

cloud-hidden friends letter

ISSUE # 17. First Issue of 1986.

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AVALOKITESVARA

The Bodhisattva of compassion or boundless love. He is symbolic of love without expectation.

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

SEARCHING FOR THE HERMIT IN VAIN

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

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

We look to Daisetz T. Suzuki, Alan Watts, Nyogen Senzaki, and Shunryu Suzuki as our "honorary founders". They are usually associated with Zen Buddhism, but the Dharma spirit they represent 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 Buddhism and Christianity, and that he had "determined to become as good a Buddhist as I can".

It is hoped that our letters will somehow help us open our hearts to each other, and deepen our sense of the Dharma. It is also hoped that in this way more than a few real friendships might develop.

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

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1. This is the first issue of 1986, and begins the New Year, and the fourth year of the CHF Letter. The next issue will be out probably late in February.
2. There is something new for the CHFL in 1986. We now have an added dimension and a new way of relating to the CHF. This issue has enclosed a "Cloud-Hidden Friends Card". Hopefully readers will find time to dash off a card directly to someone whose letter has appeared in the CHFL. Communicating with each other at this more personal level would no doubt be greatly appreciated. If you don't have someone's address, write in care of the CHFL and we can probably forward it.
The CHF card also introduces a big change in our subscription policy. Formerly every subscriber was supposed to write a letter every now and then, for publication in the CHFL. Now however there is also the alternative of pledging to send several CHF cards every year. No doubt some subscribers will feel more comfortable with this option. For convenience sake a CHF card will probably be enclosed in each future issue, but of course any card would be fine.
We are not asking for money for the CHFL. There are more than enough organizations doing that already. We figure that what is needed is more groups giving away something. This does not quite mean however that we will refuse your contributions. Fortunately our expenses are quite small, and should remain so as long as our subscription list doesn't get over a hundred.
3. We exchange subscriptions with "Spring Wind", a periodical sponsored by the Toronto Zen Buddhist Temple. It has a non-sectarian emphasis and is intended as a Buddhist cultural forum. Recent issues have concentrated on a particular theme, such as "Buddhism and the Performing Arts", "Buddhism in India", and "Zen in North America" etc. Each issue is a real treasure. The subscription fee is \$15 a year and well worth it. Write Spring Wind, Zen Buddhist Temple, 46 Gwynne Ave., Toronto, Ontario, M6K 2C3 Canada.
4. Alan Taplow has a new address - 1651 Saint George Avenue (A1), Roselle, New Jersey 07203.
5. Welcome to Frederick Frank, a new subscriber appearing in this issue. He is the author of several books, all of which ought to be of great interest to our readers.
6. Please remember to leave one inch margins on both sides of your letters. It makes assembly etc. a lot easier.

SEASON'S GREETINGS TO EVERYONE !

Ananda Claude Dalenberg
CHFL Clerk

Joel Weishaus
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31 Oct 85

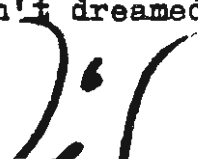
Dear CHF:

Yesterday I drove to the edge of the city and climbed a few hours into the mountains, cutting cross-country until coming upon a trail, and a large cairn. I bowed, the memory--and obligation--of many circumambulations of Mt. Tamalpais on Buddha's birthday coming upon me.

To find a cairn, a stupa, in the Sandias gives one a sense of connection. (Thomas Merton's favorite intuition: connections.) I don't get to the mountains much these days, having karma to burn--intrad of campfires--in the city. Someday, someday, I will return, I tell myself. And think of Mircea Eliade--who, as a young man, spent time as acolyte in the Himalayas--contending that there's a cave in India waiting for him; and that as long as he knows that cave is there, life as a professor in Chicago is bearable.

I'm not sure if I wrote this story before. If so, it's worth repeating. About a year ago I had a dream. I got off a bus in a city that seems to have been Tokyo, and there was an old man sitting on the curb. I recognized him as a Zen Master. We exchanged some words I don't remember, and then he said to me: "You're almost there." I replied, "But I haven't practiced for years!" I awoke knowing there's a little "Buddha" that goes on meditating inside us, all of us, whether we consciously practice or not. Even in those who practice evil, who hate and destroy lives, inside, the process goes on, a tiny flame flickering in a black heart. Zazan takes the burden from the Buddha, the Bodhisattva. As Ananda might say--or have said in his wonderful Potato Letter--, even in a potato meditation continues. Even in the city, in the heart of the barking dog that annoys me, a little Buddha quietly sits on its hind legs.

Is it that I must believe this to survive? If I hadn't dreamed it, I would take this for fancy. One dream, one potato.



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115 Blue Rock Rd.
So. Yarmouth, MA
02664

Dear Cloud-Hidden Friends,

Gratitude is said to be the mature emotion (/?) and as we enter the Holiday Season I must share my gratitude for the teachers who have come to our shores and given us so much!!

Gratitude and mayⁿ Gasshos to the Buddhas, living and departed.!! May their karma continue onward in our materialistic culture. Did not Toynbee say that this century will be remembered in history as the time when Buddhism made its penetration into the fabric of our world? What are the documents that will be left to the future by these teachers? For myself I simply want to repeat the printed records of what have been the volumes bringing joy to my life!! (Dangerous as these concepts might be) Naturally there are others but in the absence of a face-to-face master they may at least point the Way.

What do you think, CHFriends? Would it be helpful for each of us to share the names and written records of his/her teachers in our future letters? Would it possibly bring about the needed changes dreamed of by George Leonard when he said that all that was necessary to bring down the old order was enough people having faced the pain of change and accept the the intrinsic delight of existence. He described the most radical act of this age was perhaps to experience four straight days of joy without anxiety or guilt or regret. ????????

Thus: Suzuki Roshi- Zen Mind, Beginners Mind, Taisen Deshimaru- Questions to A Zen Master, Thich Nhat Hanh- Miracle of Mindfulness, Seung Sahn- Only Don't Know, Holmes and Horioka- Zen Art for Meditation, Philip Kapleau- Three Pillars of Zen. and, and...

In addition and to compliment Ananda's and Reps' potato and rice, here below is David Loy's (Maui Zendo) drawing and text.(COVER ONLY)

Peace and Love,
Richard



FROM:

"THE STILL POINT OF THE
TURNING WORLD"

DAVID LOY — MAUI ZENDO

.....
...The pot in which the rice is cooked must be thought of as our own head; the water in which the rice is washed must be regarded as our own life. The offerings we make and accept are the very substance of the universe: our very substance.

Dear Cloud-Hidden friends,

In trying to deepen my own understanding and experience of unconditional love, I find myself more and more appreciative of the importance of personal humility. Increasingly it features as one of the prime factors in our ability to know and to express love. Without it there seldom seems to be enough freedom from self-interest, to enable us to enter the secular "kingdom or heaven"... however we might choose to define this!

The essence of humility rests with our ability to transcend the awesome stranglehold that our egos normally exert over us. It represents our ability to break loose from ALL self-interest and to see beyond the myopic veils of illusion that constantly sustain our selfcentredness. It indicates the available presence of a high enough level of consciousness, to see that all our precious labels of distinction, rank, office, status or position, no longer hold any affective or hidden meaning for us. That they are all agents of our ego's need to maintain the grand illusions of promoting our external sense of import.

Within the state of a genuine humility, there is absolutely no sense of personal loss or diminution resulting from doing and being anything...the lowliest job or task is equally acceptable to the highest. A genuinely humble individual has no need of any personal investment in social ranking, and all hierarchies of position, power or status are seen for what they are ...simple ego generated props in search for self-preservation, personal stature, self-aggrandizement or immortality.

A genuine humility frees us from the anxiety and tension that always accompany any uncertainty of tenure within oneself. It frees us from having to maintain any externally defined status, image or desire for respect.

Those who are caught up in having to meet strong ego needs, will likely find it extremely difficult to envision themselves (or anyone else for that matter) as not being diminished or humiliated by any task or role that normally would be seen as lowly, menial or demeaning. This is inevitable, and must be reckoned with as a barrier in trying to talk with others about humility.

Humility is indicative of an inner strength and security that enables us to feel safe and real without any external validation. It is a trait readily found among those who are blessed with access to their own capacity to love. It can only be fully expressed and validated within the practical domain of doing. It is in the practice of service...in the giving of ourselves away to others... that we can experience humility and be "sure" of its authenticity. It also cannot be sought after or cultivated, for it is the normal by-product of simply being who we are, beyond the connivance of any ego generated pretentiousness. Humility comes naturally and quietly unannounced the very moment that we can reclaim our capacity to love and to free ourselves from all the virulent by-products of our ontological fear.

In my perception, many brilliant people, gurus, teachers and the like, who freely advise us on how to seek inner peace and enlightenment, are often seriously limited by their own hidden ego needs for power, recognition, acclaim or adoration. It remains strikingly ironic that many of these colourful and charismatic figures, who often exalt the value and virtue of humility, are unable to resist the numerous temptations of accepting the praise, power and personal prestige that their followers generally bestow upon them.

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 In many instances they live in opulent surroundings, amass great fortunes and demand an unquestioned obedience from their followers.

I am NOT without respect for much of their wise teachings and profound insights into the human condition, but I seriously question their inability to embrace and practice humility as an ESSENTIAL dimension on any road to enlightenment.

This surely presents us all with some extremely difficult decisions regarding our personal responsibility in the process of seeking wisdom and freedom, via the utterings of any would be mentor.

What thinkest thou good friends? *John*

(Note...among Love's principal antagonists-in my view all direct derivatives of a primal fear of separation originating in our sense of lost union with THE ALL- none is more insidiously and tenaciously active, than the human ego. It completely dominates our needs to be noticed, to be a somebody, to seek fame, fortune, recognition, distinction, notoriety, success and immortality.

Our attachment to the active pursuit of these life dominating goals, desires or ambitions is what empowers the ego with its tremendous control over our behaviour and our thinking.)

John H. Boyd

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Greg Gibbs
 Ed Star
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On Being a Grumpy Bodhisattva

Dear Cloud Hidden Friends,

Greg has been wondering how to maintain emotional honesty & still practice (the paramitas, e.g.) I wish to remain sincere, not to tamper with the translucency of my self consciousness;- still, I want to be free of anger, depression, guilt, conniving et.al. I have already recommended that we shout as needed, but do we need to connive sometimes? Must we even grant ourselves the latitude to hate as Ed questions? Greg feels that he must accept his own rationalizations in order to be able to not (routinely and pre-reflectively) use them. (have you ever gone a week without rationalizing your way out of doing what you thought was right? Hasn't it often turned out that your contrivance was healthier than your moral conviction in such cases?) Yellow Mouse might question who this I is, who's sincerity I am questioning. But that concern does not seem central to my current perplexity. Greg, or whoever, believes that our cleverness and manufacturing of excuses may, at times, be warranted, but fears so neat an answer as that we remain free of contrivance in such activities. (As Lynn Olsen has suggested we may in gain-laden Nembutsu by virtue of the real activity of the Bodhisattva's vow) As he frets over how, what, and when to practice Greg has not forgotten Krishnamurti's caution that we don't have time to do anything. (prior to confronting reality) Still, Greg will continue to make time to do something so long as he feels that he must.

* * *
 Ed: i find anger frustrating and perplexing in its ramifications. When i get angry over some stupidity either caused by someone else or something, or even through my own considerable efforts, i'm troubled over numerous problems that come with the anger package.

continued

Do i have a right to be angry? Is it a natural state? Is it possibly healthy as well as destructive? Or, should i apply a technique and control it or sublimate it? i mention a technique, because often when i've found myself in extreme stability and calmness, it's generally been due to a certain understanding of a technique, i.e. yoga, Tai Chi, Dhikr, or a mental framework that allows me an extreme amount of liberality, and in some way changes my concept about the who of me.

But how about the why of things? Obviously if a technique is only a technique, then some might find it useful, but many more would find it shallow, and eventually see it as no answer, but a way of shelving the emotions. (We really don't want answers do we?)

On the other hand, if a technique is integral to ourselves through knowledge, practice and experience it isn't a technique (non mechanical) but our way, our life. My problem is that i'm not far enough along the way to handle my emotions from a centered and a focused enlightened position.

In the mean time, i must be as clear as i possibly can over such extreme emotion as anger.

Another ramification is the introduction of hate, which either proceeds or boils over after anger has taken center stage. While it's up-setting, i can conceive of anger being a natural state; but hate is a double negative and completely intolerable to me who, regardless of my own stupid, violent and goofy nature, truly wishes the best for humanity. And, being limited in knowledge such as i am, can i change this unpleasantness to something more natural, but less a symptom of human neuroses. Can i change or eliminate the hate in anger? Can i truly be angry at someone or thing without hate slipping in?

i recall the Sufi motion of going to war, in that they believe that they have a right to defend themselves and their nation, but believe that hating their foe is wrong though they shouldn't pretend to like their aggressor's actions. Likewise, can i advance towards the Bodhisattva ideal knowing that i'm still plagued by my dumb animal (or is it dumb human) nature, and only in my head am i sometimes more centered?

i don't wish to deal with why we get angry because it's way too broad of a subject (warehouses full of material) as is the one i'm dealing with, but because of repression and the spread of hostility, thought it better to narrow my focus.

* * *

Greg perceives that both he and Ed are worried about being ready yet. (Ready to trust our emotions, ready to be free of techniques, ready for the fun part.) I find Tom Thompson's remark - "Being Buddha is a terrible responsibility", to be to the point here. As Ian Hunter posed the problem - "to seek is a mode of sin." I don't seek an answer to our perplexities; but if we can share our confusions, maybe it will help someone. I would appreciate feed-back. I must have made someone angry by now.

As we await (?ksanti) illumination, we submit our thought with grumpy (?virya) humility,

Ed & Greg

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CHF: 11/8/85

Tom Thompson: You dropped the word "indulgence" in "Seeking itself (that which we are searching for) is an indulgence ~". donJuan sez that the reverse is to be "impeccable". You so clearly pointed out: "- that sense of urgency and doing is exactly who those A-types think they are. If it disappears, they disappear. - as long as WE seek, WE are doing, and as long as WE are doing, WE are !" (emphasis mine) WHO? is WE? By our doing we make our fantasy ego into being. Later: "But WE resist just sitting. Why? WE know why. Do WE want to do it, or do WE want to play WE want to do it. - WE talk, WE read, WE write, WE intellectualize and rationalize. All OK. Do WE also SIT?" (emphasis mine) [WHO? would do the sitting.]

Klaus Gehrman: "-the missing musical aspect". See Tangent: The Sound of Compassion by Pamela Bloom pg 98 Parabola Fall '85: the Body. Incidentally the root of "music" is the same root as "Mystic", "Myth", "Muse", "Mystery" and "Mouse".

Ananda concerning the potato: that same issue of Parabola has a series of pictures (pg 26 -31) from Enku: Sculpter of a Hundred Thousand Buddhas - all of the "uncarved block".

Elson de snow: COOL = COL (OldEng) = KOL (Teut) = GEL (PIE = proto indo european): to freeze (together = into a lump) = COLD, CHILL, conGEAL, JELLY, GLACIAL, GLANCE from the same PIE root GEL: to form into a ball > compact mass or coagulated lump > viscosity, adhesiveness which forms the base of: CLUMP, CLUB, CLUE, CLOUD, CLOD, CLOT, CLUTTER, KLUTZ, CLOUT, CLOWN, CLEAT, GLOBE, GLOB, conGLoMerate, GLUTEUS, GANGLION, CLASP, CLIP, CLIMB, CLAMBER, CLAM, CLAMP, CLEAVE, CLING, CLENCH, CLUTCH, CLAW, CLAY, GLUE, GLUTEN. What is the meaning of the coincidence of "COOL" and "SNOW" ?

Ed Hiles Star: Hope all this helps: NOESIS = NOEIN (Grk): to perceive from NOUS (PIE): mind, sense, reason, intellect from NO = GNO: to know as in GNOSIS + US = AZ: that which = that which knows DIANDIA = DIA + NOUS (see above); DIA: through, across, over, opposite, apart, between, mutual, complete, from one to another THUS the knowing that carries us through, across, over

DIANA = Goddess of the moon, chastity and the hunt
 from DEIW: to shine = DEIWOS (OS = AZ = that which)
 = that which shines: the Sky God
 = TIWAZ (Teut) = TIW (OldEng): God of War and sky
 = TIU, (Tuesday)
 = TYR (OldNorse) Sky God
 = DEUS, DIVUS, DIVES (Lat): God, deity, divine, diva
 = DEIW-YO: luminous = DIANA (Lat)
 = DEVAH, DEVAS (Sanskrit): god, DEVI
 = DAEVA (Avestan): demon

ALSO DEIW = DYE = DIES (Lat): day
 = DYEU [dy > j in (Lat), Z (Grk)]
 = JOVE, JULIUS, JU-pitar, ZEUS
 = DEIE = DELOS (Grk): clear = psychODELIC

AGATHON (nothing directly) = PIE roots: AG + AT + ON: he, it
 AG: to lead, drive, conduct = ACT, AGILE, AGressive, AGONY
 AT: to go (through the cycle of years), revolve
 = ATNO = ANNO = ANNUAL

THUS he leads, conducts or drives us through the cycle of life

AGAMIC: asexual or parthenogenetic reproduction
 = AGAMUS (Lat) = a: not + GAMOUS: sexual union = unmarried
 from GEME = GAMOS (Grk) = GAM + AZ: that which
 GENE: to beget, norn, originate, beginning

THUS he is unity, asexual, pure and is the force that drives us through the cycle (KARMA ?) of life.

From the KABALAH: above the three trees of the ten Sephiroth there are three "Heavens" of vagueness piled one above the other:

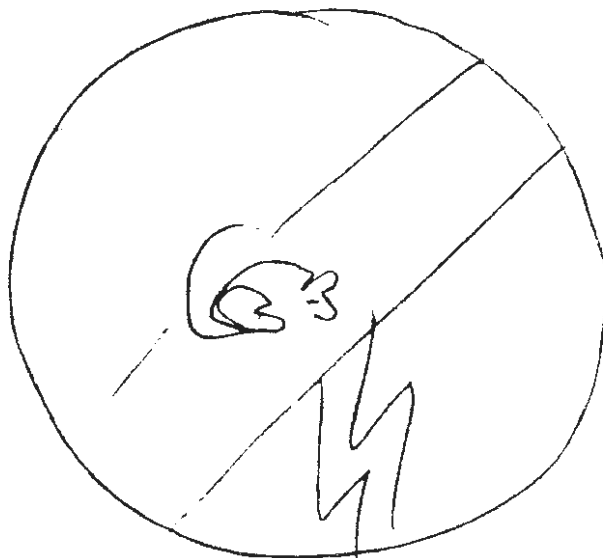
AGATHON	AIN	= absolute nothing	Father
NOESIS	AIN SOPH	= total light	Son
DIANDIA	AIN SOPH AUR	= limitless light	Holy Ghost
	~ 1 ~	= KETHER	

KETHER is the equivalent to the top of the head: the thousand leaf Chakra. The 1 (ACE) represents the hitherto unmanifest at the point where it first can become knowable to us. Still no form, only pure Being in a state of inertia, but all is latent within. Duality is not yet apparant. PRE-KETHER (the AIN series) is pre-manifestation of any kind.

Norm: Semantics might also be the science of man's ACCEPTING the human condition as GOOD but requiring a disciplined consciousness. One of the outgrowths of Freud also is: the truth of inner sets is to be found in behavior: study a man's behavior (including your own) and you will discover what he believes in.

yellow mouse
 GHEL-MUS
 (gelmush)

PS for Ananda C: My book is not printed yet at all. All I have is in the computer: still proof reading, adding and subtracting. Now that And/Or press is defunct, where do I get it published (can't pay for private printing) ? And a bow to the BO - bo-dhe: to set, place, put > establish = body.



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Dear Folks,

Everbody over at our house in Berkeley has heard me, probably once too often, regale them w/tales of our Summer adventure, the cross-country trip my son David and I made this Summer by Amtrak and rental car, so I might's well tell y'all too. David's now 6. We did this exact trip by Amtrak, sticking w/the Southern route, c. Christmas '80-81, too young for David to remember, however. So this might be his last chance to see the Grandparents alive, right? Right. Ever since I took a student loan to get a teaching credential c. '82, my finances have been permanently butchered, so I figger, wha's difference, boss, 'tween a \$3,000. debt and close to another thous. added on, eh? Right. 20: first time in a labf I eva owed more'n a cuppla hunnert; also, ferst time I eva took a beegole coast-t-coast trip on credit. Had an American Express card at the time; now they tell me, pay up r shut up, & betwixt times, cut up de card & go to de toilet....

Anyways, this time we go sorta Northerly ferst on train, actually crossing over the mountains vicinity of Reno and duckin on down then into what cud be called the Mid-western route via Salt Lake City, Denver, Chi!, Pittsburgh before creaking in t D.C., where we switched t Nat. Car Rental & drove in t Raleigh/Durham (Triangle Area) w/ole fren (lady) outen Austin & Durham, Lincoln Memorial so close to our route South that we jist duck in fer 20-30 befo scootin South.

Course, this is a mighty stretch of continent we live on, this side o' the ole ball, & when ye cross the Continental Divide or the Missouri or grand ole Mississippi, ye always get reminded of it & probably git whut th kids these days call a Flash! I think ye actually get a High on all these wonderful images of mountains, prairies, high mesas and beeg rivers and vaster oceans. Images that stay w/ye fer literally months sometimes. On this Midwestern Amtrak course, we crossed the Sierras, the Rockies and the Alleghanies near Harper's Ferry, W. Va.

The nature image that stays w/me longest from this amazin crezzie trip was of our approach to Boulder, a few miles from Denver, as we hovered at c. a measly 12,000 ft., brakeman dragging the brakes t slow us down to a cool 35mph, just about Twilight, all us Hoomans totally speechless in amazement as we slowly dipped through various terrains, worlds, things, the rock formations constantly changing in this strange light from balls to birds to spaceships to flowers to animals to temples or to whatever-the-fancy-might-call-up. An utterly marvelous, astonishing experience, that, which we won't soon forget.

In early-mid 70s I lived in No. New Mexico, so usta drive or hitch nawth to Denver-Boulder area fer readings & t hit the bookstores on & off, so I already somewhat knew that stretch of the Rockies. But the roads, even the Back-roads I usually travel, don't go as high as the train does at that point, roads usually hangin at about 9-10,000 ft. We saw no paved roads & few signs of habitation, occasional shack or cabin, at train's highest elevation. So this trip gave me among other things, a very special revelation of the Rockies that I hadn't had befor.

To then a day r so later float through the imagination's exact opposite, the extremely crowded, loud, fast, huge, tall, strange constructs we call Cities, and just how remote and off-putting and densely-packed they are, unnaturally so is my point, made a curious nameless desolation come over me as I encountered those awful glimpses of living Hell with little relief in sight in one's immediate vision. By contrast Southern sights, speech, towns, country can still, in '85, seem rather charming and loveable, or at least liveable, places to hang out, until of course one reflects that it is also the home of our country's worst

ill, slavery. I hate t say it, but after Chi., Pittsburgh, & armed-camp D.C., seemed almost a relief t once agin be back home, probably because I grew up in the same aforementioned Triangle Area.

Once your lifeway/path takes ye elsewhere fer any length of time, a decade or 2, say, the homefolks neva quite trust ye agin, however, as I find out ever damn time I go home, altho like most folks, ever once in a while, I jist can't resist trying it agin. For little Dave it was, naturally, quite a revelation to discover he had so many relations who oohed and ahhed all the time over him and fed and overfed us both daily, and in a way this was the real meaning of the trip. He got a helluva kick out of it most of the time!

At the point at which my Mom screams at me that my god's dead (de Buddah) David's in tears, and asks me later, more r less, Wha' gives, Dad, "Why she do dat to yoo?" Why, indeed? When I got over my astonishment, my reply was on the order of, Wal, in point of fact, de Buddah and de Christ both died, but if either are alive in a person's heart, thass where it's at, ain't it? Course, Jesus rose from the dead to atone for our sins, she yelps! I give up then, mainly cause I neva cud git it straight, this Sin bizness.

No sense in going on & reporting all r most of the entanglements, such as why m brother addressed me as Shithead ever time he saw me til I finly pointedly asked him why he felt compelled to do so even in front of David, etc. We resolved that one quick enuf. Whew!

Instead of jist mucho reportage or verbiage here, it'll clear up a lot & explain why all/most uv the Mosers were so upset so much of the time, if I clue ye in on a leetle background: How we gon be happy a lot these days, w/one of the boys in the State Penitentiary and Dad in a special wing of the State Asylum fer folks w/Alzheimer's Disease cause he adnt got good control neither anymore and Mom, now 71, can't handle the situation? And jist t mek matters worse, Dad had 1-2 bad falls while we were thar, getting him in Intensive Care fer the remainder of our stay, this making more sense to Dave than the other, he-can't-remember-us-too-good, interpretation. I do realize that part of my folks' lifelong disappointment is precisely that Norm cudn't or wudn't be either a straight rico businessman or Minister of the Gospel (after all, 2 uv Mom's 3 bros. were preachers). But I honestly don't feel I have a debt or burden to bear other folks re my own hardwon, deepfelt calling to vision, prophecy, poetry or other revelatory utterance. Whatever it is or comes to, it's mine, no one else's, I love it, stick by it thro thick & thin, live it, share it. That's all I can do. I ain't responsible fer everthang in this worl. I am responsible t meself & m vision & to de Buddah & the possibility of enlightenment or t put it perhaps a better way, t pleasure, joy, love, humour, insight, dance/music.

A real strange bewidlerment in all this b.s. w/m folks is how, in one way, I love 'em & respeck 'em no matter what, even th one on his current 3rd prison sentence, yet in another way, tho I spring from 'em & will never deny it, in actual fact I realize all th time, espec. now that I git bit older (54), how little I really do unnerstan 'em.

Course, it warn't all bad even in Carolina, there were some fine, lighter moments, fun stuff, swimmin & such, and one high point was participating in a casual open reading at a Raleigh cafe w/1-2 ole Bay Area pros who, like mself, come from thar, but the amazing thing about the reading was how many young Carolina poets & prozers are now liberated from the necessity of the ole Suthern lyric line in poetry or from the necessity of saying only the sweet or positive thing, if a prosewriter. I've published a bit in N. Carolina publications, so am tempted t in part credit mself w/this change, & truth t tell, I may be

a small influential part of this change for the better, but I think, far more important, the Times are the real culprit, Our Time is forging them a certain way quite apart from anything I may say or do or desire. Anyway, suffice t say, we sho had some fun 1 Thursd. nite thereabouts & we all waz duly, sufficiently appreciated.

So after sellin all th books I cud in th Triangle Area, and having paid all m dues w/kinfolk, Dave & I took orf agin, this time by car, now tryin hard to mek a San Antonio a.m. connection by Amtrak outa New Orleans Wed. nite way past midnite, startin out late afternoon Mon. Finally pulled into Austin, another of me past hangouts, lovely charming place the morning after missing thet San Antonio train by mekin 1 crucial 150 mi. wrong turn goin outa Temple, Tex. Here Dave and I had our real vacation fer couple days til th nex westcoast train headed out fer L.A. via Austin-San Antone.

One night we were asetting out in an outdoor Cafe, of which Austin has its share, and perfeck strangers, couples or solos out fer a night on th town, wud come over t greet and hug &/or chat w/us fer a spell. Amazing! I'd forgotten how friendly Austin can be. I had better luck w/Austin bkstores too than I did in the entire rest uv the country, one reason might be my ferst book came out thar & somehow, many there have not completely forgotten me over th past decade. We also tried selling books in Jackson, Shreveport, Birmingham, & other points South, w/little or nil luck. Had t pass up Atlanta and Houston cause we passed thro at night-time & simply cudn't stop (found Motel 6's all 3 nites on th road, tho they shud be Motels \$16.95, etc). One of our more charming interludes as we drove through the lower South was arriving lickety-split about a hunnert miles nawth of Atlanta c. 10:00pm some little highway town, just needin drinks cause we still had Mom's chicken left, & on pulling into a Wendy's w/leette patio outside they closed the door in our faces, so we trooped over to th gas-station-countrystore nex do', got our drinks, & boldly walked back over t Wendy's patio, where we feasted in fine Suthern style, laughin & singin t beat th band, jus me & Dave & the nice warm Suthern night, us & our corny jokes bout how th speakers probably werked backwards, broadcasting all our corny jokes, songs 'n laughter inside fer the amusement of the Wendy spectators, so strangely contained thar in that glass box & not so free as us, eh?...

Got our ferst sleepers on into L.A., & did a lot of sleepin as we wound down our cotton-pickin wunnerful crosscountry trip of Aug.-Sept. of the year 1985, snuck on in t L.A. by night & early morn, et, & then, whaddayaknow, part of a morning's ride & all uv an afternoon's too, deposited us **SAFE & SOUND** in Oakland round aboot Nightfall, say hey! Dave in Mom's arms whom he sorely missed acourse, & after all, both uv us mighty happy t be back home in Berkeley after all's said & done!

Note to Yellow Mouse middle of yore nex depression: Stop yr routine, peer round yer shoulder at all the goofy thangs in yer immediate surroundings, I mean rilly look rite into & thro 'em, & if thet don't dissipate yer bad spell, then go outside alookin fer truly wonderful, byootiful sights t see, lak birds, hills, trees, clouds & such. In otha werds, try t git outside Self & Self's concerns, sad weights, etc...

Note #2 to us all in this time in which a mate's sa hard t come by or meet up with: go r e a l s l o w, lotta respect & listenin espec. on ferst date r 2, don ask fer their Commie-card, if yer a Politico, or in our context, their Zen card, & watch out fer them controversial topics early on in acquaintanceship r courtin r whatever. More on this in future Newsletters, I swear! I once sd I'd comment on this, I know. This is all I can offer this time, dinnertime's comin up!

Yore Ole *Friend*,

17-12

Norm Moser

Letters Received

Marian Mountain

Dear Cloud-Hidden Friends,

John Boyd posed some questions in the last CHFL which have bothered me, too, for over a year: "How come...our hidden fellowship seems to be pretty denuded of female representatives? Where are the women within the larger body of Zen Buddhism? Is this but one more sign or example of male exclusivity?"

Could it be that men are more willing than women to stick their necks out and risk being put down or patronized for their efforts? Anytime we try to express ourselves sincerely and personally in public (as the "hidden fellowship" is encouraged to do in its open forum) we become vulnerable. My suggestion to men who are truly interested in a more balanced representation between the sexes in the CHFL is to let the women know how you feel from time to time. Don't hesitate to speak up if you would like to hear again from a specific woman who may have contributed an inspiring or provocative letter or two the first year and then stopped writing. Unless they are reassured frequently, many women tend to believe they don't have much to offer in the way of religion or rhetoric which would interest men. The important point, however, is to convince us women you are sincere. Sincerity is the key which can unlock a woman's heart/mind.

I'd like to explore this quality of sincerity a little further because without it it may be impossible to express spiritual matters. Sincerity is something that most of us are apt to lose as we grow older and more experienced. The child's mind--the beginner's mind--is full of sincerity. But as we gain skills we become clever. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with cleverness. In its place cleverness is entertaining. And now that I think of it, that may be the problem. If I write a clever phrase or sentence or paragraph I get turned on by it and assume it will turn on other readers. It is gratifying to my ego (my image of myself) to think I can turn others on. But I may just as easily turn my readers off by my cleverness.

I learned this lesson the hard way.

The first five editors to which I submitted the manuscript of THE ZEN ENVIRONMENT rejected it without a hint as to their reasons. The sixth attached a note to my manuscript which informed me succinctly that he had read it and found it "too breezy." After reflection I realized that "breezy" was a tactful synonym for "clever". I learned later that this particular editor had only a superficial knowledge of Zen;

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nevertheless he felt intuitively a book on meditation should do more than entertain. It should move one at a deep level.

It took two years to rewrite the manuscript for THE ZEN ENVIRONMENT in order to eliminate everything that was clever and to express what was left with sincerity. I didn't succeed completely but I made enough progress so that when I submitted the revised manuscript to the same editor he accepted it for publication.

Now, at the risk of appearing judgemental, I'd like to point out two examples of writing--one sincere and one clever--from the last issue of the CHFL. The letter from Ananda, as all of his do, moved me at a deep level. I found it convincingly sincere. The letter from Yellow Mouse--specifically the second half--turned me off. It was too clever. I must admit that I was tempted at first to dash off a clever reply to Yellow Mouse's attempt to warn me of the hidden dangers waiting to ambush me and my husband in Northern Idaho--not dangers from grizzly bears but dangers from armed and trigger-happy neo Nazis; but after reflection I realized any attempt at cleverness on my part would not only be inappropriate but would probably either turn Yellow Mouse on or turn him off--neither of which would be productive. So I'll overlook Yellow Mouse's patronizing tone toward me-as-a-woman as a harmless but failed attempt to entertain his readers. But I feel it is my responsibility to refute the distorted conclusions Yellow Mouse reached in his argument, in the chance that these conclusions may have alarmed one or two readers of the CHFL.

Even if the lurid details of the nefarious deeds of the militant "Order" (an offshoot of the Aryan Nations Church) are correct as far as they go, Yellow Mouse neglected to point out that ten members of this small group have been apprehended and are (at the time I write this) being tried in Seattle for their alleged crimes. The implication Yellow Mouse left--that the attitudes and activities of this revolutionary group are supported or shared by anything other than a tiny minority of Idahoans--is nonsense. There are no more kooks, crazies, radicals or revolutionaries in Northern Idaho than in any other part of the country. In fact, one of the features which Jack and I find appealing about this area is its cosmopolitan mixture of full and part-time residents. We have been impressed, so far, by the live-and-let-live philosophy of our neighbors.

In closing I offer this advice to Yellow Mouse (and at the same time remind myself once again): Be careful. You have a tendency to let yourself get carried away by your breezy style. If you try to cultivate more sincerity I think you'll come closer to hitting the heart/mind of both men and women.

*Sincerely,
Marion*

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GREG GIBBS
1740 N. Arthur
FRESNO CALIF.
93705

Dear Cloud-Hidden Friends,

Maybe we are developing an American form of Buddhism. Klaus Gehrman inducts a new patriarch, Alan Alda, by virtue of his "Are we having fun yet?...is this the fun part?"

Regarding practice forms, for myself Nembutsu & reciting the three treasures are safer than sitting. I can stay closer to the bone with Namu Amida Butsu & taking refuge in Buddha, teaching, and fellow path travelers than with zazen. Sitting meditation I tend to manipulate into indulgence in humility, clinging to purity, attachment to unity et. al. I'm better off with instantaneous practice forms; another example - Krishnamurti's notion that "to be aware of inattention is attention." I then proceed trying to have fun along the same path I was already walking, perhaps a little less obstinantly, hopefully a bit less greedily.

I feel compelled to remind Alan Taplow that those benches at fast-food outlets were not only designed by human creativity, but designed to be uncomfortable so you'll exit quickly, making way for the next cash-paying customer. If we are going to develop a democratic Taoism, an egalitarian yoga, we do have some knowledge to borrow from the socialists. We must avoid "loading our dice" with reinterpretations of otherwise threatening realities, however beautiful our proffered facade.

I attended a week-end seminar with Gia Fu Feng 15 years ago, and subsequently have persued Tai Chi very seriously with James Wang. Gia Fu impressed me on many levels, but it was his shameless egotism which made him incomparable (to use Ananda's term). As East meets West in the caldron of America this willingness to give the personal ego its just due may prove crucial.

Our friend behind the moniker of Yellow Mouse is unwilling it seems to face the ego defending itself with all this word play. (His, mine, & everyone's) True there is no way of authenticating freedom, but without traditions and institutions we end up with shamen like Hubbard ordinating distracting sham lineages. The way, the Tao, is all permeating and may have no preferences for pedigrees; but, from our side, we do prefer flowers to weeds, and flowers thrive in well-kept gardens. When I teach someone Tai Chi they learn something worth transmitting. The precise details of the form are secondary to the spirit & essence, but not incidental. Many of Shinran's followers find true faith mind (Shinjin), Dogen's genuine original mind, Jesus' true non-violence. Werner's dupes, on the other hand, can't even talk good jive. I agree that we musn't rely on a single approach as infallible, - but it is predecessors who took the details of their approach forms seriously who allow us this liberty not to attach to the Bodhisattva path as zazen, as I Ching study, as reliant mind etc.

American truth-seekers have responsibilities toward mega-corporations, we have to make them responsive to our needs. Pilgrim hostils, for example, will not appear to be revenue generating to owners or middle management (Who does call the shots in new feudal capitalism?). Teaching by example and speaking from our convictions (Bhante's advice) may not be enough to keep us alive in the late 20th century. American Buddhists must not allow themselves, following the Japanese example, to become the grateful dead. What then shall we do?

In the spirit of Brotherhood,

Greg

To the Cloud-Hidden Friends and All:



J.U.B.E.L. (rhymes with bluebell)

J anuary U niversal B irth E ra L egend

JUBELATIONS TO ALL THIS NEW YEARS DAY!

A HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THE WORLD, AND A
HAPPY UNIVERSAL BIRTHDAY TO EVERYONE !

Let there be more New Years celebrations everywhere, more poetry, hymns, Odes to the New Year, Odes to the birth of the World, new myths, new resolutions, new hopes, prayers, meditation, merriment, and much divine nonsense !

Let us celebrate New Years as the "universal birthday of everyone", as was so in olden times, and as is so today in many lands !

Let the great temple bells ring 108 times everywhere, signifying the ever renewing transcendence of light over darkness !

Let there be "jubelations" everywhere ! - meaning "to Halloo!, to Huzza, to shout or sing with joy, or as 'jubelate' in the 66th and 100th Psalms- to shout joyfully to God!"

May New Years be a universal holy-day everywhere, celebrated in a spirit of harmony and oneness throughout the world, so as to truly honor and adorn the birth of the New Year !

May New Years be celebrated as a great celestial event ! - as indeed it is, it being Perihelion Day, or the point in the orbit of the earth around the sun, at which the earth is closest to the sun, occurring on or about January 1, thus giving us a beautiful symbol of the great cosmic cycles of renewal and universal birth.

Let New Years be a universal birthday for everyone, as it is in China and Japan, so that no one would ever be forgotten in the confusion of trying to remember a multitude of different individual birthdays. Let there be two birthdays ! Let the world be showered with Happy Universal Birthday Greetings, even among those who have not yet heard of such a thing !

Let us drop our worries about the number of our years, and instead celebrate the amazing fact that you and I are born and are here together on this planet - no doubt the planet itself finding it all somewhat amazing. The sheer wonder that we are here is surely cause for shouts of great jubelation.

Let us also go beyond symbols and words, so as to more deeply touch the profundity, joy, suffering, and mystery of birth itself.

So let the temple bells ring! Let the Jubel trumpets sound throughout the land, including from some faraway lone mountain top !

And let there also be "yodeling" everywhere (etymologically akin to 'jubeling'), even if done in a quite subdued fashion while sitting having a cup of hot chocolate in front of a nice warm fire.

Ananda Claude

Dear Hidden Friends,

Instead of a long letter, this page from my recent book "Echoes from the Bottomless Well" (Vintage Books). Come to think of it, I'll make it two!

I am the Knight, and my Steed is People's Express, for tomorrow I am off for Europe, and thereafter Japan. All good wishes!

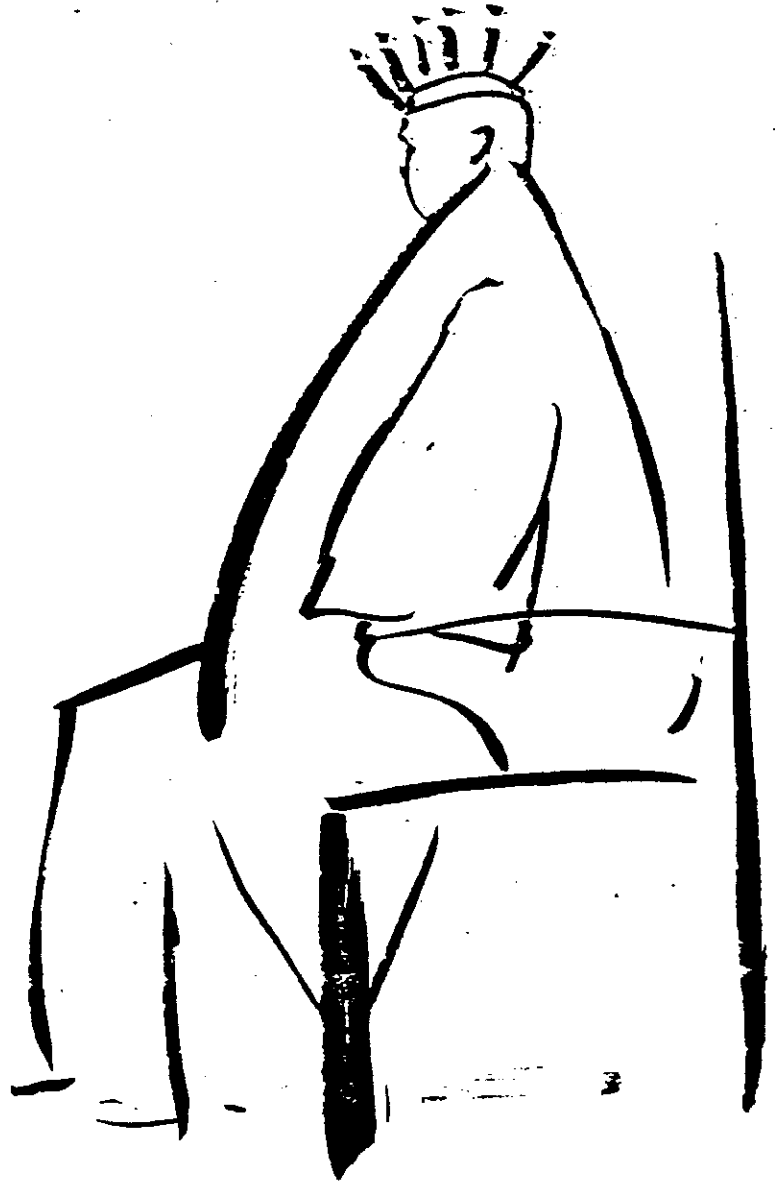
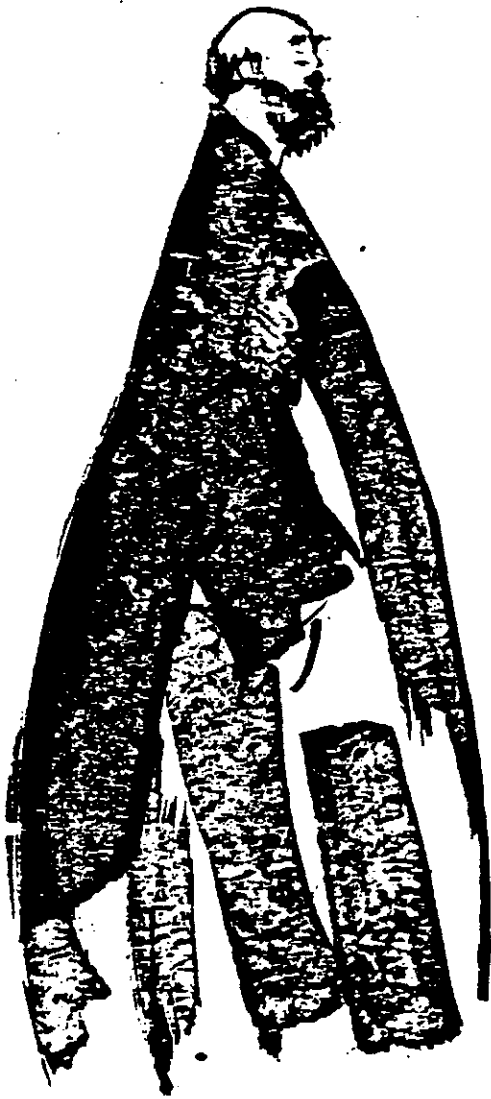
Frederick Franck



Monks should do their zazen in their Zendo
I, a knight, practice it on horseback

Kamakura Koan

P.S. You honor quite rightly D.T. Suzuki, Alan Watts, N. Senzaki, Shunryu Suzuki Thomas Merton as "honorary founders". But don't forget Sokei-en Sasaki, founder of the First Zen Institute in America, still often quoted in his great mondo in Zen Notes, now in it's 35th year- First Zen Institute, 113 East 30th St., NYC NY 10016.



Who are you?

I do not know, Your Majesty...

Bodhidharma

Frederick
Franck