

cloud-hidden friends letter



*Lord Buddha preaching the Dharma with Shāriputra
Shavira and Mah Maudgalyāna Shavira.*

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

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

Thomas Merton might be another example of the kind of spirit we have in mind. In his later years he commented that he could see no contradiction between Christianity and Buddhism, and that he "had determined to become as good a Buddhist as I can".

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

Searching for the Hermit in Vain

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

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

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1. This is our tenth issue, and the fourth in 1984. The next issue ought to be out in November, following an "every 2 or 3 month" schedule. Welcome to 3 new subscribers -- Maggie Novack, Alan Taplow, and Michael Canright.
 2. Please remember that for our "subscription fee", namely a letter for our pages every now and then, news-clippings and quotes etc. are usually not what we have in mind unless they are adorned somewhat with your own comments.
 3. We have received 3 letters this month that are too long to be included in an ordinary issue. Since we try to print everything, this presents a problem. What we propose in such cases is that we give a brief description of each letter here, and that the author make copies available to any of our subscribers who may request one. The three letters are as follows:

John Boyd has sent us an article, "Reflections on Authority", of which a one page excerpt is included in this issue.

Rene Pittet has written vigorously defending Richard Baker, former Abbot of Zen Center, who recently resigned among much criticism, including a few inuendo in our own pages. - Rene Pittet 79862-022 A, P.O. Box 1000, Sandstone, Minn. 55072.

Michael Canright has written a descriptive account of his own relationship with Abbot Baker, "The Zen of Private Property". It is probably representative of a much more negative view.- M. Canright, 319 Page, S.F., CA 94102.

I might add that as editor I didn't know how to handle the Abbot Baker issue, especially as I could easily envision our pages filled with a very divisive subject, and some real anger. Also it only really involves those few of us intimately connected with Zen Center of San Francisco. It was a great relief then to see that both letters on the subject were too long for our pages. If you want to read more, refer to the recent issue of the Co Evolution Quarterly, or the wind Bell, the Zen Center periodical, both of which are rather critical.
 4. It is quite obvious that many of us of the CHFL do not fit at all well in the usual traditional molds. The subject of "Tathagata Zen" (or Nyorai) might then be of some interest. It is either Abbot Eido Shimano or Soen Nakagawa who remarks somewhere that Nyogen Senzaki, D.T. Suzuki, and Alan Watts represent what might be called Tathagata Zen in contrast to Patriarchal Zen as are both Kinzai and Soto. These three men are CHF honorary founders. It may be that what applies to them may also apply to us. Patriarchal Zen usually has little or no use for Tathagata Zen, and emphasizes apostolic succession, Roshis, and great enlightenment. The emphasis is personal and often very anti-intellectual. Tathagata zen is based more on the Sutras, in a manner not so different from most other Buddhist schools. The last section of the Lankavatara Sutra, on "Tathagata Dhyana", is particularly important. The emphasis is more intellectual, book-loving, and universalistic (as more than a few of us seem to be). D.T. Suzuki might indeed be an excellent example of such. Patriarchal Zen has long been almost completely dominant, with, as far as I know, only a few remnants of Tathagata zen appearing now and then, and even then not in some official manner. It just might be possible that some of us are such a remnant, particularly those of us who are the fire-breathing non-patriarchal type. I probably should add however that both Senzaki and D.T. Suzuki were actually very gentle and mellow. What extraordinary patience they must have had.
 5. Alan Marlowe has a new address -- 1434 Baseline Rd., Boulder, Co 80303. He writes that he is currently very interested in helping with development plans for Lumbini, the birthplace of the Buddha in Nepal. For centuries Lumbini was much neglected, but now there is an international effort to give it the attention it deserves.

Dear CHFriends,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

HO- Richard

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

June 21, 1984

Greetings One/All:

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

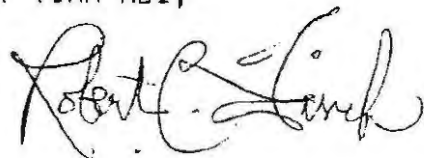
Why do the Jains take such elaborate measures to prevent killing? Why? Logically, their religion recognizes that the individual is responsible for all actions, and actions are not redeemed.

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

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

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

TAT TVAM ASI,



914 N. Naomi St.
Burbank, CA 91505

Claude-Hidden frens:

"Zen stink": "This (Sufi) isn't a Religion, it's just religion."

My rigorous duality conceptual thinking states catagorically:

THERE IS TRUTH. THERE IS DOGMA.


THEY ARE NOT AND CANNOT BE THE SAME.

If one adheres to a R (capital R) RELIGION, that is DOGMA and thus, by definition, it is not and cannot be TRUTH.

Conversly, if one wishes to adhere to the TRUTH, then he cannot and must not worship or adhere, be attached to ANY DOGMA. "He who knows (truth) - does not speak (dogma) and he who speaks (dogma) - does not know (truth)." Linguistically, the truth is that all words, phrases, attempts to communicate a truth are only metaphors for the truth and not the truth itself. We are not wrong to try to communicate in absolute terms, but we are grievously in error to insist (by our own authority and power) that an "other" may not deviate from the metaphor. When TRUTH depends on the personal power of an individual, that truth is dead - and of course, begins to stink.

My own set: Whenever and wherever I hear any "truth" propounded with the deep rich tones of personal authority, I KNOW - clearly and absolutely - that the speaker is a liar, a cheat and a crook. TRUTH needs no power behind it, it stands (Shushumna) by itself. It is DOGMA that (being a rotting piece of offal) needs someone else's power to prop it up. If the speaker were talking truth, he would respect it and let it stand on its own; it is UNtruth that he is pushing with his personal power. And yes, DOGMA IS UNtruth.

To AL HUANG: Thanx for your words on the Tao of the Mouse.

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

Brother Finchley: Is there a difference between THIS and THAT ?

Yes AND No !! It depends on what one is about at the moment he DOES IT (makes the difference).

You have a right - - but that implies that there may be some rights you don't have. One never needs external authority, rationale or rationalization of any kind to either criticize or to be silent. You want a lawyer ? You got one !

continued

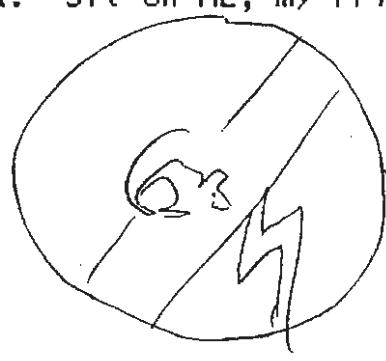
To Ananda and All:

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

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

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

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



Yellow Mouse

The latest line

dear hoboos:

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

SEKKA NO KI

石火の機

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

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

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

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



Elson B. Snow

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

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 Calistoga, CA
 94515

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

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

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

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

Truth, Peace, Joy, Love

Breck

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

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Dear Cloud Hidden Friends,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Love,
Maggie

A Poem Received from Norman Moser

Chasin Birds in the Park

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

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

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Dear Friends;

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

Can the spiritual eye open while the bowels are filled with **sheep's** brains? Yes. The Zen Master may be spiritually mature, while politically childish--there's lots of historical evidence of this. And a bodhisattva may beat his wife, because in his culture men beat their wives.

But what is this life, this mystery we are for a sprig of time, if not an opportunity to discover what we can be? We are born old, to which we add something new. We are born, those of us who are male, Paleolithic hunters, with the instincts of predators. And because men presently hold the keys to destroy this planet, we must own up to this part of ourselves. MAKE IT CONSCIOUS. To learn from it of who we are.

Always in times when underworld psychic forces rise to assume power, it is an occasion to learn. When the Nazis appeared from Hell, we missed the opportunity to see that they are us underside up. And that our leaders are also capable of genocide, given the excuse and means to carry it out. We saw this in Vietnam, a country we tried to destroy and still don't know why. We see this now in Central America.

And detachment doesn't stop the nightmare: it goes on in you without "you."

The genius of Christianity was to conceive a half-man half-god. But unfortunately the god-half was stressed. We are told nothing about Jesus as a young man, I think because the myth was written by men ashamed of the dark side of themselves. Judging from the stories of other spiritually-evolved men, from less morally hypocritical cultures, Jesus must have indulged his senses until they screamed "Enough!" Instead, we are told how he went into the desert and conquered his passions, and later went to Hades and conquered it for us all. The Ultimate Macho Hero.

I'm suggesting that the world is too dangerous a place, one button away from forever, for us to ignore the destructive side of ourselves, and of organized religions. Religions always gather temporal power, and power can only be assumed dishonestly, as we know from personal relationships. To renounce power, or authority, thus to face your self honestly, is the beginning of one's spiritual life.

As a man, I want to know just what this means, not what I've been told it means. To see, to accept, to ascertain fantasy from reality. To hone the edge of consciousness.

Freedom, real freedom, comes only with growing up, something so few of us do. Freedom is the essence of humor. Tom Merton could laugh at himself and still take himself seriously. The god laughs while the man cries, such is the music of the spheres, the harmony that we are. As the French poet Edmond Jabes puts it: "The sun is an egg in its black shell."

Joel Weisbauss

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

John H. Boyd

Joe Lawrence Lembo
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Dear Cloud-People:

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

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

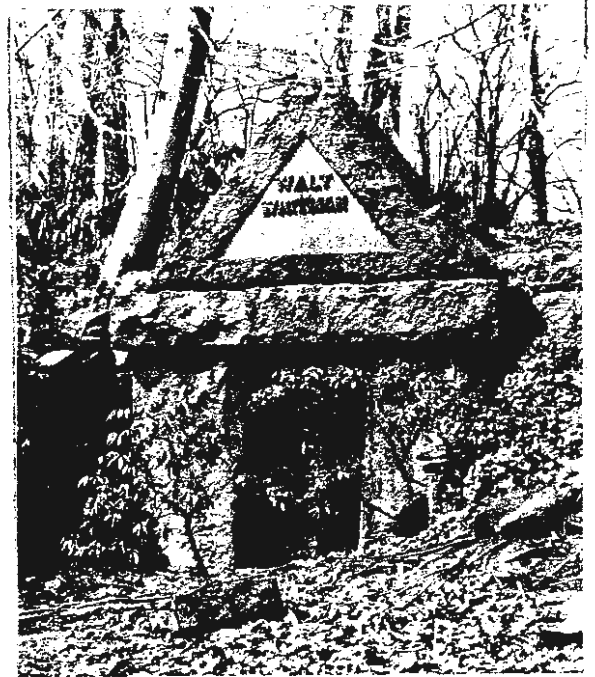
Inside the parlour room of the Whitman house were many old photos, paintings, documents, busts, etc. There was also an old secretary/bookcase containing many of Walt's books and a small glass case containing memorabilia, e.g. a lock of the good gray poet's hair. A larger glass case contained his slippers,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

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

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

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

It almost seemed like a seance as my words echoed amid the silence of the room.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ALAN B. TAPLOW

253,

181 Foch Avenue

Lawrenceville, N.J. 08648

March 14, 1984

Dear Cloud-Hidden Friends,

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

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

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

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

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

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

In Peace and Love,

Alan

Alan B. Taplow

Another Poem from Norman Moser

Conjugation

to Dear David, aged 2

"I-fall, I-walk, I-fight, I-running"

I scrimmage with the rummage
sale next door, I chase
all the tax collectors away--
and the bill collectors I put
'em in my handy li'l box
and sew 'em up, "I phone"
for help or love if I need to

and I love my mommie
and my da-die like a sweet wild bird
homing forever to its nest
O ever seeking to bind 'em up
as they (like all the others)
seek to undo themselves (and me)
in this sweet sacred place
we all live, still now, a family,
a marriage, my home-for-now

N. M.

Dear Ho Boes, and Fellow Pilgrims:

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

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

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

Ho!

Ananda

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

What a Time in the Rain

Rain

Wet, soggy

Fast, Hard, Windy

Taking a free shower

Suffering

note

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

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

for peace

12 noon, September 18, 1984, San Francisco

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A SILENCE TO BE HEARD AROUND THE WORLD

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

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