

# cloud-hidden friends letter



Old Sage, Moon-gazing and Drinking Wine

Ma Yuan

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

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 Teitaro Suzuki and Alan Watts as our honorary founders. Although they are both usually associated with Zen Buddhism, their spirit was a wide and free-ranging one, including Taoism, Hinduism, and Christianity etcetera. Their Dharma then is a more universal one, going quite beyond the sectarian confines of Zen.

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."

1. It would be natural for some of you to be wondering if we are some kind of Zen group or not. So far it has been our intent to be independent, and we have no affiliation with any group, Zen or otherwise, and I would guess we want to keep it that way. Your comments would be appreciated. We do have quite an interesting stew, with some of a Zen persuasion, and others Taoist, Christian, etc. We also have a half dozen ministers of the Universal Life Church, and some non-aligned. Add to that various combinations, and it is not at all easy to say what we are. I for one would say that in a religious sense each one of us is much more than some sectarian identity.

2. Mid-February is the season of the Chinese New Year, so it seems timely to add a note on 1984, the year of the Mouse. Also one of our members is named "Yellow Mouse", not that there is any necessary connection. The symbolism should be of interest.

Clerk, Ananda Dalenberg

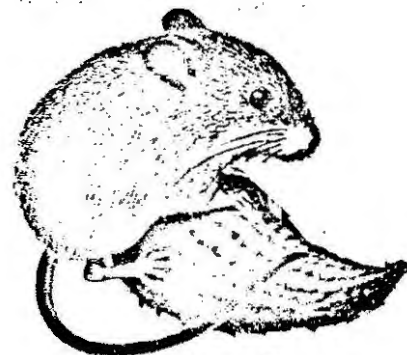
#### THE YEAR OF THE MOUSE

The Rat or the Mouse is a symbolic animal of the Chinese lunar calendar, occupying the first position of a twelve year zodiacal cycle. According to Chinese legend, many ages ago the Buddha called for an assembly of all the animals of the world on New Year's Day. He promised to name a year after all those who came. The Rat was the first to come, and so he is specially honored by occupying the first place in the cycle. The other eleven that came were, in order, the Ox, Tiger, Hare, Dragon, Serpent, Horse, Ram, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, and Boar. The year of each animal reflects then its unique characteristics, and that continues on to the present. According to Chinese tradition, people born in the year of a certain animal will tend to have its characteristics, although for some inexplicable reason, they sometimes have the characteristics of another year. People born under the sign of the Rat are said to be very charming. They work hard for what they really want and generally succeed. They are intellectual and imaginative, and give good advice. Although on the surface they appear self-controlled, they are actually quite emotional, and tend to get in trouble with love, and lose everything they have gained. They are easily angered, but manage to control it. They make good business people and writers, and love to spend money on themselves. They love to gossip, and sometimes get into trouble in that way.

Those born in 1900, 1912, 1924, 1936, 1948, 1960, 1972, 1984, and 1996 all belong to the year of the Mouse or Rat.

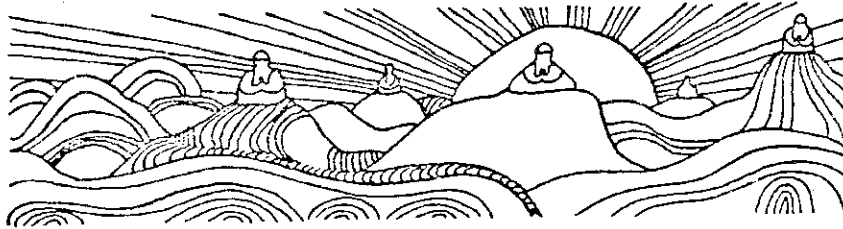
A HAPPY NEW YEAR !

GUNG HAY FAT CHOY !



Harvest Mouse

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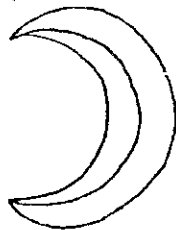


## WHAT IF

## THE MILLION-AND-FIRST MEDITATION AND THE LAST

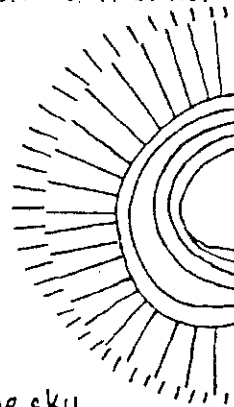
What if we smashed the mirrors  
 And saw our true face?  
 What if we left the sacred Books to the worms  
 And found our real mind?  
 What if we burned the wooden Buddhas?  
 Gave the stone Buddhas back to the mountains?  
 Dispersed the Gurus with a great laugh  
 And discovered the Path we had always been on?

What if we told the Saviours  
 We were saved from our first breath  
 And the Healers, if you could heal yourselves  
 All would be healed?  
 What if we washed clean of Authority's ordure  
 And smelled the fresh sweat of our own bodies?  
 What if, as Eve eating the Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge,  
 We knew the "Patriarchal Curse" a mere natural thunder  
 Bringing Eden a cleansing rain?  
 What if in the lightning's flash  
 We saw there were



No

Mirrors  
 Sacred Books  
 Buddhas  
 Gurus  
 Saviours  
 Healers  
 Authority



And knowledge was standing stark under the sky  
 feet naked to earth, eyes there for wherever light falls? What if..?

NOTE: Elsa's poem is an excerpt from her little booklet "Shattering the Mirror". She has been, by the way, a very close friend of Alan Watts for many years. This is her first contribution to our pages.

Editor, A.D.

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Woodbury Yoga Center

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Dear CHFriends,

I received CHF issue 6 today, dedicated to our friend Alan Watts, who I never had the pleasure of meeting, and I was quite surprised as I'm in the midst of his biography by David Stuart. I've been giving Alan alot of thought these last few days, so it was very special to read about him from the point of view of you who did know him well, either directly or indirectly. There is no doubt that he greatly influenced us all in one way or another. Alan, where-ever you are, tonight I'll remember you in meditation and give you a gassho.

I'll also give gasshos to Joel Weishaus, Yellow Mouse, Gary Snyder and Ananda for their words in Issue #5, along with all other CHF. We are fortunate to meet so many friends on this pathless path. And your words have been helpful to me.

Speaking of helpful words, we do a course here at the Center on The Yoga of Death and Dying, and we're always looking for helpful material. A while back, we received a copy of Letting Go from Richard Boerstler. What a great book! It is brief, readable, to the point, and it gives concrete instructions on useful meditations for dying people. Thank you, Richard, for a beautiful, useful book. I highly recommend it to anyone who plans on dying. I have two copies of John White's excellent anthology, Kundalini, Evolution and Enlightenment in Japanese. If anyone knows where they may be of use, I'll gladly donate them. I also have many copies in English so if anyone wants one, send along a little donation to the Center (out make the check out to me)-make sure

you cover atleast postage and handling, and I'll send you a copy in the next mail.

Winter seems as though it has finally come here to Connecticut. We've been out cutting wood for the stove -the Center is housed in an old New England farm house, and on a good breezy day the wind can cut right through. The important thing is to keep the meditation room warm.

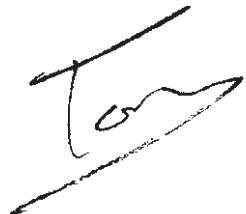
We re-did the meditation room this Fall. Painted the walls, brought the fire-place back to its natural wood, and put nice, thick wall-to-wall carpeting on the floor. The color is what we call Siddha blue. There are two tall windows facing east, so the sun pours in in the mornings. It is a small room, but warm, friendly, full of shakti, and adequate for our public programs every Sunday. We are waiting for the drapes to come. They would help in keeping it warmer, but Sears seems to have its own cosmic sense of time.

We have a person interested in Zen around here. We seldom see him as he doesn't come to any of the programs or classes. Every once in a while he brings back a volume by Suzuki, Watts, or Kapleau, and borrows another. Sometimes we see him, sometimes we don't. I do wish he'd bring back Robert Aitken's book as I haven't finished it yet. Perhaps it will mysteriously re-appear someday.

May you all have a wonderful Holiday season and the happiest of New Years.

With Love-

Tom



2/b1  
LETTERS RECEIVED

"I wonder what it would be like to practice zen meditation in Japan for a couple of years." Has this thought ever passed through your mind? If so I think you will be interested in reading the following excerpts from some letters Marian Mountain received from Henri Begonia, a lay zen student who went to Japan in 1981 to study Japanese gardening and landscape design. In 1982 Henri began attending sesshins (intensive periods of meditation) at a Zen Buddhist monastery. Henri kindly gave Marian permission to share some of his experiences and observations with CHFL readers.

June, 1983

"Thanks for the Cloud-hidden letters. I enjoyed them a lot and would like to see more. I want to contribute but I really don't know what I'd write....

"...I've been back here at the Monastery since April. It's the beginning of the rainy season. Gray sky, windy mist-like rain is blowing. Towels hanging outside the window under the eaves are fluttering in the breeze....I mostly want to tell you about the situation here: This Zen temple is almost 400 years old. It became a training monastery around 1910. In the 50's, for a period of 7 years, it was practically abandoned. It's located near a medium-sized fishing village and port. On the edge of town are some small steep mountains that reach out like two arms and embrace a small canyon valley. This is where the temple is nestled. It's a quiet and protected place in a rather attractive setting. The temple and grounds are among the most beautiful I've seen in Japan. There is a large organic garden here and I've been enjoying getting my hands dirty and helping out.

"The current Roshi, who trained briefly here in its heyday, came to restore the temple about 9 years ago, along with a few Americans and some Japanese monks. Over the years they have fixed it up, and to look at it today you could never guess that only a few years ago it was in very bad shape. From the beginning Westerners have had a part in making the practice here. Now there are 24 people in the temple; half of them are from various Western countries. The Roshi is a very low-key guy; quiet and maybe a bit shy. He is kind but stern. He makes himself completely available and you can see him as much as you like. There are translators available for dokusan (private interview).

"The atmosphere here feels really good considering all the normal problems that exist in any group-living situation.

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Everything runs very smoothly. The schedule isn't too harsh or severe--in fact it is very pleasant. I never dreamed it could be possible to be comfortable in a Japanese Zen monastery. Of course this is the honeymoon period....

"....My intention was to come here for a few months before returning to America. Now I'm reconsidering. I'm thinking of making a trip to Korea to get my visa renewed, working for a month in Kyoto to get some money and then returning here for fall practice period. The temple permits laymen to stay a year. After that one must leave or become ordained a monk....

October 1983

"Thanks for those articles by Ananda. They are indeed most relevant to things turning in my life now and also especially valuable for some of the Western monks who have been here many years and have lost perspective on the monastic training in terms of its connection to what it's actually like to live and practice in America.

"....Familiarity with the rhythms of temple life and the people here has grown. I'm pretty well immersed in the momentum of the practice here. I left the temple for the summer to earn some money and make a trip to Korea to get my visa renewed.... I worked at various part-time jobs including a summer camp for 6 to 9 year olds (great kids! Lots of swimming) and as an extra in a major Japanese film production about the Occupation after WWII. It's basically an anti-war film, with the American Occupation portrayed favorably.

"....Went to Korea August 22 and stayed nearly a month. It seems as though everything that happened the whole time there was incredible, starting out with getting pickpocketed in a port town on my second day. Lost all the money I'd saved over the summer and then some--every bit in cash. Luckily a fellow traveler gave me 40 bucks to tide me over until I could get some money sent. Ended up staying in Buddhist temples and hermitages nearly the whole month. Having no money turned it into a pilgrimage of sorts. Again and again I was helped generously by warm, kind people.

"All the Korean temples are painted in intricate patterns inside and out with brilliant colors. Psychedelic as can be. Sutras are sung beautifully instead of droned out in low monotones as in Japan. The open unreserved nature of the Korean people was quite a refreshing contrast to the cool Japanese style. It was fascinating to see how Buddhism has manifested in another culture....

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"One of the big temples I went to was too full for me to stay very long so I was sent to a small 3-person hermitage 2 hours up a mountain trail. It was magnificent and I stayed a week. A great old master was there who sat day and night. I was given my own room, meals and a full schedule of meditation. The place was 800 years old with 2 big gnarled cypress trees in back and a gay garden of fruit trees and flowers in front. Below a fine vista of a river valley with rice terraces climbing the mountains in every direction, and beyond that ranges and peaks visible almost 180° on the horizon. Clouds, mists, fog, all opening from time to time to reveal this bird's-eye view from eternity. Ironically there was a telephone, huge bouquets of plastic flowers on the altar, and a grand 300-year old shithouse--a 4-holer with a men's and women's side.

"....Now, suddenly back in Japan very busy chopping wood, tending to the garden, washing lots of dishes, chanting sutras and sitting facing the wall. "WHAT IS IT?"

"....Fall season is very busy. Lots of takahatsu (begging) which I find rather difficult to do wholeheartedly because it's so ritualized and done, not so much out of genuine monetary need as a way of the temple being visible in public and keeping up an expected tradition and image. But I love chanting the sutras at the top of my voice: "Kanzeon bo nen nen Kanzeon...etc."

"....Working a lot in the kitchen. I'm low man on the totem pole. Now that they know I can take it, everyone is really getting on my case about every detail. "PAY ATTENTION!" in many forms is impressed upon me rather strongly....

"....As it gets more down to the nitty-gritty in the practice I'm having another look at sitting and what it means to me and why I'm doing it. It's just a feeling of something I want to do--sitting that is. I don't have the deep spiritual aspiration to become enlightened or to save all sentient beings. I appreciate the vows and they are meaningful to me, but when I really look at my practice honestly I see that it's primarily for myself. I would like to be more selfless. I want to be able to sit well and to bring that empty mind into daily life. I've submitted to the conditions of the situation here in order to be able to sit in this extraordinarily quiet place. But I haven't truly surrendered to anything except that effort to abandon myself in everything I do and be fully present for the moment.

"The bottom-line is that I'm grateful to be in this place now...."

Warmest wishes,

Henri



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Alphabet Soup in the American Gulag

Taking Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's Russian "Gulag" and applying the term casually to the contemporary American Psychology and it's interdependence with language, we arrive at life in the smelting pot known as Modern Mind, or more humorously, the Prison of Wishes. (I wish the world was as tired as I so we could all stop and get our bearings together.) Modern Mind, a prison of sophisticated psychologies, monitored by statistics, psychiatry, Madison Avenue, narcotics, nationalisms, and an underlying hunger for the "New Deal", to borrow a slogan from the Roosevelt Era. The Kali Yuga has become the Neon Aeon: Ecclesiastical Electronics for the Modern Man. "See Spot Jump" in his Pac\*Man Palace.....Bright Lights.....Big City.

"See Spot Jump" is a phrase we all recognize from our first Primary Reader, the renaissance of our childhoods, which catapulted us all through Libraries, Science, Religion, Economics, Schools of Thought, Music, Love, Work, and various other delineations of human activity known collectively as "getting an education" or Typifying life in language and thought for the great cultural communication.

The many languages of this Planet and the people who speak them seem to have arrived at some cross purpose. David Chadwick, a San Francisco Zen Center friend and priest, recently sent me a small publicity card which said: "World Suicide Club. An Exclusive Membership. There Are No Non-Members." Randy Newman's song phrase, "Let's Drop the Big One Now," also exemplifies this modern cultural impasse in which dues are mandatory, profitless, and non-returnable. The apex of Modern Man's achievement has almost become the disposable planet; a marketing masterpiece, with a cast of billions, DeMille's commentary on De Bade, with seats for everyone, a true box-office smash. Little did we know that the simple chords learned in "See Spot Jump" would enable us to contrive such heavenly music.

A Simple Tone-Poem in Modern Time With an Accent on Indifference.  
IN ONE Movement.

The well-fed octopus defends his nuclear-powered tentacles  
against the unbelieving, dispossessed, and hungry.

From the bottom of the belly of the A-merican Beast, a Toast;  
To sophisticated delineations of human life-space.

Culture, and it's Henchman, language, devour the un-suspecting  
New-Born. Don't cry baby, the Raging Beast of Conformity keeps  
the earth well-economized for white-whiner's cosmopolitan quiche-  
eating. Here is Mother's Milk to nourish your struggle with the  
pain of duality.

A matter of life and death you say? If the Pope were drowned in  
Vodka, or Siberia served in Southern Fried Sauce, would Eithopian  
babies live on Fall Out?

What Religion are you, Aristotle? That's logical, Jesus Saves with  
Vatican Real Estate. Give to your United Way.

Is this contemporary montage the fulfillment of the land of promise? It certainly seems that the fabled Transmission outside the Scriptures would come in handy at historical moments like these. A transmission or understanding within or beyond language and culture is certainly called for and long over-due for all sentient beings. "Buddha Boy One, This is Buddha Boy Two, Over and Out.....IO-4." Ponce DeLeon's "Fountain of Youth," The Elixir of Immortality," or just some common sense for humanity as a whole fits the bill. How to enlighten the human condition in the Marquee of the Neon Aeon?

To See Spot Jump is an experience outside the context of language. To See Spot Jump is a totally alive experience for both person and dog, observer and observed. Since greater intellects than my own have minutely scrutinized this seer-seen relationship throughout human experience, I won't bore you with my personal brand of Psychedelic Shamanism. The postulation is enough to stimulate a point in space. Although I readily admit both the practicability and necessity of language, I am only trying to suggest a point at which it's facile road ends. For us ordinary beings, to step outside the context of language and thought is extremely difficult, although we are already doing it each minute synapse of our lives. This paradox seems to be an important crux or vortex in all philosophies and religions. Does the person who intends or attempts to split this hair, through some soul-wrenching process of rebirth, deny the mandala of the Neon-Aeon with all it's Atomic repercussions? Again history has commented endlessly on Hindoo Fatalism vs. Social Responsibility. Thus ends History and speculation and so begins The Mystery.

If we are to embrace the Buddhist and Hindu, Christian and Hebraic and Islamic freeways to success, it is important to examine the poetic metaphor of their road signs. Language being a sign of the sickness, it is somehow fitting we use a hair from the dog to attempt the cure; the Tantric approach of a little poetry to invoke the muse. The medium becomes the message?

Poetry has historically been the medium that indicates this Gateless Gate; to invoke the muse, to point the way to experience something beyond or inbetween, or as a background to the prison or gulag of language and thought and their resultant life patterns. A Zen Koan admonishes, "A finger pointing at the moon, is not the moon." Koan s may not be totally understood through the language they employ as a mystery surrounded by a white picket fence. "No Fish, No Water." takes one a little closer to the fire. The famous Genjo Koan is one of the best examples. This thinning of the Alphabet Soup brings me to the heart of this letter:

#### 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,"

#### Chia Tao

"Searching for the Hermit in Vain" is the koan of the Neon-Aeon. The solution has escaped our whole civilization. Is, then, the medium the message? Thus the mystery deepens. How to swallow the koan or poem and not choke on the sharpened stick of it's insolvability? "Master's gone, Cloud-hidden, whereabouts unknown, Searching for the Hermit in Vain." Not much promise here for the hungry, and yet the Zen Masters seem to promise some rarified nourishment. WHEN DO WE EAT, AND WHERE DO WE EAT? HOW DO WE EAT? The mystery deepens to somewhere beyond mediums, messages, koans, poetry, religion, and the muse. What is left?

The Prison of Wishes. This embodies instincts, emotions, and thought in language form, and the resultant history of all mankind forever and ever. In short, all that has ever happened or could happen. To entertain even the slightest wish is to deny the Great Death. In clinging to the history of existence, the Ego denies the pain of flame and the truth of its insubstantial nature. Poetry romanticizes the eddies of this great cosmological whirlpool. To enter a condition where it is necessary to place one's total reliance totally on the self, without the minutest safeguard is to understand or become the self and to solve the great koan. The Mystery. Only thus is the hermit forgotten.

The Eagles Wings  
 Shades the Earth  
 From the Heat of Summer,  
 Light and Free Against  
 The Sun  
 Untouched  
 Except  
 By Warmth and Wind.

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NOTE: We have received a copy of the Newsletter of the Alan Watts Fellowship, along with a note of friendship. They meet on a regular basis. Their address is 939 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02115  
 617-437-9424

Also Tom Thompson of the Woodbury Yoga Center has sent along a few helpful comments on the subject of "Ham-Sa" meditation, in reference to A. Dalenberg's letter in Issue #6. It seems the "sound" of exhalation-inhalation is not always regarded as "Ham"-"Sa". Sometimes it is said to be the reverse. It probably relates to the Vedantic in contrast to the Saivaite tradition. At the Yoga Center meditation practice often begins with the Hamsa meditation. Swami Muktananda has written a small book on the subject.

A.D., Editor

Robert C. Finch  
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Dear Friends:

PEACE

I have been relating a great many things, ideas, and concepts, with PEACE, lately. And I would like to now share some of them, and the Reality, that PEACE means to me, at this time.

Life is surrounded by PEACE. As a species, and as an individual, we are at PEACE before we are conceived, and after we die. And somewhere between these, PEACE is forgotten, and, people go through (what they believe are) the mundane tasks of the day, year, century.... But even in every breath, a person is surrounded by PEACE. For there is a moment between; exhaling-and-inhaling, inhaling-and-exhaling, at which there is the roar of Silence, hidden in PEACE. PEACE surrounds our lives.

Before and after there is any action (or inaction), there is PEACE. Though the karma each of us carries, brings about a reaction to any situation, PEACE permeates Life's situations. Everything that comes into existence, also leaves existence, and between these is a Part-of-Life. (That Part-of-Life may be of animal nature, or a thought, or of a star, or galaxy, or even Creation.) And therefore, since LIFE is of a Changing nature, and PEACE is of an Unchanging nature, then a spiritual people declare Life and PEACE by simply existing. The spiritual person is the sound of silence beyond the grave, to a world in change. And so each of us contains change(Life) and non-change (PEACE) within our Being, and so are LIFE/PEACE.

Finally, I would urge everyone to continue in ; learning about, knowing, and being PEACE. For PEACE surrounds, permeates, and is....

.... A few comments on ISSUE #7, JAN. 1984:

J.H.BOYD. Engrossing account of student/teacher. I am sure many of us understand and face the same dilemma. Ultimately I resolved it in dualism. There is always a distinction between master/slave, leader/follower, and teacher/pupil, which is a system of thought. The quality of extinguishedness is "beyond the confines and limits that are in all thought." (Let's go beyond "systems of thought".)

T.Aston. I never thought of myself as something, or an object of history before. History seems to me to be a one-sided(prejudiced) account of the facts.

L.A. Paull. Looks like a spectral-Rainbow Life. You seem to have learned a lot of lessons, the hard way.

Y.M. I still maintain that with all action, there is violence... in the sense that action is a creative/destructive formation of part, and or all of the elements of Creation. Remember, suffering, according to Buddha, is pain and pleasure. Suffering is the result of deception and change-action-violent( be it objective in the "seeming" indifference of worldly events, and subjective within the mind.) Try and think about PEACE, without the violent collisions of atoms and ions in your brain!

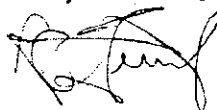
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Thanks, Y, for that insight on unemployment. And consider at this time, that the color yellow, is the color of our Sun, Spectral type G, apparent magnitude -26.5. That's a lot of yellow. Van Gogh liked yellow too.

Filled, I am the emptiness of a cloudless day,  
With Beauty, I am all in all....

Robert C. Finch

PEACE, PEACE, PEACE



Postscript

Dear Friends:

In my reading I have found a poem by Zekkai.  
MOUNTAIN TEMPLE

I have locked the gate on a thousand peaks  
To live here with clouds and birds.  
All day I watch the hills...,  
As clear winds fill the bamboo door....  
A supper of pine flowers,  
Monk's robes of chestnut dye-  
What dream does the world hold  
To lure me from these dark slopes?

That's All,



CLOUD-HIDDEN FRIENDS LETTER:

1/30/84

I guess that we all are hiding back here behind "the" clouds. Of course, there really ARE some who can see beyond the clouds into the Cosmos.

J.H.Boyd: "Labels" are pointers or tags tied to concepts. There is nothing sacred or misleading about labels themselves. We must distinguish between the labels and the concepts, or we will make the mistake of identification. Your letter is so right when it is referenced to "concepts" rather than "labels."

Ol' Mose in Bezerkly: "- ye carry the Buddha w/ye -" WHO? Watch it !!

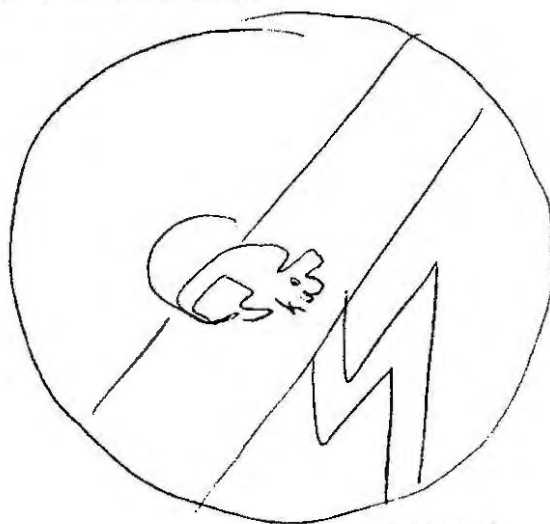
KB Finch: Being formless, taking off in any "direction" is like taking off in all directions, anyway. Besides, all things are connected or inter-connected in the web of being. You say Wisdom and Knowledge are opposites. Well, since YOU say so. Conceptually, if we agree on the meaning of the terms, you may be correct. On the other hand, if we stay away from the contaminating conceptualizing process and still our minds, then we won't be able to use words to communicate. But then WHO? is "we" in that sentence, anyway. The Cosmos communicating with itself uses the words of man to play its enlivening (sic) little fun games, joyfully danceing amongst words, too.

On "seeing": this was the initial zapp that hit me and that started me on the word trip. "See" has the same root as "say". We can only know what one "sees" by what he tells us. If he cannot "say", we don't know whether he "sees" at all. Thus the semantic and linguistic problems of our consciousness: the words we use to "say" define what we "see".

Ananadacloud: Your note about "dialogue" and its difficulties has urged me to the following: People, in their fear (early conditioning, fundamental, existential, cosmic fear), unfortunately, talk AT each other - we shoot off our mouths, aiming our ideas at the "other" intending to penetrate the seemingly unmoving impermeable rejecting "other". To the contrary, we might merely talk WITH the "othee" so that "dialogue" IS that danceing joy.

Lorin Paul turned me on to supplying the long-demanded bio for me. Enclosed. Thanks for Black Bart's address.

YELLOW MOUSE



You asked for the story of what's been happening for the last 56 years:

I was issued a life-support-system 3 months before it was ready for occupancy and placed with a pair of Pennsylvania Dutch indoctrination instructors just before the "Great Depression". After having my logic banks filled with local trash and overcome with shame, I allowed my memory to be programmed for tenure in elite leadership roles, and promptly went to sleep. Following my conditioned example, I attempted to withdraw participation in exploitation roles by involving myself in the study of the goddess GAIA. But I discovered that the necessity of fueling the space-suit involved accepting that role, anyway. Dissatisfaction stemming from the conflict between my learned set and the information flowing in from experience: seeing how mankind treats itself and GAIA, led me to shift to the game: "How men resolve their disputes".

Placing the results of my alliance making in a peripheral role and taking whatever coincidence provided, I soon found that "nature", by itself, does not automatically provide sufficient fuel for more than one space-suit, without it being coerced: the same conflict as before. This time however, my choice was to find a conventional Guru and engage in a long-winded monologue. My program, being narcissistic, was stroked for many moons. But I did start a re-programming sequence that has continued for over twenty years. I decided to involve my "trip" closer to the nature in man.

Off to the big city of Philadelphia, where, once again, the program ran into conflict between itself and the realities of experience. But I learned, the hard way, to overcome the shortcomings in the program and make (force) the experience to be rewarding on many levels. Ultimately, this time, the conflict was deeper: a fundamental schism between the "truth" and my space-suit's (identity) name. My choice was to immerse myself deeper in the experience of man. Placing "this shit-stick" in the crucible of "Another Country" led me to see that "men" are not free to carry out what they already know to be true, correct and righteous. And it was here, in the street, that I finally escaped the vicarious involvement of Western Civilization's scientific set. I perceived "reality", but was unable to fit it into my programs, even by the worst force (which threatened to blow the tubes).

Well, life amongst the natives on this planet is "fight or flight", so I quit fighting and fled back to nature: Montana: 2000 miles from the conditioned heritage, the megalopolitan corrupt culture, and high-density populations. With side-TRIPS to the Bayarea, dawn came and I set out to reprogram my central processors. Ten trips around the local star while keeping this damn uncomfortable space-suit glued to the ground and working hard at emptying the memory cells, one by one, has required all of my attention.

Now the boss has sent me back into this high-stress mess. Now, like donJuan sez: it doesn't look the same. It takes a disciplined control to find joy, beauty and love amongst poverty, illness, hurt and death. But here I am, awaiting further orders, a messenger from nowhere, inputting and analyzing the new data and starting to find my filters clogging, the processor and the reflexes slowing down. I'll need a new issue one of these days. But then I suppose the new models are far superior to the old. Besides I might be ready for a more modern planet. Hope so, but then that's up to the boss.

Yellow Mouse

2261

Joe Lawrence Lembo  
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Dear Cloud-People:

What a joy and liberating experience to read the well-written letter of John Boyd in the January issue.

I absolutely agree about removing all "labels" that restrict us from our natural BECOMING. Labels are repressive and actually block the flow. It is like building a dam in the stream of life. Once we've become "categorized," we are as good as dead and there's no room for e-x-p-a-n-s-i-o-n.

We should stop being "label manufacturers" and concentrate on becoming "glue manufacturers," i.e. we should find the means to stick us all back together. As John Lennon sang in his song: "I am he as you are he and you are me and we are all together."

Somewhere along the line our sense of ONENESS has become divided into two-ness, three-ness, ad infinitum. We must transcend the "I" and "You" of - I LOVE YOU.

Walt Whitman said: "I exist as I am, that is enough." If we can learn to accept who we already are, neither better nor worse than the next guy, we can follow the path of the open road to discovery and endless transformation. And accepting who we are enables us to also accept who he is or she is or they are.

I also feel that labels are the cause of much prejudice in the world. Because it makes us perceive ourselves as separate from one another - hence we become fearful and untrusting. Prejudice is just fear of the unknown, i.e. that which we do not (as yet) understand. And without any understanding there can be no love.

I always say the best philosophy is no philosophy. Best to remain fluid & all-encompassing. Accepting no philosophy enables us to accept all philosophies. Likewise, the best guru is no guru (except yourself.) And the best books are no books. We already contain all the necessary knowledge of living. If we would only sit quietly and reflect inwardly, there would be no need for books or teachers.

"We shall study every philosophy, search through all the scriptures, consult every teacher, and practice all spiritual exercises until our minds are swollen with the whole wisdom of the world," wrote Alan Watts. "But in the end we shall return to the surprising fact that we walk, eat, sleep, feel, and breathe, that whether we are deep in thought or idly passing the time of day, we are alive. And when we can know just that to be the supreme experience of religion we shall know the final secret and join in the laughter of the gods. For the gods are laughing at themselves."

So...if you meet the Buddha on the road, kill him! While seeking to be taught the TRUTH the disciple learns only that there is nothing that anyone else can teach him. The secret is that there is no secret!

Sat-chit-Ananda,

*Joe*



## LONG LIFE IS NOT OLD AGE

to Jim Arima, 1971

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The stone egg  
germinated by the sun  
and a formula of air and mist  
had its results in the mysterious birth  
of the magic monkey.

A happy clan,  
the mischievous tribe  
scattering their thoughts  
from tree to rock to tree;  
on the other side of the waterfall  
he discovered the land of fruit and flowers,  
and the beautiful monkey became king  
because he was clever  
and had no fear of new dimensions.  
How does it happen that  
happiness is divided by a sheet of water?

Three hundred years of rice-wine drinking  
and entertainment between the sexes,  
and the slow tedium of awakening  
to sadness of old age, sickness, and death,  
moved the king to consider a pilgrimage  
to another continent in search of a wise teacher.

His rickety raft brought on adventures,  
but it was in the green-forested mountains  
where he heard the echo of the wood-cutter's song  
and learned of the Bodhi-master:

## LONG LIFE IS NOT OLD AGE

The splitting of koans is the  
transliteration of normal speech,  
and the monkey became a lazy disciple  
with a new name and new antics.  
Songoku, the garland king,  
understood what the brighter pupils did not  
and donned the blue-black robe of understanding.

It is inconceivable how such  
power is misused:  
cartoon copies of Walt Disney,  
the joyous battle of heavenly beings,  
multiplication of heads  
and limbs and monkey tails,  
the fracture of endless mutations.  
We might ask how  
an enlightened monkey sense the world.

In later times when the red flag  
 unfurled in the east wind, it was told,  
 "the Golden Monkey wrathfully swung his massive cudgel,  
 and the jade-like firmament was cleared of dust."  
 Generations sang and wept and remembered  
 the divine battle of demons  
 rising from a pile of white bones.

"Plucking a hair means nothing to the wonder-working monkey."

When he jumped from the palm of eternity,  
 it was no more than finger-length  
 where he left his monkey stink.  
 Unprotected he was judged,  
 chain-wrapped and pinioned  
 under a mountain of stone.  
 It took Kwannon five kalpas to hear  
 the pleas and cries of the obstinate disciple;  
 it was not Songoku who first noticed  
 a stone falling from a great height has  
 a greater velocity than  
 a stone falling one yard.

"While the violent winter wind blows by

One round moon rolls through the glowing sky."

He joined text-master Genjo in a caravan  
 to the Pure Land in the West,  
 to the treasure-reservoir of logic and science,  
 mantric myths and dharani perception,  
 fields of merit, to pools of  
 cosmic sprinkling of deathless metaphor.  
 During times of transition  
 societies will be confronted with individuals.  
 He had the knack of freaking out  
 adults and children and village populations.  
 A helmet riveted about his nervous ears  
 would squeeze his brains at surley speculations.

The sounds of Gobi,  
 of old civilization screaming  
 under layers of cold sand  
 throughout empty space, the wail  
 of warriors from lost wars  
 between forgotten empires.  
 The snow of Asia,  
 of new communities forming  
 above levels of blue ice,  
 the lotus-posture leaves no tracing.

A japa of 100,000 repetitions measured  
 the steps to the mandala-seat of the world-hero.  
 The pilgrims were given a pass  
 to the treasure-stores,

"Mahamaudgalayana, Shariputra:

Please give the Chinese contingent  
 the finest of the dharma-teachings."

In gratitude, the sutra literature was received  
 and the travelers left through the East Gate of Liberation.

"Those who know how to live, feel, act,  
 and die in the name of their nation  
 are always individual groups."

Their heavy barge overturned  
 in the eddies and turbulent crossing  
 of a wide and shallow river;  
 and it was discovered that the valuable volumes  
 soaked in bitter brine, had no stroke=markings of the brush,  
 no trace of print on the curled pages,  
 no human tracing of the Buddha's footprints,  
 no signals, signs, or declarations of behavior.  
 An angry report was filed to the Buddha  
 through the office of Ananda,  
 the disciple of prodigious memory.  
 The lion-voiced conqueror was was amazed,  
 "The true dharma was offered to the Chinese people,  
 and they wanted paper with writing on it."  
 The all-knowing one was saddened.

It was three years before the group  
 settled in the White-Horse Monastery,  
 surrounded by apprentices, conspirators,  
 and council to the throne,  
 the heroes honored and adorned with wreathes,  
 waited to join the circle of immortals:  
 three mountains,  
 the pools and groves and rocky caves,  
 masses of hermits and travelling devotees, and  
 echoes from the morning star  
 absorbed the mind of princes and kings,  
 farmers and merchants, soldiers and villagers.

The inheritors received:

The wisteria floral on the turtle shell,  
 an imprint on the emperor's favorite scroll,  
 the red seal on rice-white paper, and  
 black brushings made visible the invincible dharma,  
 the eyes of the peacock, the phoenix restoration,  
 the historical disposition to sleep in images  
 and vain protestations.

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*[Handwritten signature]*  
 1984  
 Paul W. ...

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A Happy New Year To All !