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cloud-hidden friends letter

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Fu Shan
Landscape

cloud-hidden friends letter

ISSUE #7, JAN. 1984

INSTITUTE OF BUDDHIST STUDIES LIBRARY

The "Cloud-Hidden Friends" are a small non-sectarian religious correspondence group. "Our pages are your letters", so we ask as our "subscription fee" that you write us a letter now and then. Letters should be in the spirit of the Dharma. Our emphasis is a universal one, and we would stress practice more than mere belief.

We look to Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki and Alan Watts as our honorary founders. Although they are usually associated with Buddhism in general, and Zen in particular, their spirit was a free-ranging and universal one, including Christianity, Hinduism, and Taoism etcetera. Their Dharma then seems to somehow belong equally to us all, going quite beyond the confines of Zen.

Thomas Merton might be another example of the kind of spirit 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".

Our phrase "Cloud-Hidden" is taken from the title of a book by Alan Watts. He in turn borrowed it from a ninth century Chinese 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."

CHFL, 753 44th Avenue,
San Francisco, CA 94121

LETTERS RECEIVED

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John H. Boyd
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Dear Friends:

Marian Mountain recently sent me some back copies of your Cloud-Hidden Friends Letter, and I find your whole concept of an ongoing spiritual letter forum quite interesting. Reading through these collections of letters, I am particularly struck by the recurrence of our endemic concern or preoccupation with the nature of our relationship with, and our degree of attachment to, any teacher, master, guru or authority figure, whose guidance we may have encountered, in either past or present moments.

For quite some time now I have become increasingly aware of the limits and boundaries that we are constantly placing upon and around ourselves., by the very simple act of seeking to put labels on ourselves. All labels, titles, badges of office or uniforms we employ in order to define and uphold our sense of being (who we are) - no matter how minimally applied they are- are ultimately counter-productive to our full experience of personal freedom and our sense of oneness. All our attempts to externally define who we are, carry within them a hidden cause of bondage- as do all structures of dependency or allegiance, as well as those abetted by all our authority figures and their teachings. At a certain level of "immaturity" it may be necessary to avail ourselves of these dependent/helpful/paternalistic relationships, as indispensable stepping stones on our own development pathways- childhood would be an obvious example.

However, the ultimate question is whether or not it is possible to claim a full and complete independence- to in fact graduate - following such strongly bonded relationships, as seem to inevitably occur between master and disciple ? My personal experience and observation leads me to conclude that most "students" never really graduate- that they are left with a vestigal and somehow unconscious inability to totally and unconditionally let go of their guiding mentor's hand. The final and complete severance of that spiritual/psychic/emotional "umbilical", is then the next great obstacle to be transcended before graduation is possible, and few would seem to be capable of total non-attachment to these previously helpful teachings and criteria.

I am not a Zen Buddhist, nor do I walk under any banner, or wear any ideological, philosophical, religious or political label. Some would say that in divesting myself of all labels, all systems of ideology or belief, all dogmas, doctrines or teachings, that I am in fact donning the very label of having no label! That I am creating a belief system out of holding no belief system!

Perhaps it is very important at this point to realize that it is only when we can manage to discard all labels, that we can in fact embrace all labels! That in knowing our nothingness we become everything! That personal significance can only be born when we make contact with our deepest sense of insignificance! Paradoxically the gateway to a genuine experience of oneness, only reveals itself when we can risk discarding all allegiances, ties or dependencies to all systems of thought- completely, totally and unconditionally! For example there can be no possibility of experiencing and fully entering the true "brotherhood" of mankind, so long as we are identified by, or seek refuge within the infinite number of divisive labels in common use, labels defining territory, tribe, nation, political affiliations or religious beliefs. All these labels are powerful instruments (though they often come disguised by innocence) of separation- of maintaining the great existential split between subject and object- the "I-Thou" split that so directly locks us all into a lifelong search for our lost sense of completeness. It thus seems that we keep ourselves endemically split/divided/alienated by the very "mechanisms " that we employ to ostensibly define our sense of identity, purpose, meaning or security. A truly double-edged sword!

It is this framework that suggests to me that most people who have come up through any particularly strong or well-defined school/system/training/ or methodology for seking enlightenment- including Zen Buddhism - are trapped within,

continued

and limited by, the very system of thought or being that has brought them so very far! And my suspicion is that the next major quantum-leap in human consciousness (the unity-consciousness that Ken Wilber talks about), may very well come about as a result of "graduating" beyond the confines and limits that are inherent in all systems of thought- all dogmas, creeds or belief systems. All systems of thought place serious limits upon our potential for being or becoming who and what we are, and they prevent us from fully entering the experience of oneness- from becoming oneness, and experiencing the true magnitude and beauty of that state of unity-consciousness.

Finally may I point out that the fear and anxiety (ontological fear and anxiety) associated with letting go, or wearing no labels whatsoever, or of not being attached to any system of thought, or embracing any doctrinaire set of beliefs, always carries within it the awesome threat that we might experience ourselves as non-being or non-existent, which is itself one of the great illusions - for there is in fact a whole new dimension of "beingness" awaiting us beyond the fear of non-being!

I would then very much welcome any criticism or debate regarding these remarks.

Yours in friendship and oneness,

John H. Boyd

An autobiographical post script:

Most of my professional life has been spent in the fields of education, art, and psychotherapy. Having for all intents and purposes "dropped out" of professional work structures- in 1973 - I have been devoting my time to running a one-man handyman service, writing, speaking, conducting workshops in some branch of human development, co-directing a rural retreat, hosting some "New Age" type of T.V. programs, and generally participating in numerous endeavors that are related to lifestyle changes, voluntary simplicity and the awakening of human consciosness.

Currently I am trying, among other things, to establish a rural renewal center, where we can address ourselves to the needs of such groups as teachers, doctors, social workers, nurses etc., who are coping with some of the major pains of the great process of social transformation that is taking place- "rustout" and "burnout" types of problems! I am also writing a book on the relationship- the very profound relationship - that exists between love, fear, and identity.

I have grown a family of three kids, and am 57 years old/young.

My wife's name is Eileen!

J. B.

Three and More--Or One

Three at a table in Cafeteria,
two men, one woman,
others at nearby table.
"But why do you live such extremes?"
she says. I look at her calmly.
"Five men who had the faith," I say,
"could change this world
from top to bottom,
inside out and outside in."

Guy from the next table pipes up:
"One man who believed enough
in what he was doing--
who really believed--
could do it in five days," he exclaims!
We look over astonished.
He has a big grin on-
he's obviously a three-in-one:
fool, clown, holy man.

Addendum:
for purposes of this poem,
"men" are women too.
You don't talk about it, you do it!

Norman Moser

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

Dear Cloud-People:

I was recently in a Chinese gift shop and noticed a simple string of beads hanging near the cash registar. For some reason I was attracted to them and asked the shop owner if I could examine them more closely.

He took them down and explained they were Buddha Beads, i.e. seeds from the Bodhi tree. I was delighted and took five dollars out of my wallet and was ready to purchase them, until he told me they cost $35.00. "Thirty-five dollars!" I exclaimed. "If I give you thirty-five dollars I'd be broke -- thaa I'd REALLY be like the Buddha!"

The reason I mention this story is because I'd like to talk about money and spirituality.

All-too-often many so-called, "spiritual leaders" have more money than God! It seems to me that a real spiritual person wouldn't need 22 Rolls Royce's -- he or she would walk.

I'm not shooting arrows at any particuaar sect, as I have good friends of all faiths. But I cannot buy the concept of "sell everything you have and give it all to me." Jim Jones tried and look what happened.

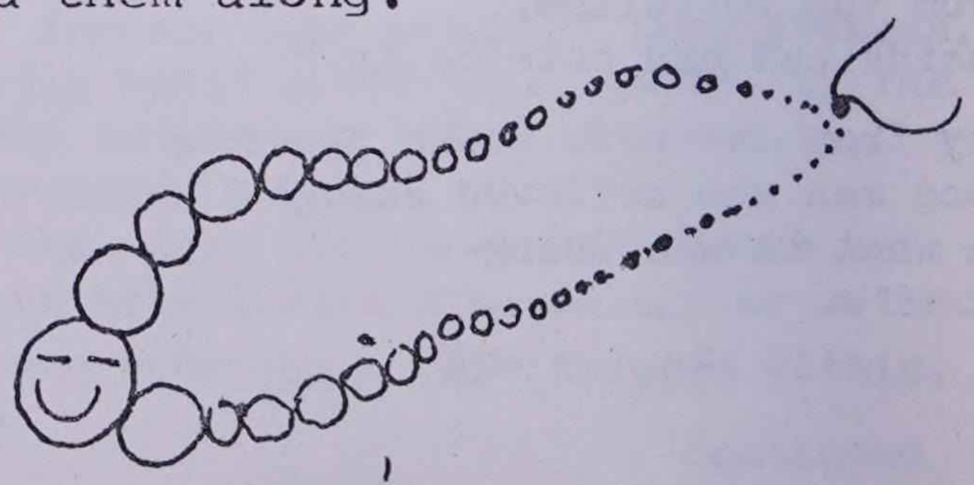
I make it a point not to attend many of the super spiritual seminars. Why? Because there are always too many chiefs and not enough Indians. The tee-pees have now turned into large suburban homes with magnificent views and the closets are well stocked with liquor and cocaine. Artificial Messiahs!

I'd rather experience life/philosophy first hand. The street is my UNIVERSE-ITY!

Last summer my mother was here for a visit and we were sitting with Marion Saltman on the S.S. Vallejo in Sausalito discussing Zen. My mother said: "Zen is good if you have money in the bank!" I'll never forget that statement. It just seemed so funny and so true. When you have lots of money, and no worries, then your mind is atpeace (or is it?)

Tashi deleg, Joe

P.S. If anyone has an old pair of Buddha beads they'd like to sell for $5.00 -- please send them along.



LETTERS RECEIVED

Norm Moser, 2110 9th St. B,
Berkeley, CA 94710

Dear Bo-hoes at the warm Clouds(hidden) House:

These are surely hard times (John Handy's new band's called, Hard Work), & at times they seem almost totally heartless, bloodless, etc, there is such cruelty/violence/noncaring people outa touch w/theyselves w/nature, & in this atmosphere the Cloud-Hidden Friends Letter is an oasis indeed. Here there is not even writers/editors competing for space or egos. I have enjoyed every word, in recent issue espec. ole writin-pal Joel W., Joe L. Lembo, the wonderful crezzy juxtaposition of the original eptaphs w/the new, fresh Oxherding pictures by R.M. Pirsig, & longtime pro acquaintance Gary S.'s opus.

In fact it is Gary's sweet letter that prompts me to finally git out paper & typer &, twixt teachin/writin/childraisin & otha chores of work & joy, get done this letter long promised to Ananda Claude. I came into Zen via Master DeNeal Amos' homey group c. '58-9 not more'n a year or so after I'd hit the ole Bayside & more on that in a lil minit. First, that partly explains how Claude & I met a few months back over in San Fran. Seeing his ferst beeg Ho-bo letter in Amos' similar Newsletter, goin on/off since 58, which started our own initially localized beeg Cloud-Hidden blast in ferst issue (reprinted from DeNeal's N-Letter, so to speak), I called Ananda Claude on the ole voicebox & we amazed that we both knew DeNeal from late 50s but did not specifically recall each other, nor did we pronto recognize each other on first meeting, or at again meeting, at his house. At any rate we did meet, talk, I offered some poems & short prose & we had much delight & as I say, good warmth, insights too, & recently I even at last made my ferst Friday night meeting. They really reminded me of the Friday nights at DeNeal's house, though his were justa trifle more casual. We sat on the floor, mosly cause there wasn't any furniture to speak of xcept mebbe cushions or pillows. At ferst we didn meditate or anything, we were sorta feeling our way, & quite a few in that original dozen or so did not develop further into Buddhism or art/poetry or the like. Many, however, have kept the thread of that original coming together, like kids testing the water at swimming holes, & built on it & allowed it to inform them, help them grow & help them perhaps work up a bit of grace or magic or humour they may or may not've had much of to start with.

We liked so much that Zen counsels ye, look inside, fren, yer problem may be something ye created w/yer own mind, or heart, or heartlessness, whatever. That, to wit: whatever's in the world, is in you, too. So ye don needa go lookin fer the Buddah elsewhere, in the temple, in the ZENcenter, haw, in anyplace but right w/ye, why ye carry the Buddah w/ye if ye only knew it, brutha. It's not outside yet it IS outside. Got it? It's everywhere, but where ye look hardest, & yet lightest too, w/all th grace & humour ye can find, is right inside. Which way's yer tail aswishin, Sr. Burro, eh, eh, eh??? Ho-har! It also helps ye not to take yerself too seriously just when yer saddest, most frustrated at career helplessness, no gal, or whatever happens to be the problem occupying ye at a given moment. Hell, it's only a life, a moment, a joke, a gal, a love affair (or lack of one), nuthin ain the end uv th worl, & another new moment comes up ever 60 seconds. Zen just won't let ye orf the hook of yerself, yer B.s. (everbod got it), yer pretenses, yer dogma if ye have any left. Zen asks, got problems, eh? Welcome to th clubof-humanity, pal. & th pernt is, whaddaya doin aboot it, eh? Laugh, dance sing, joke, work, climb, sweat, laugh again. Laugh hardest at yerself! "Ye have to risk yerself ever 30 days," says Amos, or thereabouts.

These days w/the faster pace, robotized computerpeople, random violence etc, hereabouts, Zen helps me so much to keep it light, but steady, keep

continued

my sense of joy & humour & pleasure, however little at times, keep my warmth & flow about me, rekindle my magic at times, keep s l o w e d down, Mose, to a human's pace, or as poet Joel Oppenheimer says, observe the triumph of nature over art w/the mouse in the papers bottom of the garbage pail.

But our original sense of it was not quite like that. Sure, we wanted to resolve the duality, & find, as Amos always said, our Original Face. But we also took the same hit Gary did, of discipline, of work. But not Jobwork unless yer really into that. (I'm doin it now outa simple/plain necessity, another thing altogether.) The work w/the joy inside, that is. The thing yoo were really meant to do, that ye love w/ALL yer heart & canNOT do without. We worked hard, at our studies at SF State, we wrote & cussed & laughed & loved hard (but light'n easy too). We were at first reading Jung, Fromm, Suzanne Langer, others, others, & then, willy-nilly, someone stumbled onto ferst Suzuki then Watts or vice versa, & voila! we were home, & knew it at once. I/we devoured ten or twelve, or more, of their books, & have never been the same since, because if you take the stuff seriously, it profoundly changes yer life to where ye can't go back to the same Bullshitting fool ye once were, altho ye may retain a bit of the "fool, clown, Holy Man all at once," as I say in the last poem in me own ferst collection poems'n songs. And of course, as a writer, when Gary & Ginsberg, Neruda, Ferlinghetti burst onto the scene, to add to ~~the~~ our great loves of previous recent decades a la Miller, Nin, Faulkner, Lawrence et al, many of us in writing were once again perplexed, confounded, at same time delighted. It was another new beginning for us, in our times, in our own voices, just the way we talk, eh? And I've never regretted this profound influence on my life & werk, greatly loved these folks, & if my so-open love was not as much returned by certain of these same folks ~~xxx~~ even to Watts, Gary, etc, it diminishes my respect for their work 'n lifestyle not 1 whit to this day.

To this day I never met Watts, tho did try once, Santa Fe, c. '70-1--he got away faster'n I could get to him. I ferst met Gary c. '58-9 at SF State reading he did, & was at once astonished, perplexed, & as I say, delighted, & still from time to time run across him, tho we have never become as deepdown friends as I would perhaps have liked. I still dig his werk, have read everthang he eva writ, I guess. Perhaps we'll make it yit, 1 o these days. But no matter. If not, there's still much joy & work in my work, my art (poetry, fiction, plays, essays), my 4½-year-old son (who instinctively dropped to his knees when he met Gary few months back, which reminds me that seeing Gary's aura once almost frightened me outa my wits til I reflected on what it was) & occasional other pals, romancing, etc.

The thing that so delighted me about Watts' writing is that it's so wonderful, so charming & graceful & insightful & funny, yes, humourous, & witty in the best possible way. Suzuki is a bit witty or delightful at times too, but a bit more of a recluse, a philosopher, a scholar, the truly wise man, eh? Watts, like meself I hope, is just a bit of a goof, guy fulla fun & jokes & wit on'noff, not ever line acourse. Lotta folks have sd to me that Gary's not so much a great writer (he even disowns the moniker) as a great guy, a true original, crusty & salty, yet sorta sweet too. And if I read my reviewers aright, they say something like that aboot meself too in calling me a Zenbum, an outlaw/revolutionary, middle-aged Pan and such like.

Okay folks, got some chores to do, so gotta go. Sure was fun, tho, & y'all keep 'em comin, y'hear. Me joys & pleasures are gettin mighty few & far between nowadays. This, y'all, me too, is one of 'em. Hang in thar. Or, Keep on Truckin as the kids say now.....Yorn, Norm

Robert C. Finch
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LETTER ONE

Dear Friends:

Once again, I greet all Friends, in the spirit of giving a little to our meeting in the Letter, and receiving also from each of you, your words.

I have been meditating on the Earth, as of late. I have been seeing the illnesses of mankind, and animals, be they spiritual, mental, and physical. These are the symptoms of an ill Earth. So what is the illness? I would have to put name where it belongs, and I do name it as mankind in a malignant form. The problem rests with mankind's failure to properly deal with its technological advantages. I do not mean pollution per se, but the destruction of species, habitats, ecological niches, and the like... It is so easy for us to get in a car, and drive, and forget about the beings we kill, running over and colliding with insects, animals, and even people. We have forgotten, or never even learned the power of technology, and yet children are desirous to obtain these powers, to play with them. The hopeful conclusion is that an equilibrium will occur when children play havoc with the world through technology. And technology will then be forgotten.

As the Earth does get clogged up with pollution, the biologic world will manifest many symtoms. I cannot help but think of the great plagues of Europe, with people fleeing from war, lived in cramped cesspools, called cities, in much the same way as the squatters moving in on cities around the world today, because of war. The lesson to be learned, especially by the U.S. is that even though we do not have a war, within the boundries of the US., that the masses will converge to a place where there is no war, and carrying the threat of disease, and starvation, as well as a long list of social ills.

So what is the cure? I suppose that each of us should have regard for environment. This Letter is is an antibody to Earth's illness, in that it is a concern for a spiritual environment. Though the plagues of mankind, the vices, seem to be quite long lived, so are the virtues. And perhaps in recognizing that evil cannot thrive without exploiting the living, and that a house divided cannot stand, then eternal goodness within us can overcome the ills of the world, through patience, and non-violence.

LETTER TWO

Whom is Alan Watts? Is he That which each of us searches for within our own lives? Did he live a life which taught those around ? Is he to become a deity?

Joel W. I enjoyed DANCING UP THE MOUNTAIN. In my early climbing days, I called it FLOWING UP THE MOUNTAIN. #2 brings me home to a time when I was on an expedition through the highest quadrangle

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in the US, which is above Bishop, CA. Leaving treeline far behind, we were strung out on an end moraine with a gentle slope. About 30 long feet away from myself, was a rock just perfect for resting on. And so I saw myself inch my way to that rock. Soon I caught up with myself and sat down too. And so as you wrote,"Guess it was you I followed up here!" Has a unique meaning to me.
Y.M. Do you "see" where you are going? Or do you take off in any and all directions in Sangsara's Six Realms? You asked me many questions. Can I not do the same? I am Kharod-Beregt.

Wisdom and Knowledge being opposites, it is important to remember that people in Sangsara go round and round. Knowledge is of Sangsara. It tends to diversify, classify, differentiate, segregate...(Even seeking common word origins is of knowledges realm) Therefore your movement/growth is incorrect. Movement/growth is actually modification through the Realms of Sangsara. As you accelerate through the different Realms, remember that a moving object gains mass. The faster you move, the greater your mass. That's ego-mass! Bro Einstein told us $m = m/\sqrt{1-v^2/c^2}$.
To All My Cloud-Hidden Friends. I am wearied of the BIG QUESTIONS, at this time. I see them as the framework holding together the karmas of Sangsara's Realms. Therefore, why should I pursue THEM?
To Ananda. I am grateful and thankful, to have you as a Noble Friend....

LETTER THREE

Revelations in the Realm of the Gods, and the Realm of Mankind, have overtaken me, since last I wrote. Contemplating on the Bodhisattvic Mind, when time allows such pleasure, I wrote a poem while still thinking of such:

SHINE, Shine, great Bodhisattvic Mind...
The world awaits to see Supreme Beauty,
Through its eyes so dark and blind.
SHINE, Shine, great Bodhisattvic Mind.

SHINE, Shine, great Bodhisattvic Mind...
Dispelling ignorance-Set all minds free.
O Noble Friend, YOU are SELF ENSHRINED.
SHINE, Shine, great Bodhisattvic Mind.

In the practical Realm of Mankind, while achieving the Great Liberation (Nirvana) through knowing the Mind (mind), I learned a lesson on old habits. If one makes a habit of achieving spiritual goals, then one will continue such a habit in old age. Again a small verse:

Its difficult to change old habits,
So enter the Path very early.
Early in life, and early in the day:
Grasp the Mind, and set it free.

May each of you gain strength, in overcoming the self-generated clouds of ignorance. For just as I, and You, are not the roles we preform, so the Messiahs and Buddhas are not the roles they preform. Be Beautiful. Be Strong.

Unity in All

Robert C. Finch

LETTERS RECEIVED

Tim Aston
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Heriot Bay, B.C.
Canada, VOPINO

Dear Ananda & Ho Boes:

After every issue of the CHFL I become inspired and immediately sit down and en tune a tome of sorts and then in my disorganization misplace until it resurfaces. Comes time to re-write, the real in adequacies prevail, (this comma here a period here, is this a complete thot or am i just insane). But now, to press on, Since C.H.F.L. #1 and original manifesto, we tried to realize a true attitude of practice knowing there are others out there and sooner or later we're all going to meet and share face to face True Dharma as we have come to know ourselves, existent with years of Dharma now in the west. This is like another problem I've had, What does it mean to be a Buddhist in the West with very little tradition behind us and what did our teacher mean for us to transmit not just teacher to teacher but for those of us to become lay persons. Know what i mean? an example: I took the first precept Not to Kill to heart and for years refused to own animals even though my family (the children) begged to have horses, cats, dogs etc. chickens and every warm thing that they saw, yet i'm the religionist and no is the answer to this kind of un solvable problem. Until one day it just sort of occured to me "Animals are for children not for Buddhists" and my doubts just seemed to disappear with such a simple direct insight into respect for life, the meaning of the first precept. Now maybe i can start to work on others !

I'm Mr. Mom these days as my wife, Jean, is in Sacremento taking advanced teacher training and I'll join her there in Dec. for one month. Learning to cook, finally, and during the day i'm remodelling the basement of the island's Heritage church. Next month, i believe, we'll be having meditation practice there.

In the Dharma

Tim

Life in the Provinces

Mrs. Simpson's cow lost her bells
but the bull found his way home
anyway--only a day or so late.
You still hear the train over the hill
and the goats always jump the fence
when you aren't looking--
oops! there goes the cabbage again!

The dogs are too damned lazy
to even bark, the cats
even wag a little slower,
the trees make the slowest kind of dance,
the children dance like moonbeams,
and out on the porches or lawns sit
old men and pretty girlish things too--
reading, if you can believe that.

Life in the provinces. Widows weep,
the churches are full, one-night stands.
The Fords sit high on their rears
and blast the last good car I got
clear to Kingdom come!
You hear planes, tractors, plows,
power mowers too.
It's kind of a mess here sometimes,
always a circus somewhere--
might try the Laundrymat--
but it's also great fun
out here in ole Zen bush.

Norman Moser
Carrboro, N.C.

Lorin A. Paull
Zenraku-an
4692 E. Arkansas Ave.
Denver, Co 80222

Dear Cloud-hidden ones:

Seeking solice one day last summer following my enforced resignation from a well liked job, that of Chaplain at a large metropolitan general hospital, I wandered into the book shop of a long time Nyngmapa friend. A certain book called out to me. That book was Marian's The Zen Environment. It was mysterious at first. Figures seemed to break through the mist. I leafed through the pages. Names began to leap out at me: Suzuki Roshi, Katagiri Sensei (now Roshi), Tasajara and Haiku-an. This author, I decided could be no other than the woman in whose home I had sat several times during the summer of 1968. I paid the clerk and left the store with the book.

Returning home I read the book from cover to cover without stopping. This was indeed the woman whom I had met precisely 15 years earlier almost to the day. I had written her at her home in Los Altos a few times following my visit and learned that she was on her way to study in Japan. I had heard no more. I sat down and whipped off a note to her publisher. Last Saturday's mail brought a fat envelope from Big Sur. Enclosed was a copy of Cloud-Hidden Friends and an invitation from Marian to join in the hike. I am replying with the following autobiographical sketch.

<u>On the Trail of the Wily Dharma</u>
or
The Hunter Becomes the Hunted and Visa Versa

Before beginning to write I did the I Ching. I received SUN, the gentle, Number 57, Success through the small. It furthers one to have some place to go. (You bet, do you have somewhere in mind?) It furthers to see the great man. (O.K. America is so full of them at the moment, did you have a particular one in mind ?) Winds follow one upon another: the image of the gently penetrating. (Is there a better description for the Dharma?) This was a truly auspicious beginning for what is to follow.

Let me introduce myself. I am an Episcopal priest living in Denver, Co. At the moment I am "at liberty". I do not have a parish, nor am I working as an assistant. In my last situation I took a stand related to personal integrity which led to my termination. At present I am at home writing, making Cha No Yu bowls and doing some part time religious activities. I am also involved in Sumi painting and abstract oils.

Last winter, while home recovering from surgery, I got interested in raku ware. I was fascinated by the simple process. First came tea bowls, then other utensils. I read of a small temple on the island of Shikoku called Zenraku-an. I fell in love with the name and had a chop carved with the Kanji on it. The other day I asked the owner of the neighborhood Mandarin restaurant to read it for me. His version was San Low An. It sounded to me like the name of a peninsular commute station. It means, he said, Temple of Happy Prayers. Either that or the Japanese hut of pleaant meditation, expresses where I am just now.

I am not going to launch into a theological apologia on behalf of the Christian tradition vs. Buddhism so be patient. My tendency towards "imprecise" thinking and not rightly distinguishing the correct approach seems to get me in trouble on both sides. (I learned once that there is "a right way, a wrong way, and the Navy way".) I have also heard that where there are three Jews involved in a discourse, you are likely to have four opinions. Is it not possible then that there is <u>more</u> than just a Buddhist and/or Christian orthodox view of the universe. From my experience with the various Gurus and Senseis I have met, there are as many "orthodox" positions in Buddhism as there are in Christianity. For the most part, your orthodoxy depends on where your parents or grandparents emigrated from whether it be Athens, Warsaw, Leningrad, London, Kyoto, or Rangoon (to name only a few possibilities.) We tend to throw in with the old "hometown" gang or cross swords with them. All faiths, even Zen, have been invoked on behalf of victory.

continued

I am a third generation Bay Area person. My G.G. grandparents arrived in San Fransisco from Boston in 1850. They moved to San Jose after the birth of my grandfather a few years later. They had Chinese servants from whom my grandfather picked up tales and artifacts which he later shared with me. He learned to make flutes and other toys of bamboo and produced them for my amusement.

My father's family arrived from England twenty years later and went right into the gold fields. They settled in San Jose about the turn of the century. Dad introduced me to Japanese culture at an early age. He took me with him to visit farmers in Santa Clara Valley when he installed irrigation equipment for them. In the late '30s he joined in the construction of the Jodo Shinshu Temple in San Jose. Most of the building was shipped pre-fab from Japan and assembled by local carpenters and tile setters. My father introduced the western mystery of electricity to the building. The San Jose Temple remains today the only thoroughly Japanese edifice among the Shinshu temples in the mainland U.S.A.

Pearl Harbor and the internment followed a short time later. I was busy in high school trying to be a thoroughly middle-class American youth. The Eastern virus was not eradicated. It simply lay dormant for the next few years. While in the Navy I had hoped to get to Japan, but as luck would have it, my entire Naval career was spent in San Francisco.

The next few years saw me in Palo Alto on the "Farm". By this time I was headed for the Episcopal ministry. Certainly there was a great deal of promise to be expected from that especially when aided by a diploma from Stanford. This was not to be a sure thing, however, because somewhere along the line I met a professor from Tubingen: Dr. Fredrich Spiegelberg. (Caution: Danger Ahead!) This man's classes in comparitive religion were always packed. Why shouldn't a person headed for seminary take one or two? I jumped in with both feet. I read all of D.T. Suzuki that I could get my hands on. I met Nyogen Senzaki from L.A. He did a tea ceremony one afternoon for class. I also heard about a Father Alan Watts who was located at Seabury-Western Seminary (Episcopal) in Chicago.

In the fall of 1950 I packed up and went to Washington D.C. to Seminary. On the way I stopped off in Chicago to meet Father Watts. They told me he had just left for California. (Always, whereabouts unknown!)

On the walls of my room in the seminary dorm, I hung pictures of Gandhi (acceptable), Schweitzer (Fine!), Kwan Yin (Are you sure?), and Han Shan and Shih-te (Really now!) After one or two debates with Faculty members I cleaned up my act and stowed my "China Town souveniers" (actually reproductions from the Freer Gallery in Washington.) The East Coast and the South were about as unfamiliar a place as you could imagine. Californians were looked upon as some sort of semi-civilized tribes-people. San Franciscans were preferred over Los Angelinos who were only a cut or two above Texans. Texans always had more money than either sort of Californian and really didn't give a damn for the East or what anyone thought of them. They didn't have to adapt. They were whom they pleased to be!

One of the professors had taught in a church college in Japan before the war. His school was located next to a Zen Temple. He was not the least impressed saying that the monks were only concerned with ritual and the gathering of alms. (Odd thing for him to say!) They were given "to the contemplation of their navals rather than social justice!" He was idealistic as well as knowing nothing about Zen. I decided to let myself be convinced. My love affair with the orient underwent another remission and I was ordained in Grace Cathedral three years later (thirty years ago last summer.)

However, returning to California, I found a high school chum who had joined the Soto Zen Temple in San Fransisco and was a student of the Roshi who proceeded Suzuki Roshi. He invited me to attend with him a few times and I did. He disappeared mysteriously just prior to his departure to study in Japan. I never heard from him again.

Time passed. Eleven years and three different locations in two other states later brings us to 1968. That summer my mother died of a stroke back in San Jose. I returned home with my family for the first time since my hajira. There I tried to find solice with my "own people". Most of the men whom I had known in seminary

continued

were long gone or away on vacation. I looked to other clergy with whom to share my grief, but found no one who wanted to look at death with me. It was hard to take. I had done the same with countless other people, but I could not find a priest of my own church to share with.

I remembered the Roshi I'd met years before and went up to the old Zen Temple looking for him. One Saturday morning shortly before ten, I knocked at the door of the living quarters on the second floor of the temple. A small man in black robes, shaved head, fresh tabi and zori opened the door. I did not know who he was, but from the vestments and facial expression I knew that I was face to face with the real thing: an honest to God Zen Master! I didn't know what to expect from him next. I stammered along trying to explain what I was doing there. I imagine that I looked like some kind of an apparition standing there at 6'1" and 190 lbs. all dressed in black with my "dog collar" on.

I expected him to do something out of the ordinary. I hoped he'd stop the barrage of words from my mouth. Perhaps he would put one of his zori on his head or shout: "HO!" or "Kwatz!" He just stared up at me in disbelief. (Was this a black demon, a hungry ghost or a hold up?) He invited me in finally and bid me to take a seat. I said facetiously, "Now, I suppose you are going to ask me to have a cup of tea!" He raised his voice and shouted to someone in the back in Japanese. Mrs. Suzuki replied "Hi!" and appeared a couple of minutes later with a tray of tea things. He said something to the effect that he didn't know what to tell me about dying, but he could tell me about zazen. I sat on the floor. He arranged my position, straightening my back and shifting my head. Then he explained that he was due at a flower arrangement class he was teaching for the ladies of the Japanese congregation and asked to be excused.

My brother-in-law had attended a teacher's workshop at Tasajara some weeks before. He told me about the conversion of the old resort to a Zendo and advised me to check it out. I took off the next morning for Carmel Valley without reservations. I arrived at the height of the guest season. The place both was and was not what I expected. There was the Zen aspect, but mostly the place seemed like a small, expensive (to me) semi-oriental Holiday Inn , a kind of spiritual dude ranch. I was overstimulated at the time anyway. I was looking for the Original Shao Lin Temple, Shangri La or Eiheiji. There was no room among the guests so there was no question of staying anyhow. However I was allowed to sit with the students at the evening service. I dined upon peanut butter and saltines and spent the night out in my sleeping bag. I awoke the next morning before dawn. I heard the dawn drum and started down the mountain. The sunrise was the most glorious I'd ever seen. I drove out of the hollow where the buildings sat and photographed the sunrise from a high place on the road. Then I photographed the sun striking the Zendo. I have never been back.

During the following month I was to meet Katagiri Sensei (now Roshi) who helped me deal more directly with my death and dying issues. I also met Marian Mountain while sitting several times at her home at Haiku-an.

Back in Colorado I began a Zendo in the basement modeled from photos of Haiku-an. I sat with my wife and sometimes my kids joined in. My life seemed to take a more positive direction. I was ultimately invited to work in Diocesan Headquarters in Denver. I felt that finally things were beginning to take a very positive turn. I was on my way in the church after two or three false starts.

A few months later Chogyam Trungpa Rimpoche came to Boulder and some friends invited us to get into that scene. My wife and I drifted into it looking for the support which seemed to be missing in our Church connections. It seemed as though our church connections offered us the opportunity to follow some people who loved the limelight and whose behavior towards people showed great ego. There was a lot of Medieval fal-de-ral and precious little of the spirit of Jesus or Buddha. There were still high hopes left over from the sixties and the last days of the Vietnamese war. The message of the Chicago Democratic convention had not yet struck home.

In the early days when Trungpa first came to Boulder things were simple and

continued

relaxed. The atmosphere was pretty informal. The atmosphere of a Byzantine court had not yet developed. The spirit of Milarepa was flowing through the place. Property and form had not yet occluded the winds from Everest. It was at Karma Tzong that I finally met Alan Watts after missing him twenty years earlier in Chicago. He was a "coyote" in the Native American sense, a shaman, and an Old Fashioned Rainmaker. You could call him a spiritual gadfly, one of God's clowns; or you could call him a religious huckster if you pleased. You could imagine him as a "meat-eating monk" gathering a crowd in Beijing, or selling sheep bones for saints relics at a Canterbury fair. He was a genuine "shape changer".

At Karma Tzong I had many interviews with Chogyam Rimpoche. He was easy to see because there were no swarms of hangers on to penetrate. He had a quick wit and enjoyed a good laugh. He was also partial to Johnny Walker Red Label. It was a new experience for me to receive spiritual direction from someone who paused every now and then for a belt of Scotch neat. He told me that I was Zen, not Vajrayana. I accepted that with no difficulty. The basics seemed to be all present in Tibetan Buddhism. Still, the enormous cast of gods, goddesses, offerings, mantras, chants and visualizations made the whole thing somewhat top heavy and Baroque for my taste. It was more like a Bavarian wedding-cake church than a tea house. More like an M.G.M. musical than sharing cold rice gruel in a hut with torn shoji.

About this time the subject of Buddhism began to intrude into my ordinary conversation. The "born again" movement had also penetrated our church by this time. Friendliness with people of "cults" such as Buddhism was seen as being friends with Satan. I could not accept or understand such an odd and uninformed point of view. It was Bible Belt Fundamentalism coupled with antique Roman ritual. I was out of my post soon and into an assistant Chaplain's job at the hospital. I was out of the public eye. I loved working with patients. However during the course of eight years this position too was to run its course. Chaplains were considered public relations agents of the hospital administration. Economic considerations came before compassion for patients. The Chaplain's presence was considered for the purpose of legitimizing the status quo. It appeared that convincing patients and families that mistakes, unnecessary (expensive) procedures, and inappropiate behavior on the part of the medical staff or chaplains was my primary task. I was to operate the whitewash brush.

The I Ching said, "It furthers one to have someplace to go and it furthers one to see the great man." I have been searching for the place and the man for months. Several have proved to be an illusion. This is truly a strange Bardo. I do not look upon it as a "job search" but as a spiritual exercise. I am becoming more aware of the energies within as well as those without: what others expect of me and I of them. At the moment it appears that the somewhere is "here" and the great man is the "true self". I have not found anything else that is Sanforized and colorfast yet!

Yours in Gasho,

Lorin A. Paull

Zenraku-an







The Raging Heart
(Double Vision)

In this vision
the tree against
the shore
is the Christmastree light
against the Bay
or the light bulb
against the fading day
and the furious red ball
of the sunset in the trees
is the filament
inside
the bulb
inside the man

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NEWS & NOTES

1. New Years Greetings to Every One !!! This issue may be getting to you a little late, but you probably have noted that each issue with amazing regularity comes out two or three weeks later than promised. I'm afraid 1984 won't be much different. The next issue then will be out about "the end of Feb."

You may have noticed an occasional mention of Quakerism as a model for us. Sometimes for example we resemble an old-fashioned Quaker meeting, with a big assist from the U.S. Postal Service. The Quaker meeting is mostly silent meditation, with someone now and then feeling moved to speak. Ideally the spirit of it is quite personal, and at the same time relevant to everyone. Canned sermons directed at others seem out of place. The way I would put it most simply is that one should speak from the heart. Also note that the Quakers have a kind of universal and egalitarian spirit, there being "that of God in every one", and they are very apprehensive about having a "hireling clergy".

The "Watts Happening" was held in San Francisco recently, celebrating the 10th year of the crossing over of Alan Watts. It was quite successful, with lots of joy, laughs, and hugs.

Those of you who are novice two-finger typists, such as myself, may be interested in my recent discovery. Most typewriters, even old ones, are easily converted to "self-correcting" if they take a conventional red and black ribbon. All you do is buy an inexpensive white and black ribbon instead (Sears etc. have them). To correct you just retype in in white, followed by black.

2. You can order CHFL contributor Norm Moser's books by sending $5 for 2 books of poetry + $1 handling (OPEN SEASON & I LIVE IN THE SO. OF MY HEART), separately at $3 each. Ye get his book just coming out, EL GRITO DEL NORTE & Other Stories, for $6 plus $1 handling. Or, if ye want the entire press '80's Book-series, can subscribe at $30, netting you books of poems by Hadassah Haskale, Tim Holt & probly others, + beeg ILLUMINATIONS READER, 300-pp. Anthol. 1965-78.

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

3. Irv Thomas (Issue #3) was kind enough to send a copy of his own home made publication BLACK BART (and The Brigade!). I haven't been so amazed at anything in many a year. A real quality effort, intellectual but in the very best sense. The "Brigade" section is hoping for more participation from subscribers. There is a modest request for a donation as the subscription fee. Black Bart, by the way, was a bit of an outlaw and rebel, which might scare you away, but wait until you see the contents. BLACK BART, P.O. Box 48, Canyon, CA 94516.

4. This "News & Notes" section is intended for, among other things, notes of a more personal and intimate nature. In this respect it is getting a little thin. Yellow Mouse however has been boldly leading some kind of way in this. Ordinarily his more personal notes have appeared in the main section. However in this issue, I have taken the liberty of including his notes in this section, as a kind of example and experiment, hopefully opening some new horizon. Surely we need more feedback from each other. More personal level correspondence is beginning to happen, but we need even more of it.

Anyway, here goes from Yellow Mouse:

MARIAN POURER, the ewer amongst us who pours out herself and the water of the spirit to us all - BUT BE CAREFUL ABOUT THROWING PERILS BEFORE SWINE. Your last paragraph is full of "I" and "me". Don't try to edit. LISTEN: I have one comment: Look carefully at your paragraph, hear yourself saying it and:
WHO?, WHO?, WHO?.

YELLOW MOUSE: Instead of the culturally determined definition of "yellow", just ask yourself where, when and how, with what parameters and what percentages and probabilities, the experience of "YELLOW" occurs in nature. Then you might have a chance at determining the anthropological usage of "yellow" in the world.

continued

continued

TO BRO FINCH, ULF:
VIOLENCE = VIOLARE = VIS: force - physical or some other force
doing some actual physical injury or effect
from the root WEI: vital force
= WIROS = VIROS = VIRILE = VIS: force
= VIOLARE: to treat with force
= VICE, VICIOUS, VITUPERANCE: to abuse
= WITHER, WIZEN
= WAITH, WAITHANIAN: to hunt and plunder:
to pursue and find or catch
= WIR = WIRE; THEARA = THREAD
= VIRAE: bracelets; WITHIG: wirey
as distinguished from:

ACTION = ACT = ACTUS, ACTUM: the process of action: the thing done
from AGERE: to drive or to do, including ACTUAL: that which
pertains to an act or thing done (completed)
from verb AG: to drive, do, act, conduct, lead
envoy: he who has been sent THUS to be worthy
a train or column (a moving forward)
NOT to be confused with AD-GRESS (to step - forward)
a pursueing THUS a grabbing or seizing
distinguishable from VIOLENCE as not the result of force
AG-RO: a driving into the fields,= to the place where cattle graze
or the place where we drive or tend cattle
or where we go in order to work or ACT

The mere fact that we exist. are here on earth, in BE-ing, gives to us (WHO?) the capacity to act - and act we do and will. But not all acts are violent. (All violence is action, but the converse does not follow). Where do we draw the line between action and violence. The gray area is vast. So, in the gray area, the distinction must be SUBJECTIVE. Buddha speaks for himself.

My buddy, Jackson, in Phila. in a luncheon conversation once, told me that I "have it all wrong. It's like this" and he grabbed my face with his hand over my nose and mouth. He released me almost instantly and said: Now, I have one more breath than you do - I'm one ahead of you."

The formulation of the concept "violence" is and must be a meaningful step in the continuum from "inaction (not passive" to actions, good and bad."

CHF #5: Johnnay Walsh:

"Man, by nature, is a dualistic creature." In Amurican, we say "ambivalent". On that East-West stuff: Just which way do we face when we turn East ? We have turned our back on the West. We cannot face both ways at once. The answer to the dilemna lies in the limitations inherent in the question. We all suffer the paradox of "wanting our cake and wanting to eat it, too." And we must refer to some other frame of reference for the answer.

Incidently, tyhe love-hate thing is best seen on a circle in which love and hate are next to each other and opposite indifference:

Your last line: "Without 'them', there would be no 'us'." "Them" is distinguishable from "us" ONLY IF, AS, and WHEN we say so. Can you see "me" in "them" ? In all, there is ONLY the beloved.

continued

FINCHEY, BABY: you are talky as me:
In your 7/8, 5th paragraph: I must protest (?): Wisdom is a "selfish" concern.

And in your second last paragraph about Man at the center of the universe: In a culture of guilt (original sin), man desperately needs the idea that man IS the center of the universe. In order to move on then, we need a NEW belief in OKness. And yes, I need the COMFREY.

In your 7/27/, 3rd, about the present "employment scheme". It is slavery, for "they" have fashioned this culture to allow only one WAY to obtain your bread and that is by having a job. There is no other concept (other than "job") available to think about this subject. We are forced to join the bureaucracy wherever we turn. That WAY is NOT the MIDDLE WAY OR THE TAO OR THE WAY OF THE CROSS or "THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIGHT".

And your 2nd last para on the non-repeatable actions of our lives, no matter how they seem (to us) mechanical and automatic. GREAT ! Thanks !

To JLL out there in lembo: In your big para on Non-attachment, you say there really is no Self. Re-read that paragraph and at its end ask yourself THE question: WHO?

Watts: - for so long as there is something to prove, some ax to grind, therre is no dance." Read: for so long as there is some external force which directs the organism, there is, by definition, no possibility of freedom of choice. I love your Haiku: 3rd: who was the photographer ? 5th: the message is inside like the light in us: are we then a bottle without a message ?

To Maro Meru: So we need teachers ? The Christians say we have the bible and that's all we need. (Obviously, not if we can't read it.) When I first went into the courtroom, it took me a year to find out how ignorant I was. I knew chapter and verse of the (legal) scriptures. I was lucky for here and there - everywhere - experts, people with eyes and ears and who saw and heard with them came forward to be my guide. Without them, I would still be an expert-specialist who knows nothing. I am promoting the idea that "I can learn something from everyman I meet. And I include those of the female persuasion, too.

Breck, you wreck, you turned me on: Here's a trialog: You say that Ananda wants to be friends with everything. Don't just accept his judgement. You are not a slave. Bow to him because of his acceptance and thus bow to the inevitable - in him. Bow to both his own self-interest in his own self image (not altruism - and doubt the value of that, too). Then dig into your own self-analysis so that you might understand he truth of his dogma.

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5. It is our intent to come out with about six CHFL issues a year. Current issues are available upon request at no charge. To be on our subscription list, send us a letter for our pages. For back issues, a contribution of a dollar or two is requested. Last year's issues are also available in stapled together form for $10.

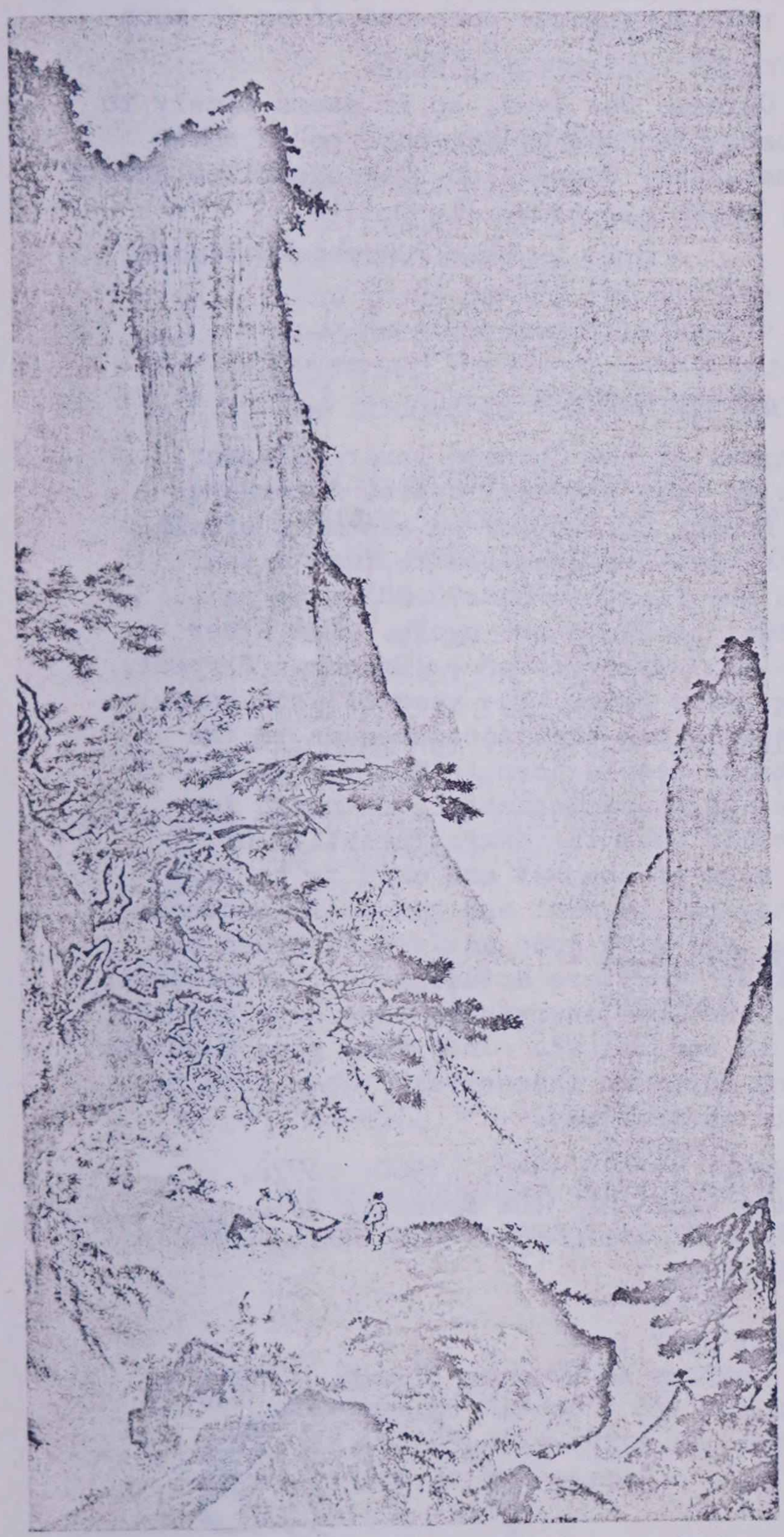
We try to publish everything we receive. Letters should be of a reasonable length. We will type them for you if you find such too difficult. Single-spaced with at least 3/4" margins is requested. It is presumed we will forgive each other a few typing errors since pirfectionism could easily paralyze us.

It is hoped that our letters will somehow help us to 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.

Ananda Claude Dalenberg, Clerk

ISSUE #8, MARCH 1984

cloud-hidden friends letter



Old Sage, Moon-gazing and Drinking Wine

Ma Yuan

CHFL, 753 44th Av., San Francisco,
CA 94121

The "Cloud-Hidden Friends" are a small non-sectarian religious correspondence group. "Our pages are your letters", so we ask as our "subscription fee" that you write us a letter now and then. Letters should be in the universal spirit of the Dharma, and we would emphasize practice more than mere belief.

We look to Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki and Alan Watts as our honorary founders. Although they are both usually associated with Zen Buddhism, their spirit was a wide and free-ranging one, including Taoism, Hinduism, and Christianity etcetera. Their Dharma then is a more universal one, going quite beyond the sectarian confines of Zen.

Thomas Merton might be another example of the kind of spirit 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".

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

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."

NEWS & NOTES

1. It would be natural for some of you to be wondering if we are some kind of Zen group or not. So far it has been our intent to be independent, and we have no affiliation with any group, Zen or otherwise, and I would guess we want to keep it that way. Your comments would be appreciated. We do have quite an interesting stew, with some of a Zen persuasion, and others Taoist, Christian, etc. We also have a half dozen ministers of the Universal Life Church, and some non-aligned. Add to that various combinations, and it is not at all easy to say what we are. I for one would say that in a religious sense each one of us is much more than some sectarian identity.

2. Mid-February is the season of the Chinese New Year, so it seems timely to add a note on 1984, the year of the Mouse. Also one of our members is named "Yellow Mouse", not that their is any necessary connection. The symbolism should be of interest.

Clerk, Ananda Dalenberg

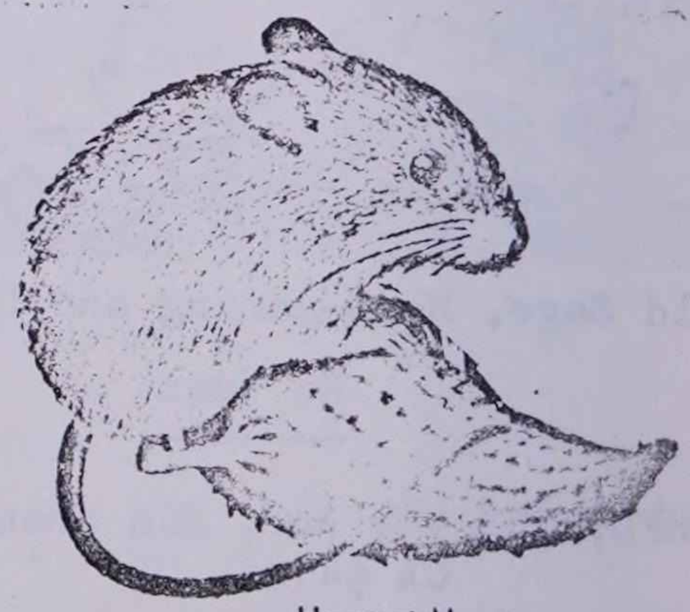
THE YEAR OF THE MOUSE

The Rat or the Mouse is a symbolic animal of the Chinese lunar calendar, occupying the first position of a twelve year zodiacal cycle. According to Chinese legend, many ages ago the Buddha called for an assembly of all the animals of the world on New Year's Day. He promised to name a year after all those who came. The Rat was the first to come, and so he is specially honored by occupying the first place in the cycle. The other eleven that came were, in order, the Ox, Tiger, Hare, Dragon, Serpent, Horse, Ram, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, and Boar. The year of each animal reflects then its unique characteristics, and that continues on to the present. According to Chinese tradition, people born in the year of a certain animal will tend tend to have its characteristics, although for some inexplicable reason, they sometimes have the characteristics of another year. People born under the sign of the Rat are said to be very charming. They work hard for what they really want and generally succeed. They are intellectual and imaginative, and give good advice. Although on the surface they appear self-controlled, they are actually quite emotional, and tend to get in trouble with love, and lose everything they have gained. They are easily angered, but manage to control it. They make good business people and writers, and love to spend money on themselves. They love to gossip, and sometimes get into trouble in that way.

Those born in 1900, 1912, 1924, 1936, 1948, 1960, 1972, 1984, and 1996 all belong to the year of the Mouse or Rat.

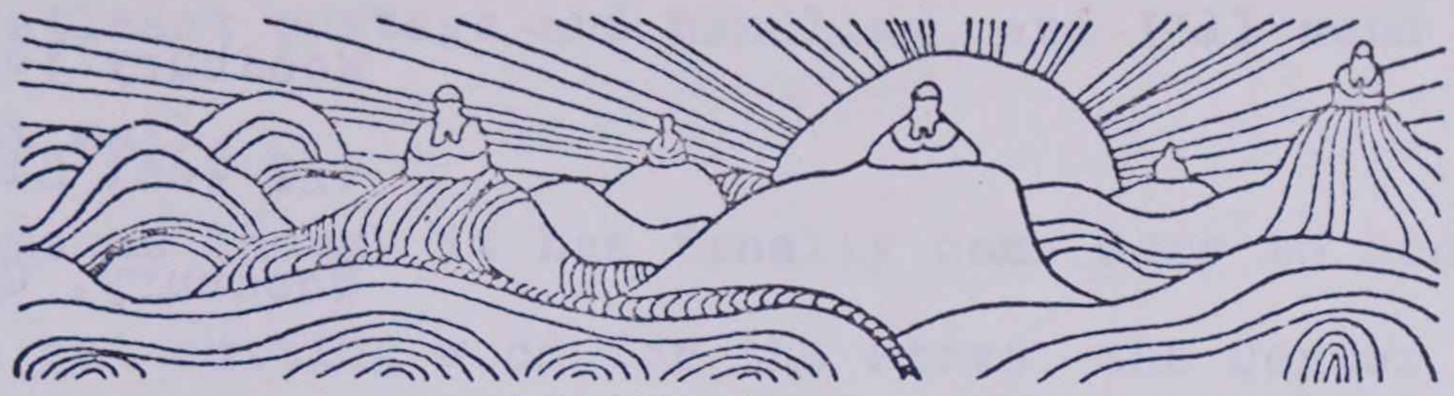
A HAPPY NEW YEAR !

GUNG HAY FAT CHOY !



Harvest Mouse

Elsa Gidlow

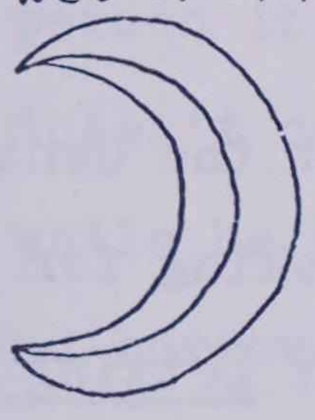


WHAT IF

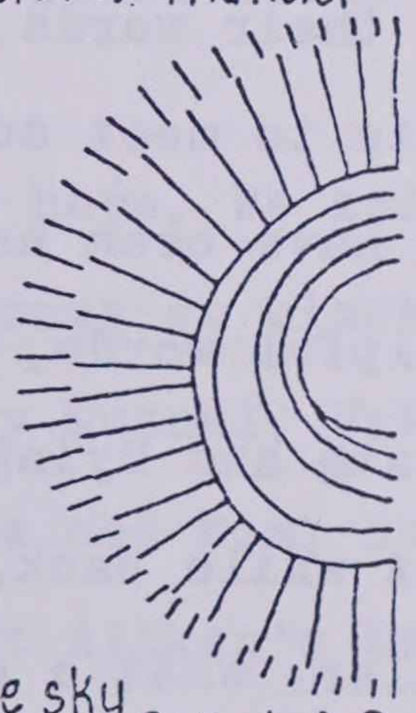
THE MILLION-AND-FIRST MEDITATION AND THE LAST

What if we smashed the mirrors
And saw our true face?
What if we left the sacred Books to the worms
And found our real mind?
What if we burned the wooden Buddhas?
Gave the stone Buddhas back to the mountains?
Dispersed the Gurus with a great laugh
And discovered the Path we had always been on?

What if we told the Saviours
We were saved from our first breath
And the Healers, If you could heal yourselves
All would be healed?
What if we washed clean of Authority's ordure
And smelled the fresh sweat of our own bodies?
What if, as Eve eating the Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge,
We knew the "Patriarchal Curse" a mere natural thunder
Bringing Eden a cleansing rain?
What if in the lightning's flash
We saw there were



No
Mirrors
Sacred Books
Buddhas
Gurus
Saviours
Healers
Authority



And knowledge was standing stark under the sky
feet naked to earth, eyes there for wherever light falls? What if..?

NOTE: Elsa's poem is an excerpt from her little booklet "Shattering the Mirror". She has been, by the way, a very close friend of Alan Watts for many years. This is her first contribution to our pages.

Editor, A.D.

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

Dear CHFriends,

I received CHF issue 6 today, dedicated to our friend Alan Watts, who I never had the pleasure of meeting, and I was quite surprised as I'm in the midst of his biography by David Stuart. I've been giving Alan alot of thought these last few days, so it was very special to read about him from the point of view of you who did know him well, either directly or indirectly. There is no doubt that he greatly influenced us all in one way or another. Alan, where-ever you are, tonight I'll remember you in meditation and give you a gassho.

I' also give gasshos to Joel Weishaus, Yellow Mouse, Gary Snyder and Ananda for their words in Issue #5, along with all other CHF. We are fortunate to meet so many friends on this pathless path. And your words have been helpful to me.

Speaking of helpful words, we do a course here at the Center on The Yoga of Death and Dying, and we're always looking for helpful material. A while back, we received a copy of Letting Go from Richard Boerstler. What a great book! It is brief, readable, to the point, and it gives concrete instructions on useful meditations for dying people. Thank you, Richard, for a beautiful, useful book. I highly recommend it to anyone who plans on dying.

I have two copies of John White's excellent anthology, Kundalini, Evolution and Enlightenment in Japanese. If anyone knows where they may be of use, I'll gladly donate them. I also have many copies in English so if anyone wants one, send along a little donation to the Center (but make the check out to me)-make sure

continued

you cover atleast postage and handling, and I'll send you a copy in the next mail.

Winter seems as though it has finally come here to Connecticut. We've been out cutting wood for the stove -the Center is housed in an old New England farm house, and on a good breezy day the wind can cut right through. The important thing is to keep the meditation room warm.

We re-did the meditation room this Fall. Painted the walls, brought the fire-place back to its natural wood, and put nice, thick wall-to-wall carpeting on the floor. The color is what we call Siddha blue. There are two tall windows facing east, so the sun pours in in the mornings. It is a small room, but warm, friendly, full of shakti, and adequate for our public programs every Sunday. We are waiting for the drapes to come. They would help in keeping it warmer, but Sears seems to have its own cosmic sense of time.

We have a person interested in Zen around here. We seldom see him as he doesn't come to any of the programs or classes. Every once in a while he brings back a volume by Suzuki, Watts, or Kapleau, and borrows another. Sometimes we see him, sometimes we don't. I do wish he'd bring back Robert Aitken's book as I haven't finished it yet. Perhaps it will mysteriously re-appear someday.

May you all have a wonderful Holiday season and the happiest of New Years.

With Love-

Tom

LETTERS RECEIVED

"I wonder what it would be like to practice zen meditation in Japan for a couple of years." Has this thought ever passed through your mind? If so I think you will be interested in reading the following excerpts from some letters Marian Mountain received from Henri Begonia, a lay zen student who went to Japan in 1981 to study Japanese gardening and landscape design. In 1982 Henri began attending sesshins (intensive periods of meditation) at a Zen Buddhist monastery. Henri kindly gave Marian permission to share some of his experiences and observations with CHFL readers.

June, 1983

"Thanks for the Cloud-hidden letters. I enjoyed them a lot and would like to see more. I want to contribute but I really don't know what I'd write....

"...I've been back here at the Monastery since April. It's the beginning of the rainy season. Gray sky, windy mist-like rain is blowing. Towels hanging outside the window under the eaves are fluttering in the breeze....I mostly want to tell you about the situation here: This Zen temple is almost 400 years old. It became a training monastery around 1910. In the 50's, for a period of 7 years, it was practically abandoned. It's located near a medium-sized fishing village and port. On the edge of town are some small steep mountains that reach out like two arms and embrace a small canyon valley. This is where the temple is nestled. It's a quiet and protected place in a rather attractive setting. The temple and grounds are among the most beautiful I've seen in Japan. There is a large organic garden here and I've been enjoying getting my hands dirty and helping out.

"The current Roshi, who trained briefly here in its heyday, came to restore the temple about 9 years ago, along with a few Americans and some Japanese monks. Over the years they have fixed it up, and to look at it today you could never guess that only a few years ago it was in very bad shape. From the beginning Westerners have had a part in making the practice here. Now there are 24 people in the temple; half of them are from various Western countries. The Roshi is a very low-key guy: quiet and maybe a bit shy. He is kind but stern. He makes himself completely available and you can see him as much as you like. There are translators available for dokusan (private interview).

"The atmosphere here feels really good considering all the normal problems that exist in any group-living situation.

continued

continued

Everything runs very smoothly. The schedule isn't too harsh or severe--in fact it is very pleasant. I never dreamed it could be possible to be comfortable in a Japanese Zen monastery. Of course this is the honeymoon period....

"....My intention was to come here for a few months before returning to America. Now I'm reconsidering. I'm thinking of making a trip to Korea to get my visa renewed, working for a month in Kyoto to get some money and then returning here for fall practice period. The temple permits laymen to stay a year. After that one must leave or become ordained a monk....

October 1983

"Thanks for those articles by Ananda. They are indeed most relevant to things turning in my life now and also especially valuable for some of the Western monks who have been here many years and have lost perspective on the monastic training in terms of its connection to what it's actually like to live and practice in America.

"....Familiarity with the rhythms of temple life and the people here has grown. I'm pretty well immersed in the momentum of the practice here. I left the temple for the summer to earn some money and make a trip to Korea to get my visa renewed.... I worked at various part-time jobs including a summer camp for 6 to 9 year olds (great kids! Lots of swimming) and as an extra in a major Japanese film production about the Occupation after WWII. It's basically an anti-war film, with the American Occupation portrayed favorably.

"....Went to Korea August 22 and stayed nearly a month. It seems as though everything that happened the whole time there was incredible, starting out with getting pickpocketed in a port town on my second day. Lost all the money I'd saved over the summer and then some--every bit in cash. Luckily a fellow traveler gave me 40 bucks to tide me over until I could get some money sent. Ended up staying in Buddhist temples and hermitages nearly the whole month. Having no money turned it into a pilgrimage of sorts. Again and again I was helped generously by warm, kind people.

"All the Korean temples are painted in intricate patterns inside and out with brilliant colors. Psychedelic as can be. Sutras are sung beautifully instead of droaned out in low monotones as in Japan. The open unreserved nature of the Korean people was quite a refreshing contrast to the cool Japanese style. It was facinating to see how Buddhism has manifested in another culture....

continued

"One of the big temples I went to was too full for me to stay very long so I was sent to a small 3-person hermitage 2 hours up a mountain trail. It was magnificent and I stayed a week. A great old master was there who sat day and night. I was given my own room, meals and a full schedule of meditation. The place was 800 years old with 2 big gnarled cypress trees in back and a gay garden of fruit trees and flowers in front. Below a fine vista of a river valley with rice terraces climbing the mountains in every direction, and beyond that ranges and peaks visible almost 180° on the horizon. Clouds, mists, fog, all opening from time to time to reveal this bird's-eye view from eternity. Ironically there was a telephone, huge bouquets of plastic flowers on the altar, and a grand 300-year old shithouse--a 4-holer with a men's and women's side.

"....Now, suddenly back in Japan very busy chopping wood, tending to the garden, washing lots of dishes, chanting sutras and sitting facing the wall. "WHAT IS IT?"

"....Fall season is very busy. Lots of takahatsu (begging) which I find rather difficult to do wholeheartedly because it's so ritualized and done, not so much out of genuine monetary need as a way of the temple being visible in public and keeping up an expected tradition and image. But I love chanting the sutras at the top of my voice: "Kanzeon bo nen nen Kanzeon...etc."

"....Working a lot in the kitchen. I'm low man on the totem pole. Now that they know I can take it, everyone is really getting on my case about every detail. "PAY ATTENTION!" in many forms is impressed upon me rather strongly....

"....As it gets more down to the nitty-gritty in the practice I'm having another look at sitting and what it means to me and why I'm doing it. It's just a feeling of something I want to do--sitting that is. I don't have the deep spiritual aspiration to become enlightened or to save all sentient beings. I appreciate the vows and they are meaningful to me, but when I really look at my practice honestly I see that it's primarily for myself. I would like to be more selfless. I want to be able to sit well and to bring that empty mind into daily life. I've submitted to the conditions of the situation here in order to be able to sit in this extraordinarily quiet place. But I haven't truly surrendered to anything except that effort to abandon myself in everything I do and be fully present for the moment.

"The bottom-line is that I'm grateful to be in this place now...."

Warmest wishes,

Henri

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Alphabet Soup in the American Gulag

Taking Aleksandr'Solzhenitsyn's Russian "Gulag" and applying the term casually to the contemporary American Psychology and it's interdependence with language, we arrive at life in the smelting pot known as Modern Mind, or more humorously, the Prison of Wishes.(I wish the world was as tired as I so we could all stop and get our bearings together.) Modern Mind, a prison of sophisticated psychologies,monitored by statistics,psychiatry, Madison Avenue, narcotics, nationalisms, and an underlying hunger for the "New Deal", to borrow a slogan from the Roosevelt Era. The Kali Yuga has become the Neon Aeon: Ecclesiastical Electronics for the Modern Man. " See Spot Jump" in his Pac*Man Palace.....Bright Lights.....Big City.

"See Spot Jump" is a phrase we all recognize from our first Primary Reader, the renaissance of our childhoods, which catapaulted us all through Libraries, Science, Religion, Economics, Schools of Thought, Music, Love, Work, and various other delineations of human activity known collectively as "getting an education" or Typifying life in language and thought for the great cultural communication.

The many languages of this Planet and the people who speak them seem to have arrived at some cross purpose. David Chadwick, a San Francisco Zen Center friend and priest, recently sent me a small publicity card which said: "World Suicide Club. An Exclusive Membership. There Are No Non-Members." Randy Newman's song phrase, "Let's Drop the Big One Now,"also exemplifies this modern cultural impasse in which dues are mandatory, profitless, and non-returnable. The apex of Modern Man's achievement has almost become the disposable planet; a marketing masterpiece, with a cast of billions, DeMille's commentary on De Bade, with seats for everyone, a true box-office smash. Little did we know that the simple chords learned in "See Spot Jump" would enable us to contrive such heavenly music.

A Simple Tone-Poem in Modern Time With an Accent on Indifference. IN ONE Movement.

The well-fed octopus defends his nuclear-powered tentacles
against the unbelieving, dispossessed, and hungry.

From the bottom of the belly of the A-merican Beast, a Toast;
To sophisticated delineations of human life-space.

Culture, and it's Henchman, Language, devour the un-suspecting New-Born. Don't cry baby, the Raging Beast of Conformity keeps the earth well-economized for white-whiner's cosmopolitan quiche-eating. Here is Mother's Milk to nourish your struggle with the pain of duality.

A matter of life and death you say? If the Pope were drowned in Vodka, or Siberia served in Southern Fried Sauce, would Eithopian babies live on Fall Out?

What Religion are you, Aristotle? That's logical, Jesus Saves with Vatican Real Estate. Give to your United Way.

continued

Is this contemporary montage the fullfillment of the land of promise? It certainly seems that the fabled Transmission outside the Scriptures would come in handy at historical moments like these. A transmission or understanding within or beyond language and culture is certainly called for and long over-due for all sentient beings."Buddha Boy One, This is Buddha Boy Two, Over and Out.....IO-4." Ponce DeLeon's "Fountain of Youth," The Elixir of Immortality," or just some common sense for humanity as a whole fits the bill. How to enlighten the human condition in the Marquee of the Neon Aeon?

To See Spot Jump is an experience outside the context of language. To See Spot Jump is a totally alive experience for both person and dog, observer and observed. Since greater intellects than my own have minutely scrutinized this seer-seen relationship throughout human experience, I won't bore you with my personal brand of Psychedelic Shamanism. The postulation is enough to stimulate a point in space. Although I readily admit both the practibility and necessity of language, T am only trying to suggest a point at which it's facile road ends. For us ordinary beings, to step outside the context of language and thought is extremely difficult, although we are already doing it each minute synapse of our lives. This paradox seems to be an important crux or vortex in all philosophies and religions. Does the person who intends or attempts to split this hair, through some soul-wrenching process of rebirth, deny the mandala of the Neon*Aeon with all it's Atomic repercussions? Again history has commented endlessly on Hindoo Fatalism vs. Social Responsibility. Thus ends History and speculation and so begins The Mystery.

If we are to embrace the Buddhist and Hindu, Christian and Hebraic and Islamic freeways to success, it is important to examine the poetic metaphor of their road signs. Language being a sign of the sickness, it is somehow fitting we use a hair from the dog to attempt the cure; the Tantric approach of a little poetry to invoke the muse. The medium becomes the message?

Poetry has historically been the medium that indicates this Gateless Gate; to invoke the muse, to point the way to experience something beyond or inbetween, or as a background to the prison or gulag of language and thought and their resultant life patterns. A Zen Koan admonishes,"A finger pointing at the moon, is not the moon." Koan s may not be totally understood through the language they employ as a mystery surrounded by a white picket fence. "No Fish, No Water." takes one a little closer to the fire. The famous Genjo Koan is one of the best examples. This thinning of the Alphabet Soup brings me to the heart of this letter:

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

"Searching for the Hermit in Vain"is the koan of the Neon-Aeon. The solution has escaped our whole civilization. Is, then, the medium the message? Thus the mystery deepens. How to swallow the koan or poem and not choke on the sharpened stick of it's insoluability? "Master's gone, Cloud-hidden,whereabouts unknown, Searching for the Hermit in Vain." Not much promise here for the hungry, and yet the Zen Masters seem to promise some rarified nourishment.WHEN DO WE EAT,AND WHERE DO WE EAT? HOW DO WE EAT? The mystery deepens to somewhere beyond mediums, messages, koans, poetry, religion, and the muse. What is left?

continued

The Prison of Wishes. This embodies instincts, emotions, and thought in language form, and the resultant history of all mankind forever and ever. In short, all that has ever happened or could happen. To entertain even the slightest wish is to deny the Great Death. In clinging to the history of existence, the Ego denies the pain of flame and the truth of its insubstantial nature. Poetry romanticizes the eddies of this great cosmological whirlpool. To enter a condition where it is necessary to place one's total reliance totally on the self, without the minutest safeguard is to understand or become the self and to solve the great koan. The Mystery. Only thus is the hermit forgotten.

The Eagles Wings

Shades the Earth

From the Heat of Summer,

Light and Free Against

The Sun

Untouched

Except

By Warmth and Wind.

NOTE: We have received a copy of the Newsletter of the Alan Watts Fellowship, along with a note of friendship. They meet on a regular basis. Their address is 939 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02115
617-437-9424

Also Tom Thompson of the Woodbury Yoga Center has sent along a few helpful comments on the subject of "Ham-Sa" meditation, in reference to A. Dalenberg's letter in Issue #6. It seems the "sound" of exhalation - inhalation is not always regarded as "Ham"-"Sa". Sometimes it is said to be the reverse. It probably relates to the Vedantic in contrast to the Saivaite tradition. At the Yoga Center meditation practice often begins with the Hamsa meditation. Swami Muktananda has written a small book on the subject.

A.D., Editor

Robert C. Finch
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Dear Friends:

PEACE

I have been relating a great many things, ideas, and concepts, with **PEACE**, lately. And I would like to now share some of them, and the Reality, that **PEACE** means to me, at this time.

Life is surrounded by PEACE. As a species, and as an individual, we are at **PEACE** before we are conceived, and after we die. And somewhere between these, **PEACE** is forgotten, and, people go through (what they believe are) the mundane tasks of the day, year, century.... But even in every breath, a person is surrounded by **PEACE**. For there is a moment between; exhaling-and-inhaling, inhaling-and-exhaling, at which there is the roar of Silence, hidden in **PEACE**. **PEACE** surrounds our lives.

Before and after there is any action (or inaction), there is **PEACE**. Though the karma each of us carries, brings about a reaction to any situation, **PEACE** permeates Life's situations. Everything that comes into existence, also leaves existence, and between these is a Part-of-Life.(That Part-of-Life may be of animal nature, or a thought, or of a star, or galaxy, or even Creation.) And therefore, since **LIFE** is of a Changing nature, and **PEACE** is of an Unchanging nature, then a spiritual people declare Life and **PEACE** by simply existing. The spiritual person is the sound of silence beyond the grave, to a world in change. And so each of us contains change(Life) and non-change (**PEACE**) within our Being, and so are **LIFE/PEACE**.

Finally, I would urge everyone to continue in ; learning about, knowing, and being **PEACE**. For **PEACE** surrounds, permeates, and is....

.... A few comments on ISSUE #7, JAN. 1984:

J.H.BOYD. Engrossing account of student/teacher. I am sure many of us understand and face the same dilemma. Ultimately I resolved it in dualism. There is always a distinction between master/slave, leader/follower, and teacher/pupil, which is a system of thought. The quality of extinguishedness is "<u>beyond the confines and limits that are in all thought</u>."(Let's go beyond "<u>systems of thought</u>".)

T.Aston. I never thought of myself as something, or an object of history before. History seems to me to be a one-sided(prejudiced) account of the facts.

L.A. Paull. Looks like a spectral-Rainbow Life. You seem to have learned a lot of lessons, the hard way.

Y.M. I still maintain that with all action, there is violence... in the sense that action is a creative/destructive formation of part, and or all of the elements of Creation. Remember, suffering, according to Buddha, is pain and pleasure. Suffering is the result of deception and change-action-violent(be it objective in the "seeming" indifference of worldly events, and subjective within the mind.) Try and think about **PEACE**, without the violent collisions of atoms and ions in your brain!

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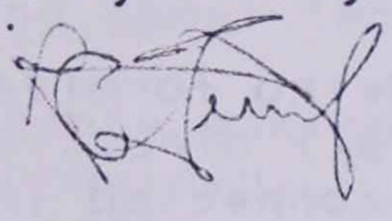
Thanks, Y, for that insight on unemployment. And consider at this time, that the color yellow, is the color of our Sun, Spectral type G, apparent magnitude -26.5. That's a lot of yellow. Van Gogh liked yellow too.

Filled, I am the emptiness of a cloudless day,
With Beauty, I am all in all....

Robert C. Finch

PEACE, PEACE, PEACE



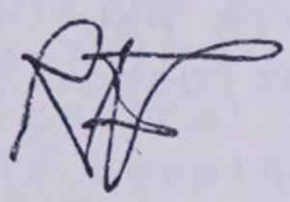
Postscript

Dear Friends:
In my reading I have found a poem by Zekkai.

MOUNTAIN TEMPLE

I have locked the gate on a thousand peaks
To live here with clouds and birds.
All day I watch the hills...,
As clear winds fill the bamboo door....
A supper of pine flowers,
Monk's robes of chestnut dye-
What dream does the world hold
To lure me from these dark slopes?

That's All,



CLOUD-HIDDEN FRIENDS LETTER: 1/30/84

I guess that we all are hiding back here behind "the" clouds. Of course, there really ARE some who can se beyond the clouds into the Cosmos.

J.H.Boyd: "Labels" are pointers or tags tied to concepts. There is nothing sacred or misleading about labels themselves. We must distinguish between the labels and the concepts, or we will make the mistake of identification. Your letter is so right when it is referenced to "concepts" rather than "labels.

Ol' Mose in Bezerkly: "- ye carry the Buddha w/ye -" WHO? Watch it !!

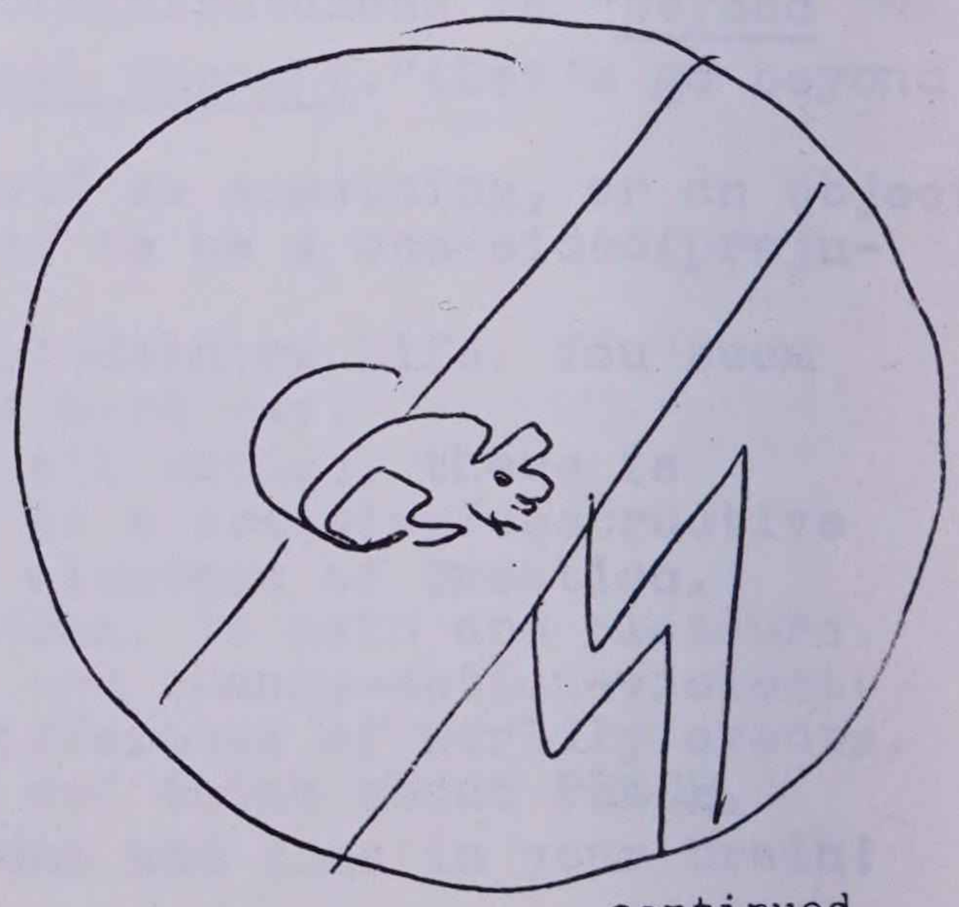
KB Finch: Being formless, taking off in any "direction" is like taking off in all directions, anyway. Besides, all things are connected or inter-connected in the web of being. You say Wisdom and Knowledge are opposites. Well, since YOU say so. Conceptually, if we agree on the meaning of the terms, you may be correct. On the other hand, if we stay away from the contaminating conceptualizing process and still our minds, then we won't be able to use words to communicate. But then WHO"? is "we" in that sentence, anyway. The Cosmos communicating with itself uses the words of man to play its enlivening (sic) little fun games, joyfully danceing amongst words, too.

On "seeing": this was the initial zzapp that hit me and that started me on the word trip. "See" has the same root as "say". We can only know what one "sees" by what he tells us. If he cannot "say", we don't know whether he "sees" at all. Thus the semantic and linguistic problems of our consciousness: the words we use to "say" define what we "see".

Ananadacloud: Your note about "dialogue" and its difficulties has urged me to the following: People, in their fear (early conditioning, fundamental, existential, cosmic fear), unfortunately, talk AT each other - we shoot off our mouths, aiming our ideas at the "other" intending to penetrate the seemingly unmoving impermiable rejecting "other". To the ontrary, we might merely talk WITH the "othee" so that "dialogue" IS that danceing joy.

Lorin Paul turned me on to supplying the long-demanded bio for me. Enclosed. Thanks for Black Bart's address.

YELLOW MOUSE



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A Short Biography

You asked for the story of what's been happening for the last 56 years:

I was issued a life-suppport-system 3 months before it was ready for occupancy and placed with a pair of Pennsylvania Dutch indoctrination instructors just before the "Great Depression". After having my logic banks filled with local trash and overcome with shame, I allowed my memory to be programmed for tenure in elite leadership roles, and promptly went to sleep. Following my conditioned example, I attempted to withdraw participation in exploitation roles by involving myself in the study of the goddess GAIA. But I discovered that the necessity of fueling the space-suit involved accepting that role, anyway. Dissatisfaction stemming from the conflict between my learned set and the information flowing in from experience: seeing how mankind treats itself and GAIA, led me to shift to the game: "How men resolve their disputes".

Placing the results of my alliance making in a peripheral role and taking whatever coincidence provided, I soon found that "nature", by itself, does not automatically provide sufficient fuel for more than one space-suit, without it being coerced: the same conflict as before. This time however, my choice was to find a conventional Guru and engage in a long-winded monologue. My program, being narcissistic, was stroked for many moons. But I did start a re-programming sequence that has continued for over twenty years. I decided to involve my "trip" closer to the nature in man.

Off to the big city of Philadelphia, where, once again, the program ran into conflict between itself and the realities of experience. But I learned, the hard way, to overcome the shortcomings in the program and make (force) the experience to be rewarding on many levels. Ultimately, this time, the conflict was deeper: a fundamental schism between the "truth" and my space-suit's (identity) name. My choice was to immerse myself deeper in the experience of man. Placing "this shit-stick" in the crucible of "Another Country" led me to see that "men" are not free to carry out what they already know to be true, correct and righteous. And it was here, in the street, that I finally escaped the vicarious involvement of Western Civilization's scientific set. I perceived "reality", but was unable to fit it into my programs, even by the worst force (which threatened to blow the tubes).

Well, life amongst the natives on this planet is "fight or flight", so I quit fighting and fled back to nature: Montana: 2000 miles from the conditioned heritage, the megalopolitan corrupt culture, and high-density populations. With side-TRIPS to the Bayarea, dawn came and I set out to reprogram my central processors. Ten trips around the local star while keeping this damn uncomfortable space-suit glued to the ground and working hard at emptying the memory cells, one by one, has required all of my attention.

Now the boss has sent me back into this high-stress mess. Now, like donJuan sez: it doesn't look the same. It takes a disciplined control to find joy, beauty and love amongst poverty, illness, hurt and death. But here I am, awaiting further orders, a messenger from nowhere, inputing and analyzing the new data and starting to find my filters clogging, the processor and the reflexes slowing down. I'll need a new issue one of these days. But then I suppose the new models are far superior to the old. Besides I might be ready for a more modern planet. Hope so, but then that's up to the boss..

Yellow Mouse

Joe Lawrence Lembo
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San Francisco, CA 94109

Dear Cloud-People:

What a joy and liberating experience to read the well-written letter of John Boyd in the January issue.

I absolutely agree about removing all "labels" that restrict us from our natural BECOMING. Labels are repressive and actually block the flow. It is like building a dam in the stream of life. Once we've become "categorized," we are as good as dead and there's no room for e-x-p-a-n-s-i-o-n.

We should stop being "label manufacturers" and concentrate on becoming "glue manufacturers," i.e. we should find the means to stick us all back together. As John Lennon sang in his song: "I am he as you are he and you are me and we are all together."

Somewhere along the line our sense of ONENESS has become divided into two-ness, three-ness, ad infinitum. We must transcend the "I" and "You" of - I LOVE YOU.

Walt Whitman said: "I exist as I am, that is enough." If we can learn to <u>accept</u> who we already are, neither better nor worse than the next guy, we can follow the path of the open road to discovery and endless transformation. And accepting who we are enables us to also accept who <u>he</u> is or <u>she</u> is or <u>they</u> are.

I also feel that labels are the cause of much prejudice in the world. Because it makes us perceive ourselves as separate from one another - hence we become fearful and untrusting. Prejudice is just fear of the unknown, i.e. that which we do not (as yet) understand. And without any <u>understanding</u> there can be no love.

I always say the best philosophy is <u>no</u> philosophy. Best to remain fluid & all-encompassing. Accepting no philsophy enables us to accept <u>all</u> philosophies. Likewise, the best guru is <u>no</u> guru (except yourself.) And the best books are <u>no</u> books. We already contain all the necessary knowledge of living. If we would only sit quietly and reflect inwardly, there would be no need for books or teachers.

"We shall study every philosophy, search through all the scriptures, consult every teacher, and practice all spiritual exercises until our minds are swollen with the whole wisdom of the world," wrote Alan Watts. "But in the end we shall return to the surprising fact that we walk, eat, sleep, feel, and breathe, that whether we are deep in thought or idly passing the time of day, we are alive. And when we can know just that to be the supreme experience of religion we shall know the final secret and join in the laughter of the gods. For the gods are laughing at themselves."

So...if you meet the Buddha on the road, kill him! While seeking to be taught the TRUTH the disciple learns only that there is nothing that anyone else can teach him. The secret is that there is no secret!

Sat-chit-Ananda,

Joe

8-16

LONG LIFE IS NOT OLD AGE

to Jim Arima, 1971

長生不老

The stone egg
germinated by the sun
and a formula of air and mist
had its results in the mysterious birth
of the magic monkey.

A happy clan,
the mischievious tribe
scattering their thoughts
from tree to rock to tree;
on the other side of the waterfall
he discovered the land of fruit and flowers,
and the beautiful monkey became king
because he was clever
and had no fear of new dimensions.
How does it happen that
happiness is divided by a sheet of water?

Three hundred years of rice-wine drinking
and entertainment between the sexes,
and the slow tedium of awakening
to sadness of old age, sickness, and death,
moved the king to consider a pilgrimmage
to another continent in search of a wise teacher.

His rickety raft brought on adventures,
but it was in the green-forested mountains
where he heard the echo of the wood-cutter's song
and learned of the Bodhi-master:

LONG LIFE IS NOT OLD AGE

The splitting of koans is the
transliteration of normal speech,
and the monkey became a lazy disciple
with a new name and new antics.
Songoku, the garland king,
understood what the brighter pupils did not
and donned the blue-black robe of understanding.

It is inconceivable how such
power is misused:
cartoon copies of Walt Disney,
the joyous battle of heavenly beings,
multiplication of heads
and limbs and monkey tails,
the fracture of endless mutations.
We might ask how
an enlightened monkey sense the world.

continued

In later times when the red flag
unfurled in the east wind, it was told,
"the Golden Monkey wrathfully swung his massive cudgel,
and the jade-like firmament was cleared of dust."
Generations sang and wept and remembered
the divine battle of demons
rising from a pile of white bones.
"Plucking a hair means nothing to the wonder-working monkey.

When he jumped from the palm of eternity,
it was no more than finger-length
where he left his monkey stink.
Unprotected he was judged,
chain-wrapped and pinioned
under a mountain of stone.
It took Kwannon five kalpas to hear
the pleas and cries of the obstinate disciple;
it was not Songoku who first noticed
a stone falling from a great height has
a greater velocity than
a stone falling one yard.
"While the violent winter wind blows by
One round moon rolls through the glowing sky."
He joined text-master Genjo in a caravan
to the Pure Land in the West,
to the treasure-reservoir of logic and science,
mantric myths and dharani perception,
fields of merit, to pools of
cosmic sprinkling of deathless metaphor.
During times of transition
societies will be confronted with individuals.
He had the knack of freaking out
adults and children and village populations.
A helmet riveted about his nervous ears
would squeeze his brains at surley speculations.

The sounds of Gobi,
of old civilization screaming
under layers of cold sand
throughout empty space, the wail
of warrirs from lost wars
between forgotten empires.
The snow of Asia,
of new communities forming
above levels of blue ice,
the lotus-posture leaves no tracing.

A japa of 100,000 repetitions measured
the steps to the mandala-seat of the world-hero.
The pilgrims were given a pass
to the treasure-stores,
"Mahamaudgalayana, Shariputra:
Please give the Chinese contingent
the finest of the dharma-teachings."
In gratitude, the sutra literature was received
and the travelers left through the East Gate of Liberation.
"Those who know how to live, feel, act,
and die in the name of their nation
are always individual groups."

continued

continued

Their heavy barge overturned
in the eddies and turbulent crossing
of a wide and shallow river;
and it was discovered that the valuable volumes
soaked in bitter brine, had no stroke=markings of the brush,
no trace of print on the curled pages,
no human tracing of the Buddha's footprints,
no signals, signs, or declarations of behavior.
An angry report was filed to the Buddha
through the office of Ananda,
the disciple of prodigious memory.
The lion-voiced conqueror was was amazed,
"The true dharma was offered to the Chinese people,
and they wanted paper with writing on it."
The all-knowing one was saddened.

It was three years before the group
settled in the White-Horse Monastery,
surrounded by apprentices, conspirators,
and council to the throne,
the heroes honored and adorned with wreathes,
waited to join the circle of immortals:
three mountains,
the pools and groves and rocky caves,
masses of hermits and travelling devotees, and
echoes from the morning star
absorbed the mind of princes and kings,
farmers and merchants, soldiers and villagers.

The inheritors received:

The wisteria floral on the turtle shell,
an imprint on the emperor's favorite scroll,
the red seal on rice-white paper, and
black brushings made visible the invincible dharma,
the eyes of the peacock, the phoenix restoration,
the historical disposition to sleep in images
and vain protestations.

Elson B. Snow
Buddhist Churches of America
1710 Octavia Street
San Francisco, CA 94109

釋信敬

Obon 1984

FINIS

A Happy New Year To All !

ISSUE # 9, MAY 1984

cloud-hidden friends letter



The "Cloud-Hidden Friends" are a small non-sectarian religious correspondence group. "Our pages are your letters", so we ask as our "subscription fee" that you write us a letter now and then. Letters should be in the universal spirit of the Dharma, and we would emphasize practice more than mere belief.

We look to Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, Alan Watts, Nyogen Senzaki, and Shunryu Suzuki as our honorary founders. Although they are usually associated with Zen Buddhism, the spirit of their Dharma was a free-ranging and universal one, going quite beyond the usual sectarian confines of Zen. They were pioneers in a Buddhism for the West.

Thomas Merton might be another example of the kind of spirit 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".

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

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."

CHFL, 753 44th Av., San Francisco,
CA 94121

NEWS & NOTES

1. Springtime greetings to you all, and here is Issue #9. Our subscribers now number about sixty, some of whom, by the way, should be sending along a long overdue letter for our pages. Something from the heart would be best. However if all you can manage is a canned speech or something, we might even then have some room for it, but let's not overdo it.

We have been on a bi-monthly schedule so far, but every two or three months would probably be a more realistic target. The next issue then might be coming out in July or August.

Our 1983 CHFL Annual, including six issues velo-bound, is at last out, three months late. My apologies to those who have ordered it. The price is ten dollars.

2. There is an old phrase "Zen stink". Since we seem to be tending in a zen direction, we should be wary of such a disease. This reminds me of a suggestion Marian Mountain made some time ago. When referring to zen in a non-sectarion and more universal context, we might use lower case "zen", reserving upper case "Zen" to refer to the official sect as in Japan. In any case, the CHF Letter certainly does not represent official "Zen". Nevertheless the more sensitive among you may at times be able to detect a certain odor. Maybe Marian's suggestion would help a little, if we were to use "zen" more.

3. Our honorary founders are D.T. Suzuki and Alan Watts. There have been some suggestions that we add to this list Nyogen Senzaki and Rev. Shunryu Suzuki, since they have made a great contribution to an American kind of zen. We have decided to go ahead with this idea.

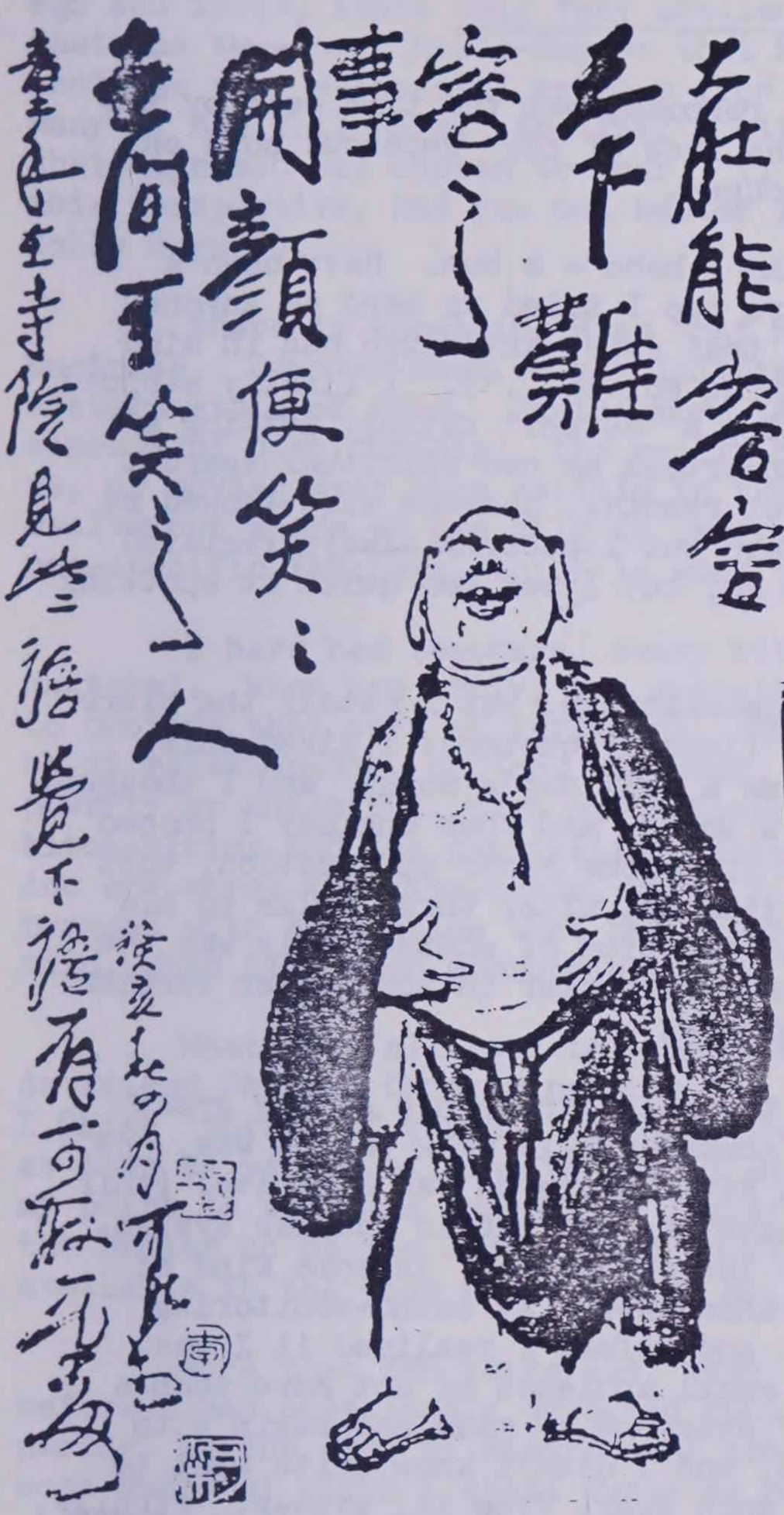
Rev. Shunryu Suzuki (d. 1971) was the founder of San Francisco Zen Center, and the author of "Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind". He is well-known to some of our subscribers, more than a few of whom have studied with him at one time or another. He and Alan Watts were friends. Alan's funeral, by the way, was half Christian and half Zen, and the Zen half was conducted by Rev. Suzuki's successor, Richard Baker. It may be significant somehow that a portion of Alan's and Senzaki's ashes have been spread over Zen Center grounds.

Nyogen Senzaki (d. 1958) was a real zen pioneer in America. He was very much an individualist, and "non-union" as far as official Zen is concerned. He preferred a simple and direct way, uncluttered by fancy robes and Zen titles. There is a fine sketch of his life in Rick Field's book "How the Swans Came to the Lake", a priceless source book on the history of Buddhism in America. Rick includes these final words by Senzaki to his students:

> I imagined that I was going away from this world, leaving all you behind and I wrote my last words in English. Friends in the Dharma, be satisfied with your own heads. Do not put on any false heads above your own. Then, minute after minute, watch your step closely. These are my last words to you.
>
> [He went on, since, as he said, he felt that he owed some explanation.] Each head of yours is the noblest thing in the whole universe. No God, no Buddha, no Sage, no Master can reign over it. Rinzai said, "If you master your own situation, wherever you stand is the land of Truth. How many of our fellow beings can prove the truthfulness of these words by actions."
>
> Keep your head cool but your feet warm. Do not let sentiments sweep your feet. Well trained Zen students should breathe with their feet, not with their lungs. This means that you should forget your lungs and only be conscious with your feet while breathing. The head is the sacred part of your body. Let it do its own work but do not make any "monkey business" with it.
>
> Remember me as a monk, nothing else. I do not belong to any sect or any cathedral. None of them should send me a promoted priest's rank or anything of the sort. I like to be free from such trash and die happily.

Elson B. Snow
B.C.A.
1710 Octavia St.
San Francisco, CA
94109

Dear Hobees:



"How compicated simple things can be sometimes and how completely simple, complicated things."

-- Notes From Japan:
King Lear, the Space of Tragedy, by
Grigori Kozintzei

I love the complexity the poem makes. It may be difficult to expose these faltering feelings in lines, but I wanted to share some of my surface feelings with you.

浄心 (Joshin/Pure Mind)

"The multitude of jewels mutually reflecting their images in Indra's net is like all phenemenon reflecting in the human body."

--- Sokushin Jobutsu Gi

having seen one buddha
he will see another
and then another,

he climbs mt. bruno
for its wild-flowers
and broken wine-bottles

there are no trees
to barricade the senses
or clean skies to interfere with

jet-engines parted to the west
with the name of buddha
on the lips of reality

the wires overhead do not crackle
they hum in the wind
a drumbeat in the ears

here, there is no entertainment
of mantras, dhāraṇīs, sūtras,
or sitting in the sun, quietly.

釋信能 Elson B. Snow
山佛流能 SAN BURUNŌ 198.

Irv Thomas
3056 Hillegass St,
Berkeley, CA 94705

Dear Friends:

For every issue received, I intended to respond, but the time went by too swiftly, and there was the next! I finally (in the face of the generous note on Black Bart) can tolerate my own wretchedness no longer.

Yes, I am an outlaw, a rebel, and more than a hobo - a bum. Have been a black sheep all my life, altho before a dozen years ago I tried as hard as anyone to cloak myself in wolves' clothing. (The wolves that James Kavanaugh had in mind when he wrote "There are men too gentle to live among wolves..."). I finally stopped playing all the games - being 'responsible', earning a 'decent' living, getting a 'head', and without even intending to, I slowly undertook my own spiritual search. I kind of backed into it - somebody gave me a tarot reading, someone else showed me the I Ching, I found an early affinity with Taoism. But I guess I always resisted this 'master' stuff. The principle made sense to me, but I was too quick at spotting their clay feet.

I love Watts' insights, as expressed in his writings, but I recall the blurb of praise he had written for someone else's book, (loosely quoted): I liked this book so well I couldn't put it down, and it cost me a full day's work! And I thought, Ye Gods! This guy bookkeeps the 'cost' of a day's work? And then one day I phoned him to get his clearance on an article, picked up from some other publication, that I wanted to reprint in Black Bart. Reached him, finally, after three calls to his houseboat, only to have him start chewing over the question of whether this was the 'right' version of the article, or whether he'd said it better in some other version that was floating around... and I mean, he was <u>serious</u>!

Reminds me of the long-ago time I was in the actual presence of the great Paramhansa Yogananda, before anyone this side of Bombay really knew who he was. He was giving a talk at San Francisco's old Scottish Rite Temple on Van Ness Ave. (this was in the mid-'40s), and I was a 17-yr old kid handling the public address system. What I saw was a rather dour-looking old man with long black hair in some kind of robe, looking for all the world like a grouchy grandmother. My sound-monitoring table was right out on the floor below the stage, and before I realized it I was literally trapped between the Paramhansa and his small audience of not more than a few dozen people. Up on the stage, he called for everyone to rise and begin with some deep breathing exercises, the audience stood, and I didn't know quite what to do, being not quite in the audience but not very much apart from it, either. Finally, to look as inconspicuous as possible (ha!), I stood and raised my arms with the rest. At that moment, the Paramhansa gave me such a withering glare (for trying to upstage him, I presume) that I don't think I'll have an eskimo's chance in hell of ever making it to any nirvana <u>he</u> has any say about.

Well, yes, they have clay feet, or they can't stay clear of the corruption of power - as we know all too well from Jim Jones, and the recent demise of Muktananda and Roshi Baker, and tales of many others. But I wonder if this isn't telling us something else than what we usually conclude. Maybe several things. Does 'giving ourselves over' to them necessarily mean that <u>they</u> must be worthy? Isn't the question really one of <u>release</u> rather than worship? A teacher is a teacher quite regardless of his level of perfection - so why do we put them thusly on the spot?

continued

Sure, it's a proper concern, the use they make of our faith, our fortunes, in some cases our bodies - but is it our concern or theirs? I mean, if we are attempting to free ourselves of the attachments, the material concerns, the links of ego and image, isn't this very challenge a part of the trip?. Consider, for example, that the two-dozen Rolls-Royces that Rajneesh has burdened himself with (yes!) represent the very successful release from those attachments that went into them, by many, many of his followers. And feel a bit of concern for the risks with karma and power that Rajneesh has chosen to bear. (I suggest, even further, that if you cannot see this perspective, had you not better look to your own feeling of attachment to a Rolls Royce?).

There is something else that may be coming to light in this master/chela business. However much we may imitate the forms, we in the west do not have the eastern state of mind. Furthermore (allowing that there have been legitimate western schools of discipleship), the really deep age of illusion and maya may be now behind us, or moving ever more swiftly in that direction. We may have reached the point of evolvement where we are able to progress spiritually on our own - or with the aid of non-specific teachers, which is much the same thing.

I have had teachers, every bit as potent, I am sure, as the various 'embodied masters'. When one truly, and awarely, lives by the I Ching for many years, it comes to provide that sort of influence. When one understands the chosen vehicle of path, be it relationship, or job, or cause, or way of being in the world (as, for instance, poverty or chastity), then one follows a teacher. Poverty has been mine, as also hitch-hiking and the publication called Black Bart (and, of course, the I Ching). And one more: the time-cycle, which I have yet to write about. Each of these has been pursued with a devotion that has given them total rein over my ego-self, my thinking mind, when it's been appropriate.

What they all lead to - each one - is that Life is seen to be the teacher. As friend Sherman Chickering puts it, everything that happens becomes 'a throw' (an I Ching 'throw' of coins). We live in the constant flowing water of release. That is, as long as we are willing to let it happen. We all have our limits, of course. But my point is that the teacher no longer needs to be the Master. Some may still find the Master to be the most direct route, but he holds no longer any secret that is not available in the wide world to the willing spirit.

More than ten years ago, when I began this late-life spiritual search (in fact, before I had consciously embarked upon it), I sat late one night in a Palo Alto pizza parlor, in the cups of misery over some disappointing romantic interlude, and wrote some verse of which I shall quote as much as this closing space will allow. I seem to have known intuitively that the more of spirit we 'see' the less we have need to speak of it. We don't need to keep persuading ourselves, and certainly not others.

On a big trip
Don't even KNOWWW
Where I'm goin'!

All I know is the climate's fine
the weather's great
the color
is beautiful!

On a big trip
There's a world out there
I've never seen!

I'm seein' things I never saw before
And it's happening so fast
and slow
and crazy
That I can't put it all together yet

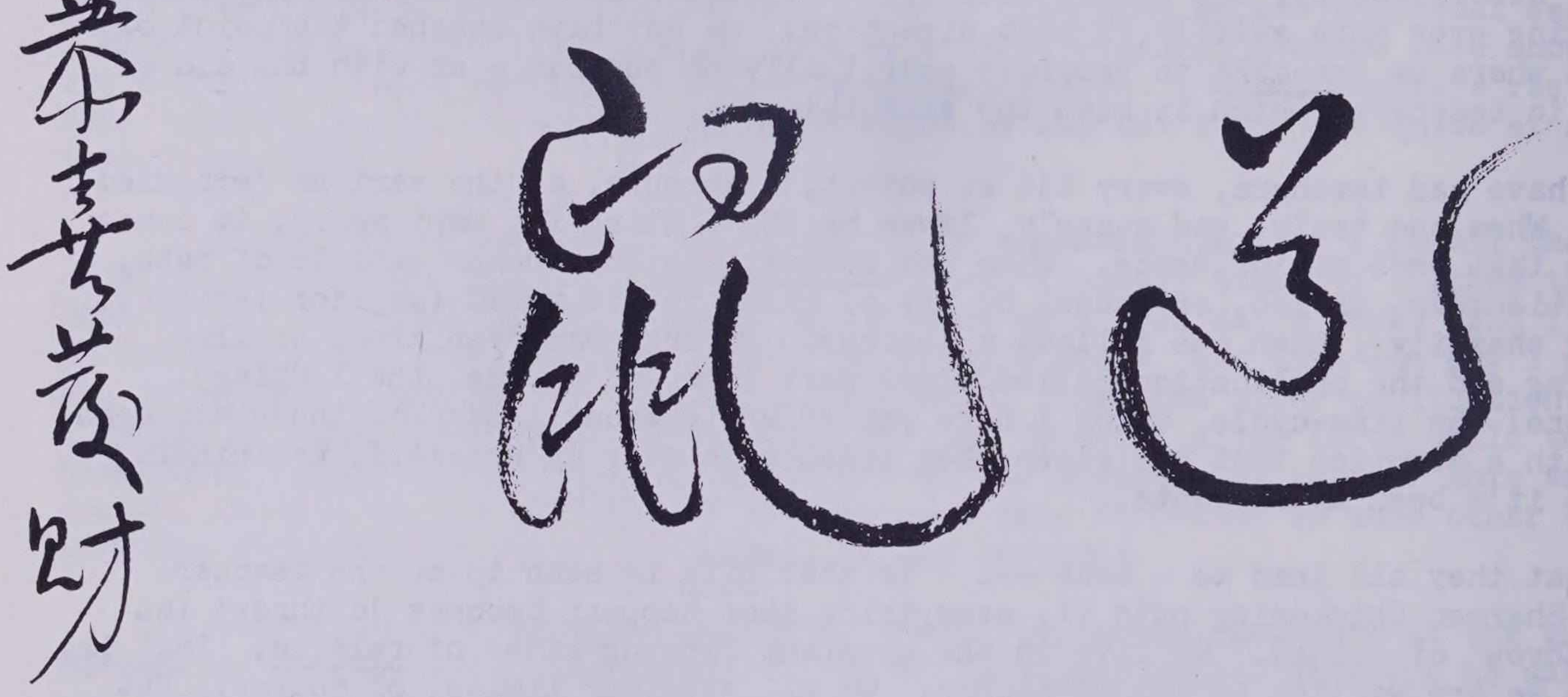
But it's a TRIP
Man
It's a trip!

And if I get thru it alive
You'll never hear of me again!

- Irv Thomas

Dear Ananda: # The Tao of the Mouse

Thank you for the current CHFL. Gung-Hai-Fat-Choy to you and all. And congratulations to all friends who were born in the year of the "T'ai Chi" mouse--a very auspicious year indeed! I would like to offer a couple Chinese tidbits, a visual calligraphy of the mouse; and an invitation to apply to our China Study Tour in October.



Mouse(or rodent), being the first animal to appear before Buddha on New Year's Day, generally shows a person of great incentive and productivity, also the first to listen and respond to wisdom;and one who knows to chew and digest "big ideas" in practical small dosages.

Gung Hai Fat Choy are 4 Chinese words(Cantonese pronunciation) of respect(wish you)-happiness-sprout(flower)-prosperity.

Our first China Study Tour(Oct.9-Nov.8,1984) is specially designed for those who have a genuine interest in the <u>real</u> China. I would like to offer the opportunity to Cloud-Hidden friends before we receive general inquiries. For details, write or call us at Living Tao Foundation, Box 846, Urbana, Illinois 61801. 217-337-6113 or China Worldwide Travel at 12 E. 41st.(suite#1305), New York City 10017.212-684-4884

Cheers! Dr. Yi-ming Huang

SOME NOTES FROM YELLOW MOUSE

When looking up the word "breath" and "breathe" = BRE + DHE, I found:

BHEUDH: to be or to make aware (from Indo-European roots, 8000 BC)
BHEU: to be, exist, grow + DHE: set or put, etc
THUS to set or put into existence or into growth or make grow
THUS as it grows it becomes AWARE = awareness
BEO-DAN (OldEng): proclaim = BID
BUDON (Teut) = BODA (OldEng): messenger
HENCE BODIAN: to announce: BODE
BUD-il-az = -il:(?); -az: he or one who
HENCE BYDEL (OldEng): herald and
BEADLE (late Eng): messenger
BUDAN (Teut) HENCE BODH (OldNorse): command, omsBUDsman

A messenger exists to make "others" AWARE of his message by proclaiming, announcing, communicating the commandment.

A messenger is also one who is AWARE that he has a message and the purpose of delivering it, commanded (set into motion = created for this purpose) by the sender of the message: an announcement for those to whom he carries it.

Using the Feudal-King metaphor, the commoner is non-existent until ratified, accepted, acknowledged by said King, Lord. A role comes into existence when and only when the King-commander makes, creates the role and fills it with individuation. But that person only exists in order to fulfill the King's purpose, desire, wish, command, will.

THUS it is our immediate need to become AWARE that each of us are individuated ONLY to make "others" AWARE of some message sent by the Cosmic Force (etc) which created us.

AND (why I wrote this):

BOD-HATI (Sanscrit): he awakes
THUS he comes into awareness, he becomes aware;
THUS he is enlightened = BOD-hisattva = BUDDha = BHEU-DHE (not "Boodah")
CONCLUSION: (you draw it !)

AND NOW: for my next and final act: THE KILLER !!!

"ANGEL" is a Greek translation from the Hebrew "MAL'AKH": "messenger". "ANGELOS" or "ANGAROS": (Greek) (700bc) meant not only "messenger" but more: "mounted courier". The early Christian thinkers (300AD) consciously used this word in translation to carry this specific meaning.

An "ANGEL" then is a mounted courier. And what is he mounted on (or in)? A space-suit: an organism adapted to the environment into which he is sent. An "ANGEL", existing in his space-suit, "comes" to earth, as a messenger or courier. Two questions become imperative: (1) what message does he bring and (2) to whom does he bring it? Taking the second first: Since there is only one Reality in existence: the Cosmic Reality, God speaks only to God: there is no other alternative. But an "ANGEL" IS individuated: thus the "messenger" speaks to other individuated energies in their space suits. But never forget that the messenger does NOT speak to

continued

space-suits; he speaks to "MAN", the individuated God WITHIN the space-suit.

SO, WHAT IS THE MESSAGE, then ? But, sir, you're still looking for absolutes. You are still interpreting "message" to mean some abstraction, some generalization, some clear single statement which exists "out there" as a truth that you might apprehend - grasp. Not true! The "message" is a flow of that pure undefined, undiluted Cosmic Energy - the LOGOS: the Word of God - into the world through the will of an "angel". In order to be made relevant and thus of value, the Logos requires modulation to the particular place and events. This is the purpose of individuating Cosmic energy into individual units: "Angels". We are messengers bringing into every moment of our stay here on earth, the omnipotent power of God and modulating it to the specific needs of the situation before us. Yes, it sounds like "situation ethics" and the concept is very parallel. But that term applies to the will of the identity, "homo": the conditioned and determined animal, and not to the Will of "MAN" that individuated spark of Cosmic Energy: the messenger "ANGEL" of God.

Tom Thompson @:
"- meet(ing) so many friends on this pathless path." is impossible unless the paths intersect - BUT an intersection is defined as where two actual paths cross.

BOBART CREOLE FINCHLEY, the 14th:
1 - "History seems to me to be a one-sided (prejudiced) account of the facts." But then too, so is any statement made by man, including yours (and mine).

2 - "- all action - is violence -" If so, then rain, even gentle nourishing rain is violence. And the growth of a spring Crocus is a violent act. Methinks this is a thought actuated by the mouth of man.

3 - Shiva is the symbol of the eternal creative/destructive reality. Suffering is what we, in our mind, do with the facts, the reality, the action. But there can be "evil" in God's creation and "good" in destructiveness.

4 - Lovely poem: "What dream does the world hold - to lure me from (here)". For "dream" I substitute "Folly", "Vanity", "Illusion", "Hallucination", "Fantasy".

5 - "- yellow, is the color of our sun - " and the rising sun is the symbol for enlightenment - why else would the mouse face east ?

6 - Yellow Mouse's Violence: I tend to load these words with guilt, bad, evil, sin, ought, should, must, compulsion (all violent). I am extremely sensitive to the loading in the language of others. I can detect, in a communication, the slightest contamination, unconscious innuendo in the tone of voice, posture, attitude, gesture or words of another. One might guess that I have a great need to be thus. Which brings up hostility. The counter is: there is NO issue in life that ever can be more important than the love of other men. WHAT ? You mean that >>>>>>>>>> TRUTH <<<<<<<<<< is not to be defended against the onslaughts of hidden meaning in the subconscious minds of men ?????????????? THERE CAN BE NO ISSUE MORE IMPORTANT THAN LOVE !!!!!!!!! Thanks again, KHAROD-BEREGT.

NOTES on Issue # 6 (just two; ho HO): (1) Richard B up there in Mass: you wondered about wandering and so herein is more than you ever wendered about:

WANDER = WANDREN (MidE) = WANDRIEN (OldE) = WANDRON (Teut) from -
WENDH: to turn, wind, weave = both wYnd & wEInd
= WANDIL-AZ = VANDALAZ = VANDALS: the wanderers
= WAND = WANDE(MidE) = WONDE (OldE) = VONDE (Teut)
= VONDR (OldNorse):a supple twig
= WEND = WENDEN (MidE): to make one's way or follow a path
= WENDAN (OldE): to turn around or away
= WANDJAN (OldNorse): to turn to
all from WE: to blow = WE=NTO = VENTUS (Lat): VENTilate
= WE-DHRO = WEDDER = WEATHER
= WENTNO = VANNO = VANE; (V)FAN
= A-WE-TMO = ATMOS: breath
= WE-TO = VATI (Sanscrit): he blows
Thus WANDER is just as illusive as we feel it: "blowin' in the wind"

WONDER = WONDREN (MidE) = WUNDOR (OldE) = WUNDAR (Teut) from -
WEN: to desire or strive for
= WINNAN: to seek to gain thus to WIN
= WUNEN: to become accustomed to = WONT
= WUNSK = WYSCAN = WISH
= WENES = VENES (Lat) = VENUS: love
VENETI: one's own beloved people = VENICE
= VENA = VENARI (lat): to hunt
= WONO = VANA: Forest (Sanscrit)
= VANIDA: seeker (Sanscrit for merchant)
Thus WONDER is more agressive than we use it. To wonder is to be out in the jungle actively hunting for what one desires, wishes, loves.

NOTE: WANT has a different root (ewa-h = waa: empty, lack, without)

But all men have always loved poetry and alliteration: both of these roots are similar. The correct vowel sound is more precisely the neutral sound. (Does WEN come out of WE ?). 8000 years before Christ the sound WE (a whispered blown "whe") was the wind imitated. If "desire: what we strive for" is WE with a nasal ending (whe-nnnn like in Ommmm), did WUN mean that such desires and their acheivement were ablowin' in the wind, too; ergo illusory ? Sounds like Maya to me.

AND (2) Ananda, you turned me on with the word "Namo" from NAMATI: to bow. It was so much like NAME, that I just HAD TO go to work. Herein:

NAME = NAMA (OldE) = NAMON (Teut)
= NOMEN (Lat): name and repute
= ONOMA (Grk) also suffixes - onym or -onymy: name

from GNOSIS = GNOMON = GNO: to know + MON: man or individual
THUS the known one: he who is named: the named
ALSO an indicator such as the stylus on a sundial
AND one who knows (what time it is), judge, interpreter
= GIGNOSKEIN (Grk): intuitive, intellectual or esoteric
Knowledge; apprehension of spiritual truth

from GNO: know, to make known, to declare
= KEN: well known, usual, familiar = COUTH = KINfolk
= ACCOGNOSCERE = ACOGNITARE = AQUEYNTEN = ACQUAINT
= AD + COM + GNOSCERE: to know completely
= AGNOSTIC = A from AD: not + GNOSTIC: not to know
= RECOGNIZE = RE: again + COGNOSC-: to know again
aware that something has been perceived before
= COGNIZANT: fully informed, conscious knowledge
CO:intensive + GNOSC-: to become acquainted with
= IN: not + GNORA: know = not know = IGNORE, IGNORANT
= GNOSCERE = NOSCERE = NOTUS = NOTE, NOTICE, NOTION
= CONNOISSEUR: COM + GNOSCERE: he knows completely
THUS KNOW: to become so familiar with something, by careful, attentive and frequent observation that one may impart it clearly to others.

PLUS MON from ME: good, timely, seasonal
= MA-TURO = mature, ripe
= MA-NI = MANE, MANUS: God
= MAN, MON: a man, the individual, one = AT-MAN
THUS MON is the good, mature individual (man)

THUS GNOMEN: the good mature one who tells about something familiar

ALSO from NEM: to assign, allot, take
= NIMAN (OldE): to take, seize
= NAEMEL " : quick to seize = NIMBLE
= NUMOL " : quick at learning "
= NEMEIN (Grk): to allot
= NOMOS " : portion, usage, custom, law
= NOME " : alloted, pasturage, grazing lot
= NOMAS " : wandering in search of pasturage = NOMAD
= NOM-ESO = NUMES = NUMEROUS (Lat): number, division
NUMBER = an alloted name

GNO-MON [(g)no-mon] ("n" = nasality on the vowel) = No-Mo, No-Ma, Na-Ma, Na-mo. "'Namo' meaning (as a verb) 'to give homage to, venerate or salute; an exclamation of adoration'" = NAME. NAME is a word by which an entity (one: MON) is distinguished, valued, represented, renowned (re-known-ed).

We have corrupted the meanings. NEM is the root of NAME so long as all that is involved is a labeling (assignment) for equal allotment purposes (a number would do). But NAME's root was not NEM but GNO: to know, understand and value; its original meaning included the repute, esteem and value of the person to which the label pointed.

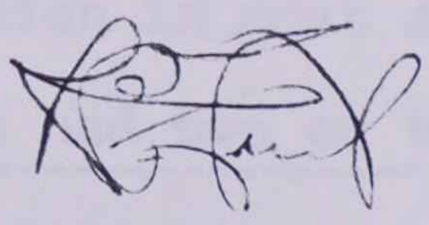
Thus NAMO is about giving esteem, homage, veneration and salute to the value, repute, knowledge, maturity of the honored one, by which he is known: the true meaning of NAME. In action, a bow.

YELLOW MOUSE
409 Atkins
Lancaster, Pa
17603

Robert Finch

Dear Friends:

I am in earnest expectation, about the spiritual growth of all who may hear, and know, and see. I am with all who are gaining, and losing....
A.C. and Elsa G.- If you remember,"Imagine there's no God, imagine all the people, living life as one", -John Lennon.
In change, there is creation and destruction. The transformations at the Zen Center are necessary, and though old traditions suffer mutation in our minds, I think a goal of loosing the Japanese culture in American Zen, is a good one. But let us give a little prayer, and respect for them both.
T.T. ZEN; A beautified meditation room. A possible devotee, whom holds something dear.
Marian and Henri. Thank you for opening our eyes to the East. Each of us seems wound up, or running down in our lives, doing our karma. What a refreshing taste of cool springwater you are.
Renee PIII. Sometimes its easier. Poems are easier if we let them. We spend our first 20 years being culturally programed, another IO years trying to loose our programming, IO years going nowhere, and 20 years getting there. Take it easy. Go with the flow.
Y.M. After first reading you, I thought you were offended by my words. But, I see no distinction between I and Thou, us and them, I plead innocence. I have the right to be critical, or praising of you/me, us/them, or be silent. I want a lawyer.
E.B. Snow: Covered in stardust
the sun's rays struck
the Earth chord.
And Life sounded in the Silence.
JoeL. I am still laughing. What a joke! The secret is that there is no secret... I love it. That really made my day.week? month?....



P.S. , Sometime later:

My thoughts have been as many places as I have been, since last I wrote, but my heart greets you all with joy....

From Louisiana to Los Angeles, I am still in transit here in So. CA. And so my thoughts have transitioned from glorious overtones of inflated religousphantasms, to where will my next meal come from?....Breaking the bonds of yesterday, and living free for today. Though no meal is free.

ICUROK. I C U R OK 2.

I think that because of the ability to "repent" that the exercise of repentance brings on the creative/destructive dualism of art. I think such, because for the first time in 2 years, I have picked up brush and palatte knife, and impressionistically layed down some paint on the canvas. Although I don't think that this will last long, the whole experience has been inspiring.

I don't want to take much more of your time. So you take your own time, and do something with it...

TAT TVAM ASI,

9I4 N. NAOMI ST.
BURBANK, CA. 9I505

Robert C. Finch

Ananda Dalenberg
753 44th Avenue
S.F., CA 94121

Dear Fellow Ho Boes:

I still look nostalgically back to the old days of the beatnik era. I think Kerouac's the "Dharma Bums" does somehow convey the spirit of those days. There is also an interesting account of a meeting between Kerouac, Ginsberg, Orlovsky and D.T. Suzuki in New York, told by Kerouac:

I rang Mr. Suzuki's door and he did not answer.

> —suddenly I decided to ring it three times, firmly and slowly, and then he came—he was a small man coming slowly through an old house with panelled wood walls and many books—he had long eyelashes, as everyone knows, which put me in the mind of the saying in the Sutras that the Dharma, like a bush, is slow to take root but once it has taken root it grows huge and firm and can't be hauled up from the ground except by a golden giant whose name is not Tathagata—anyway, Doctor Suzuki made us some green tea, very thick and soupy—he had precisely what idea of what place I should sit, and where my two other friends should sit, the chairs already arranged—he himself sat behind a table and looked at us silently, nodding—I said in a loud voice (because he had told us he was a little deaf) "Why did Bodhidharma come from the West?"—He made no reply—He said, "You three young men sit here quietly & write haikus while I go make some green tea"—He brought us the green tea in cracked old soupbowls of some sort—He told us not to forget about the tea—when we left, he pushed us out the door but once we were out on the sidewalk he began giggling at us and pointing his finger and saying "Don't forget the tea!"—I said "I would like to spend the rest of my life with you"—He held up his finger and said
>
> "Sometime."

A NOTE FROM BRECKENRIDGE

Bridge Breckenridge is on a cross-country "Walk for the Earth" along with 35 others. They have often camped on Indian reservations. Bridge reports this interesting item to us Ho Boes: "Did you know that 'Ho' is the expression of agreement, support, respect used in American Indian ceremonies"?

Ho !

By the way Bridge has his begging bowl out, hoping to receive a bit of rice now and then so that he will be able to complete the walk. The group belongs to no particular political persuasion. They would rather express their concern for the Earth by this walk.

His address while on this journey is 1315 Spring Street, Calistoga, CA Calif. 94515 . Note also his letter in this issue.

A.D., Editor

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

A DIFFERENT SENSIBILITY, A DIFFERENT PLACE

An Excerpt from a Book in progress,
"Mysticism from the Inside Out"

As we entered the town from a westerly angle, it appeared to be completely at one with distant mountains. So rounded and flowing were the buildings that they hardly appeared to be different from nature. The town seemed to deliberately blend itself with the terrain, the purpling polkad hills and forceful backdrop mesa.

The usual idlers sat dozing on the plaza. Even a sleepy village may have problems, but from the looks of things it was going to be like bathing at an ancient, still potent, spring. We crossed the plaza and continued easterly, where we found a pocket of town which was an almost exact duplicate of the village on the plaza's west side: curving roads, sloping hills, beautiful brown or white or blue adobe houses. Because of their flowing hand-shaped feminine forms, all the houses resembled cathedrals or temples, which is precisely the reverse of the situation in most Anglo towns. A few buildings in the vicinity of the plaza had two or three stories, and even most of them resembled palaces or monuments instead of official buildings.

As we inched forward in the car, we saw lights changing and knew that sunset was near. Finally we parked the car and started off on foot up one of the nearby hills. Walking was much more comfortable. The roads were now dirt anyway. We walked along, not in the least knowing where we were going, and not caring. After awhile we stopped and sat down in a large open area, hoping to get a treasured view of town from the hill. It was the last hour of light.

But from this spot we could hardly tell a town was below us, so closely had the town blended with earth, hills, brush and the few scattered trees. At first this irritated us simply because we

continued

weren't accustomed to it. But as we realized the subtlety of such beauty as this, we got to like it, and the longer we stayed in that part of the country, the more we liked it.

At length we thought we would look for our friend's house. We met an old Chicano man coming up the hill in the slowest kind of deliberate dance. He told us that the street where our friends lived was on top of the mesa, and told us how to get there. We were surprised that the town went up the mesa too, and on the way up, discovered that there were two more complete villages on the top of the sides of the mesa, and one of them resembled very little the rest of town. It had the usual square-shaped houses, each very like the other, no breathing space for houses or yards, with large apartment-tv house projects bluntly put up here and there. This was certainly a different sensibility at work--of cold, hard, squared-off modern temper. Here all the forms had edges, circles became squares, the river stopped short.

We reached our friends' attractive bungalow a little after sunset. Later we learned that the new part of town was where the Anglos and Anglicized Chicanos lived. We couldn't help smiling.

Trouble is, I can't recall what town this was. Could it be Tucumcari, or was it Santa Rosa, Santa Fe or Santa Domingo? Or was it a town I dreamed? Perhaps someone can tell me.

Norman Moser

On the Cross-country
WALK FOR THE EARTH

Bridge Breckenridge
1315 Spring Street
Calistoga, CA 94515

Dear Friends:

It is a week now since our send off ceremonies and short first day's walk on April 1st. April Fools day. We have walked 120 miles and having a day off. We are 31 full timers and one or two more, in and out, now and then.

Alice, the oldest, is 64. Ralph is 55. Im 53, Michael is 10. The others are mostly in their twenties or thirties about 50/50 male/female. Blonds & brunettes, Protestants, Catholics, Jews, New Agers, no Blacks, Orientals or Browns. One Red, George, a Sun Dance Warrior.

George has conducted sweats, pipe ceremonies, a 100 mile ceremony and has given lots of advice. He returned to Bolinas yesterday and will meet us again at Four Corners and probably again in the Black Hills of South Dakota. We carry a sacred staff at the front of the walk and a sacred pipe in which tobacco and only tobacco may be smoked only on ceremonies. George offers these "Hexes" - white and grey magic which most accept with philosophic interpretation based on American Indian nature mysticism and East Indian Karma theory.

We have meetings, meetings, meetings. General meetings, committee (Transportation, Publicity, Overnight Health + Safety) meetings, Food Group meetings. In Pt. Reyes, we agreed to make decisions on a consensus basis. Doug the originator/coordinator of the walk does not want to be "Dictator". No one else volunteered to take the role. No dicator, no boss, no final authority and no only-member-of-the-crowd-party-democracy, either. Each has his/her say, each one can oppose the group, each one is empowered, each one must agree for decision to be reached. It will often be slow, chaotic awkward, frustrating but the quiet and withdrawn will be encouraged to speak out, the loud will often have to listen and really hear all are empowered and many will speak from the heart.

We are creating an intentional community. (I feel joy as I write this.) I had always thought communities

were tied to a place but we are nomads. Our place is the earth. Our house is inside ourselves rather than outside.

A week ago Saturday we visited some Navajo Elders and received an unexpected invitation from George to attend a "sweat" the next day. This is what I wrote shortly after:

Off to Bolinas
To a house above the beach
facing the ocean
In a clearing on the bluff
A fire pit and a small Willow branch dome
A depression in the ground at its center.
Building a fire
Heating a pile of rocks
Covering the dome with blankets
Preparing the sweat

George Martin, Alaskan Indian
Warrior of the Sun Dance
Dark skinned, big bellied, nearsighted
Long hair, straight, black, tied in a pony tail
The sweat master.

Four groups of us
Seven or eight people at a time
Bend down or on hand and knee
Enter the low door with humility
Sqat down on sage covered ground
Hunched over, squeezed together
Hot rocks brought in - red hot
Door flap closed

Sage smoke around the circle
Prayers spoken around the circle
Prayers to the Great Spirit
To God, to the Grandmother, the Grandfather
Or whatever names are chosen
Sacred pipe around the circle
More prayers.
Words of respect, spoken appreciations
Finish your prayers saying:
"All my relations.

Pour water on the rocks
Steam - lots of steam
Hot steam - very hot steam
Very very hot steam!
Sweat pores out
Bodies become small rivers
Water streaming down

More water more steam
Getting hotter, gasp!
Too hot to breathe
Door flap is open
Cool air rushes in
Breathe!

Repeat it all three times
More rocks, more prayers, more water, more steam
More sweat
Fear of aphixiation sweat
More air
Release

Outside around the fire
Bright and crackling in the sunset dusk
Cleansed, enspirited, respected + respecting
Filled with gratite for our master/guide
Bodies cold outside warm inside
Sounds of the Pacific reaching the Western shore
Gazing toward far hills in the East
We walk that direction tomorrow
The spirit of this day traveling with us.

For me it's a seven month new age, holistic healing, human potential, mystical religion workshop, physically, psychologically, spiritually. Seven or eight hours of daily exercise stretching a little, walking a lot. My choice to eat only grains, fruits, vegetables and a little fish. No tobacco, no sugar, no cholesterol, little fat, little salt. Small and large groups, consensus process, American Indian ritual, shamanism, sorcery. Power games - individual growth. Blisters, poison oak, sore feet, tired joints, massage, herbal cures, band aids, moleskin, molefoam Sunscreen lotion, chapstick, awareness training. Discover how to incorporate Zen breathing practice into walking and use the Course In Miracles to step away from anger + upset and forgive others. Concentrate out of the monkey mind ego chatter and listen to the inner guide. A $10,000 workshop at Esalen or Harbin or someplace like that.

With feelings of great gratitude to All my sponsors, All my relations, I am in short:

"Having a wonderful time
Wish you were here"

Love, Peace, Joy

Brett

(P.S. we're getting lots of good press coverage, media, etc.)



BUDDHA-NATURE

Ink Drawing by J. Lawrence Lembo



ISSUE #10 AUGUST, 1984

cloud-hidden friends letter



Lord Buddha preaching the Dharma with Shāriputra Sthavira and Mah Maāudglyāyana Sthavira.

The "Cloud-Hidden Friends" are a small non-sectarian religious correspondence group. "Our pages are your letters", so we ask as our "subscription fee" that you write us a letter now and then. Letters should be in the universal spirit of the Dharma, and we would emphasize practice more than mere belief.

We look to Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, Alan Watts, Nyogen Senzaki, and Shunryu Suzuki as our honorary founders. Although they are usually associated with Zen Buddhism, the spirit of their Dharma was a free-ranging and universal one, going quite beyond the usual sectarian confines of Zen. They were pioneers in a Buddhism for the West.

Thomas Merton might be another example of the kind of spirit 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".

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

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."

CHFL, 753 44th Av., San Francisco, CA 94121



206 Maplewood St.
Watertown, Ma. 02172

Dear CHFriends,

Just recently I seem to be meeting more activist people very much involved in many aspects of the nuclear protest.(Jerry Jud who runs the Shalom MTN. Retreat Center, Livingston Manor, N.Y,since 1976,off to stand in the face and obscenity of the Pentagon and others). Bravo Jerry!!!!'

After all,it is the issue of our times!! Or is it ? Does the pollution of the mind come first. ? With Reagan lying to us day after day about OUR SECURITY while he force feeds the fat cats licking his heels. With my budget shrinking fast I ponder whether I should become an activist and protester again.

For many years I have told myself that adaptation and responsiveness to life conditions not argument,protest and dissent is the Way. That my prime work is to change my life not that of society. Changes in society it is said will always come with the changes wrought in the individual.

"What do you say, CHFriends?" Instead of stormimg the Pentagon should I not go herb picking on the mountain ? If I cannot restrain the world's powers should not my real work be to restrain my mind and double my time in zazen meditation? Really what do I care of the lack of restraint of others!! Remember the story of Hakuin as retold by Nyogen Senzaki and Paul Reps in Zen Flesh Zen Bones ,"Is That So?"When a beautiful Japanese girl who lived near him became pregnant by someone else Hakuin was accused as the father. He only answered , " Is that so?" and was driven out of the community. Later on after the birth he took care of the baby and finally the girl told forgiving everyone it was a young man living nearby who was the father. The parents, came at once to Hakuin (the famous Master) who willingly gave up the child and all he said is: "Is that so?"

Old Lao Tzu often comes to me and says (in his TAO TE CHING):

The student learns by daily gain
The Way is gained by daily loss
Loss after loss until at last comes rest
By letting go all gets done
The world is won by those who let it go.

Answering my own query (at least for tonight), I'll pick up the TAO TE CHING and reread it perhaps for the 23rd time and sit for an extra hour tomorrow.

HO- Richard

P.S. Just before mailing: "The discipline is the willingness to be unwilling and to accept the consequenses of such unwillingness!! I am told non-action (wu-wei) is the Way. I will avoid, it is said any action that does not arise spontaneously from present circumstances. Whatare my present circumstances?

June 2I, I984

Greetings One/All:

May each of your losses be greater than the last, and each thing found be greater still.

Why do the Jains take such elaborate measures tc prevent killing? Why? Logically, their religion recognizes that the individual is responsible for all actions, and actions are not redeemed.

Yellow Mouse, I have seen a gentle rain fall upon dead branches. There was no magical nostalga as the drops exploded on the branches, turning the drops into a million suns. A burning bush! Holy Moses!

And a spring crocus grows not because of its beauty to the human eye.... The sun warms the Earth, energy is absorbed, atoms vibrate quicker, more frequent collisions..., and an integrated system of mass and energy, generates an energy/mass wall, which is relatively equilibrious to surroundings, and is thereby called a crocus.. Let us not look at nature with a romantic eye, but remember a gentle rain is merely a relatively small flood. Its in the eye of the beholder... The speed of a transformation, be it 10^{-8} sec(to split U_{235}), or a few billion years for a sun to live and die, does not alter the violence in either situation. Changes which are wanted/desired/ needed, are painful when lost in time and space. (A loved one recently gone or dead.) Pain is the result. Pain is the result of violence. And changes which are not wanted/ desired/ needed, are immediately painful. (War and injury.) So may your losses be greater.... Didn't Buddha say, " Life is suffering. Suffering is the result of desire." Life permeates not only biomass, but also inorganic materials, even by the very presence of life within the Universe.

May each of us find that greater PEACE, beyond the Universe, filled in the turmoil of countless karmas.

TAT TVAM ASI,

Robert C. Finch

9I4 N. Naomi St.
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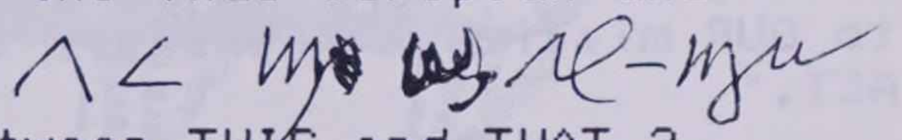
Yellow Mouse
c/o CHFL

Claude-Hidden frens:
"Zen stink": "This (Sufi) isn't a Religion, it's just religion."
My rigorous duality conceptual thinking states catagorically:
THERE IS TRUTH. THERE IS DOGMA.
THEY ARE NOT AND CANNOT BE THE SAME.
If one adheres to a R (capital R) RELIGION, that is DOGMA and thus, by definition, it is not and cannot be TRUTH.
Conversly, if one wishes to adhere to the TRUTH, then he cannot and must not worship or adhere, be attached to ANY DOGMA. "He who knows (truth) - does not speak (dogma) and he who speaks (dogma) - does not know (truth)." Linguistically, the truth is that all words, phrases, attempts to communicate a truth are only metaphors for the truth and not the truth itself. We are not wrong to try to communicate in absolute terms, but we are grieviously in error to insist (by our own authority and power) that an "other" may not deviate from the metaphor. When TRUTH depends on the personal power of an individual, that truth is dead - and of course, begins to stink.
My own set: Whenever and wherever I hear any "truth" propounded with the deep rich tones of personal authority, I KNOW - clearly and absolutely - that the speaker is a liar, a cheat and a crook. TRUTH needs no power behind it, it stands (Shushumna) by itself. It is DOGMA that (being a rotting piece of offal) needs someone else's power to prop it up. If the speaker were talking truth, he would respect it and let it stand on its own; it is UNtruth that he is pushing with his personal power. And yes, DOGMA IS UNtruth.

To AL HUANG: Thanx for your words on the Tao of the Mouse.
To the Amer-indian, the Mouse is symbolized in sign language as: extend thumb and forefinger as if measuring two-three inches (of mouse), put hand down near the floor with the two fingers nearest the floor and run your "mouse" all around in quick tight circles, maybe hidding under your knee or back of a chair leg. The Mouse is only able to know things by getting so close as to feel it with his nose whiskers. He is alert, quick, nervous, active, curious and intimate. Yellow Mouse is GHEL-MUS in the indo-european and written in the Phoenician (1200 years BC):



Brother Finchley: Is there a difference between THIS and THAT ?
Yes AND No !! It depends on what one is about at the moment he DOES IT (makes the difference).
You have a right - - but that implies that there may be some rights you don't have. One never needs external authority, rationale or rationalization of any kind to either criticize or to be silent. You want a lawyer ? You got one !

continued

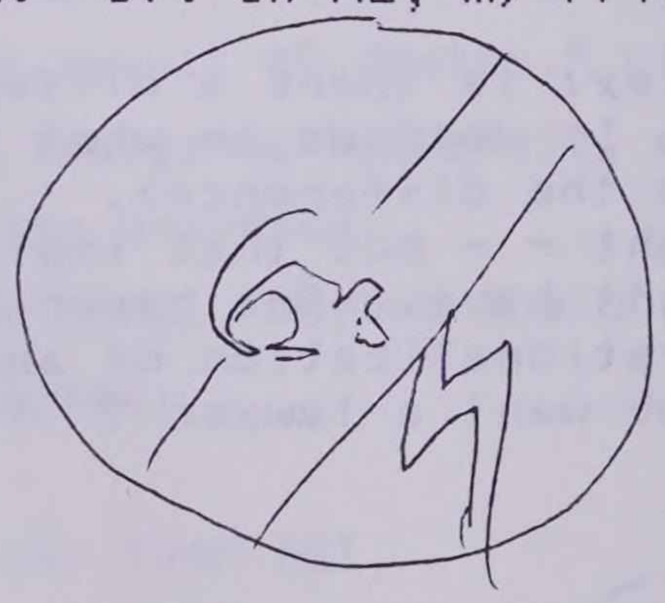
To Ananda and All:

Is this to "zenny" for me ? Not yet.

There is only ONE God. There is only ONE TRUTH. There are zillions of ways to articulate the perennial truth. Every man who ever looked at or for the truth, found it and said it HIS WAY. And his way has always been culturally specific, both in time and place. I'm not telling you anything you don't know, I'm sure.

Culturally we are twentieth century Americans (like it or not). We have been dominated by a mind-set or weltanshauung (world outlook), global gestalt, common consensus which I'll call the Religion of Science. We are just becoming aware of some of the parameters of that Religion. Unfortunately, the Christian Religion here dropped the ball some years ago (concurrent with the Industrial Revolution) and failed to make it into our day. It is now a club with loyal members who know nothing about religion (catch the shift from capital R to small r). The world needs, is crying out for something new. It is not new truth - there is no such. The Christians have bastardized so many of their words that it is doubtful that an effort to purify or reform could be possibly successful. For Americans, the "new" will have to be a synthesis (always that) between the perennial truth and science (my belief). Zen, Sufi, Tao, SunDance (and many, many others) and even Christian Mysticism are essential to the growth of understanding of the individual. In addition, each is a rich source of metaphor in the attempt to comunicate the perennial truth. That is our challenge, our mission, our duty, our destiny. Any effort (yours) to cross the boundaries reared by DOGMA and dogmatic AUTHORITARIANS is RIGHT ACTION.

So what ? Well, we are here and now - up to our ears in media hype (pure offal), pollution of various types and salvation by man (the scientists) has failed. What I am trying to point to is that THIS HORROR IS OUR CULTURE and what we say and do MUST BE culturally specific as all other speakers before us. We fail our time, brothers, God, and ourselves if we insist on non-culturally specific language. The Way of Zen, Fox, Ghandi, Buddha, Mohammed, Jesus, St. Thomas, (Blessed be ALL their Names) are all essential to OUR mission. Krsna sez to Arjuna: "Sit on ME, my Prince and ACT."



Yellow Mouse

The latest line

dear hoboes:
I do not know how to translate yojanas from english measurement of inches and feet, but I have a 4-ft kannon in the corner of our yard; I really would prefer to have this bodhisattva facing the sea, because I have a son in the coast guard and we live on a cliff facing the pacific---it is just that I cannot bear to see the bodhisattva turning its back to me! Also, a sailor who just left the navy left a 20-inch sitting buddha with me: He was tired of lugging a Buddha around, and knowing that I let the buddha carry me he left him with me in order to sharpen my thoughts and develop a little more compassion in the world. Hopefully, the Amida Buddha sitting in zazen and the Bodhisattva Kannon will receive my 4-stanza poem as sort of a wasan:

SEKKA NO KI 石火の機

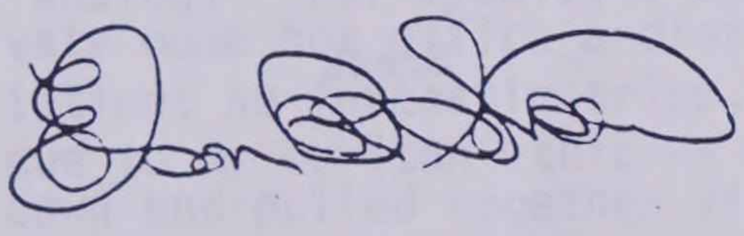
zenna: the buddha threw
the entire world
into another universe
and reduced
mt. sumeru to a poppy seed:

like dry grass,
it is essential,
"Keep away from fire!"
the tangled underbrush becomes
the nembutsu of plain wood;

Honin Shonin:
are you not a messenger
of the devil?
Kobo Daishi told of the birds
on the beach of the Four Erroneous Views:

they screech and flap their wings
over the Lake of Ten Evils; they do not
see the nets on the slopes of Yen-men, and
hidden snares on the lake of K'un-Ming.





note: The title, The occassion of flintstones producing a spark, is explained by Takuan (1573-1645) as no interval in which the mind stops. The oni-no-nembutsu scroll is from the Edo period, "The Devil Disguised as a Holy Man." Perhaps a hijiri? Bankei would say that "Buddha" is a name arising after the fact. Ippen Shonin, of course, would agree with all this, as exemplified in his non-discriminatory usage of one and ten. Any reference of the unborn has the endorsement of all instantaneous traditions in Mahayana, whether it was Shinran who ran to Honen's defense in proclaiming the doctrine of bodhicitta and its practice, or from any of the zen folk-heroes.

R. Breckenridge
1315 Spring
Calistoga, CA
94515

A Note and a Poem from Breck, written while on the cross-country "Walk for the Earth". 4-29-1984.

Willy nilly, we are engaging in a kind of Yoga/Meditation practice. Lots of time alone with ourselves without the distractions of newspapers, magazines, books, TV, movies, work etc. Just walking along the earth under our feet, the sky over our heads. Actually walking is less boring than driving. The energy of the exercise enlivens the senses- colors, shapes, sounds, forms are more intense and satisfying. One doesn't really see a place until one has walked through it. Having been a nearsighted, "book-eyed" type since my teens, I try to practice far and wide seeing:

Six to eight thousand feet
Up, Up, Up
Mountain tops flattening
Trees getting sparse
Lots of Sage
Alpine Lake, high purity
Snow capped peaks
Does inner spirit tune in
To vast beauty?
Does little worry worry mind dissolve ?
No money, no economy
No war, no death, no fear
Trickles of small streams
Wind in trees
A singing of birds
Bright, warm sun
Cool breeze
Grey, green, gold, brown, yellow, red,
Sage and brush
High mountain spring
Seeing far, hearing wide

With gratitude to all my sponsors,
All my relations
I'm fifty three, losing weight
Footloose and fancy free.

Truth, Peace, Joy, Love

Breck

Maggie Novack
1651 St. George/E-2
Roselle, N.J., 07203

Dear Cloud Hidden Friends,

Your newsletter came into my hands via a friend. It took a while before I got around to reading it, but when I did I found a lot of stuff that I needed and wanted to hear. Wow! There really are meditating people out there. Meditation isn't something sharable with just anyone, like how you felt when the cat got sick. I've found that if I have essayed a bit of sharing about what really goes on in meditation I tend to get back a "That's nice." and on to other things. If I persist, I come to note a fishy eye.

Well, what can be expected. I have been meditating for over ten years. I began with the TM sort but found it wasn't what I'd had in mind. Since then I've learned a great deal about what it is that I'm trying to do. I follow my breath for the most part but discovered Hahn"s book on the Miracle of Mindfulness and have added that to my repertoire. At this time I agree with D.T.Suzuki; Meditation is attention, Attention, ATTENTION! I've also found that I don't always want to pay attention, if I do then I will be cognizant of what I'm really saying, doing. Meditator's Lament, (or this meditator's lament, anyway), "Nobody here in this little old trap that I set and I sprung but little old me."

One of the most difficult chores that I've found is to just observe, without judgement and the other most difficult task is to let go. Of course I've found that what I think I need to let go of isn't it at all so I've found myself spending a lot of time trying to find the core of the difficulty that I'm experiencing. I lucked out and found a friend who also practiced meditation and I think she was very good at mindfulness. She and I would spend hours sharing and confronting each other and it certainly helped me. She recently died, so you can understand how opportune your letter was to me.

I loved the cartoon, "Nothing happens next, this is it." It goes into my golden treasury along with the cartoon I saw years ago; two American touristy sorts, a couple have just made the arduous climb up the cliff and to the ledge where sits the Guru. The Guru, in lotus position, is looking very compassionately at them and is saying,"I'm sorry, but the answer to Life does not translate into English."

As for the guru being the situation that one finds one in. My experience has been, right on. Krishnamurti, who is too downy a bird to take on the responsibility for you has said all along that we are our own authorities, just look at what is. I once heard a minister define meditation as the "gravity that bends space" and I like the analogy. For myself, I spent many years expecting meditation to be my own private home box office and/or very uncomfortable that "nothing" was happening in meditation; no fantastic trips, no miraculous instructions. Part of my discomfort was due to my Puritan ethic -- Satan finds work for idle hands. When, finally, I sat down and pulled together via journal work, what had been happening to me and my life, I found that meditation and my living were seamless. It was as if I'd said to my Inner Self "I really mean it, I want to grow," and Inner Self had replied,"O.K. but first you have do some housecleaning, here." Ya gotta be very careful about what it is you want, much less asking for it, for ya'll get it. Or as St. Theresa is alledged to have said, "Beware of answered prayers. The housecleaning that Inner Self had in mind was to start dealing with my issues.

It wasn't until I had done so that I began to have some very interesting meditations, indeed. For me meditation produces an inner odyssey, an ongoing teaching tale for me to ingest and be instructed thereby. I have had two major teaching tales which I have duely logged and am in the process of writing up.

continued

As I've come to understand some of my own metaphoric language I see how I"ve been working through these teachings in my day to day life. As I learn to pay attention to my meditation and to my ongoing mental chatter and to the situations I find myself in I see the parallels. Once more proving to myself that meditation and daily living are seamless. Should I get tired of always learning or not want to confont the issue confronting me I find that meditation input ceases. I'm stuck and feel as if I can't get anywhere. As soon as I say, "Oh, all right," Then lo and behold things start moving again.

Sometimes, just looking at the day's images is a clue, almost like a waking dream When I get that kind of feeling I put the sequence that got my attention down on paper, as if it were a dream and meditate on that. It's been interesting what has emerged and helped me to become unstuck. For the most part the other portions of my Being seem to have an entirely different viewpoint than little old egoic me.

Anyway, I enjoy the newsletter, would enjoy connecting with others in order to share, count me in.

Love,
Maggie

A Poem Received from Norman Moser

Chasin Birds in the Park

Like leaves in a storm,
strips of colored paper
adrift in a wind
and thrown about carelessly
this way and that,
up and down hills, around tables,
benches, playgrounds,
me huffin and puffin behind
David's light sweetness
on the air like a scent. . .
"C'mon, Dá-die!" he says,
but they always seem
to be just beyond
his short outstretched arms--
until at last we fall down
in a heap of two, or three, or more,
laughin and gigglin at our own
foolishness and fun
chasin birds in the park
in Oakland on a lovely Summer's day!

10-10 N. M.

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

Dear Friends;

Reading the last CHFL, it seems as if everyone, or most everyone, is talking about "spiritual" matters, about paths, buddhas... while our country is faced with the reality of a government whose solution to confronting the Other is force, violence, the arrogance of power.

Can the spiritual eye open while the bowels are filled with sheep's brains? Yes. The Zen Master may be spiritually mature, while politically childish--there's lots of historical evidence of this. And a bodhisattva may beat his wife, because in his culture men beat their wives.
But what is this life, this mystery we are for a sprig of time, if not an opportunity to discover what we can be? We are born old, to which we add something new. We are born, those of us who are male, Paleolithic hunters, with the instincts of predators. And because men presently hold the keys to destroy this planet, we must own up to this part of ourselves. MAKE IT CONSCIOUS. To learn from it of who we are.

Always in times when underworld psychic forces rise to assume power, it is an occasion to learn. When the Nazis appeared from Hell, we missed the opportunity to see that they are us underside up. And that our leaders are also capable of genocide, given the excuse and means to carry it out. We saw this in Vietnam, a country we tried to destroy and still don't know why. We see this now in Central America.
And detatchment doesn't stop the nightmare: it goes on in you without "you."

The genius of Christianity was to conceive a half-man half-god. But unfortunately the god-half was stressed. We are told nothing about Jesus as a young man, I think because the myth was written by men ashamed of the dark side of themselves. Judging from the stories of other spiritually-evolved men, from less morally hypocritical cultures, Jesus must have indulged his senses until they screamed "Enough!" Instead, we are told how he went into the desert and conquered his passions, and later went to Hades and conquered it for us all. The Ultimate Macho Hero.
I'm suggesting that the world is too dangerous a place, one button away from forever, for us to ignore the destructive side of ourselves, and of organized religions. Religions always gather temporal power, and power can only be assumed dishonestly, as we know from personal relationships. To renounce power, or authority, thus to face your self honestly, is the beginning of one's spiritual life.

As a man, I want to know just what this means, not what I've been told it means. To see, to accept, to ascertain fantasy from reality. To hone the edge of consciousness.
Freedom, real freedom, comes only with growing up, something so few of us do. Freedom is the essence of humor. Tom Merton could laugh at himself and still take himself seriously. The god laughs while the man cries, such is the music of the spheres, the harmony that we are. As the French poet Edmond Jabes puts it: "The sun is an egg in its black shell."

Joe 11:84

Below is an excerpt from a letter from John Boyd, entitled SOME REFLECTIONS ON AUTHORITY . Write him for a full copy at 3 Canterbury Rd. Islington, Ontario, Canada. M9A 5B2

---------- This inner determined authority only comes into being to the extent that personal ego or power needs have been transcended or given up. It is the authority of a living presence that needs no defence, explanation or justification. Its language is generally quiet and non judgemental, as it is based on a profound respect for what is - in the present moment.

Qualitatively it is quite obvious that the differences between these two'kinds' of authority are very considerable, and although they can both command appeal, energy and power, on closer inspection it soom becomes quite apparent that one aims at using its command or power in order to exercise dominion over others (for whatever the chosen justification happens to be - and God knows that there are plenty of these!), while the other commands respect only by example - by providing an authentic and viable model of inspiration through the very simple process (often very difficult!) of being or becoming the total embodiment of what is. In other words this inner determined authority is rooted in authenticity and integrity - the genuine thing! Such authenticity can only emanate from within the innermost core of our being, and it cannot be acquired by any of the usual avenues associated with commanding external authority - namely, opportunism, charisma, political or religious power, personal ego, money, expertise, exploitation, manipulation, extortion, coercion etc.

One of the key factors in trying to understand how and why various kinds of authority operate in our lives, rests with the realization that our true freedom to be who we really are, and to become totally responsible (existientially speaking) for our own experience of self, is totally(has been and always will be) in our own hands. That no external agent or authority can really be called upon (other than in some intermediate or temporary sense) to do for us, or unto us, what we alone can do for ourselves. Herein lies one of the most profoundly difficult lessons in life, which few but the most courageous are privileged to learn.

This may seem too simplistic or austere, but the fact is that any investment in any external authority for reasons of seeking any long term (lasting) salvation or security - no matter how seductive or seemingly innocuous or proper it may appear to be at any given moment - always carries within its contractual form or ideological framework, not only the opiates that bring relief from personal doubt and anguish, but also the blinkers that prevent us from truly knowing the luxurious freedom to be who we are - thus placing a very definite limit on our own capacity to grow in the knowledge of truth, universal love and unity consciousness.

Finally there is of course another special kind of authority that needs to be mentioned before concluding these comments, and this is the authority that is always present when a specific area of knowledge, skill, expertise, talent or outstanding quality is manifested. Examples of such authority can readily be found in the highly skilled surgeon, a master potter, a virtuoso musician, a brilliant physicist or an inovative thinker to single out but a few examples. However, such sources of authority are very specifically rooted and limited to a particular area of expertise, and as such should not be confused with the ontologically based types previously commented on.

The whole question of how we perceive, react to or come to be dependent (or not) on authority seems a very central factor on any quest to sample more fully the wealth of the human experience and potential.

John H. Boyd

Joe Lawrence Lembo
Box 99444
San Francisco, CA 94109



Dear Cloud-People:

Among the first of the American Transcendentalists of the 1860's was my spiritual muse, Walt Whitman. He was loved by many and considered to be a Christ or Bodhisattva. His poetry book, "Leaves of Grass," was to become the new bible. And like many hobo-poets he was often misunderstood by his literary peers and so-called, polite society. Yet his vision of brotherly love still remains timeless in today's world of nuclear madness and computerized hearts. Whitman was raised as a Quaker and followed the advice of the preacher, Elias Hicks, who spoke little of doctrinal disputes, but only of the "light within." And at the age of 35-36 Whitman experienced cosmic consciousness. He was to become the Avatar of the New Age. And still remains, for me, a real spiritual presence and guiding light.

At Eastertime I flew back to the east coast to visit my parents in New Jersey, and to make my pilgrimage to Camden to see the house Whitman died in on Mickle Street, and to visit his tomb at Harleigh Cemetary. It was the most magical experience in my life -- a day I'll never forget.

Inside the parlour room of the Whitman house were many old photos, paintings, documents, busts, etc. There was also an old secretary/bookcase containing many of Walt's books and a small glass case containing memorabilia, e.g. a lock of the good gray poet's hair. A larger glass case contained his slippers, hat, various and assorted objects and an old copy of his poem, "Passage to India."

Eleanor Ray, the Curator, was a nice-looking, thin, young, black woman with a warm and friendly personality. She gave me permission to take photographs inside the house, while she gave us some facts on Whitman's life. I showed her my poem, "Walt Whitman Breathes Here," which was published in The Mickle Street Review (an annual publication of the Whitman Assn) in 1981. She was not aware of it and seemed very pleased.

Upstairs was Walt's bedroom. There was a narrow, short, antique bed and I asked Eleanor how Whitman fit into the bed, since he was about 6 ft. tall and weighed nearly 190 lbs. She asked me what my measurements were and when I told her they were approximately the same, she asked me to lay down in Walt's bed. I was very honored and certainly tried it out.

Then she asked me to read aloud my poem, while sitting on a Victorian sofa in the bedroom. My voice became shakey, almost tearfull, as I read the lines: "The sweet and potent energy of me among you now
pervading. It is I, Walt Whitman -- again I tread
the streets after two thousand years..."
It almost seemed like a seance as my words echoed amid the silence of the room.

continued

Eleanor said my poem had real "presence" and asked me if I ever felt I was Whitman's reincarnation. Then she and my mom began discussing the soul, spirit, metaphysics.

Eleanor explained she lived in the house next door since 1955 and, as a child was haunted by stories of an old, gray, bearded poet who died in the house next door. She used to be afraid to go near the house until a woman coaxed her inside by making her a bean bag. Once inside, she would read to her from "Leaves of Grass." Eleanor became the curator and now lives in the back rooms of Walt's house, once occupied by his housekeeper, Mrs. Davis.

Before leaving we purchased some post cards and I gave Eleanor a big hug. She gave us directions to the cemetary where Whitman's tomb is and explained the top portion of the tomb (a pyramid shape) representing: mind, body, spirit. She also mentioned there is a vacant space in Walt's tomb - where members of his family are also buried.

At first we drove around in the wrong cemetary and the words to one of Whitman's poems kept surfacing in my head:

> "Of him I love day and night I dream'd I heard he was
> dead. And I dream'd I went where they had buried him
> I love, but he was not in that place."

Finally we found Harleigh Cemetary. It was full of cherry blossoms, daffodils, and tiny wild violets in full bloom. A perfect, sunny, Easter Sunday. The tomb, which Walt designed himself, was partially set into turf, with trees, and ivy growing out of it. It was all by itself, apart from the other burial vaults and headstones. The front of the vault or tomb had a large, thick, primitive, stone door which was left open (I kept thinking of the biblical Easter story of how "they rolled the stone away.") It had an old iron gate in front of it and you could barely make out the inscriptions on the marble slabs inside. I put a piece of calamus-root (Whitman's symbol of manly love) inside the tomb and gazing quietly inside I recalled these lines from one of his poems:

> "O thou within this tomb, From thee such scenes, thou
> stintless, lavish giver. Tallying the gifts of earth,
> large as the earth. Thy name an earth, with mountains,
> fields and tides..."

And I made a promise to Walt, then and there, to help carry-out his timeless message of brotherly love. I plucked a sprig of ivy from the tomb and we drove out of the cemetary. When I arrived back home I opened "Leaves of Grass" at random to a page which said:

> "Dear Friend whoever you are take this kiss,
> I give it especially to you, do not forget me,
> I feel like one who has done work for the day
> to retire awhile,
> I receive now again of my many translations
> from my avataras ascending, while others
> doubtless await me,
> An unknown sphere more real than I dream'd,
> more direct, darts awakening rays about me,
> So long!
> Remember my words, I may again return,
> I love you, I depart from materials,
> I am as one disembodied, triumphant, dead."

P.S. Any HoBo poets or Whitman lovers are very welcome to drop me a letter or come for a visit to my "Whitman shrine."

ALAN B. TAPLOW
181 Foch Avenue
Lawrenceville, N.J. 08648
March 14, 1984

Dear Cloud-Hidden Friends,

I received Issue # 7 of your letter from Chung-liang Al Huang, whose Tai-Ji Workshop I attended last Summer in Hawaii. He thought I might be interested in it since I'd recently started a newsletter for people interested in the I Ching, which like the CLHF letter is a multilog made up of letters from its reader membership. In reading it through I found myself experiencing an inner feeling of awe at the depth of thought provoking content expressed by so many of the correspondents. I immediately wanted to subscribe and become associated with this group and then to my dismay read that the price of a subscription would be a bit more demanding than just writing out a check. Aha! - I might have to work a bit to become part of this process - perhaps stretch my mind a bit - but how intimidating - could I hope to come close to matching the clarity and intellect expressed in the letters from the folks who were contributing. Aside from some beginning readings, I've not really experienced any in depth Zen thoughts or philosophy - did I have anything significant to say which would be consistent with the level of expression in the pages of CHFL?

Well, after flushing all that debris from my system, here I am. My first 47 years of this incarnation were spent acting out a 'middle class' life as a married businessman with goals of 'making it' in a large pharmaceutical corporation. Then, 6 years ago, after a consciousness raising type of workshop experience, I rediscovered parts of me which were dormant since early childhood and began a more conscious search to discover and be comfortable with myself outside of my fantasy of societally expected roles (perhaps this was my mid-life crisis) and began to expose myself to a large number of different physical, psychological, intellectual and emotional experiences (some have said "workshop junkie"). I'm still a married businessman in a pharmaceutical company, but inside, feel like quite a different person.

I identified with much of the content of John Boyd's letter - have found myself following Guru after Guru throughout life ranging from the Guru of 'middle class respectability' to Gurus of education to a raft of spiritual Gurus -a continual flow of labels and identifications which I felt were necessary to feel whole, inside of me. Much of this identification was concurrent with telling myself that I was 'my own person', and needed to be part of no other group in order to feel complete. I am not certain, John, if deep down inside I really WANT to 'graduate' - to lose identity and a sense of belongingness, though I intellectually recognize the point that in "disidentifying with all, I might really obtain all!". So much of my life's activity has been directed toward wanting to be identified and associated with a group or idealogy where I felt accepted and a part of and which gave the illusion of accepting me. Your letter helped me reidentify the magnificant games I play with myself; I appreciate - even enjoy my dilemna.

Joe Lembo laments the money which has flowed into the organizations of so many spiritual leaders, perhaps particularly many who have transferred their activities to the West. How difficult if must be to become a popular Guru - to have your own Dharma be perceived as a model for others - particularly others who admire you sufficiently to contribute their material wealth to the increased popularity and proliferation of your particulr philosophy. Is it possible for a spirituality to become wide spread without becoming corrupted? It's tough! Live simply with a model philosophy - but if you should share it with others or permit others to join with you and you now have an 'organization' and people who, with all good intent, want to support the organization and spread the word,

continued

and in wanting the best for their Guru, encumber him with material wealth. To the truly enlightened Guru, it may well be that he is oblivious to it all. The gold plates he is eating from may truly register on him as a large leaf upon which to place his alimentary sustenance. The Rolls Royce may truly register as merely a means of getting from one place to another - it has been given to him - should he not use it - is there really an attachment. What of ornate temples - hardly a Bodhi Tree, yet followers have felt a need to erect and enhance these material manesfestations of their spirituality - not necessarily the same spirituality of the Guru. It is all a good case for protecting ones own private 'aloneness', and eschewing all who desire identification. Aha! Norm Moser sez it - "ye don nedda go lookin fer the Buddha elsewhere..."

I'd certainly like to receive future issues of CHFL - enclosed is a check for all your back issues as well as a few bucks to help cover costs of some of the future ones.

In Peace and Love,

Alan

Alan B. Taplow

Another Poem from Norman Moser

Conjugation

to Dear David, aged 2

"I-fall, I-walk, I-fight, I-running"
I scrimmage with the rummage
sale next door, I chase
all the tax collectors away--
and the bill collectors I put
'em in my handy li'l box
and sew 'em up, "I phone"
for help or love if I need to
and I love my mommie
and my dá-die like a sweet wild bird
homing forever to its nest
O ever seeking to bind 'em up
as they (like all the others)
seek to undo themselves (and me)
in this sweet sacred place
we all live, still now, a family,
a marriage, my home-for-now

N. M.

LETTERS RECEIVED

Ananda Dalenberg
753 44th Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94121

Dear Ho Boes, and Fellow Pilgrims:

Nyogen Senzaki (d. 1958), was one of the early pioneers of zen in America, and I consider it my good fortune to have known him in my younger years.

I particularly remember him for some excellent counsel he once gave me. At the time I was doing some graduate work in philosophy and was planning to write a paper on the empiricism of David Hume as related to the Buddhist Abhidharma psychological system. At the same time I had been becoming more and more interested in zen. The whole thing came to a head and I decided to give up an academic carreer and to instead "devote my life to help in bringing the Buddha Dharma to the shores of the West". I thought that was a pretty good line, so when I saw Senzaki not much later it was with some eagerness that I informed him of my decision. The part about giving up the academic scene seemed to go pretty well, but when I came to the part about deciding to devote my life "to help in bringing the Buddha Dharma to the shores of the West", he immediately and forcefully replied "Bring what?" Somewhat taken aback, I thought to myself he probably didn't understand my English, which would not be too surprising since his own wasn't exactly perfect. So I slowly and clearly repeated my story, and when I got to the part about bringing the Buddha Dharma, again he abruptly replied, even more forcefully this time, with "Bring what ?". Whereupon I suddenly realized that I didn't have the slightest idea what this "Dharma" was that I was going to help bring to the shores of the West. Amazing! Here I was, about to devote my whole life to something without actually having any idea what it was! Obviously he had no problem in understanding either me or my English. For me it was an oh so rare momment of utter honesty about myself and my life. Of course my ego was severely deflated, but most of all it was so refreshing. I remember thiking if that kind of honesty is what zen is all about, then that is for me.

I still think about Senzaki's "Bring what" even today, and it still continues to evoke for me a sense of deeply refreshing honesty, accompanied by a no small sense of liberation.

Ho!

Ananda

P.S. My ten year old daughter Diane has been writing Haiku at school.
They recently went on a field trip and got caught in a storm.
Shortly afterwards she came up with this:

What a Time in the Rain

Rain
Wet, soggy
Fast, Hard, Windy
Taking a free shower
Suffering

Dear Friends:
This seems a natural for us unorganized hoboes, so I thought I would share it with you. I can't wait until Sept. 18 however, so I figured I'd start right away.

Ananda

---

one minute of s i l e n c e
one moment of s o u n d

for peace

12 noon, September 18, 1984, San Francisco

what: You are invited to join with citizens of the City of San Francisco for one minute of silence to focus on peace together followed by a moment of joyous sound.

when: **Tuesday, September 18, 1984**
12 noon - Minute of Silence
12:01 p.m. - Moment of Sound

September 18th is the third annual **INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE** as proclaimed in a unanimous resolution by all member nations of the United Nations. The United Nations General Assembly will be convening in New York City and, at that very moment, will be observing their traditional moment of silence with which they begin their year's work.

where: Wherever you are at 12 noon on September 18th. In San Francisco: at many places of worship, work and study, as well as eating places and open spaces where people congregate. (Citizens for peace are organizing observance of this day in many other cities and countries throughout the world.)

who: You and everyone who cares about peace in our world.

why: The **INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE** will serve as a reminder of our permanent commitment to peace, above all interests and differences of any kind, and will give positive evidence to that commitment. Individuals, acting in concert with one another, do make a difference in the quality of our lives, our institutions, our communities of activity, our planetary future. Through working in concert, people become aware of and manifest the essential spirit that unites us amidst our diverse ways.

how: Observe the minute of silence.
Spread the word to your family, friends, neighbors, co-workers and community groups.
Participate in monthly convenings to organize the event.
Give your financial support to help cover the costs incurred in organizing an event of this scope.

A SILENCE TO BE HEARD AROUND THE WORLD

Pathways To Peace, the coordinating agent for this event in the Bay Area, is an association of individuals from various professions, cultures and faiths working together to foster peace. For further information and tax-deductible donations, contact Pathways To Peace, P.O. Box 1057, Larkspur, CA 94939. (415) 924-2412

FINIS

ISSUE #11, November, 1984

cloud-hidden friends letter



KUAN YIN 13th Century Chinese Porcelain

CHFL, 753 44th Av., San Francisco, CA 94121

The "Cloud-Hidden Friends" are a small non-sectarian religious correspondence group. "Our pages are your letters", so we ask as our "subscription fee" that you write us a letter now and then. Letters should be in the universal spirit of the Dharma, and we would emphasize practice more than mere belief.

We look to Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, Alan Watts, Nyogen Senzaki, and Shunryu Suzuki as our honorary founders. Although they are usually associated with Zen Buddhism, the spirit of their Dharma was a free-ranging and universal one, going quite beyond the usual sectarian confines of Zen. They were pioneers in a Buddhism for the West.

Thomas Merton might be another example of the kind of spirit 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".

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

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."

NEWS & NOTES

1. Here is the November issue, successfully concluding our second year. Our active participant-subscribers continue to hover around 40 in number. Complimentary copies to newcomers, friends and libraries brings the total up to about 60. The first 1985 issue will be out in late December in time to catch a bit of the holiday spirit.

If you can't have your letter typed, please feel free to send it on in anyway. We'll take care of it somehow. By the way please leave about one inch margins on both sides of the paper to make photocopying etc. easier.

2. In this section of the last issue I commented on the subject of Patriarchal Zen versus Tathagata Zen, suggesting that the latter might include Nyogen Senzaki, D.T. Suzuki, and Alan Watts, and maybe quite a few others "cloud-hidden". It might be said that Tathagata Zen is non-sectarian, mostly unorganized, and generic, with origins in China going back before Bodhidharma. Patriarchal Zen is sectarian and generally highly organized, with official temples and sacerdotal ceremonies, and with everything centering primarily on Zen Masters who have apostolic succession from the Buddha on down to the present. I have no doubt suggested some real antagonism between the two views, although I don't actually know of anyone willing to stand up and defend the side of Tathagata Zen, other than perhaps myself. However in any case such antagonisms would seem to be not at all in the spirit of the seventh Bodhisattva precept, which is not to proudly defend ones self while criticizing others. I take this precept seriously, and here plead guilty. The following reaction to my remarks on the subject by Roshi Robert Aitken are then quite justified :

> "I think your Tathagata/Patriarchal Zen dichotomy is untenable, just as mistaken as concepts of "Other-Power" and "Self(-centered) Power" of Honin Shonin; and "Great Vehicle" and "Inferior Vehicle," invented by early Northern Buddhists. "Comparisons are odious." "Other and Self", "Great and inferior," "Tathagata and Patriarchal"-- these categories smell of intolerance.
>
> Sectarian paths exist because people want them. Even a so-called non-sectarian path, like that of Krishnamurti, is quite sectarian. The Zen Center of San Francisco, of which you are a Board Member, is a sectarian way. Let one-hundred sectarian flowers bloom !"
>
> Steadfastly yours,
>
> Robert Aitken

3. Note Gary Snyder' Smokey the Bear Sutra , reprinted in this issue. It seems to me we need more of such, if the Dharma is to truely continue and grow. However if you can please don't make them too magnificently long, at least not for the CHFL since we only have room for maybe 3 or 4 pages.

Editor, Ananda Claude

A Letter Recieved
By The Cloud-Hidden Friends
From The Soldiar Of The Wave
Of The Northern Land 'O Lakes

H.Dairin Love
3126 Emerson Ave.S.
Mpls.,Mn 55408
9/12/84.

Torn out by their roots
And tossed upon this garbage heap,
Who could not Love these Sunflowers?

Dear Cloud-Hidden Friends,

Howdy! Please let me introduce myself. I was born at an Army Hospital in Osaka Japan. My given name is LeRoy Dennis Love, My mothers family name is Hashimoto (as common as Smith in J-pan) and Dainin Katagiri Roshi named me Dairin, "The Big Fish", after San Sheng's fish in The Blue Cliff Record. I am a student of Katagiri Roshi's. I live a Poetic life & put bread on my table by: Moving pianos, doing house cleaning and carpentry.

I am in Minneapolis studying and practicing Zen and writing. I plan to move back to the country when my studies are complete. Why? Because any place that will not sustain natural wildlife is not a healty place for humans. Any city over 300,000 should be dismantled and returned to nature. Minneapolis is full of lakes which gives me sanctuarys of fresh water (I am a native of the Great Lakes, so this is very important), and its winter blizzards give me some solace (A blizzard in a big city is nature's way of saying to man, "So who's mastered who?). Above all, I am a self proclaimed avocate of all sentient beings who cannot speak for themselves.

Sweeping the stone path
A dead leaf sprouts brittle legs,
Cicada's brief song.

What do I cherish in life? My partner Jean, Hugging big pine trees, good beer/saki/wine, full moons, motorcycle ridin', fresh water (& snow which is water claiming the land wherever its worth claimin'),sun set/risings, good no-bullshit-friends, walkin' the dog, workin' up an honest sweat, makin' my livin' without rippin' anyone off, standing between tradition & innovation, large bodies of fresh water, drums, good books, gut splittin' humor, thunder, flowers, folk music and touching others heart to heart.

Zen and The Art Of Roshi Maintenance.

I believe that it is important to have a teacher and people of like mind near you when you are trying to formulate your personal spiritual path. Any teacher or group that tries to make you dependant upon it is not a true "being" in the way. It is tradition in Zen, to have an initial period of training that allows the individual to go offand explore on his own as a wandering pilgrim, a mountain hermit, a temple priest that administers to the needs of a community or as a poet or an artisen of some sort. My wish for American Zen is that it will grow broad shoulders and long arms so that it will be able to embrace all things, not worrying about differences that are just preferences as long as the heart and spirit of the way is there. The Cloud-Hidden friends are an important support in my path. Thank you Ananda Claude for creating this forum and thank you Marian for introducing Me to it.

Cut Daffodil flowers
Before Avalokitesvara
And after a cut man.
-Gassho and Ho!-

Dairin

11-3

An Excerpt From a Letter Received From Robert Glenn Breckenridge.
He is with a small group showing their concern for our planet
by walking across the U.S. It is called "Walk For the Earth".

Now walking through Kentucky and headed toward Virginia, I find myself thinking a lot about the founders of our country, including a few family ancestors who came to this country to get away from the King of England and the oppressive feudal systems of Europe. I recall that our constitution, I believe, states that we are endowed by our creator with the inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. These freedoms seem very real here in Indiana, Missouri & Kentucky where the small farms and lack of crowding seem to nurture a strong sense of personal worth and 'independance. I suppose a lot of these people will vote for Ronald Reagan, more defense and less welfare. Being away from the misery and crowding of cities it is easy to see why.

In any event it seems quite clear that America still provides most of us with a chance to have life, liberty & happiness but these are and have always been something that each of us must find for ourselves and the governmental system can only provide a situation where that is possible. Here, now, away from schools, jobs, large and rather inflexible institutions, one can pursue life & liberty with gusto. The walk group provides a perfect laboratory/workshop to speak out, take risks, explore and expand ones limits to freedom & happiness. The here and now, day to day, down to basics mostly outdoor sort of life has taken many of us away from all the security systems and possessions which often end up owning us more than we own them.

But some seem dedicated to life, liberty and the pursuit of unhappiness. They have their perceptions pre-programmed to continually discover "what's wrong!" What's wrong with the government, the corporations, the available products, the food, the chemicals, etc. etc. There is apparently no end to the number of things one can find that are wrong and misery does seek company. Even without a radio or TV and no newspapers certain fellow walkers excitedly announce the discovery of new wrongs daily.

If one has decided not to pursue unhappiness it is a bit of problem to avoid getting caught up by the "what's wrongers". It's all too easy to decide that they are what's wrong and thereby having a lot of wrongness around.

I've taken to giving a "what's wrong" report in the morning circles in which I announce amazing discoveries. For example: If you decide that eating meat is wrong for people, there are several people who are wrong - billions in fact - who are wrong-often every day. On the other hand one can decide that freedom is O.K., let everyone eat what they want and let vegetarians be vegetarian, too, and an enormous amount of wrongness vanishes in a flash. It leads one to wonder if it would be possible to think it through, avoid judgement and get rid of all the wrongness completely.

Well, in my researches, I asked a local who was sitting in a horse barn with a can of Budweiser in his hand "what's wrong around here?" "Nothing" he replied "everything's just fine" and added "That's what pisses me off, there's nothing left to complain about anymore."

Yesterday morning I joined a few fellow members of our Cafe society (also known as "WE-LO" the "Walk For The Earth Liberation Organization") for a little respite at "Bud and Mabel's Restaurant" alongside the road near Lawton Kentucky. After a few cops and a little conversation, Bud got out his guitar, shared a few pluckings & strummings with our own wandering minstrel, Teddy, and then got out his songbook and sang this one for us:

Keep Walkin

I searched and I searched
For the road that leads to heaven
I wondered if I'd ever find the way
I sat down to rest
For my feet had grown so weary
And then I heard the voice within me say:

(chorus) You've got to keep walkin
Walkin in the Light of the Lord
You'll get to heaven someday

Better get in the right way
Walkin in the Light of the Lord.

I prayed and I prayed
For the Lord to give me mercy
I prayed for him
To brighten up the day
(chorus)

I was so afraid
For the road now seemed so weary
Until I heard a voice within me say:

You've got to keep walkin-
Walkin in the Light of the Lord
etc.

Well, you know, sometimes I walk along chanting the Hare Krishna:

Hare Krishna
Hare Krishna
Krishna Krishna
Hare Hare

→

Hare Rama
Hare Rama
Rama Rama
Hare Hare

using the string of 108 beads that were given to me at the Hare Krishna Temple in St. Louis. ("Hare Krishna" and "Hare Rama" incidentally both are merely invocations of the supreme pleasure of Krishna (God-Christ) consciousness). Sometimes most of the small thoughts of the little ego-driven judgemental mind drift away. I get a notion of what that "walking in the Light of the Lord" might be all about. I'm not sure Christians would consider this getting to heaven in the right way but over the years I've done a lot of things that are much weirder and it seems to be working out O.K.

Love, Peace, Joy (and occasional upsets)

Robert Glenn

(In honor of my Father, Grandfather and other republican ancestors and the Kentucky democrat Breckenridges, too, I've decided to use my full first + middle name. No diminutives - Bob, Bobbie, etc. will be accepted)

IN THE ARBOR

Marble statue poised to walk
through roses and camellias,
palms down,
blessing the empty lawn chairs...

Rimless glasses,
starched habit,
a long life of prayer.

is she crazy?
is the Order too harsh?
talking to a statue,
laughing, imploring,
like a little girl
80 years old.

<u>did it answer</u>?

Beyond the mind.
beyond the rising & falling
of the mind. beyond all the
arts and deceptions--
a weathered statue,
an old nun.

—Joel Weishaus

1115 Copper N.E.
Albuqquerque, NM
87106

Dear Fellow Students:

I have felt for a long time that in Zen there should be a way of meditation for everyone. At least the potentiality should be there. It might be too much to expect this to be so for the content of meditation, but surely it should somehow be true of the physical form, and this is here my concern.

Unfortunately however, the physical requirements alone of traditional Zen meditation, or zazen, are such that they automatically exclude many if not most people from such a practice.

The traditional posture for Zen meditation is lotus position, with legs crossed and feet resting on the top of both thighs. In some instances half-lotus is also permitted, and in Japan seiza posture with legs folded straight back under the buttocks is often expected of women. A few zendos are so liberal as to give permission to sit in a chair. However there is almost always an unspoken message added, and this clearly reads that there is no real alternative to formal lotus or seiza. The net result is for example, that generally older people are simply not present in the zendo, and for good reason.

Clearly the form of Zen meditation alone eliminates many good and sincere students. This might be all justified somehow if Zen were really only intended as an exclusive monastic practice for some kind of elite, with a special emphasis on some kind of painful macho asceticism. But I don't think this is what is relly intended, although it often appears to be so.

The difficulties are compounded when it comes to the length of the meditation period and some regular daily schedule. Many people are able to grunt and groan and get into some kind of lotus posture, but if then asked to hold that posture for more than a minute or so it becomes impossible. However the traditional meditation period is usually from about 30 minutes to 60 minutes long, and is strict and unyielding. There would also be at least several such periods everyday, and sometimes all day long for days on end. Such a schedule might make good sense for a bunch of young monks in training at some monastery far off in the mountains someplace, but it seems not at all harmonious with the rhythms of ordinary everyday life. Nor does it make much sense in terms of a lifetime practice, and as far as I know this is also true for monks and Zen Masters, who usually do not follow such in their older years.

The question then seriously arises about any possible alternatives, especially in the context of a lifetime practice that could include everyone. Loosening up zendo regulations so as to include an occasional chair or two doesn't seem to really work. A more fundamental change is required, something maybe a bit

revolutionary. In this regard there is a story about a Zen priest in India which might indeed suggest such a revolution. It may be in part legendary, but the thrust of it is I think quite clear :

Not many years ago a Zen priest came from Japan to India. He was just an ordinary priest, but he loved the Buddha very much, so he wanted to help spin the Wheel of the Buddha's Teaching. However this seemed next to impossible since he spoke no Indian languages, and had little hope of ever being able to do so. Pondering upon his predicament, he decided to condense his own modest understanding of the Teaching into just one short and simple phrase. It was then easy enough to have this phrase translated into a dozen different Indian languages, and to memorize each. With this phrase as his Dharma call he then went forth wandering through the Indian countryside as a beggar monk. In English it would be "Ten Minutes of Zazen is Ten Minutes of the Buddha". He was often warmly recieved by villagers, and if it seemed the least bit appropriate, he would joyfully repeat his phrase, hoping that he might persuade others to join him in 10 minutes of zazen. Such simple purity and enthusiasm of course proved to be hard to resist, so he was often joined right then and there by those willing to give it a try. He was quite happy to have people take any meditation posture they pleased, and sitting on an old log would do just as well as lotus. It was all quite gentle, and there was even a liberal sprinkling of smiles. Today, years later in India, it is said to be not so unusual to find someone sitting silently for 10 minutes, with maybe a hint of a Buddha smile.

Now there is an alternative for you, and a bit of a revolution. At the same time it is quite traditional in its own modest way. Basically, the model of the story is the Buddha sitting silently under the Bodhi Tree, realizing the true nature of all things just as they are, and attaining unsurpassed perfect awakening. Also the story unmistakably affirms the teaching that everyone verily has the Buddha Nature.

Ten minute zazen would indeed seem to be something that anyone and everyone could easily do, and what is more, it could be a lifetime practice. It wouldn't make any important difference whether one were old and arthritic, young and supple, brilliant, dull, obsessively busy, lazy, neurotic, republican, bohemian, or whatever, plus in various combinations of such.

For some people the stricter traditional forms of Zen meditation are no doubt of great value. However there is also the danger that they might become hindrances. It is all too easy to identify practice with some architectual form, impressive ceremonies, priestly hierarchies , and official robes etcetera. Such can easily become a necessity and a crutch. What that priest in India then emphasized is that the universe can be one's zendo.

Wherever that priest went, there was his zendo. As a way for everyone, and as a lifetime practice, this makes an awful lot of sense.

A more orthodox view might be to insist on having an official zendo with formal 40 minute periods and all. Indeed from an orthodox viewpoint that priest in India was not even qualified to teach, since he was only an ordinary priest and not a Zen Master. To this my response would be to thank the Buddha he was not more orthodox.

In my own life there have been a few Zen teachers to whom I feel especially grateful. Among them is one Nyogen Senzaki (d. 1958). He also reminds me of that priest in India. As a young Zen priest he came from Japan to America, and made it his home. He too was a wanderer, having no permanent abode. Wherever he was there too was his zendo, or "floating zendo" as he would often call it. He loved to give talks on the Dharma to his fellow students , but he claimed no special titles such as "Zen Master". He was only a monk who loved the Buddha and his teacher Soyen Shaku very much. He had little use for the usual concerns of organized religion, whether Zen or otherwise. He no doubt could have easily founded some big temple, but that was not his way. What was important to him however was meditation. As for lotus posture, that was fine for some, but he himself sat in a chair and encouraged others to do so. He did however much prefer a longer period than 10 minutes. His contribution to Buddhism and Zen may not be as conspicuous as some, but he was one of the true early pioneers of Zen in America. I for one would say that the kind of spirit he represents is even more relevant today than it was back then, even though somewhat traditional Zen temples seem to be springing up everywhere these days.

One of Senzaki's close friends in his earlier years was Paul Reps, who shared with him much the same kind of spirit. Poet, artist, teacher, student, Reps is a most amazing fellow. The usual categories don't seem to apply to him. He also is a great wanderer, and loves to gather together others here and there for a bit of meditation in a spirit not so different from that priest in India. He is quite willing to go even farther and suggest only one minute of zazen, while hinting that later 10 minutes would be a good idea. Somehow he manages to get people to relax and smile during the whole process. If one way of meditation doesn't seem to be working for someone he is more than willing to suggest another, such as in his book "Ten Ways to Meditate". In describing him, one word which does not occur is "orthodox".

I might add that I sometimes think of Daisetz T. Suzuki of one minute zazen, although I don't really know. He had a way of stealing a minute here and there while right in the midst of things, apparently lost in meditation. Sometimes he would do this in the middle of a lecture, or in response to a student's

question.

Although I have been a Zen priest for years, I am no longer content to stay within the usual mold. Perhaps underneath I've always felt that way, but then did not have the gumption to go and do something about it. Recently however I've come up with quite a bit of gumption, maybe mostly because of that Zen priest in India, Nyogen Senzaki, and Paul Reps. Now I take the universe as my zendo, or "floating zendo". Also I've begun sitting in a chair here and there, for periods of ten minutes and maybe somewhat longer. Perhaps someday after I've gained enough experience I will even graduate to one minute zazen.

So far I find this kind of meditation can serve one very well indeed. It is a way anyone could practice, even when old and arthritic, as many of us will someday be. I am amazed at how well it harmonizes with the rhythms of ordinary everyday life. Even in family life, finding a willing ten minutes here and there is as easy as falling off a log, or rather sitting on one I guess I should say.

So, I don't know if it is likely that we will be bumping into each other anytime soon, but if we do, what do you think about maybe pulling up an old log and meditating together for ten minutes, or possibly even one ?

Nyogen Senzaki was very serious about the floating zendo. There would seem to be no better way to conclude than to quote him on the subject :

"I carried the Zendo with me as a silkworm carries a cocoon. The silk thread surrounds me unbroken. It may weave a brocade of autumn leaves or a spotless spring kimono for the coming year. I only feel gratitude to my teacher and all my friends, and fold my hands palm to palm."

Gassho,

Ananda Claude



Joe Lawrence Lembo
PO Box 99444
San Francisco 94109

Dear Cloud-People:

Do you believe in miracles?

When I first visited Alan Watts' old ferryboat Vallejo a few years ago, I was particularly attracted to an old carved wooden cherub that was propped up in the window. Marion (current owner of the boat and former friend of Watts) explained it was the "guardian angel" of the boat and had been there a long time.

A few months ago I wrote an article about the boat, "The Ancient Mariner," and sent it to many of the New Age magazines for publication. But only received rejection slips.

Recently Marion called me and said: "The angel (cherub) spoke to me this morning and said it wants to be in your house." So, she invited me for tea and, before leaving, gave me the angel. It made me very happy!

Just two days later I received a call from SAN FRANCISCO MAGAZINE saying they were interested in publishing my article. Needless to say, the angel had begun working its magic.

The reason I had written the article is because Marion is now interested in selling the Vallejo and hopes a group of spiritually oriented people will become the new guardians of the boat. It needs exterior and hull restoration, but has a unique potential as a historical landmark, a commericial enterprise, or a private residence. And with appropriate planning and renovation it could house a museum, gallery, cultural or educational center or retreat.

The Vallejo has approx. 4,000 square feet of living space, which includes three apartments with kitchen/bath, two pilot houses, and a large gallery/reception hall. The interior appears to be in fine, livable condition.

Alan Watts used to say that the old ferryboat was like an <u>oyster</u>: all rough on the outsideand beautiful on the inside. (Certainly it contains pearls of wisdom!)

If you know of anyone who may be interested in purchasing the old ferryboat and carrying on its rich tradition, please write or call MARION SALTMAN, 36 Varda Landing, Sausalito, Ca 94965. (415) 331-1495. Thanks!

SMOKEY THE BEAR SUTRA

Once in the Jurassic, about 150 million years ago, the Great Sun Buddha in this corner of the Infinite Void gave a great Discourse to all the assembled elements and energies: to the standing beings, the walking beings, the flying beings, and the sitting beings—even grasses, to the number of thirteen billion, each one born from a seed, were assembled there: a Discourse concerning Enlightenment on the planet Earth.

"In some future time, there will be a continent called America. It will have great centers of power called such as Pyramid Lake, Walden Pond, Mt. Rainier, Big Sur, Everglades, and so forth; and powerful nerves and channels such as Columbia River, Mississippi River, and Grand Canyon. The human race in that era will get into troubles all over its head, and practically wreck everything in spite of its own strong intelligent Buddha-nature."

"The twisting strata of the great mountains and the pulsings of great volcanoes are my love burning deep in the earth. My obstinate compassion is schist and basalt and granite, to be mountains, to bring down the rain. In that future American Era I shall enter a new form: to cure the world of loveless knowledge that seeks with blind hunger; and mindless rage eating food that will not fill it."

And he showed himself in his true form of

SMOKEY THE BEAR.

A handsome smokey-colored brown bear standing on his hind legs, showing that he is aroused and watchful.

Bearing in his right paw the Shovel that digs to the truth beneath appearances; cuts the roots of useless attachments, and flings damp sand on the fires of greed and war;

His left paw in the Mudra of Comradely Display—indicating that all creatures have the full right to live to their limits and that deer, rabbits, chipmunks, snakes, dandelions, and lizards all grow in the realm of the Dharma;

Wearing the blue work overalls symbolic of slaves and laborers, the countless men oppressed by a civilization that claims to save but only destroys;

Wearing the broad-brimmed hat of the West, symbolic of the forces that guard the Wilderness, which is the Natural State of the Dharma and the True Path of man on earth; all true paths lead through mountains

With a halo of smoke and flame behind, the forest fires of the kali-yuga, fires caused by the stupidity of those who think things can be gained and lost whereas in truth all is contained vast and free in the Blue Sky and Green Earth of One Mind;

Round-bellied to show his kind nature and that the great earth has food enough for everyone who loves her and trusts her;

Trampling underfoot wasteful freeways and needless suburbs; smashing the worms of capitalism and totalitarianism;

Indicating the Task: his followers, becoming free of cars, houses, canned food, universities, and shoes, master the Three Mysteries of their own Body, Speech, and Mind; and fearlessly chop down the rotten trees and prune out the sick limbs of this country America and then burn the leftover trash.

Wrathful but Calm, Austere but Comic, Smokey the Bear will Illuminate those who would help him; but for those who would hinder or slander him,

HE WILL PUT THEM OUT.

Thus his great Mantra:

Namah samanta vajranam chanda maharoshana
Sphataya hum traka ham mam

"I DEDICATE MYSELF TO THE UNIVERSAL DIAMOND
BE THIS RAGING FURY DESTROYED"

And he will protect those who love woods and rivers, Gods and animals, hobos and madmen, prisoners and sick people, musicians, playful women, and hopeful children;

And if anyone is threatened by advertising, air-pollution, or the police, they should chant

SMOKEY THE BEAR'S WAR SPELL:

DROWN THEIR BUTTS
CRUSH THEIR BUTTS
DROWN THEIR BUTTS
CRUSH THEIR BUTTS

And SMOKEY THE BEAR will surely appear to put the enemy out with his vajra-shovel.

Now those who recite this Sutra and then try to put it in practice will accumulate merit as countless as the sands of Arizona and Nevada,
Will help save the planet Earth from total oil slick,
Will enter the age of harmony of man and nature,
Will win the tender love and caresses of men, women, and beasts
Will always have ripe blackberries to eat and a sunny spot under a pine tree to sit at,

AND IN THE END
WILL WIN HIGHEST PERFECT ENLIGHTENMENT.

thus have we heard.

(may be reproduced free forever)

Gary Snyder

Marian Mountain
Coastlands
Big Sur, CA 93920

Dear Cloud-Hidden Friends,

The question posed in Richard Boersler's letter (issue # 10) seems to me to be relevant to all of us who practice some form of meditation. Action or non-action? Is that really the question? Is there a difference between storming the Pentagon and herb-picking on the mountain? Would it be better to sit an extra hour tonight or use that time to write a letter to my congressman? Is one way better than another?

If wu-wei (no action that doesn't arise spontaneously from present circumstances) is the Way (to avoid getting tossed about on the horns of the action vs. non-action dilemma) then before we ask the question "What are my present circumstances?" it might be helpful to ask the question "What is an action that arises spontaneously from present circumstances?"

Doesn't all action arise spontaneously from present circumstances? Isn't wu-wei the natural way of life? And isn't it "thought" tacked on to spontaneous action that creates the confusion? It seems to me that when we try to justify to ourselves and to others why we do or don't do something we create unnecessary problems for ourselves. How can anyone know their present circumstances--completely? John Muir said, "When one tugs at a single thing in nature he finds it attached to the rest of the world." And when one tugs at a single explanation for doing or not doing something one finds it attached to the rest of the world's ever-changing events.

Suzuki Roshi addressed this matter of spontaneous action in his book ZEN MIND, BEGINNER'S MIND (p. 30) when he said: " You may say 'This is bad, so I should not do this'. Actually when you say, 'I should not do this', you are doing not-doing in that moment. So there is no choice for you. When you separate the idea of time and space, you feel as if you have some choice, but actually, you have to do something, or you have to do not-doing. Not-to-do something is doing something. Good and bad are only in your mind. So we should not say, 'This is good', or 'This is bad'. Instead of saying bad, you should say 'not-to-do'! If you think, 'This is bad', it will create some confusion for you. So in the realm of pure religion there is no confusion of time and space, or good or bad. All that we should do is just do something even if it is not-doing something." When Suzuki Roshi says "Do something!" I think he means do it wholeheartedly without comparing one activity with another. In other words, sit or march but don't wobble.

With gassho,

Marian

Norman Moser

Sept. 20, 1984
Berkeley

Dear Be-clouded Friends:

In my last letter I mostly focused on how I'd gotten to where I am, my origins in a group very like this (or Ananda's Friday group-meetings). This time I'd rather focus more on the present--where I'm at now.

I said that though the road seems harder now to me than when I was first entering Zen and poetry, etc, that I still do find things to enjoy, perhaps less often or sometimes less intensely. I also don't smoke dope no mo' and now, this Summer, beeg achievement, I quit cigs. Now do 1 a day some days or none sometimes fer a week or more. Am real proud on this cause I grew up in tobaccy cuntry, Durham/Raleigh area.

Am now back to werk, my 5-yr-old David finally got to beeg P.S. Kindergarten, and it's freakin him out some, compared to his cute small Bilengual Daycare center from before (where Mom/ex-wife, werks). My good solid growin joyful relation w/Dave is, as one fren sorta sadly put it, de best thang I got goin. Meaning, caint seem t sustain a relation w/a lady lately longer'n few weeks/r months if I'm lucky. But that's a real beeg subject I just stumbled onto, which will do whole beeg letter on soon's can git to it, I swer.

Meanwhile, am mucho engaged with this lovely boat we got goin here, it along w/my Buddhism uv 25 years, is another lovely/lively thing I/we got goin hotfooting it along now. Enjoy all r most uv yer letters'n poultry, but recently the Lembo sweet appreciation of Whitman was so joyful & appreciative it moved me very deeply.

But it's Joel W.'s observations on "a govt. whose solution to confronting the Other is force, violence, the arrogance of power," that really kicks orf me thorts here, to wit: anyone who allows his town, country or neighbor, or another cuntry far away, to be needlessly raped, sacked, etc, is not understanding his Buddhism or other mysticism properly. That's one level of the argument. I agree w/ole buddy Joel on this. But I want to take it a leetle farther as I feel it.

Does the govt. have any meaning in our lives that is tangible? Local govt., maybe. And yet, if it weren't fer the Fed. Govt., hardly any of the Civil Rights victories would've been won over the years. I used to think for sure that govt. didn't matter, that it only mattered what /I/ felt. I see now, that doesn't work. We ARE sharing a planet with folks many of whom we do not love or like or understand very well. Partly it's about just that, trying to somehow get along with others. Also, a very deep level of this truth, to me, goes like this: can't we judge a very elemental, deep need of human nature by what the tribal folks did, and did they not have leaders, different leaders for different things such as a war-general, a harvest chief or the like? Si?

Then leaders are very necessary. But since Reagan/Nixon can't do anything but manipulate images or people, the fact that we need a better leader-symbol up thar confronting us, eludes so many they either vote frivolously or don't vote at all. But you can also take another tack on this: So you personally don't need Reagan or any other leader to inspire or govern you? Perhaps so. But many others DO need leaders and feel very defeated or frightened in such circumstances as ours these days. Vote, then, for a not-very-inspired (or inspiring), but good solid man like Fritz Mondale--or vote for Reagan if you truly prefer that squirrelgrin rascal. But vote for somebody--if you're registered for this election. You may even improve someone's job prospects, pos-

sibly even yer own, particularly if you mark the Mondale-Ferraro slot. I also truly feel it's quite exciting to have such a sharp, cute lady up for such a high office even though we suspect she may not be so great a person as we first hoped. As even the sweetcrezzy radical ole Mime Troupe says in their Summer show just past, voting for these two can still be very valid even if it's as 'better of 2 rather sloppy tickets'. It's real hard t git wuss than Reagan. We cud try ole Frits/Gerry! Well, as Claude sez, we don wanna wax too political, so let's move on now to another recent thort I wanta explore.

* * * *

By now most in the group recall that I am a writer & publisher of long standing. By publishing, at the outset of my brandnew 80s Book-series, primarily or all writers formerly featured in my mag., Illuminations, who have not had much luck on the open market w/their books, including myself among that group, I could perhaps call into question whether I'm/we're focusing solely on the past to the detriment of the present. And when I realize how much of my time/energy goes to getting these books published and distributed, out thar in yer stickly leel ole hands, yoo Readers, as opposed to putting more time behind the creation of new marvels in the here & now, I do sometimes despair. Now take the next book on the list, due in month or two, book of poems by ole friend & contributor (& incidentally a member of our/Amos' original S.F. Zen group, if indeed that is what it was), [redacted] Tim Holt. Now this is Tim's absolute first book in 25+ more years of writing. Ye cud argue the point both ways: No matter what, either posthumously or presently, that book wud surely somehow exist in the world. So why now?

But why not now? Mebbe Tim needs thet book out to inspire him on to the creation of another book. Mebbe we need to hear that craggy ole TimHolt voice again and again, not just one time.

Likewise, hardly anybody realizes the extent to which I am published, in 4 different genres too. If I don't successively bring out me own books of poultry, stories, essays, etc, as Whitman/Blake did, who will? A general broad kind of neglect in the world I've experienced now for many years; it isn't so bad as ye might suppose. But I for one do know of the extent, & hopefully the depth, of this particular goofy loopy collection of works in this world of ours, as do a few ole/new frensamine. Do I then have no duty or responsibility to these works of art? Not maybe to alluvem jus cause I writ em, but to the ones I do profoundly feel will interest the elusive ole Reader still? It's a hard question when yer as pore as me & not gittin any yunger now at 52. I think ye gather my answer.

It's the same answer I made when I did Hadassah Haskale's second buk. Sure enuf, she's hard at werk on another, eh! Mebbe this loopy goofy ole theory actually werks? Zowie. I hope so. And when I add the beeg upcoming ILLUMINATIONS ANTHOLOGY, 300 mo' pages of prose & poultry by c. 200 writers & artists, it better succeed, this theory, & better sales too, cause, Jeez, I/we gon havta cough up a few grand gittin all these beeg'n leetle buks in them stores, and it's not gettin t be mo' fun, is turnin into leel bit uv a burden, & Jeez, didn I always say that when it got to be not a joy but a burden I'd quit this damfool publishing anyway, that paupers shud not be publishers, etc etc etc...? ZO, how's by yoo folks, shud I cont. breakin me arse as a publisher r give up & jus live fer th present, fer joy & luv, by gum, & jus search me out a new gal. I probly be a damfool & keep on truckin as I have been. But yer feedback be much appreciated rite aboot heah. Whadda y'all think? No duties?

Yorn, w/for, by luv, joy, respect, & more,

Norm Moser

Yellow Mouse
8/19/84

Dear Cloud Hidden Frien's:

To mah mass buddy Rich B: in order to relate this "stuff" to US requires the Christian (King James ed.) idiom:

1 TIMOTHY 1: 5 Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:
9 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane -.

MATTHEW 5: 17 Think not that I (Jesus) am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am come not to destroy, but to fulfill.

ROMANS (Paul) 2: 13 For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.
10: 4 For Christ is the end (conclusion, not goal) of the law for (to obtain) righteousness to every one that believeth.

GALATIANS (Paul) 3: 11 But no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.
12 And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.
13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, -
24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.
25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.
5: 4 - whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.
5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.
13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; -
18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

HEBREWS (Paul) 7: 18 For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.
19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing on of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

JAMES (James, the apostle) 1: 25 But whoso looketh into (as in a mirror) the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.
2: 12 So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall (are to) be judged by the law of liberty.

CONCLUSION: the law is negative : THOU SHALT NOT - . The message of Jesus is positive : THOU SHALT DO unto others - . Law (Dogma) is unable to inform man of what his POSITIVE duty to and in the world is. The SPIRIT (breath) resides in and informs a man from within. No authority external to him can inform him. He is made free of the negatives of the law by Jesus (the Way, the Truth and the Light). Instead of being a captive of the law, man is to be FREE and

uninhibited (unrepressed) in his behavior so that he has the opportunity to make good actions, deeds, works. Modern totalitarian regulatory law and its enforcers (bureaucrats) enslave to the law men, who are to be free.

LAW = LAWE (MidEng) = LAGU (OldEng) = LAG = LOG(H) (OldNorse)
  from LEGH: to lie or lay = LOGH-O
      = LOGHAM (Teut): that which is laid down: law
    from LEG: to collect and speak (collect oneself)
      = LEGERE (Lat): gather, choose, read
      = LEGEIN (Grk): gather, speak
      = LEX, LEGIS: collection of rules: law
      = LOGOS (Lat): speech, word, reason
THUS a gathering or collection of ideas, words laid down all together before the hearer. It is a collection, of necessity, of vicarious truths and thus requires an external authority to give them force.

LIBERTY = LIBERTE (OldFr) = LIBERTAS, LIBER (Lat): free
  from LEUDH: to mount up or grow
      = LEUDI (Teut): mass or multitutude of people (LEUTE)
      = LEUDH-ERO = LIBHER = LIBER: free
    from LEU: LOOSEN, divide, cut apart + DHE: make happen, DO
        = LUEIN (Grk): loosen, release, untie
        = SE (apart) + LU
            = SOLVERE (Lat): loosen, untie: SOLUTE, SOLVE, ABSOLVE
THUS, since life and people have inherent in them an upward pressure to grow, increase, mount up to the heights, this will automatically happen if its bonds are cut, released, untied, FREED.

FAITH = FEITH, FETH (MidEng) = FEIT, FEID (OldFr) = FIDES (Lat)
  from BHEIDH: to persuade, compel, confide
        = BHE-AI + DHE: make happen, DO
    = BIDAN (Teut): to await trustingly, expect, trust: BIDE, ABODE
    = BHID = FIDere (Lat): trust, confide: FIANCE, FIDUCIARY
    = BHOIDH = FOEDER (LAT): treaty, league: FEDERAL
    = BHIDH = FIDES (LAT): trust: FIDELITY, FEALTY, FAITH
  from BHA: to shine, sign, banner, light, to be brought to light
          : to speak, proclaim, summon, curse, BANish, prayer, BOON
        = BHA + MA = FAMA (Lat): talk, reputation, fame
                   = PHEME (Grk): saying, speech
        = BHO + NA = PHONE: voice, sound
        = BHE + TO = FATERI: to acknowledge, admit: CONFESS
THUS BHA-DHE is to make happen, firm and secure the speech, proclamations and promises (that shine on the banners and signs) previously made which were so compelling for one to believe in = FAITH.

CONCLUSION: It is stifling to men to have their upward thrust of physical, mental and spiritual growth to be repressed by the authority of a collection of ideas and truths laid down by men who preceeded them but who have not had their experience. They are set free of that repression by that work, action which actualizes, brings those promises, those truths written so shiningly on the banners, into reality. FREE MEN MAKE GOOD THINGS HAPPEN !

El-son Be snowed: Is it the Buddha (the bull) who carries a person or is the bull to be identified with the person who carries the Buddha ?

Go, Breck, GO !

Welcome, Maggie - just WHO? are you, ANYWAY ?

To Jo-El Pure-HO (& Claw-dhe): FREEDOM = FREE = FRE (MidEng)
= FREO (OldEng) from PRI: to love
= PRIYO = FRIJAZ (Teut): beloved (belonging to the loved ones)
THUS not in bondage = FREE
= PRIYA (Sanscrit): dear, precious
= PRIY-ONT: loving = FRIJAND (Teut): lover
= FRIOND, FREOND (OldEng): FRIEND (There you are, Friyonds)
= PRI-TU = FRITHUZ (Teut): peace = FRIDU (OldGer): peace
= PRIYA: beloved = FRIJJO (Teut): beloved, wife
= FRIGG (OldNor): Goddess of love
THUS FREE = peace, love, precious, friend and NOT IN BONDAGE.

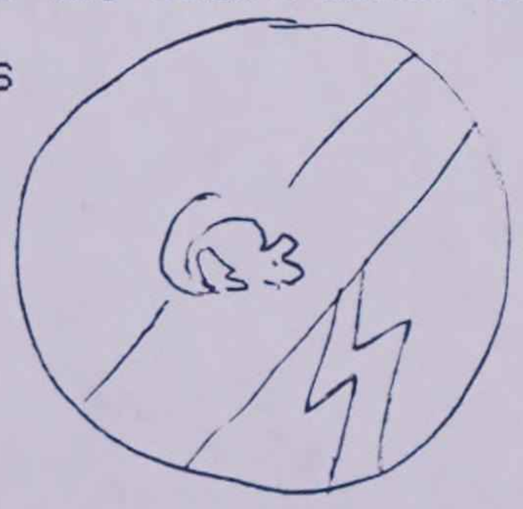
DEAR JOHNBOYd: Yes, we are "for" dominion over self while "they" want dominion over "others": what we call the baddies, black hats, ENEMIES and the Amer-indian calls the "Contraries". But they are US (Pogo).

ALAN Be TAPPED LOW: I recommend C.S LEWIS's PERELANDRA Trilogy, especially the third: THAT HIDEOUS STRENGTH on the issue of wanting to be in, included, belong. And: Coomaraswamy: "-the modern world is far more lacking in the will to seek, than likely to be led astray by false direction."

Norm Moser: Daddy: Da-Die: DAI, DHE-DHE, PA, PETER: what I have is too long for inclusion here: Sorry. Ask and ye shall receive (more than you ever wanted to know about -).

Dalenberg = DAL + EN + BERG
BERG: a high place of safety, hills and hill-forts, fortified town
DALE: valley from DHEL: a hollow = DELL
EN: in, within, inside, and
THUS more than merely a Dale AND a Berg; possibly a Dell IN a Berg; Probably a BERG WITHIN a DELL: a protected place of refuge, peace, sanctity within a pleasant fertile (thus nurturing) valley. THAT'S OUR CLAUDE !! (But, his Berg is hidden in the clouds.) "BRING WHAT ?" sounds like "SAYWHOT ?". Besides, that'a a lot of dharma, anyway. Speaking of that: ROSH (as in ROSH HASHANAH, the Jewish New Year) means "head" (of the year). Say, just why did the Bodhirabbai come to the East ?

YELLOW MOUSE: GHEL-MUS



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