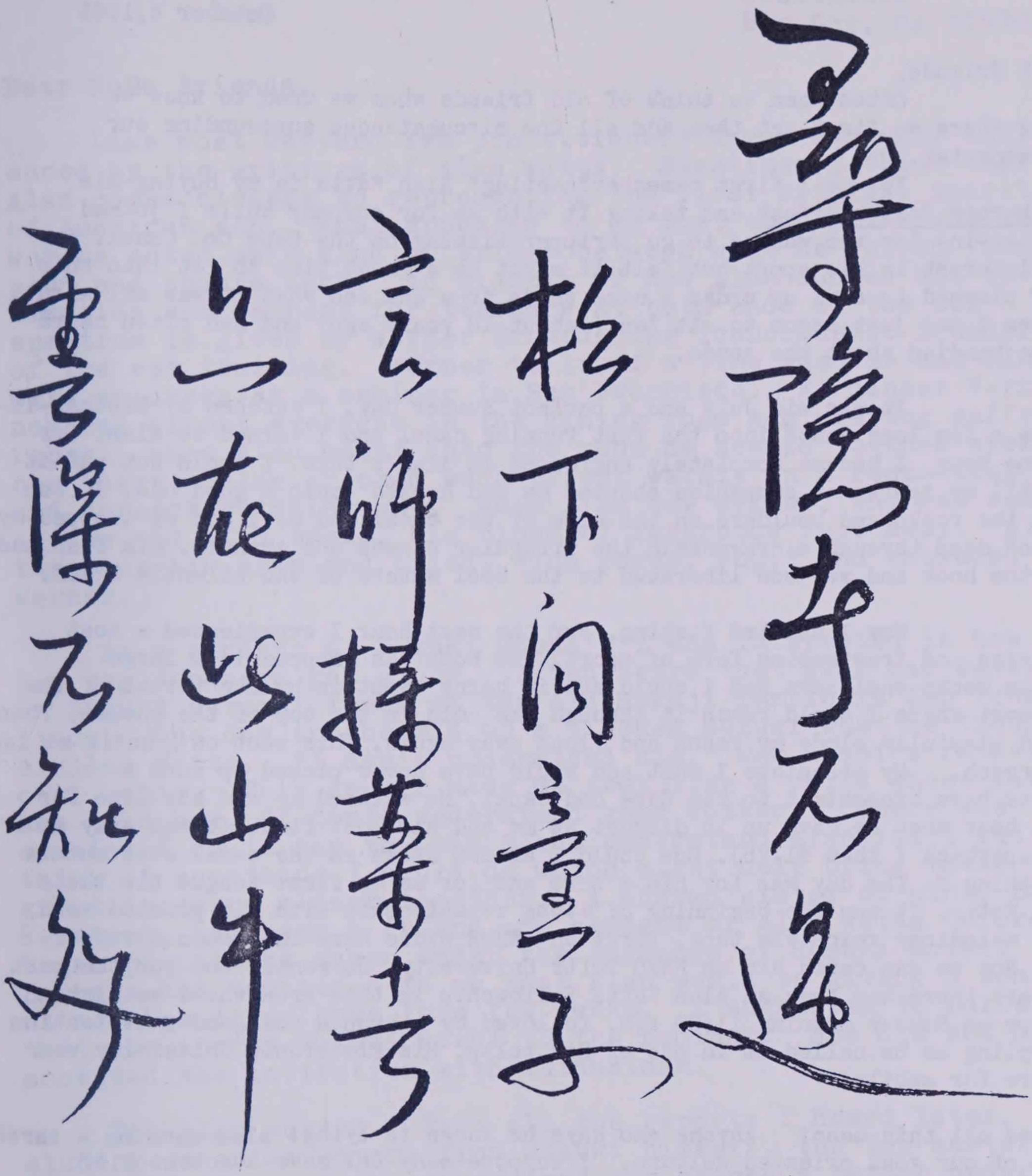
Visiting here at Esalen Institute for awhile - a place that Alan Watts contributed greatly during its formative years by drawing large audiences here for his lectures. An image comes to mind from an evening in 1969: Alan co-lecturing with a Hassidic rabbi in the lodge. They were sharing stories, ideas and jokes illustrating the similarities between Zen and Hassidic traditions. At the end of the lecture Fritz Perles walked out of the lecture hall over to the coffee stand making vigorous brushing motions with his hands over his head, shoulders and arms, looked at me and said loudly, "covered with shit! Nothing but shit!" (Later that evening Alan and Fritz were in the hot baths together laughing uproariously)

Fritz used to say that there are only four kinds of language; chickenshit, bullshit, elephantshit and poetry. Alan himself would frequently point out that Zen was a tradition in which the greatest truth is said to be beyond words - outside the mind.

But Alan had a golden tongue, a powerful memory and a sharp wit. We didn't just listen to his lectures. He took us with him. We explored the East and the West, the present and the past, the Judeo-Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist and scientific traditions. The Newtonian and Einsteinian universes. We became wiser than our fathers and forefathers yet kindly and tolerant of their amusing follies and occasionally awed by the wise ones. East meeting West, science meeting mysticism right here in California we were building the foundations for a new age.

People always wondered if Alan was enlightened and hoped that he could give them spiritual counsel. He offered little if any such assistance and often poked fun at gurus, masters, meditation and other spiritual practices, invited no disciples, drank and smoked a lot, left his first wife with two children for a second and then left the second with four children for a third. He ate meat, occasionally smoked grass and experimented with LSD. It seemed that he spent most of his life talking: talking and writing, talking and eating, talking and drinking, talking and smoking. He wrote all those books that everybody was reading in the 50's and 60's and many are still reading now thirty years later. He talked in auditoriums, lecture halls classrooms, bookstores. cruise ships, airplanes, cars living rooms and on radio and television. He apparently stopped talking after he died, but I sometimes wonder about all these new books that are being channeled from somewhere or other.

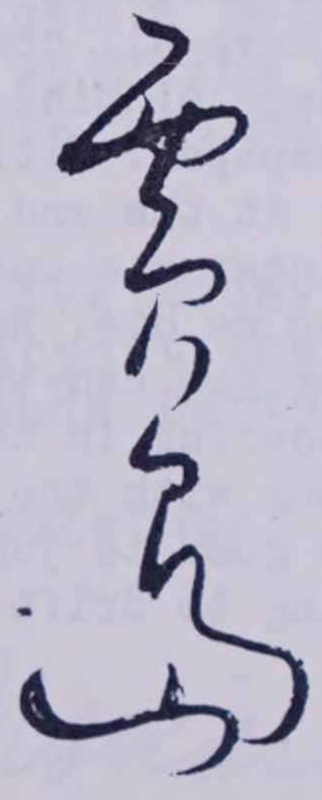
Many of us around Alan felt that we were a part of an intellectual revolution. Eastern mysticism, particularly Taoism and Zen, were coming to the west and change us, enlighten us and change the world. Now just a few years later there are Zen Centers, human potential centers, Tibetan temples, Yoga groups, cult groups, communities, Moonies, Rajneeshpuram in great numbers taking root and flourishing here in the Pacific Northwest and in other places all over the country. We could never say that Alan was the cause of it all. He was our Herald Angel whose eloquence (elephantshit, bullshit, chickenshit and poetry) is a rich compost that has fertiized our land for the flowering of the new age.



SEARCHING FOR THE HERMIT IN VAIN

I asked the boy beneath the pines.
He said,"The master's gone alone
Herb-picking somewhere on the mount,
Cloud-hidden, whereabouts unknown."

Chia Tao



A calligraphic version,
by Chungliang Al Huang

Letters Received

206 Maplewood St.
Watertown, MA 02172
October 4,1983

Dear C H Friends,

Often when we think of old friends whom we used to know we remember where we first met them and all the circumstances surrounding our first encounter.

For me I first remember"meeting" Alan Watts in my buying his Psychotherapy East and West and taking it with me for company while I joined my brother-in- law who wanted to go stripper fishing on the Cape Cod Canal. I had no interest in his sport but felt it might be a great time to get into this book. I planned to curl up under a nice shade tree and see what it was all about. I believe I had just begun to sit Zen (about 18 years ago) and had often heard his name bandied about the zendo.

It was mid July and a perfect summer day. I watched my brother-in-law make a few long casts into the fast running canal and I turned to Alan. For about one hour I became completely engrossed in Alan's text. I could not put it down until my sportsman companion shouted he had hooked onto a good one. I ran down to the rocks and boulders on the edge of the canal and as I did so dropped my paperback deep through a crevassein the irregular stones and granite. His fish had thrown the hook and was now liberated to the cool waters of the Atlantic again.

Now I started fishing. For the next hour I experienced a most tantalizing and frustrating form of sport. The book was trapped in a large under the rocks enclosure and I could see it being swept in by the thrust of the tide almost where I could reach it through the hole in the top of the cavern. Then it would playfully elude my reach and float away again. This went on , until at last out of reach. My associate I must add would have never picked up such a book much less have brought it to the Cape Cod Canal. He watched me and his line for over an hour when he gave up in disgust at me and his lost fish. It was only a cheap paperback (then $1.25). How could I almost drown in the canal over such a stupid thing ? The day was for him a zero and for me my first tongue tip taste of Alan Watts. It was the beginning of along relationship with his printed word and his melodious voice via tape. First on WBUR Radio here in Boston for four years . Now we can catch him on WMFO Tufts University. Currently and for the past five years there has been an Alan Watts Fellowship in this area where we listen to a tape on Sunday morning 11;00 A.M. followed by a brunch and good conversation and peopling as he called it in one of his talks. His Electronic University was also here for awhile.

What does all this mean? Anyone who says he knows is lying! Alan remains a threat to most of our goal oriented culture. I suppose many CHF have a notebook of bits of sayings we have all come across which we think may be of importance sometime. In the back of mine I had clipped some quote from Alan in a subculture (what's that?) newspaper. Title: Wander Wonder. He says these two words are probably the same. At the end of his two columns in which he describes how we as the universe are incarnate curosity and that as long as we are curious we go on living,when we stop we die. He concludes:" After you discover there is really nothing to discover you can wander about the world in a different way. The Chinese poets speak of wandering in the forests, one's thoughts wandering in the great void, of going along with the streams and clouds and birds and not being in search of anything; it is good to just drift." Gratitude, gratitude Alan for your life and ours. I'm going to drift off this page.

Much peace,
Richard

LETTERS RECEIVED

Marian Mountain
Coastlands
Big Sur, CA 93920

Dear HoBo Friends,

Like most Western zen practitioners I was strongly influenced by the writings of Alan Watts. Sometimes I think that Alan comes closest to representing the first original spirit of American zen. What appealed to me most about Alan was the way he acted as a kind of bridge between what he called "beat zen" and square zen". An example of how Alan showed his admiration and respect for teachers at both ends of the zen spectrum is given by Werner Erhard, the iconoclastic founder of the est training. Werner tells of a time when he and Alan were speakers at a seminar in San Francisco. At dinner Werner noticed almost everyone in the dining room was wearing saffron robes. When Alan swept into the room he seemed to know everyone there. Alan greeted each priest warmly in a respectful and correct Buddhist way. When Alan saw Werner, who was seated at the end of a table, his cloak of reverence fell away. Alan threw up his arms and cried, "You rogue, you," and embraced Werner.

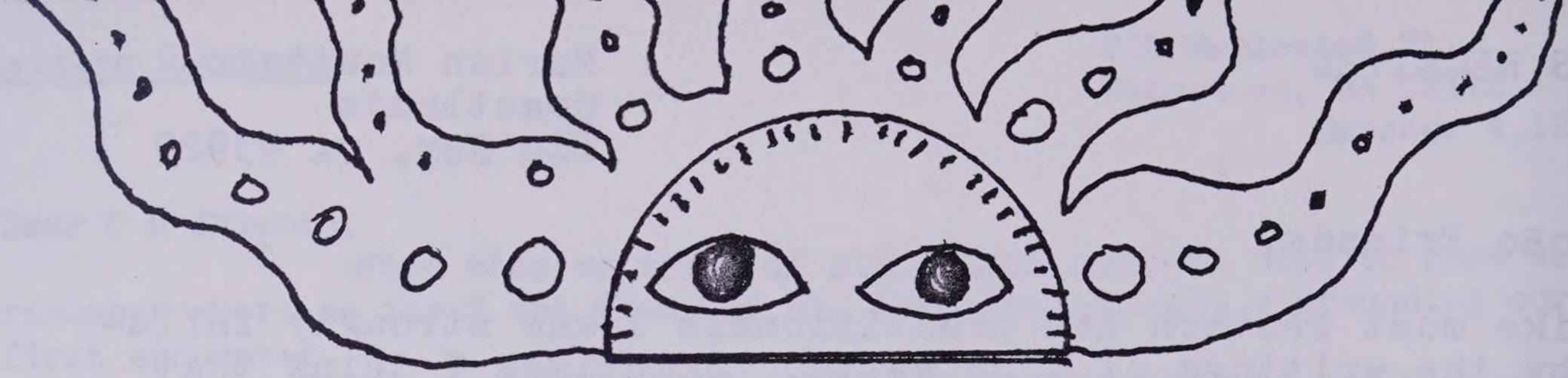
As a student of Suzuki Roshi's I was interested in how the two zen teachers got along. I had heard that Alan had called on Suzuki several times at the old Sokoji Temple in San Francisco. One day in the mid 60's I asked Suzuki what he thought of Alan Watts. "I don't understand him," was Roshi's rather cool reply. This answer made me feel like a child whose father has told her, "I don't understand your mother." There was nothing I could say to help Roshi understand Alan but I did think of something I could do which might help bring these two great teachers closer together. A dharma sister of mine, Barbara Heistand, had been a friend and student of Alan Watts before she began practicing zazen under the guidance of Suzuki Roshi. Barbara had mentioned to me that Alan would be giving a seminar at her Los Altos home in a few weeks. I suggested to Barbara that she invite Suzuki Roshi to the seminar. She did and Suzuki accepted the invitation with enthusiasm.

The plan worked. From all the reports I heard later, including an animated one from Suzuki himself, the Zen master thoroughly enjoyed the experience and gained a better understanding of Alan's bodhisattva spirit by watching him in action. This was the beginning of a warmer and more intimate friendship between the two teachers.

If Watts and the two Suzukis were alive today I'm sure they all would understand and strongly support the broad zen spirit expressed in the Cloud-Hidden Friends Letter.

With palms together,

Marian



"My home is aboard the ferryboat Vallejo which is tied up at the north end of Sausalito close to San Francisco. You may think a ferryboat is a rather weird place to live. But I've always loved weird things."

-- ALAN W. WATTS

* * * *

Dear Cloud-People:

I moved to California in the spring of 1978, so I never got to meet Alan Watts in person. However, his work and spirit has had a profound effect on my life, and that is why I often refer to him as my "spiritual guru."

In 1982 I put an ad in a Russian River newspaper, under the "personals" column, for the purpose of developing new friendships outside the city. I received a note from a man named Bill Watkins, advising me he lived in both the Russian River and Sausalito. I called him and during the conversation he mentioned he was once good friends with Alan Watts & Jean Varda. I was intrigued since I had always wanted to visit the S.S. VALLEJO (the old ferryboat Watts & Varda lived on) in Sausalito. Bill invited me for lunch.

I asked the bus driver in San Francisco to let me off at GATE 5 in Sausalito. I got off the bus and found myself in the midst of a narrow winding road near the waterfront, where a proliferation of old, interesting, rusty mailboxes were struggling to survive amid the tangled weeds. Many times I had passed by this area, en route to the Flea Market, and always wondered what mysteries were hidden beyond my immediate range of perception.

I followed the road a short distance and came upon a small weather-worn sign: VALLEJO. "This is it!" I exclaimed, and from that moment on I seemed to be walking on air. I stood in front of the old ferryboat utterly amazed, gazing at the huge mass of seableached splinters. A colorful, mystical archway on the gangplank curiously reminded me of a resplendent sun, or a foreboding octopus, with two large eyes that seemed to be staring back at me in awe. A gentle fog was hovering over the bay, and everything seemed to sway in the wind. I stood there silent, alone, watching a hundred Renaissance flags flap in the wind, and listened to the tinkle of windchimes. The sea and sky seemed to be married in a metaphysical bliss! Everything was pervaded with the essence of a mysterious <u>elan vital</u>.

I walked across the parking lot and saw Bill standing in his yard opposite the ferryboat. We introduced ourselves and he invited me inside and prepared a delicious chinese lunch. We sat talking about Watts and Varda, then I asked if it would be possible for me to go aboard the boat. He took me aboard and introduced me to Marion Saltman, a wonderful woman, who has kept the Vallejo afloat for the last 12-13 years. She was a humanistic psychologist, conducts art shows on the boat, as well as play therapy sessions for burned-out adults. She, too, had been a good friend of Watts and his widow Jano.

cont'd...

cont'd...

The interior of the boat was full of Varda paintings, plants, folk art, mystical objects, instruments, a wonderful old puppet stage, a long handbuilt table, a papier mache horse hanging from the ceiling, unusual rugs, wooden art structures, a sandbox: a potpourri of colorful bohemian debris haphazardly strewn about in a fascinating array. Referring to the dust, Marion said, "It's not easy trying to keep Watts out of the corners!"

During the weeks that followed Marion went to the hospital for a hip operation, and I was inspired to do a primitive painting of Alan Watts, wearing a long robe, a halo around his head, and standing with outstretched arms on the gangplank of the Vallejo smiling. I visited Marion and gave it to her for the boat. She was delighted and invited me to have an Art Show in the beautiful gallery aboard the ferryboat. It was the answer to my prayers!

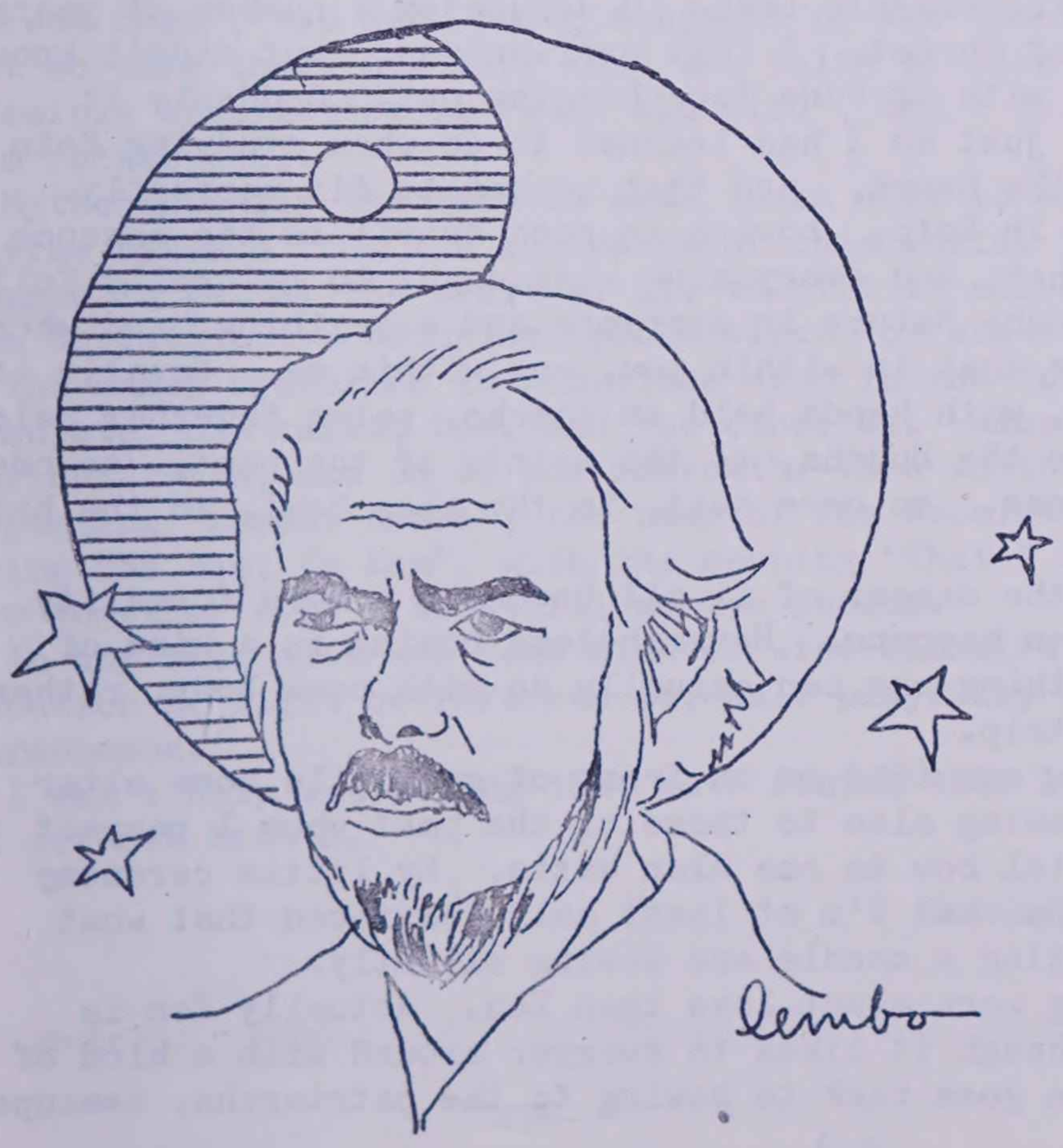
Since then I've had the pleasure of meeting Jano Watts, Virginnia Goldstein (Varda's widow), and a host of other Watts devotees. I even wrote to my friend Lee Baker -- then living in Florida -- who had always liked Watts' books, and arranged for him to come to California and live with Marion on the Vallejo.

"Gate Five carries an occult meaning in sundry ancient mythology," wrote Kenneth Anger. "In ancient pictographs, the city, the center of culture, has four pedestrian gates. These are tangible; they can be seen; physical entrance can be shown. But the city also has a fifth gate, which cannot be shown because it is not tangible, and can be entered only in a metaphysical way. This is the gate to illusion."

For those of you have not yet had the experience of visiting the Vallejo, I urge you to do so. Perhaps you can add your own creative contributions to her allure -- as she continues to follow "the watercourse way."

With Gasshō,

Joe Lawrence Lembo
P.O. Box 99444
San Francisco 94109



IN HONOR OF ALAN WATTS

Surely one of the most fundamental teachings of Buddhism is that everyone has the Buddha Nature. Or maybe I should say everyone and everything, since all of nature is included. Buddhist art often conveys that sense, particularly in Chinese landscape painting of the Zen and Taoist schools. Mountains and rivers half-hidden in the clouds, and perched on some precipitous cliff will maybe be a tiny little tea house where two old friends sit taking it all in, telling stories and composing haiku, and laughing uproariously about something, about what I can only wistfully wonder. D.T. Suzuki in his books manages to somehow convey much of the same quality. It is the kind of thing that Alan Watts loved so deeply.

Admittedly this is a much idealized image of Zen that does not easily mesh with the world in which we actually find ourselves. Commenting on the matter, Alan used to say that he didn't find it so difficult to perceive the Buddha Nature in mountains and trees, but when it came to London taxicabs, that was something else again. He would add that it was his lifelong ambition to perceive the Buddha Nature of a London taxicab. From what I hear that is setting up quite a goal, and I'm not completely certain that he ever got that far.

Although taxicabs are not my problem, realizing the Buddha Nature in my own everyday life is. My lifelong ambition is not very different from Alan's. Having been at such for a long time now, I can certainly say it is not easy.

On the other hand I am convinced there are moments in all of our lives when we perceive something like the Buddha Nature, even if infrequently and only in some vague intuitive way. The occasion might be a beautiful sunset, a flower, a humble old monk, a waitress, the stars, or washing the dishes. Or it might be in regard to some great saint of the past that we respect and love, like Bodhidharma, St. Francis, Ramakrishna, or D.T. Suzuki, although he might here object. Even so, it is still true that the Buddha Nature is in everyone.

Given that we all sometimes perceive the Buddha Nature, such a moment seems to call for something more than some event entirely within ones own head, like perhaps some cry of joy or something. That is partcularly a problem for many of us with a Protestant background, like myself. We have no sign of the cross, mudras, or mantras. I remember for example being in Jerusalem a number of years ago, standing before the tomb of Christ. I felt overwhelmed, but didn't know what to do. I just stood there, with my bare face hanging out. Suddenly it occured to me that I could bow, just as I had learned to do when studying Soto Zen in Japan. So I bowed from the heart, and that seemed to fit perfectly.

It might be fair to say that in Soto, bowing in good spirit is the essence of practice. Do a good job of that, and everything else ought to naturally follow along behind. Just hail the Buddha Nature in everyone and everything, and when we meet we bow to the Buddha Nature that is within you, and within me. Usually it is a quarter bow from the waist, with hands held in gassho, palms together held in front of chest, bowing so to the Buddha, to the saints of the past, to one's ancestors, to loved ones now gone, to ones seat, to the rice bowl, to the bathtub, and to all.

Obviously in Soto there is the danger of it all becoming a mere formality, and it is true that is what often happens. Nevertheless bowing is a kind of universal archetype. It is something one can actually do with ones body, rather than just another intellectual trip.

Early in the morning then you can find me in front of my little home altar lighting a candle and bowing, bowing also to those of the past whom I respect and love, including a very special bow to one Alan Watts. My little ceremony sometimes is accompanied by words, but I'm at least half convinced that what is more deeply eloquent is lighting a candle and bowing silently.

That sounds as if I'm talking more about love than Zen. Actually Zen is rather soft-hearted inside, although it likes to swagger around with a kind of macho exterior. However it soon goes back to bowing to the patriarchs, teacups, and cherry blossoms.

continued

continued

Certainly one of the characteristic features of Zen is its emphasis on silence. Other schools emphasize sutras, mantras, chanting and such, towards which I am somewhat inclined myself. Indeed there is a short mantra which has become very important to me, partly because I think it so perfectly expresses the spirit of bowing. It is just one word, "Namo" (nah-mo), meaning "to give homage to, venerate, salute; an exclamation of adoration". It is derived from the Sanskrit root "namati" meaning "to bow". Many of the great mantras open with it, such as "Namo Amida Buddha", "Nam Myo Ho Renge Kyo", "Namo Tasa Bhagavato Arhato Samma Sambuddhasa", and "Namo Bhagavatyai Arya-Prajnaparamitayai". In all of these Namo has the sense of being an exclamation of adoration, and sometimes it appears alone as such. Adoration of what? I would say to the Buddha Nature which is in each and everyone of us, Namo to the great open sky, to a flower, and to a London taxicab.

There is a passage in the Lotus Sutra that warns of the dire fate of those who are so gross as to go through an entire lifetime without uttering a single Namo. I don't think much of the effectiveness of such warnings but I would agree that there must be at least a few moments in everybody's life that call for a bow from the heart, maybe accompanied by something like Namo.

Sometimes then in my little morning service I might exclaim "Namo Bodhidharma ! Namo D.T. Suzuki! Namo Alan ! ". I don't know if it would work to Namo a London taxicab or not. Maybe that would be getting a little too ambitious. To those we love however, it is easy.

I often think of Alan as a great teacher. He certainly has been so for me. It would seem then his name ought to somehow reflect that. I sometimes call him Dai Yu Alan, meaning great hero or great founder. He was given such a title posthumously in his crossing over ceremony back in 1973. That ceremony by the way was half Christian and half Zen, as might be expected from one who delighted in crossing over boundaries. On that occasion he was given the Zen title of "Dai Yu In Yu Zan Myo Ko Dai Zen Jo Man". You can see why I have shortened it a bit to the first two words, Dai Yu. In full it means "Great Hero, Alan Watts, founder, opener of the Great Zen Samadhi Gate".

For those of a Zen persuasion, that would be a good name for him. A few of his old friends however half playfully and half seriously call him Alan Paramhamsa, and I feel drawn to that myself. It too means "Great Teacher", and more literally "Great Swan", the swan being a symbol of the Absolute in Indian Mythology. I'm not so sure there are very many who think of Alan as a Great Swan, but another possible translation is "wise old bird", and I think many would agree that fits him rather well.

Mythologically the swan is said to be able to separate milk from water, or the divine essence from the confusion of this world. That does remind me of Alan, who seemed to get at the heart of it, to sift it all out somehow, whether the subject was Christianity, Buddhism, pschedelics, or whatever.

The Hamsa symbolism is sometimes also in the form of two swans representing the Absolute, one called Ham, and the other Sa. Also Ham is said to be the sound of our outbreath, and Sa of our inbreath. Thus whether we know it or not we are all repeating "Hamsa, Hamsa", the name of the Absolute. It can also be regarded as being "Sa Ham, Sa Ham", with the meaning "That I Am" (sa-aham). I would say the two together make a beautiful mantra indeed.

In any case Alan was some kind of wise old bird, and with considerable justification he might be referred to, half playfully and half seriously, as Alan Paramhamsa.

I can't help but noting that as I finish this letter we are left with the sound of our own breath.

Gassho,

Ananda Claude Dalenberg
753 44th Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94121

Original 1973 Ceremony as Published in the Windbell

CEREMONIES OF CROSSING OVER

ALAN WATTS
(1915-1973)

Led by: *Zentatsu Baker-roshi*
Kobun Chino-sensei
Claude Dalenberg

Roshi:

All your ancient karma
From beginningless time
Born of body, speech and mind
Is now fully resolved.

All your ancient karma
From beginningless time
Born of body, speech, and mind
Is now fully resolved.

All your ancient karma
From beginningless time
Born of body, speech and mind
Is now fully resolved.

Let us recite the ten names of Buddha:

Everyone:

Homage to Dharmakaya Vairochana Buddha,
Homage to Sambhogakaya Lochana Buddha,
Homage to Nirmanakaya Shakyamuni Buddha,
Homage to the future Maitreya Buddha,
Homage to all Buddhas in the ten directions,
past, present and future,
Homage to Manjusri the perfect wisdom Bodhisattva,
Homage to Samantabhadra the shining practice Bodhisattva,
Homage to the many Bodhisattva Mahasattvas,
Homage to the Maha Prajna Paramita.

Roshi:

Alan, as you well know, there are four practices in Buddhism:

The first is the Precepts, knowing how to survive, finding out how to live in this world. And you knew well how to survive, and taught us all, this whole society, how to live, in so many ways you taught us. I now give you all the Precepts, the True Mind of Buddha that sounds as thunder.

And the second practice is understanding, wisdom, Prajna, the transforming light that through your clarity led so many of us into wiser paths.

The third practice is compassion, putting yourself in the place of others, knowing the ultimate concern and care for the world and its beings—animate and inanimate—service. And you have served us so well, showing us the true meaning of this vow.

continued

continued

The fourth is the lineage. The understanding that is out of time and yet one with it. That is for all ages, all world systems, and yet one with this present age, the understanding and being of the universal source of all wisdom, all light and life.

And so I give you a Buddhist name now, to recognize this lineage, a name based on your home place, Druid Heights, where you felt so comfortable, and where you peacefully left this world. Yū Zan Myō Kō, Profound, Mysterious Mountain of Subtle, Penetrating, Transforming Light: Profound Mountain, Subtle Light; and because you are a great hero, a great founder of a new spiritual world; founder, opener of the Great Zen Samadhi Gate, I give you this title, Dai Yū In in front of your name, and Dai Zen Jō Mon after your name. A title given very rarely, once a generation or a century.

Dai Yū In Yū Zan Myō Kō Dai Zen Jō Mon:

Please take refuge in the Buddha.
Please take refuge in the Dharma.
Please take refuge in the Sangha.

Please completely take refuge in the Buddha.
Please completely take refuge in the Dharma.
Please completely take refuge in the Sangha.

Now you have completely taken refuge in the Buddha.
Now you have completely taken refuge in the Dharma.
Now you have completely taken refuge in the Sangha.

Roshi returned to his seat and chanted the 'Mantra of the Secret Treasure of the Gate of Sweet Dew,' three times, preceded by the Dharma drum which faded as he began to chant and rose again each time he finished.

Chino-sensei then offered tea and said:

With formless form you have come.
With formless form you are going.
This is how you are with us–
We are with you–
Showing what is the nature of awakening.

We are very grateful.

Claude Dalenberg then offered sweet water and said:

O Monk of mind
Broad as the sky
Not clinging
To any special Dharma.
Going, going beyond going!
The word of the Buddha
Knows no discrimination.
Thus he gave.
A gentle rain of the Dharma falls on this land.

We are grateful.

continued

Roshi then offered food. After the Flame Lighting Mudra–the circling of the flame clockwise and counter-clockwise–Roshi said:

Alan, Dai Yū In Yū Zan Myō Kō Dai Zen Jō Mon,
Here is your lineage from Buddha through the Buddhas
and Patriarchs to you.

Alan Watts was a philosopher, a poet, a calligrapher, a
lover, a friend, a Dharma reveller, a revealer, a
great founder of the spirit for all of us.

He saw the true emptiness of all things.

He taught us to be free. To see through the multiplicities
and absurdities to the Great Universal Personality
and Play.

He gave us the Dharma Eye of a new age.

Our blessings go with You now.

Wide Mind, Joyous Mind, Careful Loving Mind.

For the true life is beyond life and death, origination
and extinction.

We are with you in the many paths you opened for us.

HOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

Go! Go! Great Hermit! Great Founder!

Philip Whalen then read a tribute written for Alan by Gary Snyder:

He blazed out the new path for all of us,
and came back and made it clear. Explored
the side canyons and deer trails, and
investigated cliffs and thickets.

Many guides would have us travel single
file, like mules in a pack train, and
never leave the trail. Alan taught us
to move forward like the breeze–tasting
the berries, greeting the blue jays, learning
and loving the whole terrain.

Roshi then shook his staff and said:

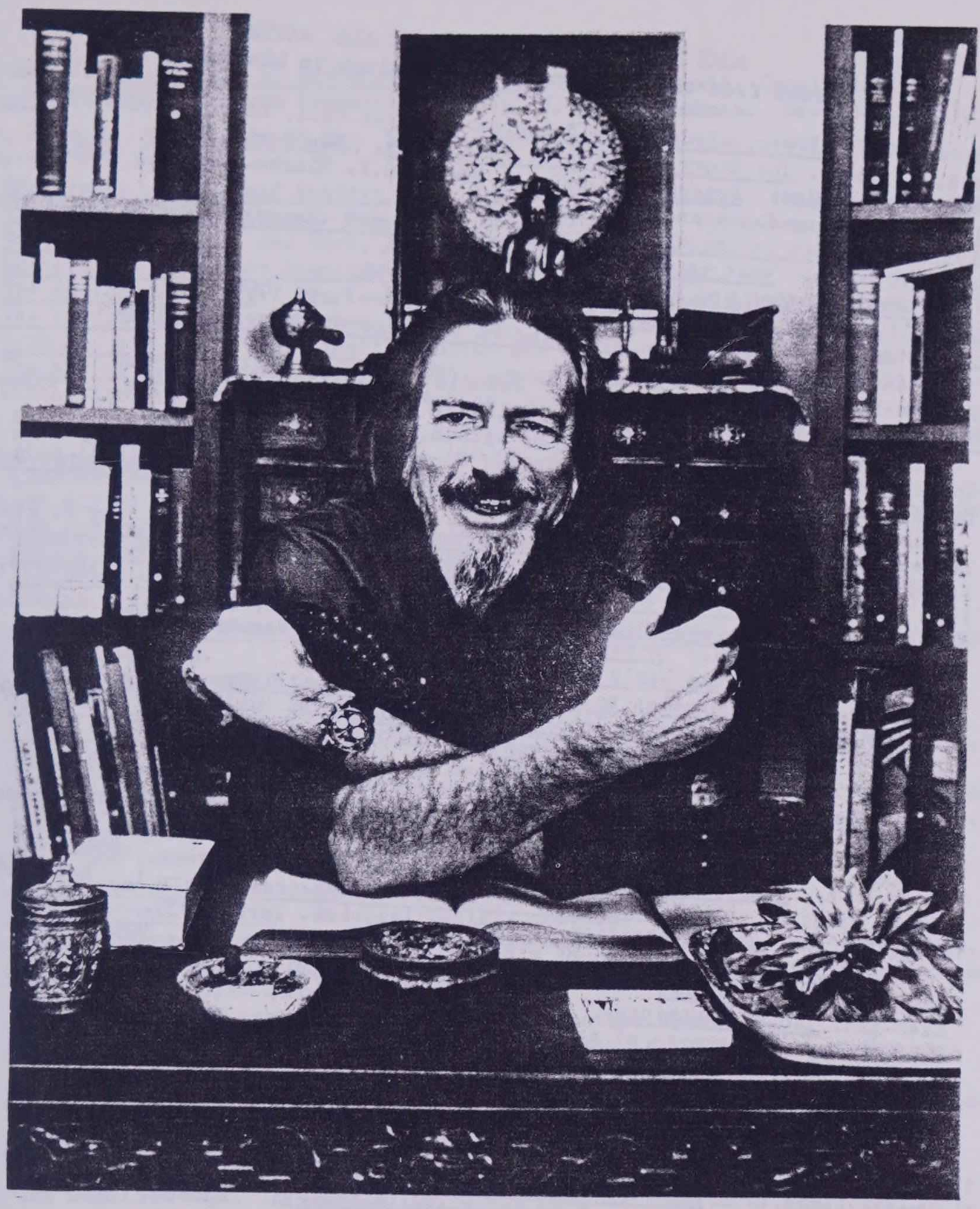
Alan gave this monk's staff to Suzuki-roshi at Tassajara monastery, and Suzuki-roshi gave it to me before he died. Suzuki-roshi used it at my Abbott's Installation Ceremony, the last ceremony he ever performed. Now I shake it for you, Alan, to help you on your way.

After the priests chanted the Shariraimon, the family and friends offered incense while everyone chanted the Dai Hi Shin Dharani followed by the Maha Prajna Paramita Hridaya Sutra in English and Japanese.

Roshi:

We have offered light, tea, sweet water, food, flowers,
And we have chanted many things for you,
O Alan
May your great spirit rest
And may we rest and move with you
Coursing in this new peace you have shown us.
Blessings on you and all beings, animate and inanimate.

Green Gulch Farm Zendo November 18, 1973





Crossing Over Ceremony

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* Only those items cited in at least 3 of Alan Watts' books are here included. The full original list includes over 600 separate items. A bibliography of Alan Watts' own publications is included, but is not intended as authoritative or complete. The original list was prepared for use as a "further-reading guide" for an on-going discussion group on the philosophy of Alan Watts in San Fransisco. Copies of the full list are available. Suggestions and inquiries are invited. Please write the Bodhi Friends, 753 44th Av., San Francisco, CA 94121.

Note that the Alan Watts Library is now under the care of Zen Center, at 300 Page St. in San Francisco. Its permanent home will be at Z.C. in Green Gulch.

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NEWS & NOTES

1. This is issue #6, a special issue honoring Alan Watts, 1915-1973, this being the tenth year of his crossing over.

The original funeral ceremony back in 1973 was half Christian and half Zen Buddhist, as might be expected from one who had little use for sectarian boundaries. Note that it includes a poem by Gary Snyder, who was amenable to having his own contribution to this issue in that form. The ceremony itself is I think quite interesting, and certainly is a departure from the ordinary.

The bibliographical list was contributed by the Bodhi Friends, via A. C. Dalenberg. Note that the full list is available by writing in care of the C.H.F. Letter.

Our next issue should be out a little before Christmas.

2. Al Huang (see calligraphy, page 3) is the editor and co-author of Alan's book; Tao: The Watercourse Way (Pantheon, New York).

3. Alan Marlowe writes that he is helping in a fund-raising campaign for a World Peace Center at Lumbini Garden, the birthplace of the Buddha in Nepal. He has been asked to write an article on the subject of peace and needs help. He would welcome your ideas, and also needs literature on the history and extent of the peace movement, and names and addresses of organizations active in such. Write him at P.O. Box 956, Boulder, Co. 80306.

4. Marian Mountain writes: "Even though I bow to the bodhisattva spirit that prompted the clerk to ask for volunteers to send dumb letters so potential contributors wouldn't be scared off by what the clerk felt was the too high quality of recent contributions I think the suggestion was dumb. If there is a problem, and I'm not sure there is, I don't feel it has anything to do with perfection. After all good writing is nothing more than clearly expressed writing. If you are intrested in communicating you surely want to try to express yourself clearly. But there may be a potential problem. This is the one of slipping into a purely intellectual discussion group. Whenever I send out out a sample issue to someone I feel might be interested in reading and contributing to the CHFL I suggest they tell something about themselves in their first letter. It isn't egoistic to tell people where you are coming from. It's friendly. So please: no more dumb letters: more personal letters."

5. We are planning to assemble all of the six 1983 issues into one stapled-together volume. They are available to all of you but the photocopying costs for such are considerable. We then ask for a contribution when ordering. Ten dolars would not be far off the mark. This also would provide newcomers a chance to catch up with the rest of us. As the months go by, this is beginning to be a problem. As for the current issue, it will continue to be at no charge.

Ho !

Ananda Dalenberg
Clerk

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