

# cloud-hidden friends letter

A BUDDHIST PERIODICAL IN THE SPIRIT OF THE BODHI-DHARMA

Issue #28

Third Issue of 1988

The CHF Letter is dedicated to sharing in the spirit of the universal Dharma. Our emphasis is on Zen Buddhism, but the spirit we aim for is an open and free-ranging one, not tied-down to some sectarian formula. As examples of such a spirit, we look to D.T. Suzuki and Alan Watts. Thomas Merton might be another example, since 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 "subscription fee" is not a monetary one. We would instead require your active participation. This could be in the form of either writing a letter now and then for our pages, or by personally replying to some of the letters appearing in the CHFL. We hope to be able to publish everything appropriate. Letters should be of a reasonable length, and in the spirit of the CHFL.

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



*Avalokitesvara (Kwannon Bosatsu)*

CHFL, c/o The Floating Zendo, 753 44th Avenue,  
 San Francisco, CA 94121

Greetings! Once again the great holy-day season is close at hand. Here in San Francisco we have had a special occasion with which to begin the season. On Nov. 20 there was celebration at Zen Center honoring the memory of Alan Watts. It is now fifteen years since he passed away. There was a Dharma lecture by Gary Snyder, and poetry and music. Also there was the primal sound of forty stadium-horns during the procession up to the beautiful small rock stupa where his ashes remain. Since Alan is also important to the CHF, we are planning another CHFL issue honoring him soon. If then you would like to write something for our pages in memory of Alan, please send it to us soon. Letters, stories, poems, haiku-- all are welcome.

The CHFL is now in its fifth year, and it may be a critical period for us. It is amazing how many small periodicals seem to have a natural life span of about five years. When energy begins to wane, there is often some attempt to design a grand plan to solve everything. However as editor, I refuse to worry much about the CHFL. I don't think survival and longevity is the point of it all. Furthermore I think the all-demanding need of institutions to survive and perpetuate themselves is what creates many of the world's problems. And of such problems, we all have more than enough already. Let us be generous and not give this poor old world too many more. So far the CHFL has been fun, and that in itself is quite good enough.

Some of you have asked about the "Floating Zendo" referred to in our address. It is wherever your editor, in some mostly inward sense, happens to be floating in the world at this moment. I borrowed the term from Nyogen Senzaki, an early Zen pioneer in the West. I do not think he intended any direct reference to the Buddhist overtones of the Ukiyoe art school, which portrays the drama and pleasures of the "floating" professions and their poignant and evanescent world. Senzaki in his later years offered this comment on his "floating zendo" and wanderings on the west coast:

"I carried the zendo with me as a silkworm carries its 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".

753 44th Ave., San Francisco,  
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Ananda Dalenberg  
CHFL Clerk

541

July 02, 1988

CHFL  
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Dear Cloud Hidden Friends,

A small note fell out of the CHFL. "Perhaps it's right," I thought. "I may have too many commitments to continue. I won't even read this issue." I picked it up and read it anyway and letter by letter, until John Boyd's letter at the end was caught in the knots of "Indra's net." Thank you Claud Ananda for your note and your poem. I was touched by both.

On Cape Cod things progress. I'm still working with A Course In Miracles and various 12 Step Programs, although my thoughts of the former have been tempered somewhat by the work of Richard Moss. Slowly I pull away from the Congregational Church that I approached tentatively a few years ago. Although I recently presented a four week session on Buddhism for a very liberal group. If anything, it proved I'm more Buddhist than Christian, at least as practiced in the Church.

Thank you Yellow Mouse for a thought provoking letter. A great deal of what you wrote mirrors my own thoughts and recent writing on self esteem. I wonder, "is enlightenment as simple as remembering? Then having remembered must we then re-member-rebuild ourselves from a view of self different from that taught by family, friends, school, church and every other structure in society?

Although I agree that all families are dysfunctional. I do not agree they must always be so. I am convinced that 12 step programs, an increase in NDE's, increased incidence in channeling and other spiritual and paranormal activities can be the beginning of something. (The end of the Kali Yuga?) Any thoughts?

I'm also curious about the Floating Zendo. Does it float? How, on the water or as a crap game? Is it a Zendo where many come to practice, or one in thought and action in the mail?

In peace and love,



Bob Smith  
RR 1 Box 176A  
Eastham, MA 02542

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John H. Boyd.....3 Canterbury Road, Islington, Ontario, Canada. M9A 5B2

Dear Cloud-Hidden-Friends:

It has been said that expectancy enhances the pleasure of receiving.....and certainly our issue #27 was thus received and enhanced in the pleasure of its arrival the other day, by a long wait.....but what a delight.....we, as a fellowship of correspondents, may not write very often, but it certainly is worth waiting to hear from those for whom years have passed without a word - I marvel at the diversity and simplicity of our sharing, and like Ananda's comparison with the Quaker meetings, where only those moved to speak, would speak. I certainly like that kind of a loose model for our forum....so long as not all remain silent all the time!

Our friend Dairin Love sends us many challenging book recommendations and raises several worthy questions for us all to ponder along the path - he started me wanting to articulate some long accumulated thoughts, which I will address myself to a little later. Then Joel W's comments reminded me of the tenacious determinism (not too sure that this is the correct word!) that so typifies so many who have found their self-righteous "truth" through being "born-again", and who then set out to tell others to get saved....I have recently been writing quite extensively about the abortion issue, where these fanatical minds are so vocal and determined to have their pro-life moral indignation legislated into the laws of the land! Certainly here in Canada. They have no ability whatsoever to let us all decide for ourselves, as they see themselves blessed with a holier-than-thou-moral-rectitude which obliges them to "help" those who have not seen the light....how perverse can we be?

Our elusive Brown Rat, as nameless as always...but why?...plunges right into the fact that all pain comes to us through desire, and that all families are intrinsically dysfunctional and responsible for our inescapable condition, which endlessly sends us out looking for the knowledge that, in our state of endemic illusion and sleep, keeps us believing that we might find some kind of deliverance from our existential terror of non-being....more or less...wow! But yes, there is "a load of stuff here to be worked out"....good luck and thanks for the sharing....you are basically right on....good mouse!

Then Robert Glenn's gift of the empty/full/infinite "square/rectangle", was/is/timelessly great and right on....yes, everything has already been said, but there continues to be value in both silence and in saying it all over and over again ad infinitum. Elson's nostalgic trip provided many counterpoints for me on my own journey....particularly where I have increasingly been trying to let it (the past) all go, believing that the past is simply the past and that in general, it takes us away from the present....a trap of memory, as Krishnamurti never tired of reminding us.

I could/cannot fully understand why you brother Ananda should be so concerned to transcend the gap between Christianity and Buddhism - given that there is no gap in reality!...they are both the same in essence, if not in doctrine....or am I wrong? - "with some urgency" before you die? But you obviously attach considerable importance to this, as you openly share with us in your comments. Our "attachment" to parents, or the affective memory of them, either in terms of good feelings, guilt, responsibility, raw hatred and anger as well as general bewilderment and confusion, are deeply complex, as I well recall from the many years that I spent working in the psychotherapeutic world....but the final solution to all these problems, I believe, is more likely to lie in our ability to let them (parents and memories thereof) go completely, feelings and all....and I think that this is more of a "religious" process or an existential one, than anything as "deliberate" as psychotherapy....but then again this is a very complex issue, and I don't want to make the mistake of oversimplifying it all in a few words. But psychotherapy in general, is not, I would say, the modality of choice for trying to let go...to surrender, in the sense of giving up all attachments/identifications/etc. associated with our parents - or anything else for that matter. To be able to really walk alone, once and for all, and to do so with a deep feeling of being complete (totally) in oneself and not needing one's parents, is I would suggest, to be blessed.

Your ceremony idea is great if it works for you - perhaps as you say, on a yearly basis - but my personal suspicion is that even this need/wish/desire would likely fall by the way-side of unimportance, the moment that non-attachment to their memory, has been attained/realized. I am speculating, so please take my comments in this spirit....for it is risky to be offering another well intentioned advice, no matter how tenuous this might be! I would be happy to "talk" further with you about this matter, should you so wish.

Some general comments regarding our ongoing search for answers: I am always struck by how much effort, personal anguish, scholarship and grim determination seems to be present in the unfolding of our journeys. There seems to be an inescapable and heavy burden attached to the process of self-realization. The "human condition" seems to compel thus, no matter which pathway we follow in our search for personal growth, freedom, salvation, enlightenment, grace, inner-peace, integrity....call it what you will. Here I am always intrigued and personally challenged by the concept/idea and "beauty" of "the effortless effort" - something that has been increasingly taking me in the direction of intuiting that perhaps we need to "back-off" a little from making so much effort....that perhaps it is the almighty ego that generates most of our efforts to wish to be other than what and who we are at this moment....the whole (infinite) gamut of desires and goals. There is of course "nothing new" in this for those who are familiar with the teachings of Zen Buddhism, yet are not these pathways also steeped in incredible (often torturous) efforts in search for enlightenment? It is an odd paradox, in a sense, that what we really seek cannot really be found through direct effort....most of us know this deep down, and yet we keep on trying even harder! I am absolutely convinced that we already have it all, and that it is a simple/complex matter of being able to see this very clearly....very clearly, so that there is no doubt whatsoever. Perhaps the ultimate irony in life is that we already have the very thing that we are looking for, but cannot see it! Is there any greater laughing/crying matter for us to ponder? I think not.

I trust that we are enjoying the long-hot-summer....green-house effect and all!

Happy travelling and love to all,



August 1988

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CHFL: 8/17/88  
Thanx, Lee, for the 6-point mandala: reminds one of the Star of David, Assagioli's Mind and the Strong Hex.

Jo-el: "Just World !": WORLD = WEOROLD (OldEng) = WERALDH (Teut)  
= WIROS (man) + ALDH (age): the life and age of man  
WIROS = WIR (VIR) + OS (-AZ: s/he or that which) has WIR  
= WIR = VIR = VIRILE = man, manly, virtue  
= VIS = VITAL, force, vim, vigor, violence  
= VICE = vicious, vitiate; VITU = vituperate: abuse  
= WEI (PIE): to twist > wire, thread, wiry, vita, vine, wine (DNA?)  
= WEI (PIE): the vital force that gives life, capability of action  
THUS WIRAZ: s/he who has the vital force in hir  
= VIRTUE: the having of the vital forces within one  
ALDH = AL + DHE (PIE): to set, put, lay down > establish, make happen  
= AL (PIE): to grow, nourish, also high, deep: ALTUS = exALT  
(with the negative AB: AB-AL-ISH = ABOLISH: to retard growth)  
THUS ALDH: to establish and actualize nourishment  
and thus growth = OLD, ELDer, ALDerman, adULT  
THUS WIRAZ-ALDH = WER-ALD: the nourishment, growth, maturity,  
flourishing and evolution of s/he who has the vital forces within hir.  
THUS WORLD (verb) = To nourish, mature or lift the vital forces in man  
to the fullest heights (or depths)  
AND WORLD (noun) = the complete history of the nourishment, growth,  
maturity, flourishing and evolution of the vital forces in the human,  
both individually and jointly (how s/he holds to the thread of life  
and uses it in action and how s/he learns from hir experience) = not a  
planet, not material but the life, experience and ages of mankind:  
hir-story.

To Yellow Mouse: an updating of The Great Koan:  
Monk to Master: "Does a Cow have Buddha-nature ?" Monk: "MOOOoooo "

Dear DOM (Dirty Old Man): The Most Basic Teaching: Whatever actually  
helps your "neighbor" out of his place of despair, anxiety, fear.

To Shakya Gummo: Jae Jah Noe sez each new enlightenment comes faster  
than the last - faster and faster - until our minds have reached the  
speed of light and we exist in continual enlightenment - which is:  
that which is (or is it THAT WHICH IS ?). "Om mani padme Hm" =  
something about the Lotus which theLB assures us that each of us IS.

To The Star: 6 EPHESIANS (10) Finally, my brethren, be strong in the  
Lord, and in the power of his might. (11) Put on the whole armor of  
God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.  
(12) For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against  
principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of  
this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (13)  
Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to  
withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to STAND.  
(14) STAND therefore, having your loins girt about with truth; and  
having on the breastplate of righteousness; and (15) your feet shod  
with the preparation of the gospel of peace; (16) above all, taking  
the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the  
fiery darts of the wicked; (17) And take the helmet of salvation; and  
the SWORD of the SPIRIT, which is the WORD of God -

CONCLUSION for STAND: (1) to erect the pillar of the SHUSHUMNA  
 (2) to take an unyielding position and WAY and there  
 (3) to meet and engage with and resist or endure  
 (4) the forces which pressure one to abandon that position.

All of the ARMOR of God is defensive, EXCEPT the one offensive weapon:  
 the SWORD of the SPIRIT (S/S). What does this mean? We are told  
 directly that it is the WORD OF GOD.

SWORD = SWERD = SWER (PIE): (1) buzz, whisper, swarm, swirl, whirl,  
 eddy; (2) post, rod, branch; (3) cut, pierce; (4) speak, talk, SWEAR.

SWER 1 is swirl and eddy but also the SWIRL of senses that occurs  
 in the trance state where one encounters the breath essence of life;

SWER 1,2; rod or post: the SHUSHUMNA: that erected rod of spirit:  
 center of the whirlpool; the swirling breath of life essence: the  
 creative energy force of God;

SWER 1,4: the buzzing speech: the OM sound: the LOGOS: word of  
 God;

SWER 3,4 is not just speech, but those important powerful words  
 pronounced emphatically with the expectation that they make something  
 important happen: that they have important consequences.

THUS SWER is that whirling stick that cuts (pierces to the core): that  
 incisive whispered buzzing word that pierces through and cuts (to the  
 core of a person, matter, concept or issue).

SPIRIT = SPIRITUS = SPIRARE (Lat): to breathe, breath: the essence,  
 the vital principle, the Holy Ghost, the elan vital, the incoming  
 creative energy, force of God that gives life to man.

THUS the SWORD of the SPIRIT: The SPIRITUAL SWORD: The active,  
 offensive, aggressive whispered word from the whirling eddy of the  
 breath of life - from the Center of the whirlpool comes the LOGOS.

"Take the sword of the spirit" does not say "wield" it. "Take"  
 implies the having of it as you pursue your career through life: thus  
 take > carry > keep > have. But the identity is NOT the source of the  
 energy to wield that S/S: that is for the Christ/center.

WHO is this injunction issued to? It is directed at the reader of  
 the letter (epistle): he is told: "(YOU) take the S/S." God, Christ,  
 the Center core (heart) doesn't "take, carry, keep, have" the S/S, it  
 or s/he IS the S/S. It is the "other" "self", the identity, that is  
 admonished to take, carry, keep and have the S/S with him. How does  
 one do that?: The identity erects the Shushumna, centers itself,  
 walks quietly and carries a big stick: the Shushumna. This is the  
 only one aggressive weapon authorized by Paul.

Ananda: The Amer-Indian (the First American) also respects and uses  
 the 6 directions and has all sorts of rituals involving same. Each  
 rite is designed to form a completed mandala - wholeness, integration,  
 holiness.

"Working in my garden in July,  
 I thought I saw Jenny pass.  
 It was so hot my eyes were filled with sweat;  
 perhaps it was my wife at the piano."

To Johnny the gentle Boid: you are so sweet. yellow mouse

To CHF:

The Sawtooth Mountains are simply themselves —  
Too rugged to be logged,  
Too barren of gold and silver to be mined.

They are what they have become in 10 000 years  
Since the last glaciers melted.

Cold rain and snow make them my hell,  
And in warm sunshine my beautiful flowers.

From a regular reader,

Erik Storke



#### ON COMMITMENT AND JOY

The Bodhisattva Ideal is certainly fundamental to Buddhism, just as it is to Zen. Nor is it really a matter of the Mahayana or Theravada traditions,, since it all goes back to Sakyamuni. In the long process of becoming the Buddha, he was first a Bodhisattva. For when he encountered the extent and depth of the suffering in this world, he took the vow of a Bodhisattva, committing his life to a way of salvation for all.

A Bodhisattva might then be defined as someone who is fundamentally committed to following a way of salvation for all. It is not just Sakyamuni who has made such a commitment. It might be anyone. Indeed, here the Mahayana would emphasize that deeply within our hearts we are all Bodhisattvas, or at least potentially so. In Zen such a commitment is often called "The One Great Matter". The Bodhisattva Way also then is what Zen is all about.

Such a commitment is so deep it is said to be irreversible, and it does not then come and go with the changes and difficulties in ones life. However in addition to so fundamental a commitment, there are also related secondary commitments. These however do come and go as circumstances change, and this is as it should be. For example there may be a commitment to a particular temple or form of practice, but this may change in harmony with the changes in ones life.

I think affirmation of change is very important here. For example, if one were to leave some particular temple, it might be thought of as meaning disloyalty or letting the group down, or that one is somehow being a quitter. The result might then be serious psychological problems, as is quite common in so many New Age groups. But surely this kind of commitment should actually be regarded as secondary. What is constant is the Bodhisattva Way, and the infinite variety of its manifestations.

In Zen, zazen meditation is obviously very important, But I would say that it is but one manifestation of the Bodhisattva Way, and that the more there are of such, the merrier.

If, on the other hand, one takes the view that zazen is what zen is all about, then Japanese Zen actually doesn't make much sense. The simple truth of the matter is that there just isn't that much zazen going on these days, at least not of the formal variety, and probably there never was.

I would say that what is so obviously actually happening is ritual, Dharma classes, memorial ceremonies, holy day celebrations, tea ceremony, Buddhist kindergartens, Buddhist music lessons, Buddhist hostels, pastoral counseling, and so on.

Such a variety may seem scattered and confusing to some, particularly so if there appears to be no zazen on which it is all based. But to me it seems so obvious that what it is actually all about is the Bodhisattva Way, and it all then makes such perfect sense.

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One of the primary qualities of the Bodhisattva Way is joy. This is said to be especially so for beginners; and fortunately this would include most of us. Of course there also will be times when it seems mostly like a chore. A beginning Zen student, for example, usually experiences no small amount of difficulties, both mental and physical, but nevertheless has some overall sense of joy to it all.

More "advanced" students however, and I hope that doesn't include too many of us, often lose this sense of joy. I regard joy here as being very significant. I even think its presence or lack may serve well as a kind of signal and personal guide, which is often needed in the infinitely varied and often confusing world of practice. If then there is not somehow an overall sense of joy in my practice, at least in some small degree, I suspect it indicates that something may be very wrong. For example it might mean that I should rely less on zazen in its formal sense, and turn more to what Dogen Zenji meant by a zazen which is not one of the four postures, that is, not standing, walking, sitting and lying down. Or maybe I should be moving on to yet another other form of the Bodhisattva Way. Sometimes it might mean it is time to leave the temple and to go wandering as a Bodhisattva pilgrim in the world. Or if wandering around pretending to be vital and creative has brought me to a joyless dead end, it may be time to settle down to one simple thing, in which I find joy.

I don't think that joy here means that everyone is supposed to go around laughing and hugging each other all the time, although these days Zen could certainly use a bit more of such. I'd say it is much more quiet, hidden, and undramatic, and much more akin to a Buddha smile.

On second thought however, maybe what this old world needs is a little bit more of both.

Namaste,

Ananda

P.S.

Frank Haile, occasional contributor to the CHFL, and who happens to be my father-in-law, has come up with a brilliant idea. He reports that a few authorities from the Knoxville electric company were at first very apprehensive about it all, but now it seems that further marketing studies look quite promising, particularly for the deluxe refrigerated model:

continued

The Knoxville News-Sentinel, Friday, July 15, 1988 •

# He reports another use for old refrigerators

## Editor, The News-Sentinel:

The June 30 column by Sam "Venerable" depicts the latest in funerals, caskets, and accessories. Here's the latest one that will blow even Sam's "mind":

There is a loose nut (not related to Sam) in Knoxville who is saving his old refrigerator with a lifeless compressor beside his new refrig in his kitchen to store canned and paper goods in until he terminates and will use it to store his remains in forever for the following reasons:

1. It's sealed against water, air and is rust proof.

2. Buried in end, it takes up less space in a refrigerator graveyard and four can be interred in the same amount of real

estate as formerly required. With this system the average crowded cemetery could have housed three times as many Saint Peter gate crashers ... or hell benders.

3. The top freezer compartment will house all of his old love letters, letters to the editor, birth certificate, his favorite big-billed sun cap, wrist watch with an illuminator and picture of his black-and-white cat named Integration.

4. In the large cooling compartment his carcass will be placed in a fetal position, since that was the position he entered this world.

5. So many poor people aren't able to buy expensive gold and brass caskets.

Why should they when most old refrigerators are free?

6. The rich eventually will come around to new fridges with workable compressors and hook them up to KUB to keep them coolly preserved for the rest of their interredship. KUB would like this since none of their underground subscribers could fuss when they raise electric rates.

7. The 7,500 laid-off TVA unfortunates could certainly use this method of going if their time comes before Marvin is transferred to Beaver Creek Dam as chairman.

Frank Haile  
Knoxville

Frank also sent along these thoughts

in memory of his mother:

There was a godly mother in South Carolina who guided all her five children to college, Sunday school and church every Sunday. She never used a cuss word, smoked a cigarette, tasted booze or gossiped. She did raise a big vegetable garden and canned enough to feed us all winter. On top of all this she had a cow that furnished milk and butter to keep us all healthy. She was called Ma by all her "chillun" and they adored her. She was proud to admit blushingly that her "better half" was the only man she ever kissed. As president of the United States she would have balanced the federal budget with a profit.

Frank Haile  
Knoxville

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"It is easier to hide than to love." Francis Sharp, KPFA, 4.1.88

3.31.88 Berk.

Dear Folks,

I'm still so enchanted by my fantastic trip to Guadalajara last month that I'm still in the glow of it almost a month later (after gettin back 'home,' i.e.). I kinda wanta spill the beans on it to ye, so here we go, & it also occurs to me that in so doing I might at same time keep my longstanding promise to discourse a bit on romance & adventure & such--La vida de amor, eh!

So in early Feb. finding myself in that almost unnatural state (espec. for the 80s) of some money left over & no deadlines or job hassles looming over me & not having had a real vacation since Sum. 85, I take off excitedly by train&bus for parts So. of the Border, otherwise known as Mexico. Weekend I arrived in Matzatlan, all the Prezzes in the region are arriving the next day, so all rooms booked solid, so I push on to Guadalajara para el tren, not knowing precisely whut to expect, aware it's Mexico's 2nd largest metro area, which seemed quite lovely to peer at going thro ~~it~~ coupla times on way to or coming from Mex. City or other Southerly points of interest, other years. I pull in midnite Fri., & by Sat. noon I've loaded m' pockets with mucho pesos, changed rooms to a Pension in the Univ. Guadalajara district just on the No. edge of El Centro surrounded by mucho bookstores, Cines, lotsa reasonably-priced Cafes & Coffeehouses & couple bars. I'm delighted, entranced, etc... By Sunday I discover I've arrived on Guadalajara City's 446th Aniversario, so festivities, musica & mucho señoritas bonitas seems quite in order. I join in with a relish, being too fond of Latins & Latinas for my own good, probably. One señorita warmly welcomes me all the way back to my pad, 2 adorable rooms up the only steps I saw there. But in a few days she has to go back to Mex. City to check on her kids and see if her oldman will lay off with the violencia enough to suit her, so nothing longterm in this encounter, lovely/adorable/charming as it (she) was. There are other gardens to farm, eh?...

By Teusday or so I've hit upon a plan: Why not meet some of these folks at the bookstores & Univ. Guadalaj.? I have a few books with me, so I start in almost at once at the store on the block & the 2-3 within couple blocks, my street, & as the week warms up, I stumble upon another possibility, my doing a reading somewhere, some store, cafe, or at U.G., etc.... I sell no books at the stores, their Engl. sects., w/one exception, are c. 3x4 ft. total. And after trying sev. cafes, stores, U.G., etc, I'm not able to tap into a reading series anywhere--there are none I can locate--but do score a 1-night stand at a writers workshop situation right around the corner from my place next door to my favorite cafe for breakfast or late-night flirtin & B.s.-ing, at a State-sponsored Arts Center comparable, say, to our Berk.-San Francisco neighborhood Arts Centers (or Sr. centers) or perhaps to La Pena/Berk. I was the guest of honor for a doz. or so young writers, read in English with translations, 3 of which I'd written out beforehand. Rest of em, however, were done by an absolutely brilliant young poet/translator right-on-the-spot, sight unseen (prior to that Eve). All discussion was exclusively in Spanish. Kinda surprised m'self that I could handle that. Seemed as though it made a quite distinct impression on the group, tho a course I'd be hard put to tell how much so or how lasting it'll turn out...

I'll drift back over to the Romance department in a minit. Right now I wanta say this befo I fogit it: Parachuting into Mexico is like being suddenly set down on another planet in comparison to our shady ole 80s Lady by-the-Bay--everyone there is so warm, enthusiastic, (mostly) helpful, friendly, charming, ready at a flick for adventure for fun'n games, a joke, a dance, a talk, whatever, they almost glow all over they're so darn nice & With It as we usta say on de streets way back when around here. Matter of fack, it kinda reminds me of the ole warm shining adventurous breezy Bay Area I once knew & was so fond of I could hardly stand it, so your guess is as good as mine precisely whut tis I be lookin fer on these goofy trips I mek.

Gives me some perspective on how folks are acting round here. Did yew notice, like I did, that the same folks who wuz hysterical about something else 5-10 years back (whut I often call Non-specific hysteria) are now hysterical bout AIDS? Pause fo reflection, eh? Apparently these times we're atrying t git thro w/all the courage we can muster up are one helluva lot more difficult to apprehend, survive, transcend, enjoy, or all 4 at once, or whatever yer particular thing is re whut I'm tryna pin down here. I'm sure the confused politics & wobbling economy affects folks much more, probably, that they suppose. Thus ye git folks who in another time/place, wud neva be caught dead dismissing old standbys we've always lived by a la the Family, child-raising, Relationship & so on. How ye gon build something with somebody who's so down on the idea from the outset? I don't say only women are guilty of these mindless lambastings. But I do say this: usta be twas the women ye cud count on to be upholding the values I mentioned, plus such otha out-of-fashion virtues as honesty, sweetness, affection, enthusiasm & such. Nowadays, however, women in the U.S. (or B-Area) can be counted on for no such values. Lot of em sound like the brutal mindless macho Male Hepcats of a previous era. Zounds. Weird. Wha' gives? Somebody tell me qweek befo I fall outa my seat, Splash! Right to the bottom of the pond wit the other gorldarned Bullfrogs. . . .

Not too surprising then, anyway, that a week or so later, a most attractive creature at an outdoor cafe smack in de middle of El Centro carried on a most Ladylike flirtation with me, to which I with mucho gusto responded, resulting in a sweet sedate dinner at her place night or so later, way up past midnight talking & light smooching. By next night we're both hooked, but she decides, perhaps wisely, that if I do stay over, I sleep in Mom/Pop's bed, other bedroom. By now we're really totally enchanted, but the Consulate refuses her a qweekie visa, & that nite at dinner out comes her whole tearful story--trouble with U.S. authorities & hasn't even divorced her 2nd husband yit. The romance continues, but had to leave her behind that time, hopefully not next time I go down for her birthday in Aug. The enchantment, the romance goes on, we coo on th phone ever week or so & we're currently trying to git her divorced from that 2nd husband & reaching for a long-range visa with serious plans for eventual marriage there or here, if possible. Even with her/naw our, difficulties, I'm sticking by this charmer because, among other things, she opened her heart to me when apparently no one else would--for good, that ole lastin relationship or possible pending matrimonio.

Pretty successful trip, I'd say. Lotsa adventure, sightseeing, mucho amor, & even one last-minute poetry-reading at a Guadalajara writers workshop. Mucho fun. Naturally I feel regenerated, replenished, renewed, all the good things, right? And wish me luck with the new gal, right?!

In fact, if nobody minds I'll just close with a love poem & my first ever to be totally composed in Spanish originally. Instead of translating the whole thing for ye, I'll just render here most of the key words I'm supposing ye mite not know: Sueños/Dreams, Esperanza/Hope, deseos/desires, besos/kisses, reíndo/laughter, tierno/tenderness//S-dulce/sweet drms, Niños bonitos/lovely children, "cielo y ojos divinos/heavens & eyes divine," bailando/dancing, canciones/songs...tocando/touching, sentamiénto/feelings (r thoughts) (smiles)sonrisas, "Pero hay/But there are" & "Vamos unirélos/We're going to unite them..."

Now, the poem:

Casas de Amor  
(a María Elena Dolores Jiminez)

Casas de los Sueños  
Casas de la Esperanza  
Casas de los deseos  
Casa de los besos  
Casa del silencio  
Casa del reíndo  
Casa del tierno

Casas de los Sueños dulce  
Casas de los Niños bonitos  
Casa de cielo y ojos divino  
Casa del bailando  
Casa de los canciones  
Casa de los besos  
Casa de las poemas  
Casa de los flores  
Casa de los deseos  
Casa del tocando  
Casa del sentamiénto  
Suenos esperanza sonrisas  
Casa de amor!

Pero hay dos casas en ese poema,  
uno en Berkeley, uno en Guadalajara.  
Vamos unirélos tan pronto que posible!  
Conjuntos. Pronto.

2.27.88

San Diego

Norm Moser

P.S. Next up, series of articles on my son; hiking; WW III, etc...

### "ENVIRONMENTS OF SERVICE AND CARE"

Issan Dorsey's commitment to provide care for those in need compelled him to respond - the Hartford Street Zen Center has, without formal planning, already become a residence for two people with AIDS. MAITRI's hospice program was conceived of as an organized way to provide Issan with the means to attend to the needs of many people who are currently suffering without adequate care. It will formally establish a personal, home-like environment in which to offer a range of health care services, utilizing the best professional and volunteer support available.

Because there is no existing cure, MAITRI is committed to providing the best available "treatment" - understanding, support, comfort, care and compassion - and will do so in an "environment of service and care." This environment will address the psychological and spiritual needs, as well as the physical demands, of those affected by the AIDS epidemic. When acknowledged as a part of our life AIDS is not merely something to be rid of, but rather is also an opportunity to deepen our awareness of ourselves and to express our concern and love for others. MAITRI will attend to the essential needs of people with AIDS in the following ways:

- Physical - Providing a peaceful, personalized environment, including home-cooked meals, etc., in a non-institutional setting; offering the highest quality of home nursing care on a 24-hour per day basis; and providing medical consultation and direction.
- Psychological - Taking care of people, both those that are stricken with AIDS and ARC and their families, friends, and caregivers in a personal, heartfelt way which directly meets their needs; minimizing the emotional trauma associated with life and death care; and utilizing the expertise of mental health professionals on an ongoing/as needed basis.
- Spiritual - Cultivating an environment of awareness, attention, and observation while acknowledging the truths of change, suffering, and transiency; residing in and appreciating the present moment; understanding the inter-relationship of all being, whether healthy or sick; regarding each event in our life, including our death, as a precious opportunity.

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Dear Cloud Hidden Friends,

It seems that every year or so I'm writing you about a new project and/or place that I've gotten (or been gotten) into. Now it's "MAITRI" (from the Sanscrit, meaning "the joys of true friendship"). Those of you who have any contact with Issan Dorsey or the Hartford Street Zen Center have probably heard or read about it already. Rather than taking the time to explain it myself, I'm including an excerpt from some promotional literature which you've probably already read on the preceding page.

MAITRI now has a long term lease on a large house next door to its building on Hartford Street (which, incidentally, is just  $1\frac{1}{2}$  blocks from the middle of the S.F. Castro District) and is expanding the hospice program from two to five people seriously ill with AIDS.

The description of "physical, psychological and spiritual" services sounds great - but, then, all promotional literature does. I got involved with MAITRI before I read the literature because it feels that way around there to me and I like it a lot.

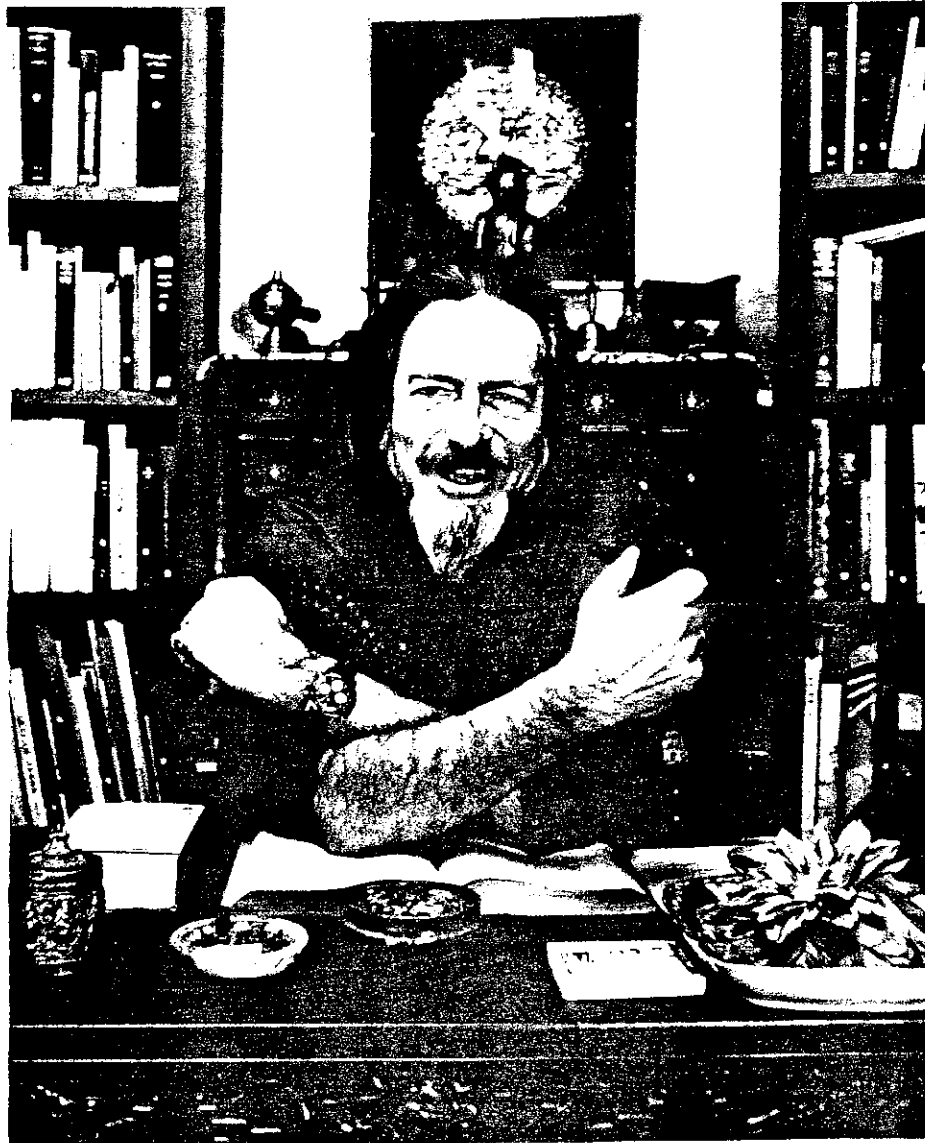
When I told Issan Dorsey that I knew practically nothing about hospices, nursing and dying, he said they didn't know much either. They are learning about it as they are doing it. So, I would say that in the Beginner's Mind tradition, MAITRI is a natural extension of the Zen practice at Hartford Street responding to a profound need of the people in its community. And, now that the program is expanding, there are a lot of organizational, financial and legal challenges coming up to intensify the usual personal, psychological, spiritual things that we all have for ourselves. But spending some time as a volunteer giving care to someone who is partially incapacitated is very much a person to person, here and now kind of experience. While I sit at home now, writing, the images that come to mind are mostly of warm and smiling faces of volunteers and patients at MAITRI, so I quote from the last paragraph of the excerpt:

".....residing in and appreciating the present moment; understanding the inter-relationship of all being, whether healthy or sick; regarding each event in our life, including our death, as a precious opportunity."

— — — — —



SSS



ALAN WATTS (1915-1973)



CROSSING OVER CEREMONY AT ZEN CENTER 1973