

# THE ZEN FREETHINKER

613

ISSUE #35

THIRD OF 1991

Formerly Known As "The Cloud-Hidden Friends Letter"

The *Zen Freethinker* is devoted to a more natural and free spirit in Zen, with an emphasis on the more individual way of a pilgrim, rather than the way of an organization, temple, or sect.

Such a spirit is perhaps best exemplified by Daisetz T. Suzuki, Alan Watts, and Nyogen Senzaki, three important early pioneers of Zen in the West. Although they greatly loved traditional Zen, in their own lives they each chose to go a more free-ranging and individual way, remaining unallied to any particular organization or sect. Nor did they seek some lofty religious title, no doubt in the spirit of Rinzai's phrase, "A true man of no rank". They then might indeed be regarded as being *Zen Freethinkers*. Among many others that might be included here are Paul Reys, R.H. Blythe, Christmas Humphreys, and those in Japan with a spirit akin to that of D.T. Suzuki, although they themselves did not use the term *Zen Freethinker*.

There are of course also other Freethinking traditions. In the West, Freethinking is often scorned as representing some unholy den of atheists libertines, and deists, even though it would include such eminent figures as Edward Herbert, Voltaire, Rousseau, Spinoza, Thomas Paine, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson. For us this seems an illustrious heritage, for which we have some real affinity. Although trying to define so free and varied a tradition is hazardous, it might be fair to say that "Freethinking trusts most deeply in natural religion, and in the natural divinity which is the inmost nature of everyone. A Freethinker then is free from dependence upon revealed truth or external religious authority". Combine such a definition with an equally or even more hazardous definition of Zen, and you have a *Zen Freethinker*.

In any case, we aim to go beyond the barriers dividing East and West.

For our "subscription fee", we request a letter from you now and then for our pages. But if that is too much to ask, we would accept some small monetary contribution.



The Buddha and his two disciples, Sāriputra and Mahāmaudgalyāyana

The ZF is a *Beneath the Pines* Publication, and our whereabouts are somewhat hidden in San Francisco fog. We then are fond of an old Chinese verse by Chia Tao. Lin Yu Tang 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."

# Zen Freethinker

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THIRD OF 1991

1) This issue is out a little sooner than usual, since there have been a deluge of letters from you recently. Also they have been of a rather high quality, so much so that it has me a bit worried. One might easily become too perfectionist about all of this, to the point where one loses an amateur spirit and begins to worry whether or not one's own meanderings are good enough. Maybe what is needed is more Bodhisattva volunteers willing to write some real dumb letters. If there were more of such as models for us, we could all relax and take it easy.

2) Since the ZF is supposedly a Zen periodical, you may have wondered why quite a few letters have been appearing concerning the Pure Land tradition and the practice of nembutsu (turning to Amida Buddha and repeating his name). Actually this is a problem mostly in the context of Japanese sectarian orthodoxy, which tends to put everything in watertight compartments, and that is definitely not the kind of spirit we have in mind. We would rather here follow the openness of the Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese Zen traditions, where nembutsu has been one of the most common practices for at least the last five centuries. A more sectarian and orthodox spirit would no doubt also cast a very disapproving eye at the beatnik zen, the martial arts, and zen motorcycle maintenance etc.. Nor would other Western developments be really trusted, such as Zen Unitarian groups and books on Zen by Christians. It has even reached the point where several Catholic priests have received Dharma Transmission! To the ZF, however, such a scenario seems to be quite a merry one.

3) The Alan Watts Library has been given to the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco. The opening ceremony will be on May 31. An article on the library appears in this issue. Also the Alan Watts Society for Comparative Philosophy will be starting a monthly study group meeting at Green Gulch Zen Center in Marin County beginning June 9. For information, contact the SCP, PO Box 173, Villa Grande, CA 95486. Tel. 415-332-5286.

4) Letters etc. appearing in this issue are from:

Deneal Amos	Dave Kiebert
Wulf A.	Yellow Mouse
Richard Bell	Lynn Olson
Michael Canright	Ed Star
Ananda Dalenberg	Tom Thompson
John Esse	

Ananda Dalenberg, Editor

The Zen Freethinker, 753 44th Av., San Francisco, CA 94121

6-15  
For the ZF.

ABOUT THE "NEW AMERICAN DREAM"

Some two years ago, around Martin Luther King's birthday (15th of January--and in 1991 George Bush's "deadline" for war--in contrast to Martin's "lifeline"!), we talked about this peculiar idea of the "American Dream" in a senior high school class (I was a substitute teacher there for a time).

The "Pursuit of Happiness", Horatio Alger's "Rages to Reaches" stories -- could we perhaps come up with something better, add to Martin Luther King's famous dream? After much enthusiastic discussion ( these kids seemed to be endowed with an inexhaustible supply of enthusiasm) and several tries, we finally agreed on this new version of the American Dream.

And now, in this grim Winter of War, I thought, it might be a fine contribution to our great leader Georges Bush's "New World Order".

I am giving it as wide a distrubution as I can ( a 'San Francisco policeman read it during a demonstration, and the local sheriff read it after he had torn it from a huge artillery shell to which I had brazenly attached it at a Nevada munitions depot). I talked to both of them for awhile and am convinced that in their hearts they were dreaming just such a dream.

Wulf A.

6/6

## THE NEW AMERICAN DREAM

We, the people of America and of all this earth, people of all races and all origins, have a dream.

We dream of experiencing a powerful yearning to understand, respect, and love all human beings, others and ourselves, and nature as well in all its myriad forms from the tiniest microcosmic puzzle to the mysteries of a boundless universe.

Especially we dream of understanding and respecting the physical and mental needs and emotions of all fellow humans. We dream of understanding knowing, and experiencing oneness with all others and of realizing that our individual actions affect all and everyone. We dream that a great joy and energy will fill us because of our interactions with others and that our very souls, our most intimate personal being grows and expands without limits as we interact with all and everything.

Such all and everything includes all of nature which in turn includes all of us. We yearn to understand and live in harmony with nature as one of its most fascinating and precious manifestations. We dream of the joy and happiness that flows to us from nature as we understand it and live with it.

And we dream further that the force that drives us in all our actions is a boundlessly compassionate curiosity, the deep yearning to understand and thus become free in a new and profound way.

And we are convinced that this NEW DREAM can nurture us and motivate us in the reality of our daily lives better than the old dreams of times we leave behind.

An anonymous American

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Canaan, NH 03741

For Zen Freethinker

Dear Cloud Hidden Friends and Free Thinkers:

Greetings from a long-time friend and lover of the CHFL. I've been thinking about you all for quite a while. Now that I have a few days in the hospital (complications of the flu), I'm finally able to write. Back in the forties when I was going to school at Berkeley, I used to come home from work and study while listening to classical music on KEAR, one of the early FM stations. They used to sign off every night with Jan Pearce singing "The Bluebird of Happiness". I would get sentimental thinking about all the other people listening to that music. I felt a part of something larger. That's the way I feel when I read the CHFL too. The Cloud Hidden Friends title has always appealed to me because it spoke to my sense of loneliness for, and connection to, all the others who were out there doing the "Work".

For those of you who remember me, and those of you who don't, I run a small meditation school in New Hampshire, and I give classes in the area in Meditation, T'ai Chi, and Zen Basketball (Moral Philosophy). Our goal is to cultivate spiritual community as a means to the 'Peace that Passeth Understanding'. I've just passed my 63rd birthday (1/22), and I'm in the hospital because too much work and the flu don't mix.

Friends from the old days would, undoubtedly have put me in the category of free-thinker when I was younger. For myself, I never looked at things quite that way. My folks, the children of ex-slaves had a different viewpoint. What they said was that we might not always be able to do what we wanted to, but no one could stop you from thinking your own thoughts. We were all free thinkers! Our ideal was the attainment of reason, to bridge the gap between different ideas and cultures. We were looking for the world we all could share. This search led to non-attachment, meditation, and non-doing in the Taoist sense as the means to perfect harmony. (Whatever happened to the age of reason? Nowadays reason is what you give when you're late for work.) I do have some reservations about the notion that the way to heaven is to do your own thing. (I oversimplify) I believe I can be master of myself, but not master of my fate. I enjoy discipline and order, and I'm not threatened by the need to work for others or with others. There are many reasons to go it alone, but I fear that many people who believe they chose to go it alone have really just chosen to avoid the sacrifices and complications of living with others. There's some justification for this. The tyranny of the righteous can be even more vicious than that of the conservative (have you wondered how the thousand years' peace is going to be maintained). I don't believe in the reality of a separate self. I am the nucleus of an entity with no boundaries in the sea of sentiency. I think our hope of attainment is a misunderstanding of the nature of reality. Actually we just remember the truth that always was and will be. The notion of separateness inevitably leads to identification with the image of conflict.

The tempest will always be with us. Whether we see ourselves being at war depends on our practice. When the tornado comes, we don't see ourselves as having failed in our practice. When the storm tosses men instead of trees, is it any different?

Practice peace and you'll bring peace to the world. We can practice peace with ourselves, our friends, and our neighbors, the people/sentiencies we meet on the path we walk, regardless of the label we're wearing. We can let go of name and form; float on the sea of humanity; get over the fear of falling. Mostly we don't know we are holding back, but when we agree to go together it's easy to find and overcome the stuck places and easier to do without the ego supports we blame others for hoarding. We establish, by example, that peace is possible right now - in war, in poverty, in difference, etc. Samsara is Nirvana. There's no need to wait for anyone else to begin; just be still wherever we are. As you let go of these things that disturb, that stillness, peace will come. As the sailors of old used to fire a cannonball through the eye of a tornado, we can from our several locations break up the view of the world as conflict by simply being still (at peace) together.

Gassho,



Shanti!

TO THE ZF

RICHARD DEIL  
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ASHLAND, OR 97520

Dear Siblings:

I have a confession to make...I've sought acceptance and sangha and being part of a group by sugar coating my reactions to stuff and trying to not insult anyone (except in the duly sanctioned Zen way, of course). I've tried real hard, but I haven't gotten what I wanted. I know it's arrogance that I trust my vision of the Dharma more than I trust some tradition or teacher...I know that, but what else can I do?????

Inspired by Ed Star's hearty imitation of a crusty ass I'll vent a bit of my own phlegm here....Brrraachhhh...hackkk...patooie. Ah...masculine culture...(is that an oxymoron?)..("Of course not dear." she said).

To G. Gibbs, myself on a bad day, and a bunch more of us who'd like to feel superior to the Christians or Theravadins or NSA or Scientologists et al....How can we criticize them for not piercing their tradition when most of us (well, maybe not us, but certainly all those other Buddhists) blindly accept tradition rather than making skillful, philosophic sense????

eg...using nouns for Bodhi such as Buddha, enlightenment, etc instead of verbs. The Judaio-Christian God is a verb (is, was, will be). Look where traditional, shallow understanding, respectful usage of noun forms got them...how can we think ourselves different??? While I'm at it, what's the logic behind using Bodhisatva pantheons and ritual to point out reality...Why not just say "Look...Reality!!!"...and Sanscrit terms, come on now.....I know you understand, but how about those other guys?

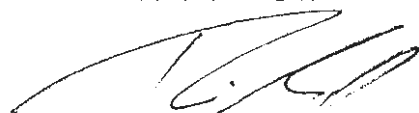
...and "Purity" as in "Purely enlightened one." How can there be "purity" in light of dependent origination? I hate it when I do that.

...and another thing...I'm tired of being insulted by sincere practitioners of tradition with little understanding yet with the brown or black or yellow or magenta robes of sanctioned lineage...I lean over backward to not tease them too much, but do I get thanks...Nooooo...I only tell the young Zen monk that anybody arguing that something wasn't Zen doesn't understand Zen and the teacher monk that he is obviously attached to his status as a monk and I get censured for not going with the flow and respecting their status. (So I'm transparent)...Well, excuuuuuuuuuse me, but I thought we were doing Buddhism here, or at least Zen, and at least honesty....and what's worse ... (this is the bad part)...it's embarrassing to admit that it tweaked my ego and hurt my feelings. It did too.

...and what's this exclusive thing folks are into. I don't necessarily want to be a card carrier, but it would be nice to be recognized on some level. I mean reeeeeealy, does being a member of the club have to be more important than understanding the Dharma? And why do I care if I'm not thought to be a Buddhist by all of you (I mean them) anyway??? I'm supposed to be more evolved than that. Cages rattle at pointing out that the Buddha never taught Buddhism as we know it (He taught the Dharma) ...but I'm some kind of ass picking a fight instead of a Hui Neng killing the Buddha on the road to Damascus. Sometime's I feel I just can't win.

Thanks for reading, I feel a lot better now. Really!!!

Toward the One (I mean the Void),



619  
Dave Kiebert  
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January 11, 1991

Dear Zen Freethinkers,

Greetings and Happy New Year! Let us hope that the new year does not bring war and suffering, but a continued thawing of the political tensions of the World.

One thing that bothers me about traditional Zen is its formalism, the insistence on certain postures, breathing techniques, and mental attitudes as essential to proper practice. But the irony is that Zen has been modified over the centuries to adapt to various cultures. The Indian Djana was modified by the Chinese to produce Chan Buddhism, and Chan Buddhism was in turn adapted to Japan in the form of Zen. The point is, if we in the West, and particularly in the United States, are to adopt Zen, why should we not adapt it to the peculiarities of our own culture?

The cornerstone of American culture is the concept of Freedom. Most of us passionately adhere to the freedoms in the Bill of Rights and the Constitution. In Academia we value academic freedom. In the sciences we require the freedom to explore new ideas and techniques. The value of freedom is one of the reasons we have succeeded as a nation to the extent that we have. Why not apply that freedom to the practice of Zen? Perhaps in fact we should drop the word "Zen", with its connotations of esoteric Japanese mysticism, and adopt a totally Western word, like "Freethinking" or "Meditation", just as the Chinese changed Djana to Chan and the Japanese changed Chan to Zen.

Another feature of American culture is eclecticism. We are supposedly a "Melting Pot", a rich mixture of peoples and cultures. In biology, there is the concept of "hybrid vigor"; when two individual organisms of diverse strains mate, their offspring tend to inherit the dominant characteristics of both parents and to be more vigorous and healthy than their parents. When the Chinese adopted Djana, they mixed it with native Taoism to produce a hybrid that was suited to their culture. Why should not we bring together ideas and techniques from various cultures to enrich our own spiritual practice?

Take basic meditation, for instance. In traditional Zen it is strongly recommended that one practice every day, sitting in the lotus position, one's arms a certain distance from one's body, one's hands in a certain position, etc. One is instructed to empty one's mind, to count one's breaths, to strive for one-pointedness or mindfulness, etc., while at the same time making as little effort as possible, with no clinging to thoughts of enlightenment or competitiveness. In a way, this reminds me of the old Western advice, "Keep your nose to the grindstone, your shoulder to the wheel, your ears to the ground — Now try to work in that position."

Personally, I like "Doin' what comes naturally". I have a natural enthusiasm about living, love of other people, delight in nature and works of art, curiosity about science, etc. I take the spontaneous approach to "spiritual" practice. My form of meditation, which I don't do daily, but only when I have time, is to sit in a quiet, dimly lit place in a comfortable but erect position, breathe deeply and slowly, focus my attention on something like a candle flame, relax and let my mind wander. I become lost in images of wind blowing trees, rain clouds drifting across the sky, raindrops rippling in a pond, birds flying and twittering. I lose myself in the immensity of the Universe, the Great Unconscious. Slowly, reality comes back to me like a developing photograph. I arise feeling refreshed and relaxed.

What works for me may not necessarily work for others. What works for you?

Namaste,

7 Dave

620 Dear Ananda and Cloud-Hidden Friends-

Ananda, in a brief note you asked me about more information on the HARA Training that I teach...so I thought I'd kill two birds with one stone by answering you with a letter to CHFL!

Basically, the Hara Training came from methods and trainings I received in Zen, Yoga, Meditation and the Martial Arts. After the psychedelic 60's and the very intense Kundalini/Siddha Yoga 70's, I realized that no matter how many states of consciousness I had been in or how many different planes of being I had discovered, I still had a body and, in 1977, a new baby (Kelly) to take care of and support. And so the challenge was to get grounded and functional in a way that worked yet didn't require "selling out." And so from that need gradually developed the Hara Training.

Having spent some time with Japanese Americans and having gotten close to my teacher Iku Mayeda, I was aware of Hara. A person with Hara is considered a powerful, kind, functional human being with high standards for themselves. They are solid, centered people. A person without Hara was loose as a goose and all over the ball park-very much like someone who has taken one too many hits of LSD and never came all the way back! In the Hara Training I talk about tying your kite down. It can fly as high as it wants as long as its string is tied down well. But many of us have lost hold of the string and are just flapping in the wind, so to speak.

The five basics of Hara Training are 1- Focus mind in the Hara. Breathe!, move, act, and relate to others and environment from the Hara. 2-Relax completely into good posture and muscle tone. 3- Flow the ki, through eyes, fingers, feet, Hara. 4-Keep weight down-the more tense we become, the higher our breathing moves and the higher our center moves. Again, breathe in the Hara. 5-Be Attentive. Empty still mind reflects reality accurately as a still pond reflects the Autumn moon. As Suzuki Roshi said, "An empty mind is ready for anything." 4 out of 5 I got from Koichi Tohei's books on Ki development. George Leonard has developed LET- Leonard Energy Training-which uses GRACE\_ Ground, Relax, Awareness, Center, Energy in the same way. In the Hara Training we use various arts esp. aikido, zazen, etc. to develop and internalize these steps. And then we forget them.

Although the training is interested in practice-skill in action-as the Tibetan yogis say, "Insightful wisdom requires skillful means to produce effective action."-and not too much in theory-there are



a number of books that provide valuable information to anyone involved in Hara Training.

They are Gesture of Balance and Skillful Means by Tarthang Tulku, Book of Ki and Ki in Daily Life by Koichi Tohei, Hara-Durkheim, The Unfettered Mind-Takuan Soho, Ki-William Reed, The Zen way to the Martial Arts and Questions to a Zen Master by Taisen Deshimaru, Samadhi-Mike Sayama, Zen Training-Sekida, Zen Mind, Beginners Mind -Suzuki, Three Pillars of Zen-Kapleau, and anything by J.Krishnamurti.

Again, the basic to the training is practice. But the 5 steps can be practiced anywhere and anytime! So one doesn't need a dojo or special situation. One of the Hara students said that the training was like getting a practical handbook to life-the one we didn't get when we were born or in school...most of what is taught in Hara I is very practical and obvious (there are 3 levels of Hara Training) and yet, as Swami Sivananda points out, an ounce of practice is more valuable than tons of theory.

And with that it is time for me to meditate and practice as I have a student coming in awhile. Ananda, I very much thank you for your support and interest-and I hope I haven't bored the rest of my CHF's. My best to you all. And until next time I bid you all a fond Gassho!



Tom

Tom Thompson  
HARA FOUNDATION  
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919-692-4854

Dear Dharma Friends:

John Esse

This is my first contribution to The Zen Freethinker. I have appreciated receiving the last few issues, and have read with interest the various approaches to the theme of "the individual way of a pilgrim, rather than the way of an organization, temple, or sect." While I can resonate to the notion of an individual way, I do not see the individual way as contrasted with the organizational way. As I have explored the path of the Buddha-way, I have been attracted to the other-power, faith-oriented teaching of the Jodoshinshu Sect. I admire those who are able to follow the more rigorous, independent approaches, such as Zen, but such approaches are not for me. Perhaps you will find some interest in the story of my individual journey.

During my childhood years, I was exposed to events which resulted in feelings of fear, shame, and unworthiness. I thus developed a sense of personal insecurity, which affected the quality of my relationships with others.

When I reached late adolescence, I found that I could not consistently be the kind of person I wanted to be. But I was motivated toward self-improvement, and I had a strong desire for peace of mind, so I worked hard to understand and overcome the conflicts within me.

In my early twenties, I sought psychotherapy and went into the field of clinical psychology. I searched earnestly for a full solution to the problem of suffering, but only found partial answers. Even after I graduated, and began my professional career, I still had lingering self-doubts.

After working four years at a community mental health center, I shifted to working as a private therapist. I made that change in hopes I would find greater happiness and fulfillment. I wanted to be freer to actualize my own values. On the negative side, that change also re-stimulated my fears of the possibility of failure.

In March, 1979, at age 31, less than a week after entering private practice, I experienced a personal crisis. Feeling anxious and fearful about being in a situation over which I had so little control, I literally got down on my knees in my office and asked for help. I had no clear idea whom I was addressing, and had no real expectation of a response. But something dramatic did happen! Suddenly, I felt a wonderful sense of peace and calm and happiness, more so than ever before in my life.

I studied and looked inward to discover the basis for the wonderful gift I had received. I adopted a daily meditation practice, which involved focusing on my breathing, and letting go of all other thoughts and sensations. I also spent much time reading the Bible, the writings of the Christian mystics, the early Buddhist teachings, as well as the Great Vehicle Buddhist scriptures, such as the Heart Sutra, the Diamond Sutra, the Lankavatara Sutra, and the Threefold Lotus Sutra.

Of all that I was exposed to, I was clearly most attracted to the Great Vehicle teachings and practices. After about six months of study, I felt confident enough to publish a newspaper ad offering to share my perspective on Mahayana Buddhism with interested persons in my home community. I had regular sessions with four such individuals, which not only helped them, but myself as well. By trying to teach them, I learned much about myself, and about the Buddhadharm.

Thankfully, one of my "students" was an elderly woman who helped me appreciate the Pure Land perspective. In a sense, I was the student, and she was actually my "good teacher". Lucille had already been exposed to Taoism, and Tibetan Buddhism through her own

self-study. She also had developed a strong devotional orientation toward Amida Buddha, whom she portrayed in beautiful paintings. Lucille helped interest me in learning more about the Pure Land School of Buddhism. I reflected deeply on the Sukhavati Sutras, which tell of Amida, his Vow, and his World. I thus came to the gate of the Nembutsu.

About one year after my "religious conversion", I was still experiencing a fairly constant state of peace of mind. I was arrogant enough at that time to think that I could actually approximate some of the bodhisattva-virtues. I restructured my life to pursue a more altruistic direction, largely leaving the field of psychology in March of 1980, and becoming a Headstart home-based teacher. I also became a husband and father during that year. What I discovered is that I couldn't perform the practices necessary to achieve Buddhahood.

Through knowing Lucille, through further study and reflection, and through facing the reality of my own limitations, I realized by the Summer of 1980 that Amida was responsible for my peace of mind. He had given me the freedom from fear and anxiety which I now enjoyed. It was his power upon which I had been relying. I then accepted Amida's compassionate help with conscious awareness, thus entering the gate of the Nembutsu.

I still, however, didn't fully appreciate the fact that Amida had no requirements of me at all. I shifted from exerting efforts toward the performance of "good" actions, such as serving the poor and laying the groundwork for a Hospice program, to focusing my efforts on worshipping Amida. I restructured my life further, taking a job as a 3rd shift factory worker in January, 1981, which permitted me to recite the nembutsu in my mind during most of my waking hours. What I discovered after three months of doing this, was that even worship and the Nembutsu are not necessary for salvation. I was overjoyed to realize that Amida accepted me just as I was, with all my flaws and limitations. Even the faith I experienced was a totally free gift from him! Namu Amida Butsu!

After a year as Executive Director of a Hospice program, I went back into the field of psychology in May of 1982, by accepting a senior position at a regional psychiatric hospital in Western North Carolina, where I still work at present. My three year period of experimentation with my life was over.

During those years, a feeling was established within me of absolute assurance that Amida's embrace extends to me. Amida says to me, in essence, "Rely on the saving power of my embrace, John Esse, rather than on your own contrived self-efforts. I guarantee you will be born in my paradise when your earthly life ends. You will immediately, at that time, attain Buddhahood!"

I have been profoundly comforted by Amida's merciful promise, confident that I will reach the supreme perfect enlightenment of Buddhahood when this lifetime ends, due to his extraordinary efforts on my behalf. And I am exceedingly grateful! My natural response to this wondrous gift is to joyfully and thankfully call out his name. Namu Amida Butsu! Namu Amida Butsu! Namu Amida Butsu!

In Gassho,

*John Esse*

John Esse  
P.O. Box 2114  
Morganton, NC 28655

624  
Dear Zen Freethinkers:

I haven't written for a long time. It's been a rough couple of years. I am glad that things are looking up again.

I have been thinking about ordination lately. Actually about self-ordination or perhaps a new "ordination platform." What if we (whoever among the Zen Freethinkers who wanted to) would be a part of a "Zen Freethinkers Ordination Platform" (ZEN JIYŪ SHISHŌKA KAIDAN in Japanese)? Whoever wanted to be ordained would write up an ordination ceremony for themselves and whomever else they wanted to include. The ceremony could include "taking refuge," receiving a Dharma-name, one's lineage, poems, songs, dharma-talks--whatever is important to the person. (We wouldn't have one ceremony but as many as there are "Freethinkers.") ~~They would then send it to Zen Freethinkers to be read and enjoyed.~~ They would include a certificate of their own design which would be a visible sign of their ordination. Those Freethinkers who wanted to would sign the certificate and send it to the next person on the list of people the ordained person wanted to have read it. We could even have a seal made up for the "Zen Freethinkers Ordination Platform." A person would not be ordained as a member of the "Zen Freethinkers" but in an organization of their choosing or perhaps no organization at all. This way we "Freethinkers" could exist as an ordination platform but not as any kind of formal organization. Thus we could keep our informal status yet help each other in the ordination process. And have fun with it. For example, I could send in the following:

1. A copy of my ordination ceremony, ordaining myself in "THE WHITE LOTUS SOCIETY" or whatever.
2. A certificate of ordination of my own design with blanks for "Freethinkers" signatures. (see next page)
3. A list of names and addresses of persons who I wish would read my ceremony and hopefully sign my certificate. Each person would read and sign (or not) and then send it on to the next person on the list. Each person could feel free to make suggestions and comments about the ordination which could be added to the ceremony, if I wanted to.

What do you think? Does it sound like fun? There are probably a multitude of ways to do it. I was ordained years ago in Korea but I think I would value a "Zen Jiyū Shisōka Kaidan" ordination even more.

  
Lynn Olson 23645 NE Hwy 240 Newberg, OR 97132

continued

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THE    WHITE    LOTUS    SOCIETY

under the auspices of the  
ZEN FREETHINKERS ORDINATION PLATFORM

here ordains

Lynn Myoshin Olson

Priest

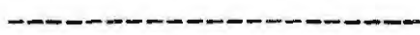
given at Two Rivers Hermitage  
Yamhill, Oregon

October 13, 1991

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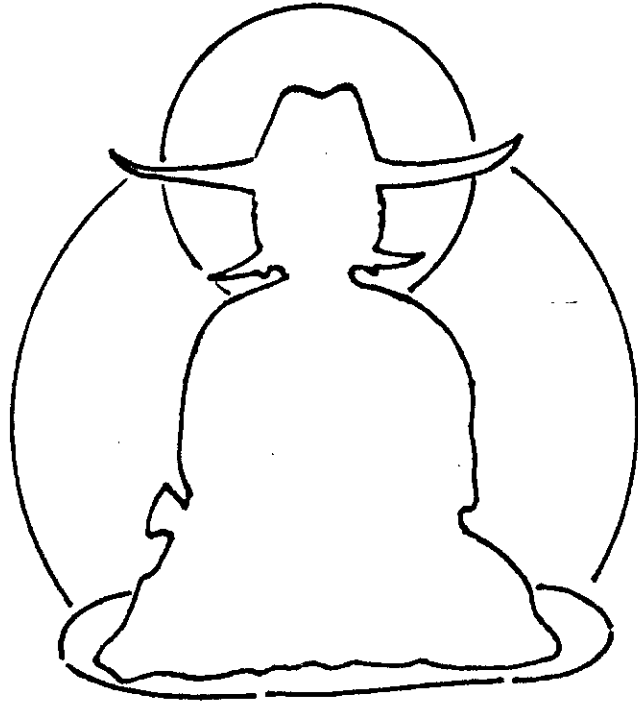
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626

Thus Spoke The Bubbha:



What is the Truth of Life ?

To have a good one.

What is the Truth of Death ?

You Die, and you won't give a Shit !

( The Time Worn One then lifted his leg slightly from the cushion and farted. Those ten's of thousands assembled, awakened, bowed and also farted ).

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Friends: As to the notion that there is some controversy over a recent poorly written letter of mine. Eh? Why? It wasn't meant to be an indictment or a proclamation of any sort. Nor was it a neurotic exposing his pent up emotions(don't got any) as some would like to believe, though I'm not sure why they'd think such. It was a letter to some writing acquaintances, and yes I did mention some odd bits and took a swing at a few folks and organizations. So what? What I dislike, I get tired of, or find distasteful, I don't hate, nor do I expect anyone to agree with me. As to, On What Authority I feel empowered to tap and knock at so-called Angelic figures, let me give you my sublime divine secret; "I'm No body in particular".

To Greg: I know you don't believe me, or still insist I don't understand, but I do like Shinshu. But how I express it is not as anyone else would do so. I did like you last article. And recently I rented a Jade-East(or was it West?) video, and was legally blind for three days.

To the Mouse: I don't got no Chevy(physically), but the one that doesn't need wheels runs real fine, thank you. -- I don't ever get depressed, ever! I can and do get close to being very frustrated but I work it out. -- I sign my name in lower case often out of habit, been doing so since grade school. What me humble? hardly. Later dude.

To Ananda: I can't imagine writing more on what I believe(it isn't important except to me), as what little I've mentioned so far has been such a big todo over nothing. Not that I don't have more I'd like to bring up, but my writing ability is so poor that I'll only offend even more people, nor will most really understand what I'm attempting to say. Anyway thanks for the nice thoughts buddy.

Terrorist Alert!!!: Be advised that this roue Sufi-Martial Artist-House Painter-Deva Guru and general Horse's Ass from hell will soon be moving to the once tranquil Carlsbad, New Mexico, and set about to immediately terrorize vast amounts of Desert, Cacti, Prairie Dogs, and the occassional Miner or two. If selling the house goes well the wif(wif-me) and I will be out of here the end of May or June. I can assure you I will take a break from being tarred and feathered to visit the coast atleast once a year, provided I can get untied from the rail.

Later Dudes and Dud-ettes,



ed star 4/91

"My name is Mike," he said.

He was sitting on the bench next to the tent in the Civic Center as the crews tore down the balloons and colored ribbons and folded up the tables they had used in the Affordable Housing Fair. He seemed pretty young, curly headed and wore a long baggy army parka with the hood up.

"Well that's my name too!" I responded and laughed.

It seemed kind of funny somehow. It was an opening. The winds were growing stiffer as evening expanded and the first strands of fog were streaming in over the bitter roofs of our world. The homeless residents were filtering back as the Fair personnel took away the last of the party trappings. The Pickle Circus people were almost cleaned up, and Brad Paul, the Mayor's recently appointed housing deputy, was giving a little pep talk to his admiring troops, who occasionally looked with disdain or non-interest in my far-off direction.

It had been a day of depression, of mitigated failure from my perspective. The Poetry Event, calling upon the Muse to confront the profound corruption and injustice of our society had fizzled and then utterly choked. Two homeless men had been arrested, for failing to remove their belongings and had their tent confiscated. A second tent (mine) had been taken down. Our people and our energy had been frustrated and diffused in fruitless arguments with Fair organizers and then the police. They won. The poetry hadn't happened.

Steve, Rudi and I had finally gone off dejected for a tasteless lunch on Market St. and then home to smoke a joint. Now I was back in the Plaza again, alone, to mourn our losses, pick up the broken pieces and just say good-bye. It was all a bitter, sad lemon, and I was having to eat the whole thing. I felt fragmented and unfulfilled.

Yes, we had given away plenty of good, nutritious food (thanks Ellen and Maggie) and six bags of fine clothing (via Marvin and family). At the TU table we had given out much useful advice and information to many renters and distributed leaflets on the upcoming Housing Now! march. But for me, all that was small comfort wrapped up in the dismal failure of my central event, the 'Confrontational Poetics' event. Many good and vibrant poets had come and left in disgust (to my embarrassment). The leaflet, announcing the event, which seemed so inspiring before now seemed like a sliver bent on festering inside me.

I hadn't accurately gauged the size of the Fair, the crowd, the impact of the circus or the wandering mariachi band, and most of all, for the emotions of my fellows in the midst of the confrontation. We got swallowed up and excreted.

Oh well (I told myself) what had happened could not be changed. Nothing ventured, nothing gained, as they say. Some hungry folks got a meal

out of it. Some kid has a baseball mitt. It's over now; just chalk it up to experience and move on. And try not to get so ego involved!

I put the center pole back in the small pup tent. The sign next to it (thanks Jess) which read 'This Is Affordable Housing' seemed more profound than ever—especially with fair filled with booths from realtors, bankers and other con-men, claiming that one can find affordable housing in San Francisco. It was a pleasant day (weather-wise) mostly sunny and clear, with a fresh, invigorating sea breeze. Mike and I just sat there doing nothing, watching, as the artificial scenes were dismantled.

A group of homeless "tweakers" (crack cocaine users) who had drifted or been driven to the edges of the park during the festivities, began to filter back and reestablish themselves under the olive trees (or what's left of them). One young couple, a muscular, stocky man and a thin small woman were having an argument. It seemed male dominated and one-sided.

The woman's responses were low and inaudible and the man was aggressively gesturing as if he meant to carry out the threat. But from our distance, the source of the dispute or who was really at fault seemed remote. The intensity of the anger was real, however, and the ugliness of the deep frustration was quite plainly exposed and invasive.

Mike turned to me and frowned. "Man, I hate to see that. I just stay away from people. Ya know? It's just too messy; I can't take it."

"I know what you mean, man. But all a person's got is his friends, ya know. All we got is each other. That's about all there really is. . . I think."

"Well not for me. I'm too filthy. . ."

I just let that one sit there for awhile. The cool wind, the grass bending in the evening light, the smell of the sea. . . you know how it is.

But then I answered, "You don't look that bad to me. You're not filthy. You seem like a good guy to me."

"Well, I haven't been rolling around in the mud or anything. But I'm filthy all right. I stink."

"You're okay, man. Really. You don't seem bad at all. Just a regular guy as far as I can see."

He didn't answer that and I shut up too. We went back to the silence, just hang'n out. After awhile, casually, I asked again, "Sure you don't want this tent? I'm going to give it to someone; might as well be you. It's a good ground cover too, even if you want to set it up."

"No! no, Mike! I don't want it!" he said with maybe too much emphasis. "I'm not a beggar, you know. I'm not a roach, and hey! stop asking me. Okay Mike? Okay? Just stop asking me!"

"Okay, sorry."



We were back to just being there together. I decided to get into the posture and and sit a little zazen. I thought, "I'll just do it for myself and maybe go through my chants and songs and poems (silently); the ones I was going to do for the poetry event. Just to complete the cycle. You know, just to let it out."

So I crossed my legs and brought my feet up. But no big deal. Just bein' a lump. Just a bit of dust on this big old earth. I followed my breath and tried to sit straight but not rigid, as Suzuki Roshi had taught me. I felt whole again, as always.

After awhile Mike spoke: "What are you doing?"

"Meditating. It's easy. Any one can do it. Just sit quietly and follow your breath. You know, just in, and out. Naturally. Don't try to rush it, just let it happen. And you don't have to sit like this either, the bench is fine. Why, you might be doing it all the time and not even know it. It doesn't cost anything either and it's always with you, no matter what."

He kind of smiled then (the first time); "Okay," he said, "I can do that."

"I know you can; it's easy. I learned it from an old Japanese guy, but he's dead now."

So then we were two lumps, plus infinity . . . and we were just there. No place else. Enough. Just following the great waves of our ocean breath, in and out. Very simple. Just me and you kid. Get it? For a time then we were all of it, until the fog covered us and the sky above was cold and wet.

Finally, I bowed (in the Zen way) and moved towards getting up. I am weak; I know that I have a home with a heater to care for me.

"Thanks Mike. It's been great. I'll be seeing you again, okay?"

"Sure, Yeah. See Ya. Hey what about the tent?"

"Oh, I'm leaving it. Some one will come along. It doesn't belong to me anymore. Take care. See Ya."

"Yeah. See Ya."

Slowly I picked my way across the big hard plaza. Sure is a lot of concrete in this world. The Fair was all gone now. You wouldn't even know it ever happened at all, tomorrow. And the Poetry Event (my embarrassment), it was nothing but a scrap of paper blown to the careless wind that nobody had read or cared about (except me) anyway. What was real was it was getting chilly and dark and I was hungry.

When I reached the far side of the plaza I stopped and looked back across to where I had been. There was Mike and he was taking the tent.

I laughed, "My name's Mike, too."

*by Michael Canright*

*Tenant Times Fall, 1989*

### **BULL IN A CHINA SHOP**

*I was chasing it up Grant Avenue,  
Dodging straw dogs,  
The scent of cheap incense  
Leading me on.*

*It vanished  
In a curio shop  
Among plastic Buddhas  
Manufactured in Taiwan.*

*I think I caught a glimpse of it  
On Montgomery Street  
In a woman's eyes  
Just before dawn.*

*She was buying flowers  
From a blind man's stand;  
He put the money in his pocket  
As she walked on.*

**— Dave Kiebert**

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Free the Zen Stinker !!

TO Rich Bell: no comment, just one word:

ATTENTION = ATTEND = AD: toward + TENDERE: to stretch  
= to stretch toward

ATTENTIVE: paying attention, concentrated, observant, listening

ATTEND: to stretch toward, direct attention to, be present at  
to have one's attention in command and directed towards

TEND: short for attend

TENDERE = to stretch out or direct one's course

THUS to move in a certain direction

which one is inclined (stretched out) or disposed towards

from TEN = TENERE: hold, keep

= TENACIOUS: to cause to continue, stretch out, endure or hold on

= POR-TEND = to stretch out before

= TANTRA: he stretches out or weaves

= TENERO: TENDON, string, THUS delicate and TENDER; TONOS: string

Nurses TEND by directing attention in a disciplined, unwavering  
concentration towards its object.

= INTENT = to have in mind, plan or to mean

from IN: inner + TENERE: to stretch out and hold to one's course

THUS INTENT: to direct and stretch out one's mind towards something

THUS -TEND = to stretch out or direct one's mind, having under command  
one's capacity of observation (thus non-distracted by non-essentials)  
or having one's dispositions in conscious control - a firm, enduring,  
unwavering, impeccable hold on such capabilities. Plus AD-: to or  
towards

THUS ATTEND = the directing of TEND TOWARDS some object.

It's hard to describe in modern terms what it means to "stretch  
out". If one mimics the action described one will feel the  
apprehensive, anticipatory tension of expectation that floods the body.  
Stretching the Shushumna vertically (hanging one's chin on a sky-hook)  
is part of it. This is the feeling that MUST come when one is  
attentive. If we pray for God to answer, we ought to be prepared  
(disciplined) to catch an answer. That requires an extreme "stretching  
out" in expectation to grasp THAT which is arriving.

ALERT = ALLA: at the + ERTA: watch = on or at the watch

ALLA = AL: beyond, ultra, yonder, outre, penult,

ALTER: other of two; more than two: ALIAS, ALIBI, ALIEN: wanderer

ADULTERER: one who approaches another unlawfully

from AD-: to or towards + ULTIRE: else, elles, alles, alius

EX- + ULTRA = EXILE

ALSO to grow or nourish, mature: EALD: OLD; ELDER, ALTUS: high

ERTA: watch from the watch tower (Tarot)

from ERECT: directed or pointed upward;

stiff, rigid position; to raise upright or set on end

from ERECTUS = ERIGERE: to raise up = EX: up + REGERE: direct or set

REGERE = REG: command, King, REX;

to lead straight; be RIGHT(eous); strong; RECKon

THUS -ERT: the Shushumna erected, attention marshalled, the King on his  
throne, THUS centered: attention and posture in command -

AL-: and this attention directed outward to the environment

as one of two possible choices (the other, inward)

and it is matured: trained, disciplined, nourished

- the energy floweth beyond the self.

THUS AL-ERT = one's posture is erect, attention is gathered,  
commanded, disciplined, focused, and directed to the environment.

This one blew my mind when I realized how all the knowledge about the Shushumna and the perfect posture for meditation had obviously once been known to the Western world but LOST. And that knowledge lay here in the very words we ignorantly use.

To Greg Gibbs: MEDITATE = MEDITARE: to reflect upon, ponder, contemplate, plan or formulate intentions  
from MED: take MEASURE, METE out, be MEET or fit, look after or heal  
= MEDICUS = MEDICAL: to heal  
= MEDITARI: to think about, consider, reflect  
= MODUS = MODEST: appropriate MEASURES = MODERATE  
= MEDHYO = MIDYA: MIDDLE, aMIDst

from ME: myself = in the middle or midst of  
= ME-DHI: among = META: between, with, beside, after  
= MOTHAZ = MOD: MOTIVATION, MOOD, humor, manner, custom, MORALE  
= MEN: to think = MIND, MENTAL, MINNI (Ger): love  
= MENE: to measure, length = MENS: MONTH, MOON, MENSES  
= MARE: big = MORE, MEISTENS, MOST

THUS to mete or measure out appropriate measures, sets or concepts formulated in the midst of self; in mind. But what is appropriate? This word indicates that "appropriateness" necessarily must come from within: the midst and not "out there", external to the Self.

PS: Ask Jade if she is a Dakini.

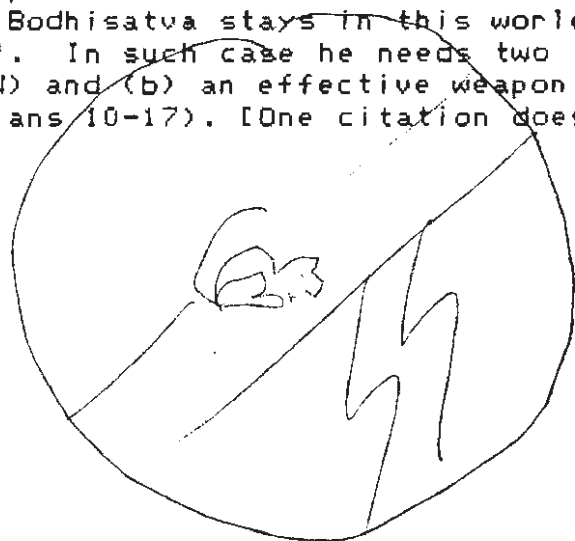
To Johnny de Boid: Good point, well said and helpful. Thanx !

To Basco: I think Tweety said "pooty tat". But I was struck by the usage "TAT": that, in Sanskrit as in TATagata or TAT tvam asi. THANX !

TO Don Stevens: "searching for - value - which can hold its own - today -." Try rock instead of sand: Reality, That-Which-Is.

To edstar: (1) A YAHOO is an Amer-indian (in the midwest) term for a type of sorcerer ? who went about in a trance with very strange clothing and behavior, sounds, etc (sounds like a Zennut). The term was picked up by early settlers and applied to various dum-dum or duh-types. (2) "Sword" play = If the Bodhisatva stays in this world (on the Way), he WILL meet with "evil". In such case he needs two things: (a) an effective attitude (ZEN) and (b) an effective weapon (the SWORD of the spirit: see 6 Ephesians 10-17). [One citation does not make a Yahoo into a Christian.]

yellow mouse (weahs de chiz, whiz ?)



*The Pilgrimage of the Alan Watts Memorial Library*

By Ananda Claude Dalenberg

Alan Watts (1915-73) has made a significant contribution to the philosophical and religious issues facing us today. It might be said that his philosophy is to some degree reflected in his library, and a brief description of its nature and history may then be of interest.

The Watts library consists of about 1,400 volumes, mostly on philosophy, psychology, and religion. It is in fair condition today. A number of volumes are missing, but no more than one would expect from natural attrition over the years. One obvious lack is that it presently contains only about half of the more important works that he has cited in his writings. Also, the Zen collection needs some serious up-dating. However, plans have been made to remedy this.

One of the earliest homes for the Watts library was the American Academy of Asian Studies in San Francisco. Watts was invited to teach there by the Director, Professor Frederic Spiegelberg. During that period, Watts' library expanded greatly. Watts lent most of his own personal collection to the Academy, and without his generosity, the Academy library would have been woefully inadequate.

Watts was Dean of the Academy for a number of years during the 1950's, and it continued to be successful, although there were many problems. Eventually, however, the Academy began to decline. Haridas Chaudhuri and several others who taught there were also very devoted to the Academy, but their efforts were not enough. Watts then went on to found the Society For Comparative Philosophy, and his library went with him. Chaudhuri too eventually left, and went on to found what later became the California Institute of Integral Studies. Although their paths separated, they both, each in their own way, carried on in the spirit of the early days at the Academy.

Watts' interest was much more in philosophy than dry academic matters, nor did he have any use for sectarian concerns. Such a spirit is reflected in his library. He was a philosopher in its truest sense. For he was first and foremost a great lover of wisdom, in all its forms and wherever it might be. He then chose the term 'Comparative Philosophy' in naming the Society that he founded, and comments:

"*Philosophy* is used in the title of this Society in its older and most inclusive sense -- to mean not only the study of logic, and speculation about matters of being, knowing, aesthetics, and ethics. but also 'natural philosophy' as this phrase was once used to include the various sciences now called physics, chemistry, astronomy, biology, psychology, and the rest. For it is becoming more and more obvious that our knowledge of the world cannot be set rigidly in departments, and that we are in great need of exchanges, not only between the several disciplines and fields of knowledge, but also between the ideas of differing cultures."

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After the Academy, the library's next home was the Society for Comparative Philosophy, and it had its own building on a lovely site in Marin County. The Society was quite active during his lifetime. Even after his death in 1973, it continued on, but eventually various difficulties began to appear, and the Society decided to discontinue most of its activities. It then seemed best that the library be given to Zen Center of San Francisco. This in some ways was a natural home for it, since Watts had had such a deep influence on so many Zen students. Also, at the Green Gulch branch of Zen Center, there is a stone stupa marking one of the several sites of his ashes.

In 1982 Zen Center and the Society decided to begin an Alan Watts Memorial Fund for the purpose of moving the library to Green Gulch. Plans included both the construction of a building, and the expansion of the collection to include more recent publications and audiovisual materials, especially in the area of Zen and comparative philosophy. The goal was also to have a more active center for those drawn to Zen and the spirit of the Society. This seemed quite possible, since Watts' books, for example, continued to be very popular, and his taped lectures were regularly aired on several radio stations (the same, by the way, continues to be true even today). However, it soon became apparent that fund-raising was not going at all well. By 1986, there seemed to be no alternative but to abandon such plans. It was then decided that the library should go, at least temporarily, to the San Francisco branch of Zen Center. The small sum in the memorial fund was to be held in reserve until other plans could be made.

The Watts library was never used very much at Zen Center, other than for occasional research purposes. This was probably mostly because its limited accessibility. It was never housed in a visible yet secure area, nor was the collection fully processed. Also not many Zen students, at least of the current generation, are really interested in philosophy, whether it is philosophy of the Zen variety or otherwise. Other alternatives were then considered, including giving the library to one of several universities that were interested, though it might then mean that it would disappear into their dusty archives.

Then, early in 1989, Zen Center began discussing the Watts library with the California Institute of Integral Studies. In many ways, this seemed a natural solution. At the Institute, location and accessibility would be excellent. Also the Institute is the natural heir to the earlier spirit of the Academy of Asian Studies, which earlier had been so important to both Watts and Chaudhuri. For Watts, comparative philosophy meant much the same thing as integral or integrative studies. Perhaps the latter term is even more descriptive of the spirit he had in mind, and the Institute has a beautiful library devoted to such concerns. The Institute also was willing to take over the Watts memorial fund from Zen Center, and to continue it in some meaningful and appropriate manner at the Institute. In various ways, at the Institute there was an appreciation for the Watts library as representing a certain kind of flowering of the spirit, which is all too rare here in California, or for that matter, anywhere at all. Zen Center then decided the library should go to the Institute. In a way, this was like its returning home, and in the context of the old Academy Library, it is almost as if it were Shangri-la.

Floating Zendo

Ananda

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FINIS