

cloud-hidden friends letter

A ZEN BUDDHIST PERIODICAL IN THE SPIRIT OF THE UNIVERSAL DHARMA

Issue #27

Second Issue of 1988



Manjusri (Monju Bosatsu)

The Cloud-Hidden Friends are a religious shared-correspondence group. Some of us are inclined towards Zen, and most of us are Buddhists, but the Dharma spirit we aim for is a free-ranging and universal one.

Our "subscription fee" is not a monetary one. We would rather have your participation. This could be by writing a letter now and then for our pages, or by personally replying to some of the letters in the CHFL.

Hopefully our letters will help us to open up more to each other, and perhaps more than a few good friendships in the Dharma might result.

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, c/o The Floating Zendo, 753 44th Ave., San Francisco, CA 94121

Greetings! Here it is summer already, and what a summer it has so far been for many. The CHFL continues in its more relaxed unstressed pace, with an issue coming out every now and then. I notice, by the way, that these days, the Buddhist term 'Dukkha' is often translated as 'stress' instead of 'suffering'; so the CHFL pace is actually then perhaps setting a good example. This has been, however, a difficult practice for your editor, since it also seems to mean patience, and I have to patiently wait for your letters to come in, before I can come out with the next issue.

The CHFL has only very modest goals, as is appropriate for a small and intimate open forum, such as we are attempting to be. I often think of the old-fashioned Quaker meeting as a kind of model for us. No scripture or person is the final authority on anything. The meeting is held mostly in a contemplative silence not very different in spirit from that of zazen. Occasionally someone will stand up and speak when moved by the 'light within', usually briefly and right to the point, and not with some long harrangue. About the only 'doctrine' there is, is the living faith that within each and everyone of us is there is 'that of God'. Interestingly enough, from so simple a basis, a never ending stream of social concerns and actions also naturally follow. In Buddhism, we might prefer to say 'the Buddha Nature within', or as it is taught in Soto Zen, 'That this very mind is Buddha', but the similarities are quite surprising, and seem to be more than just at the surface.

Some of us are members of some big religious organization, including myself, but I think it would be a great mistake to ignore the importance of a more modest and individual level. William James, whose opinion I greatly respect, even would go so far as to say:

"I am through with big things and great things, with big organizations and great ideas, and I am for those tiny, invisible, molecular moral forces, which work from individual to individual, creeping in through the crannies of the world, like so many soft rootlets, or like a capillary oozing of water, but which, if you give them time, will burst the hardest monument of man's pride.

That is most well said, I'd say. However, in defense of big organizations, I do think they have their place. The problem is that we project such impossible demands upon them to be something they can not be by their very nature. I find, for example, that big organizations are generally very impersonal and lonely places, much more so than the local coffee shop. But that is not really intended as a criticism, since I think it is their nature to be mostly impersonal. They have to work at it really hard to be at all friendly. Indeed, my own experience has been, that an organization can at best provide a context for a true friendship in the Dharma to develop, and even then, the actual dynamic may be a more individual one, such as William James describes.

Ananda Dalenberg
Clerk, CHF Letter

For The CHF Letter:

521

From: Dairin L. Love 3126 Emerson Ave.S. Mpls. MN 55408 July 4. 2551

On the tatami-yellow grass

The Starling stands, with its mouth agape;

Will this drought ever end?

Dear Cloud-Hidden Friends,

It has been around four years since my last (and only) contribution to these cloud floating realms. My tardiness has not been because of a lack of appreciation, I look forward to each and every issue! I plan on writing ya'll more often in the future.

My wife Jean and I make a livelihood with our little two person cleaning service we call White Crane Home Services. I was first made aware of the practice aspects of cleaning during my first retreat at Hokyo-ji (Catching The Moon) Zen Mountain Center, located in the very South Eastern corner of Minnesota. I've been cleaning full-time for about 4 years now.

I've been working at creating an independant practice for the last year and a half, ever since a brush with the Grim Reaper. I only live a 14 minute walk away from the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center but felt the need to develop a practice that I could carry on where ever I might happen to find myself. Have been doing zazen, studying and devotions at home with my wife Jean. It is going well, with much thanks to my partner Jean. The spiritual life in marriage is a lot like a bicycle-built-for-two: when one person gets a bit tired, they can have the other "peddle" for them while they coast, rest and catch a little of their breath.

I have been busy helping start a Green group here in the Twin Cities. The Greens are a social action group which is founded upon the four pillars of: Ecological Wisdom, Social Justice, Grass Roots Democracy & Non-Violence. There are many Buddhist involved in the Green movement. Two books I would recommend to anybody that wanting to know about them are: Seeing Green, by Johnathon Porritt, Basil Blackwell LTD. Porritt provides a good historical background and explains why Greens are "neither left nor right." If you are not able to find this UK publication, try: The Green Alternative, by Brain Tokar, R & E Miles.

Soon after I saw that the Green group had a running start, I realized that there were many similarities between the Greens and the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. A BPF group was started here, shortly after Thich Nhat Hanh's first visit to the Twin Cities, but it hasn't been active in 3 or 4 years.

A friend of mine, Ida, told Jean a story about her experience at the "Get Our Troops Outta Honduras" demonstration. The riot police got out of hand, came after the protesters with clubs, mace and dogs. Ida, being a veteran activist from way back, told everyone to sit down, hoping this action would give the police less of a target.

Ida got maced, her arms tied behind her with a plastic strap and was

placed in a crowded paddy-wagon on her knees. Most of the folks in the paddy-wagon were youngsters. One of the young people in the dark wagon asked the group, "Are there any Buddhists here?" Ida thought, 'there should be, by-golly!', and then answered to the affirmative.

She told Jean about her desire to get the BPF going again and Jean told her that I had been thinking the same thing. So, we got together and have been working at it since the Honduras demonstrations, slowly but surely. One of the things I would like to see the BPF do in our community is to help get the many different Buddhist groups talking to one and other. We have one of the largest concentration of Viet Nameese, Cambodian and Laoatian refugees in the Mid-West. Many of these folks are Buddhists.

If anyone is interested in finding out more about the BPF, please check out: The Path Of Compassion, writings on socially engaged buddhisim, Edited by Fred Eppsteiner, Parallax Press. Many well known Buddhists have articles in this volume including: The Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, Robert Aitken Roshi, Gary Snyder and Robert Thurman.

I find Robert Thurman's articles: The Edicts of Asoka and Nagarjuna's Guidelines for Buddhist Social Activisim, helpful. He shows how social activisim has an old history in Buddhism, going all the way back to the social revolution started by Gautama Buddha. I have appreciated Robert Thurman's work ever since I read his translation of The Holy Teaching Of Vimilakirti, which is a great guide for "regular Joe's", (like me.) For friends that might be unfamiliar with Vimilakirti, he was the great 'mythic' enlightened lay-follower of the Buddha, who made even the great Manjushri quake in his boots for fear of being "found out" by Vimilakirti (ha-ha!)

Speaking of Robert Thurman (who is a Tibetan scholar who has practiced as a monk in India): a Tibetan teacher I have had to good fortune to meet is visiting North America this fall. His name is Luding Khen Rinpoche and he is the head of the Ngor sect of the Sakya School of Tibetan Buddhism and Abbot of Ngor Pal E-Wam Choden in Mandumala, India.

Tibetan Buddhism is far more varied than it is popularly believed. Luding Khen Rinpoche explained that the Ngor sect of the Sakya school is the Tibetan parallel to the Soto Zen school of Japan. The meditations this school practices often relate to Manjushri. If you would like more info on the Rinpoche's visit, which will begin in New York on August 6th, please see the June/July issue of Vajradhatu Sun or contact the Jetsun Sakya Center at P.O. Box 1603, Cathedral Station, New York, N.Y. 10025 (212) 459-4112.

Luding Khen Rinpoche escaped the Chinese and went into exile in India at the same time as the Dalai Lama. He gave the Manjushuri and the Avalokitesvara initiations the last time he was here and was so impressed with the gathering that he also held an impromptu Refuge Ceremony. I was taken by the down-to-earthness of his entourage. They were far more spontaneous and free flowing than most of us ZenFolk.

As long as I am talking about teachers, I would like to reccomend Dainin Katagiri's book, Returning to Silence, Zen Practice in Daily Life. Published by Shambala. This book is compiled from Katagiri Roshi's lectures including a comentary on Dogen Zenji's "Four Methods of Guidance". Robert Thurman provides the forward for Returning to Silence and calls "Four Methods of Guidance" "...some of the best advice for Buddhist social action I have yet seen."

Katagiri Roshi is very much a chip off the Ol' Dogen block. He has worked to combine a very traditional practice (especially at Hokyo-ji) with the flavor of the American (especially at the City Center.) Katagiri Roshi stresses

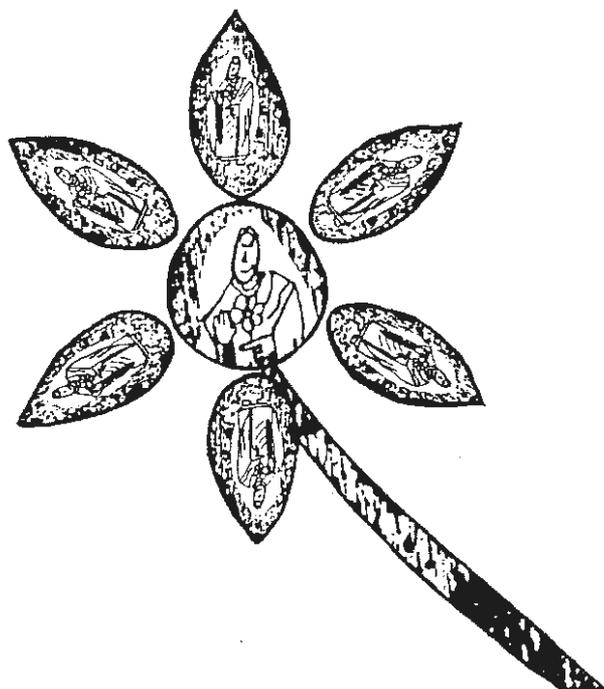
"practice enlightenment" and its applications to daily life. I have never met a person so dedicated and yet so full of humility as Katagiri Roshi. He has also taught me that scholarship and practice can be artfully combined. Let me end with a quote from Returning to Silence.

This is from the Chapter on Life and Death and Katagiri Roshi uses Suzuki Roshi's last words to explain the mind with which we should do zazen:

"If we do zazen to obtain something, then we should ask ourselves where we are heading. Can we carry this kind of zazen or happiness to heaven? Eventually, we have to say good-bye to everything. Suzuki Roshi's final words were, 'It's all over.' 'All over' means he really touched the core of human life--where are we heading? For sixty-eight years he worked hard and taught Buddhism in the United States, and then where was he heading? In such circumstance, could we say that because we do zazen we can die in peace and harmony, or that by doing zazen our mind will become calm and strong? If we believe zazen is like this, what's the difference between us and a bank robber? By doing zazen, we can become a bank robber with a calm mind, and steal money from the bank with a calm mind. It is ridiculous if we believe in zazen in that way."

In the distance
The cicada is calling;
Born with out a mouth,
Not to get but to beget.

May Peace Be Yours!



Lee
AA

524
Joel Weishaus
2812 Garfield SE #E
Albuquerque, NM 87106

Dear CHF;

An old friend phoned me from New York recently. He's an evangelical pastor, the whole family has been "born-again." I told him I've been a Zen Buddhist for almost twenty-five years (never having bothered to tell him this before as it wasn't important until he began preaching the "Truth" to me). "What do they believe in?" he asked. I was tempted to say, "Nothingness," but knew he wouldn't understand. (I don't either.) Instead, I said, "It's too long for a phone call."

The conversation continued with my trying to explain that other people's beliefs, and experiences, are just as valid as his. But I couldn't get through. May I never find the "Truth."

This blind eye toward the rest of the world has always been a weakness, a myopia, with Monotheism. I've always been proud of Buddhists for their--more times than not--tolerance, even acceptance of, other beliefs. With Zen, I think this is a ramification of a practice of literally no illusions. Strangely, although it emerged from societies that were hardly democratic, it breeds lives of fierce independence.

Christianity, after all, was born of meek people who fed themselves to the lions as a testimony to their faith. Martyrdom and masochism are relative to more than intent. Meek, then, because, as we know, the sufferings in our lives are the real roaring of the spirit.

Buddhism developed from a fraternity of half-crazed, acerbic, forest dwellers. The Buddha, it seems, became too sweet for them, and it took the Chinese, their hard land, to restore the wilderness into the Way.

The Japanese, in turn, softened it again, but only its edges--leaving at its center, however, not a crusty worm-eaten ascetic, but a cultured warrior.

What shape will American Zen finally take? Probably a polymorphic identity, as we are not even a culture but an ideal glimpsed between jolts of harsh realities. We like to speculate on what American Zen will be, while it has already arrived! To see it, just look at the people who are sitting. Not those who have taken to wearing robes; rather look to those who are still in jeans. We are not a formal people. As uniformity does not come naturally to Americans, something like wearing robes--at least those of all the same color!--is one step away from declaring that we have found the "Truth."

I like the story of when Thomas Merton visited D.T. Suzuki, who was then teaching at Columbia University. He told the old man that he, Merton, had found Christ in himself. "That's fine," said Suzuki, "but it's still a concept. Go deeper!" And Jung said that if you go deeply enough into your Self you finally arrive back at "Just world."

What I remember most fondly about my friend's phone call is his familiar voice, and the memories old friends share.

Johnnie Boid: loosing "ambition" - I'm with you BUT I got a problem: How do we bring in the bacon? Do we rely on gifts from others - begging? (Not dis ego, y'betcha!) This is antithetical to the Western: Take Care of Yourself First! But you can't take care of anybody or anything else unless you can first take care of yourself. Your bit challenged me to realize that the only source of money (or "bacon") is people and there are essentially only two ways to get money from them: (1) you "take" it from them (manipulate) or they "give" it to you. Thus the moral or ethical way must be: to ALLOW them to GIVE to you. To do that requires (1) lowering one's ego, humility, (2) ASKING and then (3) being able to deal with their response. That takes such bravery. Fantastic!!! Thanx much.

QUESTION: The four great truths are founded on the discovery that the root of all our problems is desire and the pain that arises from the frustration of those desires. Correct me if I'm wrong but GS,B's premise is desire.

My experience in psych and ACOA (etc) raises the issue: from where do our desires arise? ACOA points out: having been raised in a dysfunctional family, we grow certain expectations about life and people - expectations that are conditioned by our specific family of origin and which models their specific dysfunctionality. ACOA variously declares that 50, 80, 96% of all families are dysfunctional. The best way to deal with this is to challenge: bring us a functional family. You can't find any.

But returning eastward: GS,B claims that his truths are universal: they fit everybody, without exception. Thus ALL families are, always were, and always will be dysfunctional. I conclude: the infant has all the mental capabilities necessary to cope, deal with his family of origin. But he has nearly an absolute ZERO of experience. What he sees (perceives, experiences) is colored by his lack of knowledge that there are other possibilities. He must and does respond (even if it is withdrawal). If his response works, it will be reinforced and thus repeated until it is habitual (??). That process is based on the expectation that he has found the right (??) way to respond. All this takes place in the palace of his parents - in isolation.

That basic (made in infancy) idea sinks into the unconscious where it becomes lost. Later in life, still trying to do the impossible (manipulate the environment to his own benefit), he repeats the behavior which now, being inappropriate, doesn't work. He must open the programming and start over. This process is absolutely distinct from learning, working to add more understanding to the already dysfunctional system. That way can't work - no matter how many years, degrees, gurus we have worked with.

Thus Zen, Tao, etc force us to drop the old conditioning and RETURN. But even this can't work if we insist on the Western division of labor: psych, religion, family, employment all separable into categories and never may mix. To understand the Master, we must deal with the way our own mind works - in detail in all areas. Otherwise we cannot even know the emotional loading we put on the words we use - and that affects our responses.

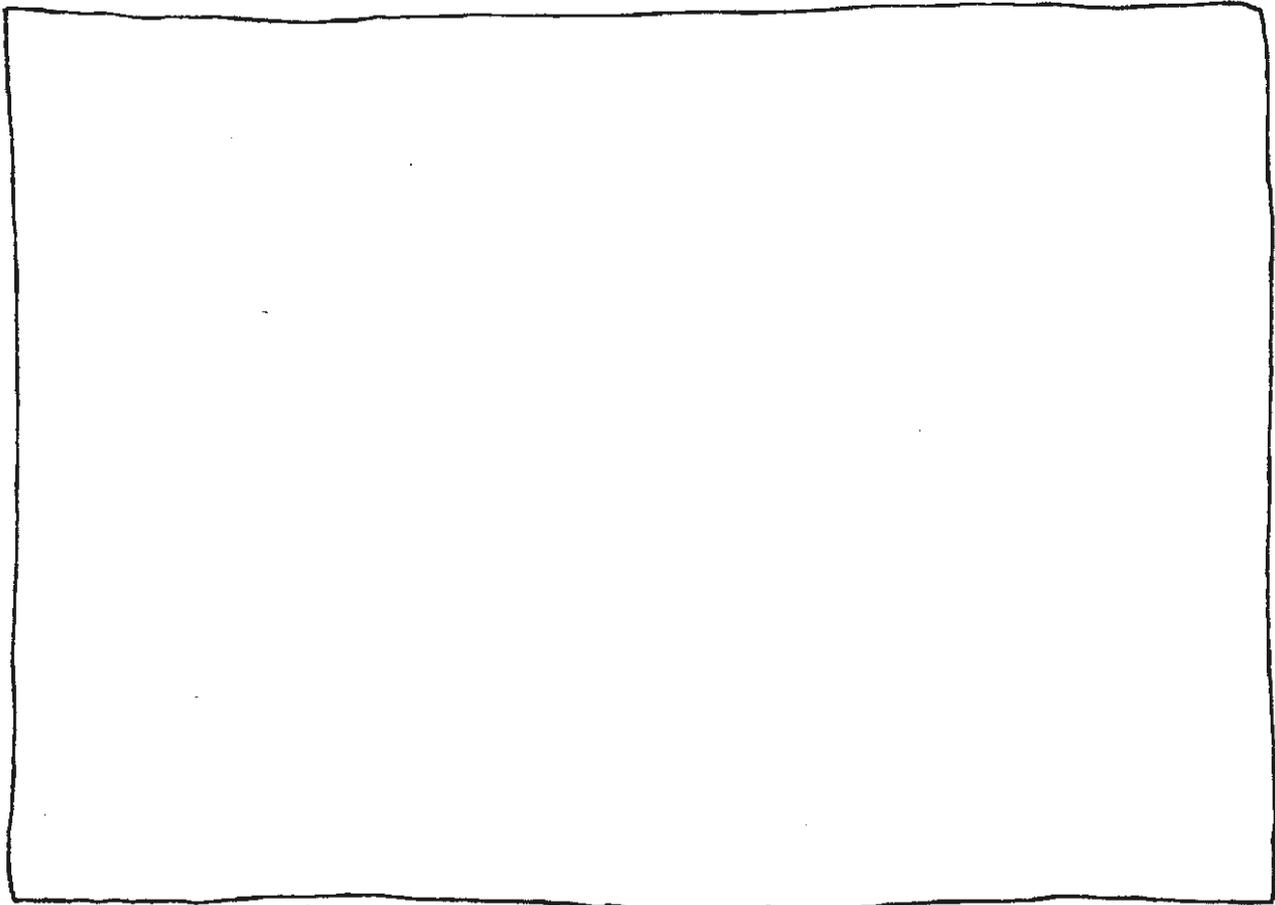
Enuf! Comment, please - there is a load of stuff here I haven't yet worked out, but I felt confident enough to expose it to the only group of competent critics I know of.

*yellow mouse
to you*

526
For the CHF

Ho! to you all dear Cloud Hidden Friends,

This time I offer a carefully worked out summary of the most basic teachings: (See box)



To those of you who consider this to be pure heresy or simply a waste of time and paper, I respectfully suggest you may have skimmed over it too rapidly.... Also, I'd like to point out that it's good for a large number of other things such as:

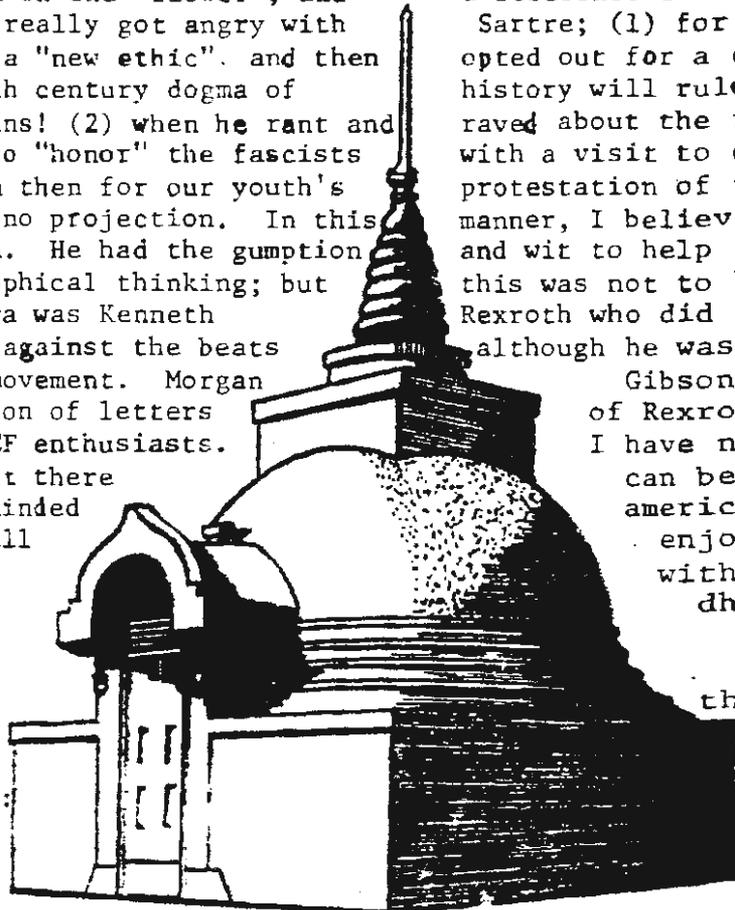
- 1) Feedback on the feedback we've received on our previous contributions.
- 2) What I/You should have said to that soandso that said suchandsuch.
- 3) A definitive outline of steps to take in our wars against whatever we're fighting or just struggling against or for.
- 4) The best advice to give your rebellious teenager.
- 5) A contribution one can make to the CHF when one has that frustrating feeling that everything has already been said.

There's probably an infinite number of good uses for it but, alas! you can't package and sell it so it's economically worthless.

Robertglenn Breckenridge (Still socializing at the Hermitage, 262 Kings Rd.
Brisbane CA 94005 tel (415)-468-5940)

dear hoboos:

nostalgia is not an ugly word although somehow I don't like it; there is a myth going around that there is such a thing as "aging gracefully": a theme recently selected by a Buddhist conference in San Jose! I only bring this up because the contributors to the Hidden Cloud Friends are apparently the old scoundrels related somehow to the hippy syndrome, survivors who have not yet quite fallen apart. I was inspired by Ananda's meditation on the "flower", and Moser. I really got angry with to create a "new ethic". and then in the 19th century dogma of proletarians! (2) when he rant and refusing to "honor" the fascists needed him then for our youth's depth and no projection. In this generation. He had the gumption to philosophical thinking; but of this era was Kenneth animosity against the beats for this movement. Morgan a collection of letters benefit HCF enthusiasts. myself, but there literary-minded variety will anarchist universal



Even I do not that my discomfort: the past. is dis- joy and

explained; the slightest exaggeration could be an all-out derangement of mental and physical functions. My journey into the past is simple. I take a red and white ferry to Larpur Landing, and I'm home after 45 years! In "returning home I remember the real Golden Gate before there was a span; crossing the bay was not like "old times": the new ferries are smaller and run like a Rolls Royce. Alcatraz still sits in the bastille-shaped island, but today it is a shell, a visionary memory of nothing substantial whatsoever, and I wonder if this, too is not the same with my personal and physical past.

a reference to Sartre made by Norman Sartre; (1) for his broken promise opted out for a cheap marxian belief history will rule-out in favor of raved about the reactionary americans with a visit to our country: we really protestation of the vietnam war had no manner, I believe, Sartre failed his and wit to help restore respectability this was not to be. The literary hero Rexroth who did not withhold his although he was a god-father (of sorts) Gibson has just come out with of Rexroth which would really I have not acquired this volume, can be little doubt that our americans of the buddhist enjoy reassessing this old with an affinity for the dharma.

though, nostalgia is something like, it must be admitted age-bracket causes a lot a longing, somehow, for For me this looking back tasteful, a mixed bag of sorrow, that cannot be

The ordinary Buddhist layman, I'm sure, do not usually associate the dharma with a heavy emphasis on memory, but our lives are absorbed in trillions of

bija seeds, and our karma is threaded with mystery. How important it is that we know how to use our mind-body-speech. I now have arthritis and cannot gassho properly. How frustrating to be left at the obutsudan, and laughed at for taking postures serio

WINTER 1988

There is just no way to convince 20th century people why asana is so important; even for the nembutsu man, we should be able to put our palms together without getting entangled with the beads in our ojuzu!



BEST WISHES
FOR AN AUSPICIOUS
EARTH DRAGON YEAR

GREENBRAE WETLANDS

Foot traffic is heavy with "beautiful people" jogging along a line of poison oak; a landfill hides a primordial marsh and its salt-grasses; and the walls of San Quentin sorrowfully jets into the bay beyond the shadows of Tamalpais; licorice plants and green ferns wrestle on the weeded path for sunlight; a scroungy patch of roadside bamboo scratches for space; from a distance on the banks of the slough a noisy mallard complains.

Haunting the old grounds of the past was painful because the region has actually improved if we are happy that Kentfield does not flood anymore, and there is a large hospital on grounds that once were nothing but salt-flats; and the creek has been cleaned up even though there are no swimmers like there ~~were~~^{were} in the past when we had to dodge raw sewage for recreation. And when we ask someone about Meadowsweet Dairy, we are given funny stares; there are no cows in this part of Marin County!

In passing my old grammar school I recognized the old volley ball courts: the wire fences are still standing! And I actually recognized a small grove of redwoods on the school ground, a eucalyptus tree, and an old oak still standing in the middle of a street: these living forms are going to outlive me! I wonder why? As for the town of Larkspur, itself, it has become quaint. Instead of a town it is now a village. The open-air dance hall is gone: A sort of improvement if you are over sixty! The three different houses we lived in on top and bottom of a three-crowned

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foothill in Corte Madera ^{are} still standing. And it dawned on me that the only buddhist thing I did in these days was to tramp, just like Nietzsche bragged about in quoting Buddhist sutras, "I wander lonely like a rhinoceros."

I wanted to stop at the service station (Standard) and say, "Hey! I worked at this very same place before going into the Navy during WWII!" But I did not know how to say this to the mechanics on duty, nor to the customers who were really only interested in their cars. So, I turned my back and started to hike back towards San Rafael to visit a cemetary where a friend was laid to rest, so many years ago:

FREMONT JOSEPH NELSON

after forty years
the road to the cemetary
is spreckled by sunlight
dancing on fallen leaves;
grass covers the ground,
nothing is freshly dug;
in the shade,
an old man reading
about the 2nd class signalman
named on the flat-stone marker:
I remember his question:
What is zen?

I am amazed at such a strange day. I carry no watch but I had to keep some track of time for how can you explain to wife, family, and friends that you have come stranded in Marin County! There must be a way, a method, to live urban, and not be plagued by commute, systems, city disetiquette, and the strangenoises of the streets. Next time I go to marin county, I'm goint to follow the old trail to the crazy lady's house. Maybe, I'll climb higher and follow the stream without being seen. The tamalpais rivulets are not like real mountain brooks, so I want to go unobserved and not be questioned about roughing the wilderness area of a bed-room community like Corte Madera-Larkspur. I have not the faintest idea of what "roughing it" means. In ~~any~~ any case, my next Big Trip will be to Golden Gate Park. Maybe I'll get another chance to meet a young chinese girl and tell her how wonderful Chinese Buddhism is. I have done that already, a stranger at San Francisco Airport. I would like to do it again!

The strangest experience one can have is to be a stranger in one's hometown, and thinking deeply about the matter, I wonder where our Country is, and ~~our~~ our birthplace. The old adage about, "possess, or be possessed" is just simply nonsense. Perhaps there are no home=place, only acres and acres of stupas, a playing field for those of us who have not yet got the hang of GROWING OLD Gracefully!

ELSON B SNOW
1710 OUTFIELD ST,
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94109

June 1988

Dear Friends:

Flowers and smiles, the essence of Zen. What a treat it is to have access to the thoughtful caring letters of our friend Ananda. Now I know the secret behind his lips, which, for those of you who have not met him in person, always seem to be turned up just a bit, on the verge of a big toothy grin. The secret is, he thinks of us as geraniums. Amazing!

I have to admit that sometimes I do feel like a flower or that something wonderful is opening up or blooming in me- and although I have a preference for daisies and roses, a geranium is fine with me too. On the other hand, most times I feel more like a weed- that is the one who fills the garden, choking out all the flowers- a strong, unquenchable, everlasting, very common weed.

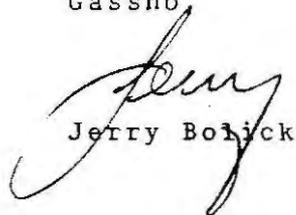
Don't get me wrong; I'm not saying this disparagingly; it's more a statement of fact. My everyday nature is more like a weed than a flower and that's all there is to it. And we should not forget that under the right circumstances, weeds very often produce blossoms of their own. Perhaps that's the kind of weed I am.

The first time I saw mention of the Japanese word for weed was in the writings of the Zen poet and great sake drinker, Santōka. He loved weeds, thinking them very much like people, growing with abandon all over the place, strong and gripping on to life with limitless vigor. The transliteration used by John Stevens was gunmo. Shinran also uses it (gunmo) in referring to the ordinary man, as opposed to the saint or sage, and the translation in the commentary was "a multitude of sprouts," which, in my mind, comes even closer to describing who we really are. A dictionary I consulted went further, saying that the sprouts referred to were those used in the fermentation process to make sake and other potent beverages.

I certainly understand now why Santōka identified with weeds. But more so, I feel it a particularly apt description of the kind of drunken, illusionary state Buddhism tells us we are in. As for me, it fits perfectly and when I took a Buddhist name awhile ago, I chose Shakyā Gummo. A common ordinary weed who has chosen in his drunken fashion to follow the teachings.

Perhaps, if the Buddha smiles, I will give rise to a beautiful blossom some day; then again, perhaps I am blooming already.

Gassho



Jerry Bolick

* SHINRAN'S Kyo Gyo SHIN SHO

SPIRIT SWORD

There can be a dynamic play between intentional aggression and mindful calm, and providing that the participants are mentally serious and emotionally peaceful, the play that can follow is very rewarding. Our method is "spirit entering", the ability to enter into our opponents physical nature. To directly connect with the attackers intention and motion, and to push through (to cut, to strike, to ward), to shadow (to become alike, to stick, to throw), to withdraw (to snap back their energy), to tune up or down their intent (to overcharge, to dull, or confuse) and to re-order the intention itself (to create) both towards their opponent and their own nature.

The practice is Zen Shugendo. Our system or school is Tsuru Mineri Ryu Mikkyo Do Ki Jutsu. Its systematic formation came about through interaction with a Sword Master of the Shugendo Yama Bushi and his particular Dharma challenge. Our school is private, and I only accept reasonably good-natured people. I don't expect saintliness, but folks with chips on their shoulders or something to prove may go elsewhere. I do prefer people without Martial Art training, as we all tend to have to much mental baggage as it is. I do not care whether they are athletic or physically limited, we all need to work with what we inherently possess. They need to be atleast thirteen years old and can even be a senior citizen, as we do not employ hard physical contact.

Our approach is Internal. I hold qualification to instruct in many diverse metaphysical systems, having spent 29 of my 39 years studying, experiencing and coming to grips with what Internalism is and should be. I do not agree with most popular conceptions of Satori (Enlightenment), and find the idea of Illumination a misnomer with little basis in fact or common sense. Unfortunately people often give their mental and emotional lives over to people who don't have a clue as to what being an Internalist is, but can mouth nice sounding words, do a form, and/or look good in so-called spiritual get-up (white robe, uniform, etc). Such people can do great harm to Ontologically naive, but otherwise genuinely sincere people.

Physically our school teaches the structure of movement and its relation to the four elements of earth, water, fire, and wind, both with freehand techniques and sword. Later on, it is hoped that the student will synthesize these elements into what is the culmination of their abilities, what we call "spirit entering", the aetheric fifth element (the void). At such a point the student takes what is useful for health, mental calm and re-newal, defense, and discards what does not work or isn't needed. The desired form is no-form. The substance of action and mind, not Kata or Satori by the numbers.

532

Any esoteric techniques are experienced with high restraint, least one become too attached to technique and forget the main intention. Idea being "to see" without pre-conditions, alert and creative. The taste of the thing, is not the thing, only the taste.

One of the practices where we distinguish the "me" from the "I", are with sword. The Sword (Aiki Kenjutsu) requires full Mindfulness. Our classes are held outside at night. A favorite technique is to face off with a student in sword ready position, the yard light is directly behind me blacking out my features, leaving only outline. I on the otherhand can see them very clearly. The rules are all in my favor, I can move the sword from ready position to anyother ready position, can shift my body forwards, back, or side to side. The student must not anticipate, nor do I seek to trick him/her. The student can only evade or counter as they experience my intention forwards, as I begin the actual attack. Movements are slow and controlled. Physical injury is extremely remote. The whole aim of this and other exercises is to be "awake", the challenge is "to lose", and the results if we participate with equal honesty and freedom is to become "Internal Artist". An Artist creates to their own abilities and liking, and rejects cultural or religious restraints on their creativity.

* Miki Kyoshi Edward Hiles Star, Konjin Roshi of the Tsuru Mineri Ryu (Crane Entering The Mountain School). Nei Kung Dharma Heir of Bodi G. Gibbs, Yang style T'ai Chi Ch'uan. And Murshid of Sri Maryam Sufiyya, Malamati/Khumbasihis branch, Suhrawardi Order.

-- Hey folks, i've really enjoyed reading your letters, and feel bad that i'm too lazy to write anything meaningful, other than this form-letter on the school. Hope to have someting meaningful to say some day soon.

By the way, i've turned over the directorship of the Crane Hand Association, to Kathy Lasky. She's both qualified to teach Yang T'ai Chi and is a truely crazy Tibetan Buddhist person. And i'm quite sure that Greg Gibbs would agree, to both points !

I owe alot to Greg, for he is the one that allowed me to see that the inner experiences with the Yoga techniques and the Internal Martial Arts (Nei Kung) were the same, and this afer nine years of Aikido, twenty three or four years of Yoga, twenty years of Sufism, and Konjin Roshi Omo !

hey, later. . .

edward hiles star
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Dear Fellow Pilgrims:

It has now been some time since my parents died, but recently I have felt somehow very close to them. I can't quite make sense of it all, but I do feel that it calls for me to see it through to some resolution, rather than puzzling over it now and then, and then once more forgetting the whole matter. What I have in mind is not some psychoanalytic resolution of my past relations with my parents, as important as that may be. What I'm really concerned with here belongs more to the realm of religion.

It would be a lot easier for me if my parents had been also Buddhist rather than Christian. As it is, I feel I have no choice whatsoever other than trying to somehow transcend the gap between the two religions, which also exists within myself, and to do so with some urgency before I die.

No doubt the Buddhist teaching of rebirth could be greatly significant here. Also, in China and Japan, ancestral ceremonies are integrated with Buddhism. But how this all applies, I don't know. Also, most of us, including myself, have an automatic resistance against anything remotely resembling 'ancestor worship'. Maybe this is mostly due to our own narrow more fashionable brand of cultural chauvinism. It would seem to be the wiser course, however, to first try to understand the inner significance of these traditional ceremonies, and then to go on to recreate a form more appropriate to our own culture with its Judeo-Christian background.

Take Zen for example. If we were to eliminate anything remotely resembling 'ancestor worship', there actually wouldn't be very much left. In traditional Zen, there is a great emphasis on the transmission of the True Dharma from Ancestor to Ancestor, in a continuous succession from the Buddha on down to the present, and there are many, many very important ceremonies dependent upon this ancestral transmission. Also, for the laity of an ordinary neighborhood Zen temple, the various ceremonies for one's family ancestors are obviously very important, even to the point where they generally constitute the main religious activity of the temple.

Undoubtedly such forms and ceremonies will have to be greatly transformed and changed before they will begin to be really meaningful for us. Recently I tried taking a few stumbling steps in such a direction. I felt a deep urge to have some kind of memorial service for my mother Jennie, so I began to think about some new form which would make some real sense to me, and perhaps to others as well. This took me some time, but it did all turn out to be a deeply meaningful experience for me. I probably should also add, however, that those whom I persuaded to attend the service seemed to be mostly somewhat uncomfortable with it all, if not utterly baffled.

What I had in mind was more of the nature of a celebration than a mourning. It is no doubt significant that in many cultures, after several years of mourning someone's death, there begins to instead be an annual celebration of their birth. What I wanted to do was to celebrate that Jennie was born and lived on this planet. I find that to be a most amazing fact. Amazing that we actually have parents!

I also felt it should be a ceremony that could be done equally well either with others, or all alone. I decided to celebrate her birth-month which

534
was April, rather than her birth-day. This allowed me some real flexibility in arranging the ceremony, and it proved to be a great help.

For the inner philosophy of it all, I turned to the Avatamsaka and the Lotus Sutra, which teach of the absolute as the universal interdependence and interpenetration of all beings. For me, this teaching is most simply and beautifully summed up in the symbol of 'Indra's Net'. The whole universe is said to be like Indra's Net. Each and every moment of reality or of individual consciousness everywhere is as if it were one of the intersections in the Net. At each intersection there is a beautiful jewel, and the net is then composed of countless such jewels. Also each jewel perfectly reflects every other jewel. All of the jewels then are interdependent and interpenetrating, in such a way that each jewel is found in all, and all in one. Indra's Net then includes all sentient beings everywhere, not only in all of space, but also in all of time. With this teaching as a background, the rest seemed to naturally follow. Indeed, a host of other ceremonies begin to also seem relevant and make good sense. I did not here really directly face the issue of 'rebirth', but at some deeper level I felt there was some kind of resolution.

When it came to the form for such a ceremony, the Sigalavada Sutra was very helpful. It contains a ceremony and meditation to protect the six quarters of the universe. In brief, instead of trying to protect the six quarters by incantations or sacrificial offerings, loving thoughts should be offered to all sentient beings in each quarter. In addition, the six quarters are said to be symbolic of the basic cardinal relations in our lives. The East, for example, where the sun rises, is to be regarded as symbolic of one's parents. Also this ceremony is not just of loving thoughts, for it should be followed in one's own life by offerings of harmonious good deeds and actions. I take this teaching quite seriously, partly because it fits so harmoniously in the context of a yuzu-nembutsu practice in the spirit of Indra's Net, which has been close to my heart.

With Indra's Net as a key, it was not then very difficult to come up with a modest little ceremony. Also I was fortunately able to borrow a verse from Sir Edwin Arnold's poem "The Light of Asia" that seemed quite appropriate.

I puzzled for some time about what I should include as an offering in the ceremony, and I felt I should include a poem of my own honoring my mother. My intent here was partly to leave my kids with a few thoughts and memories about their grandparents, so that in later years they at least might have some sense of their ancestral roots. The kind of things I was trying to express here seemed to belong mostly to the realm of poetry. In fact, I soon came to feel that poetry was the only form they could take. However, composing such a poem was not at all easy for me, since before I had only written a few haiku. Of course the result was a bit amateurish, but I found the whole experience to be extraordinarily meaningful and rewarding.

I am even thinking of having such a service for my parents every year. I already have a poem honoring my father. I also am ruminating about a memorial service for one's Dharma teachers, but I don't yet have any answer here. The creative possibilities seem many, and I would be delighted to share notes with those of you who may be interested in the subject.

A BIRTH-MONTH MEMORIAL SERVICE

The Buddha taught Singala the Noble Way
That truly protects the Six Directions,
Not by mere ritual, lifeless and external,
But by compassionate love in thought and deed.
Thus each day, the Six Directions are greeted,
And All Being everywhere, is truly honored.

The poem "The Light of Asia" has a verse
That well sums up this noble teaching:
"Offer loving thoughts and acts to all.
To parents as the East, where rises light;
To teachers as the South whence rich gifts come;
To wife and children as the West where gleam
Colors of love and calm, and all days end;
To friends and kinsmen and all men as North;
To humblest living things beneath, to Saints
And Angels and blessed Dead above.
So shall evil be shut off, and so
The six main quarters will be safely kept."

Harkening to the teaching of the Buddha,
May I truly honor the Six Quarters.
May my offerings be from the heart,
And be followed by harmonious deeds:

I bow and offer this incense:
(Light portable incense, with it bow to East
and other directions; on knees for "Beneath".)

This food I offer to everyone.
May it be that we sustain others,
As we have been sustained:
(Food or sweets to be blessed over
incense, and distributed after service.)

I offer these flowers: (Offer or scatter to
East and other directions.)

And on this day, in the month of April,
The birth month of my mother, now departed,
I bow especially to the Eastern quarter,
And honor the memory of my mother Jennie
(Bow to the East with flowers and/or incense.)

And in her honor, I quote this verse:
"She loved the stars too well, to fear the night"
(Also offer other poetry, now or informally.)

ALL BUDDHAS, SIX DIRECTIONS, THREE TIMES,
ALL BEINGS, BODHISATTVAS, MAHASATTVAS,
WISDOM BEYOND WISDOM, MAHAPRAJNAPARAMITA!
(First time alone, then all together) A.D.

536
 Jennie, was my mother's name,
 Born on the Fifteenth of April,
 Eighteen hundred and ninety-three,
 In a farm town, South Holland Illinois.
 Hard-working they were, and very Dutch,
 Loving the Good Book, and the Church.

Her parents were kind and gentle,
 For of harsh scoldings, there were none.
 Not a single spanking does she remember,
 Nor was angry voice raised against her.
 But memory also does change with time,
 Perhaps itself turning kind and gentle.

Jennie would tell of childhood days.
 Of brothers five and sisters three,
 And the delight of Christmas stockings
 Stuffed with three marvelous oranges.
 Or of walking to school ten whole miles,
 And what fun they had along the way.

As a child she loved to sing
 With sister Liz and brother Harry.
 Happy she was to hear the preacher say,
 That in heaven, there would be
 Choirs singing most glorious hymns,
 Everywhere, and eternally.

But why wait, little Jennie thought,
 Let's begin, this day, now.
 So Liz and Harry were persuaded
 To join with her in eternal song.
 For two whole hours, they bravely sang
 Before doubts arose on heavenly things.

Jennie was good in the work of a farm.
 Sometimes in the busy work of summer,
 The harvest crew, she would even lead
 While father, needing peace and quiet,
 Somewhere off would go, with his pipe
 To find some more solitary chore.

For her mother before dawn work began.
 She everyday, can you imagine this,
 Would bake twelve loaves of bread,
 Soon gone, in their six meals a day.
 If need be, she could work like a man,
 But her motherly work seems even harder.

'Twas the farm her father so loved,
 Though of inventions, he also dreamed.
 A trusting man, perhaps too much so.
 It shook his faith when he discovered,
 That newspapers do indeed sometimes lie.
 But his pipe, to him, remained true.

School was dear to Jennie's heart,
 Perhaps even more so than the farm.
 For through snow, she'd gladly trudge
 Just to be in that one-room school.
 Others more gladly at home would stay,
 So more than once, she was all alone.

A school teacher, she later became
 Until it came time for her to marry.
 A carpenter he was, Clarence William,
 And he built them a most fine home.
 A family of four soon was theirs
 With two sons, David and Claude.

To church, she would have us go,
 And not to just one, but many.
 The Salvation Army, she quite admired,
 And Friends simplicity, and kindness.
 Sometimes she would even cart us off
 To hear some professor theologian.

Her love of music never ceased,
 And some did rub off on her sons.
 She played piano, and loved to sing,
 And now not just of hymns divine.
 To a fine octet, she also belonged.
 They even toured throughout the county.

In Dutch ways more old-fashioned,
 Playing cards was not at all approved.
 It was no small thing then for her
 When a bridge-club, she did join.
 So off to bridge she would often go,
 Obviously loving every minute of it.

Big decisions, she did not fear,
 Even when a widow and eighty.
 Time to pack up and go, she said,
 Selling the family home, and moving on
 'Twas the Holland Home for seniors then,
 And also, a secret bridge-game, or two.

For Jennie, family ran broad and deep
 With cousins uncles aunts and more.
 She wove somehow a connecting thread,
 As many did weave, not so long ago.
 But now old South Holland is no more,
 And one wonders, about what is instead.

Her last remains are an urn of ashes.
 Coffins and tears were not her way.
 Nor some funeral, so glum and dreary.
 A memorial service then it was for her,
 Accompanied of course by a tear or two,
 But also some smiles were there.

Ananda Claude Dalenberg

April 24th 1988

Dear Cloud-Hidden Friends:

In pondering our Cloud-Hidden fellowship over the years, I marvel at its ability to sustain such a wide variety of friendships via our ongoing exchange of letters and the like - thanks of course almost exclusively to the efforts of our determined clerk Ananda, who's personal initiative and light keeps our modest letter shining brightly.

I keep wondering however, why our regular contributions are few in number? Is there little to say and share, or are we simply lazy? Could it be that those who follow the Taoist, Zen or Buddhist ways have largely outgrown the need to speak out or write reflectively about the Human Condition and matters spiritual? I somehow think not, and yet I hear Ananda's gentle hidden pleas for more contributions. We must all realize that either we write once in a while, or the value/life-force of our own fellowship is seriously debilitated, if not actually threatened with eventual atrophy. For us to recognize a fulfilled purpose that no longer needs to be kept going, is one thing, but to let such a fine initiative simply die through neglect, is quite another...or am I totally out to Zen lunch?!

Yours hopefully and with love,



John H Boyd



The Two Door-Keeping Gods (Niwo)

FINI

27-19