

cloud-hidden friends letter

ISSUE #20, Fourth Issue of 1986



The "Cloud-Hidden Friends" are a shared religious correspondence group in the spirit of the Universal Dharma. Our "subscription fee" is your participation- either by writing a letter for our pages every now and then, or by personally corresponding with CHF members, and preferably both.

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 confines of sectarian 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 through our letters more than a few real friendships might develop.

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

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."

1. This issue seems to be another example of a very broad approach to Zen, which is our goal. Maybe when we can't quite tell whether it is Zen or not, we will have succeeded. Welcome to the several newcomers in this issue, and thanks to all of you for spreading the word. The next issue will probably be out in late October.
2. There was a conference on Zen Buddhism in North America this summer at the Ann Arbor Zen Buddhist Temple. Samu Sunim, a Zen Teacher of the Korean tradition, somehow managed to persuade many good people to come, and that is no small accomplishment. I would say it was quite successful, and I hope there will be more of the same. One of the central topics was the coming era of an American kind of Zen. The Zen Teachers invited to attend were all "home-grown Americans", in contrast to those with a more ethnic focus. A lot of sharing happened there, and it was obvious that many groups were going through a profound religious crisis, often a very agonizing one. Rather than expansion pains, there seems to be mostly shrinking pains. Another important topic was lay practice, and even the more monastically oriented groups seem to be headed in a mostly lay direction, sometimes in the form of a "Bodhisattva monk" or lay-priest. Another topic was authenticity in the Zen tradition. One might first think that it is all a simple matter of Dharma transmission, but that is by no means a simple matter since historically there has been an amazing variety of different forms of Dharma transmission. Chinul for example, one of the greatest figures in the Korean Zen tradition, had no teacher at all in the usual sense, yet he was the founder of an entire school.

Fortunately a fine group of Buddhist scholars also participated in the conference, all of whom had also a deep and sincere concern for practice. They were a valuable resource indeed for the various topics of discussion.

Next summer they hope to have a similar conference, but it will be for all the various Buddhist traditions in North America. For information write the Zen Buddhist Temple, 1214 Packard Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48104. (313) 761-6520.

3. I don't believe any of you head some publishing company or something, but I would imagine that among the CHF there are more than a few deserving manuscripts. Poet Norman Moser for example could use an angel of some sort to help him publish an anthology from past issues of his poetry magazine, hopefully on a scale that might even make a bit of a profit. Note also Norm's letter in this issue.

I also received a fine thing from Yellow Mouse the other day, and I do hope he somehow manages to find a publisher.

4. Remember that dashing off one of the enclosed CHF Cards to one of our members is a fine alternative way of paying our "subscription fee".

Ananda Dalenberg, CHF Clerk

IN MEMORIAM

TO TWO GREAT LADIES WHO RECENTLY PASSED INTO ETERNAL LIFE
Both ladies had been good friends with Eastern Philosopher
- ALAN W. WATTS -

"May they all be together again, in the heavenly realms,
enjoying the lila dance." - Joe Lawrence Lembo

Marion Saltman

DIED: May 30, 1986/ Mill Valley

Marion was a Humanistic psychologist, peace advocate and play therapist. She was the founder of LILA: The Center for the Study of Play for Adults.

She has been acting caretaker of the old ferryboat, S.S. VALLEJO in Sausalito since Alan Watts' death.

Her last months were devoted to helping other cancer patients at Commonweal Program in Bolinas.

A Memorial Celebration was held at Unitarian Fellowship Church in San Rafael.

Elsa Gidlow

DIED: June 9, 1986/Mill Valley

Elsa was an avid gardener and poet. She was Alan Watts' landlady in Druid Heights before his death.

She was interviewed in the film, WORD IS OUT - A gay documentary.

Among the books Elsa has left us with are: "Sapphic Songs: Eighteen to Eighty," "Letters from Limbo," and an autobiography - "I Come With My Songs."

A private memorial service was held in her honour.



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 Tich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese Zen Buddhist monk, has founded a new Buddhist order called the Order of Interbeing. He is perhaps more widely known for his work in the world-peace movement, but this is best understood in the wider context of his life and practice.

The Order of Interbeing has as its base 14 new precepts, intended as being relevant to the actual world today. However the values they represent are in some sense obviously Buddhist. Certainly the traditional Buddhist precepts often seem to be mostly irrelevant, and it might be true that a fresh start is needed.

It is also possible to regard the Interbeing precepts as an unfolding of the inner meaning of basic traditional precepts, such as for example, the 16 precepts of the Bodhisattva tradition. The two then might be combined in some fruitful way.

If the 16 Bodhisattva precepts are regarded as basic, they could each be expanded by a matching selection from one or more of the Interbeing precepts, which is the line here pursued. This does mean a somewhat drastic arrangement of the Interbeing precepts, but all in all it seems to come out quite well and is indeed relevant to today's world.

In the following example the 16 precepts are as found in the Soto Zen Bodhisattva tradition. These begin each precept and are underlined. Each is then expanded with an Interbeing selection. The result is a combination of the 16 Bodhisattva precepts and all of the 14 Interbeing precepts.

THE 16 BODHISATTVA PRECEPTS EXPANDED TO INCLUDE THE 14 INTERBEING PRECEPTS

Refuge Precepts, 1,2,3: To Take Refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

Pure Precepts, 4,5,6: Cease from the Unwholesome; Practice the Good; and Help Others. We shouldn't lose ourselves in dispersion in our surroundings. Learn to practice breathing in order to regain control of body and mind, to practice mindfulness and to develop concentration and understanding (7).

Truth is found only in life and not in conceptual knowledge. Be ready to learn throughout one's life and to observe reality in oneself (2).

Do not avoid contact with suffering or close your eyes before suffering. Do not lose awareness of the existence of suffering in the life of the world. Find ways to be with those who are suffering by all means, such as personal contacts and visits, images, sounds... By such means, one should awaken oneself and others to the reality of suffering in the world (4).

The Ten Grave Precepts

7. Do Not Kill. Do not kill. Do not let others kill. Find whatever means possible to protect life and prevent war (12).

8. Do Not Take That Which Is Not Given. Possess nothing that should belong to others. Respect the property of others, but prevent others from enriching themselves from human suffering (13).

Do not force others, including children, by any means whatsoever, to adopt our views, whether by authority, threat, money, propaganda, or even education. However, through compassionate dialogue, help others renounce fanaticism and narrowness (3).

9. Do Not Misuse the Body or Sexuality. Do not mistreat the body. Learn to handle it with respect. Do not look on your body as only an instrument.

Preserve vital energies- sexual, breath, spirit - for the realization of the Way. Sexual expression should not happen without love and commitment. In sexual relationships, beware of future suffering it may cause others. To preserve the happiness of others, respect the rights and commitments of others. Be fully aware of the responsibility of bringing new lives into the world. Meditate on the world into which you are bringing new beings (14).

10. Refrain from Falsehood. Do not say untruthful things for the sake of personal interest or to impress people. Always speak truthfully and constructively.

Have the courage to speak out about situations of injustice, even when it may threaten your own safety (9).

11. Do Not Trade in Wine or Delusion. Do not live with a vocation that is harmful to humans and nature. Do not invest in companies that deprive others of their chance to life. Select a vocation which helps to realize your ideal of compassion (11).

12. Refrain from Slander and Divisive Speech. Do not utter words that cause division and hatred. Do not spread views that you do not know to be certain. Do not criticize or condemn things you are not sure of (9).

Do not utter words that can create discord and cause the community to break. All effort should be made to reconcile and resolve all conflicts, however small they may be (8).

One should not use the Buddhist community for personal gain or profit, or transform one's community into a political party. One's religious community should, however, take a clear stand against oppression and injustice without engaging in partisan conflicts (10).

13. Refrain from Self-righteous and Disparaging Speech. Do not think the knowledge you presently possess is changeless absolute truth. Avoid being narrow-minded and bound to present views. Learn and practice the open way of non-attachment from views in order to be open and receive other's viewpoints (2).

Do not be idolatrous or bound to any doctrine, theory, or ideology, including Buddhist ones. Buddhist systems of thought must be guiding means and not absolute truth (1).

14. Refrain from Avarice. Do not accumulate wealth while millions are hungry. Do not take as the aim of your life fame, profit, wealth, or sensual pleasures. Live simply, and share time, energy, and material resources with those who are in need (5).

15. Refrain from Hatred. Do not hold anger or hatred. As soon as anger and hatred arise, practice the meditation on compassion in order to encompass with love the persons who have caused anger or hatred. Learn to look at other beings with the eyes of compassion (6).

16. Do Not Be Unfaithful to the Three Jewels.

HOMAGE TO THE BUDDHA, HOMAGE TO THE DHARMA, HOMAGE TO THE SANGHA !

4 th of July, 1986

Dear Cloud-Hidden Friends,

Writing on Independence day, there are two topics which I would like to address: 1. A healthy respect for what we usually (pejoratively) call the intellect 2. Gratitude toward, but circumspect admiration for our recently departed mentor, Krishnamurti.

Regarding the first point, John H. Boyd made some very salient comments in the last issue (#19), which I find to be in consonance with my perspective. The fact that my views are my views is his central point as I understand him, and cannot (on my view) be stressed strongly enough. There is no such thing as revealed truth. (I hate disagreeing with Hegel, but he was wrong on this one) We must each do our "homework", to borrow Mr. Boyd's analogy; and, whatever scriptures we revere, we must take individual responsibility for interpreting. The oft maligned intellect is that aspect of ourselves which we must engage to do this work.

I would like to quote Mr. Boyd on this point and construe his thought from my (notional) framework: "...the realm of thought...is The supreme agent of All reality frameworks. Realities beyond thought belong to another domain altogether." I do not think that this contradicts Yellow Mouse's observation that intuition and intellect are merely ends of a continuum. The product of either must be turned in to knowledge by being modelled in conceptual structures; or, to use Mr. Boyd's image by being brought into the realm of thought. Without this effort to add extension to the depth of our insight, we have nothing to share. Without cultural formation the individual certainty of our present-oriented intuition fails even our own self in the next moment. If I may quote another dharma friend on this matter, Lynn Olson - "Communion without communication is privatistic and prone to self deception." So let's cut the anti-intellectual bull which we all, at times, slip into.

Our spiritual convictions are all the stronger for our submitting them to formulations which may be questioned, revised, or even rejected. This leads to Krishnamurti, patron gadfly of "rationalization busting" - Yellow Mouse's favorite sport.

Krishnamurti almost never answered directly a question which he was asked. He would always go after the rationalization which was the question's underpinning. He would circuitously lead the discussion toward an unasked question - "Why am I inattentive?" In giving his partner in conversation hints as to the answer to this question, he would guide them to the fact that his/her original querie was answered really in the understanding of attentive sensitivity.

Krishnamurti paved the way to Enlightenment for many with this unwavering stress on mindfulness. Still, this is an emphasis, and can become constricting. Even the Occhamistic Gautama named 7 other steps besides mindfulness as crucial on the road to truth. From his emphasis on awareness, and keen eye for the mind's escapes away from awareness (or translucency) Krishnamurti built a following and a perspective, all the while dispensing with reliance on any particular teaching. In time-honored Socratic fashion he left it to each of us to formulate a viewpoint in resonance with his reminders. At times he seemed prey to anti-intellectualism, but this is natural given his years-long work at untwining mental knots. I hope that we may benefit from Krishnamurti's efforts to keep us honest, and still strive to nurture that "transpersonal unity consciousness" of which Mr. Boyd speaks. Freedom is an ephemeral treasure to guard, and we shall need the eminently substantial intellect for this vigil.

with kindly intent,

Greg Gibbs
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Dear Cloud-Hidden Friends,

May I once again express my unqualified thanks to Ananda for maintaining our exchange of letters going so smoothly - it must be no easy task at times.

I was recently trying to put down in words some personal reflections on a transpersonal level of consciousness, and thought that our circle of hidden friends might give me some feedback....what group could be better placed? So fellow travelers, speak out!

There really is no such thing as an objective reality this side of a transpersonal level of consciousness. Our ordinary constructs of reality are always totally devoted to upholding and defending our own particular view of things - this is always their prime function and purpose.

A reality that originates from within a transpersonal level of consciousness - where the subjective power of personal ego needs has been fully transcended and where the individual is free to experience the common oneness that unifies everything and everybody - has a totally different set of criteria governing it. Because such a reality is non-dualistic, it enables us to see and experience ourselves in a common bond that embraces everyone and everything....literally enabling us to say and feel that "I am the world and the world is in me".

Here there is no separation or division or boundary within our common essential nature. Such a reality is whole and totally clear - that is to say, free from conflict or any of the dualities of right and wrong that a divided self can so readily invent. It enables us to see things just as they are and without any desire that they be otherwise. How things are is simply the way they are! This of course does not exclude the possibility of things or circumstances changing, but when they have changed, these will then be equally accepted for what they are - simply new and different circumstances!

We are generally so conditioned to think of changes as primarily resulting from dissatisfaction, discomfort, disappointment or dismay, that we automatically mistrust anyone suggesting otherwise. Changes occur because they occur - they are part of any highly dynamic or natural system of interrelatedness, where cause and effect are one and the same, for whatever "reasons" happen to be operative at any given moment. Our ability to be free from having to be in control of circumstances, or from having to mould the way that anything unfolds, is only available to us from a transpersonal space, where no separation, boundaries or divisions exist.

A useful framework or example within which to explore these ideas, is to be found in the realm of examining how we perceive the meaning of "an enemy". If I perceive an enemy as one with myself, there is an immediate and blatantly obvious "contradiction" - in the sense that an enemy, in order to be an enemy, has to be in direct opposition to, and in conflict with myself. Thus the suggestion that 'I could have myself as an enemy', becomes ludicrous and totally untenable. How can I have myself as an enemy? An enemy to be an enemy, has to be split off or separate from me, otherwise I have to acknowledge that my enemy and I are one and the same....making the whole thing clearly untenable within our ordinary sense of reality. The fact that enemies can only exist from within a divided self - that is, a sense of self that experiences itself as separated from all other selves and divorced from the essential experience of our common oneness - suggests to me that we actually "create" our own enemies, in order to sustain the need to believe in a divided sense of reality....a reality that is designed to maintain the subject/object duality going. In this way we avoid having to enter our common oneness into consciousness - besides 'helping us' to project what we find unacceptable in ourselves onto our enemies....to externalize whatever we do not like in ourselves.

Enemies then, are the simple by-products of our inability to recognize or understand the duality split that has us believing in 'I' and 'thou' as separate entities: as the observer and the observed, as subject and object.

396 For someone who clearly sees this dichotomy as the most profound and chronically pervasive delusion, there can be no enemies! The need to have an enemy has been transcended, and the delusion of separation gone! Such a reality has regained its original (and lost) integrality!

From within such a level of awareness, it is clear that all conflict exists only in an essentially illusionary framework of reality - within a sense that you and I are indeed separate entities, divided by thought generated systems of differentiation.

One of the most radical propositions that we can entertain, within "the normal" parameters of reality, is that there is another transpersonal and unified level of reality, which transcends ALL the boundaries of separation that we ordinarily take as a given fact in life. This model or perception of reality is generally much too disruptive of what is firmly in place within our "normal" constructs of reality. Consequently the whole idea that I and my enemy are indeed one and the same, begins to look too absurd and not worthy of serious consideration, in the eyes and thinking of most people. A unified view of reality is much too elusive, unimaginable and disruptive of the "comfortable" ways in which we have come to see things. It does not readily afford us the "necessary" credibility or easy footholds with which to begin questioning the very foundation of how we see things. We thus have firmly in place a formidable array of barriers to the process of raising our ordinary levels of awareness to the point where we can begin to relinquish our tenacious attachments to a divided view of reality. Yet ironically it would seem that only when we can begin (hopefully) to catch a glimpse of the unified/transpersonal reality beyond our commonly divided one, can we possibly gradually begin to leave ourselves open to the first inklings of an available enlightenment beyond all boundaries.

We can but hope (while simultaneously acknowledging the limits of all hope) that given enough "good fortune", which of course can mean a lot of different things to different people, we might begin to awaken more and more to the illusionary nature of thought.... usually well abetted by the ever conspiratorial powers of our self-serving egos to 'keep us asleep'. It remains a great and tantalizing mystery to know why and how the first rays of enlightenment can make themselves available to one person and not to another. Many people invest enormous amounts of energy, effort and dedication in the pursuit of enlightenment, truth or the perennial wisdom that has long been known to exist, with sometimes little or no 'success'; while others would seem to 'stumble across' these elusive human treasures without effort or reason! Such is the paradoxical nature of our human condition in its noble perversity!

Most of our Oriental schools, seeking to show us ways of finding satori or enlightenment, employ extremely strict and severe methods of 'helping novices on their way', which not infrequently require much personal suffering, hardship and extraordinary determination of anyone seeking to discover the truth. They employ methods and very specific criteria to facilitate their process, and the relationship between novice and master takes on a central and somewhat paternalistic role throughout their training.

My own present view, while recognising the value of some of these highly disciplined and personally demanding ways of seeking enlightenment or satori, leaves me with some profound doubts about their inflexibility when imported from the Eastern Schools for direct home consumption in the west. It seems to me that for our more western mind, set in its high-tech dominated contemporary culture, some suitable modifications need to be explored in helping to adapt these long proven eastern methods to our significantly different social climate and conditions. Do we not need to find ways of 'translating' the essential beauty and power of this ancient oriental wisdom, into more dynamically (less static) useful forms? Many would of course respond to this suggestion, by pointing out that any changes or dilution of these ancient forms, which have carefully evolved over many centuries, could only serve to mislead us along false pathways of self deception and illusion, and that there can be no other way but that which

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has been so painstakingly perfected by the great masters from the east. I cannot of course answer such claims or suggestions, for I do not have the background nor the direct experience that would enable me to try such a tremendous challenge with any degree of credibility. I am however, left with the enormous possibility, verging almost on certainty, that somewhere in the greater scheme of things, any system of thought or practice that ignores the dictates of dynamic change and adaptability, cannot long survive in a new setting. Enough is enough is enough for now.

Just had a thought folks....how about looking at the tentative possibility of having our Cloud-Hidden circle of friends come along to The 14th. International Human Unity Conference next year (June?) in Philadelphia??! It should be a memorable gathering of peoples from all over, seeking to deepen our understanding of human unity. This coming year the 'hosting body' will I believe, be the Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship (SFF) organization.... which I personally recommend as a body of good people. What think you? It would be a great occasion/opportunity for some of us to meet beyond these pages.

In peace and friendship,

John H. Boyd.

For the CHF from Maggie

Dear Cloud-Hidden Friends,

CHFL is always a peak mail experience for me and I savor each one. Many letters are written in reply/response - in my head. It would seem more than time to materialize a letter a bit more definitively.

Ananda, your letter in issue #18, I found particularly interesting. What immediately came to mind as I read it, was an affirmation I read in Psychic Politics, (Jane Roberts): "All of Creation is sacred and alive, each part connected to each other part; each communicating in creative, cooperative commerce in which the smallest and the largest are equally involved."

Amazing, isn't it, that the same idea keeps popping up all over the world, in such different times, cultures, said in so many different ways?

"All of Creation.." Hey that's me! Hey, that's us! Me, Maggie - sitting here, on this chair, in front of this typewriter in this room, in this building, on this patch of earth; stretching out across a continent, (or over a couple of continents and oceans, depending), to you, sitting there, in that chair, in that room, in that building, on that patch of earth; all encompassed by the Universe... that's us!

We are Creation. No matter how we call ourselves or what we seem to perceive as other - "one drop of water is an enlightened one, too.."
The Supreme Be-ing

It is so simple, so very simple. Yet, as I have noticed in my past, simple doesn't necessarily mean easy. Ah! me.

Maggie Novack
1651 St. George Ave/E-2
Roselle, New Jersey, 07203

Namo!
and Namaste



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From Marian Mountain

Dear Cloud-Hidden Friends,

Thanks, ed star, for nudging me to write. Your last letter, with its breezy style reminded me of the Zen saying, "It's true, but not always." You may remember that I wrote, some months ago, about my efforts to get rid of my own breezy style of writing because it lacked sincerity. It expressed a false image of myself. Though I would love to possess a light, airy personality, mine is formed more like a...sword? Your writing style, on the other hand, must represent your true self because it moves the reader to smile. Never underestimate the power of a smile. A smile can cut away as many illusions as a sword.

I was delighted to discover two other contributions in the last issue of the CHFL in which the writers seemed, to me, to have found the perfect style in which to express themselves. The moving poem by Lorin Paull makes me impatient to explore the purple mountains of Northern Idaho, and the charming letter and drawing by Klass Gehrman makes me want to buy a harmonica to stash in a side pocket of my back pack.

It's been almost a year since Jack and I moved to Northern Idaho and we've both gone through many changes in our habits and attitudes. Whether they are good or bad I can't say. One change, which began about two years ago, is that I haven't felt moved to sit in zazen. I think this may be due to a general movement away from living a special life and toward living a more ordinary one. I don't feel guilty or concerned about not sitting...and yet my Zen teacher, Shunryu Suzuki Roshi, felt strongly about what he believed to be the importance of never giving up the practice of zazen, so I can't ignore the new condition completely.

I feel grateful for being introduced to, and encouraged in, the practice of zazen. Zazen transformed my life from one of confusion to one of relative clarity. I want to encourage others suffering from confusion to begin the practice. Am I setting a bad example by not forcing myself to continue to practice zazen? Or am I setting a good example by demonstrating non-attachment to it?

During the period when Suzuki Roshi was leader of a Japanese-American congregation he used to tell them over and over, year after year, "You should practice zazen!" None of the congregation were moved to do so by his pleas. The Japanese-Americans, who came from the old country where only Zen Buddhist Priests sat in zazen, felt no guilt whatsoever about not sitting. It was more difficult, however, for Roshi's Caucasian congregation to avoid guilt feelings.

I remember, early on in my training, a young American Zen student reporting on a visit to Los Angeles where she attended a lecture by a Japanese-American Zen Buddhist priest who admitted he no longer practiced zazen. The Zen student considered the priest's behavior heretical. Was she justified in condemning him?

I also recall, a few years ago, talking to a member of the San Francisco Zen Center, a mature Zen practitioner, who confessed she didn't like to feel so dependent on the Zen community, but who was afraid to strike out on her own, as I had done, because, she said, "If I leave I'm afraid I'll stop sitting." Was she to be admired or pitied for her attitude?

My grandmother, who was a Christian Science practitioner, suffered from a serious case of arthritis. By the help of her religious beliefs she managed to live, untreated, with the pain of her arthritis until she was almost 80 years old. Finally the pain became so unbearable she gave in to the coaxing of her children and put herself under the care of a physician. She was criticized (behind her back) because she continued to receive phone calls and to treat her Christian Science clients (for a fee) during the time she was accepting medical treatment in the hospital. She was judged to be hypocritical. Perhaps she was. Perhaps I am being hypocritical to try and pass along the spirit of Zen Buddhism and to encourage others to practice zazen during a time when I am not moved to sit myself. Whatever the answer, if there is one, it is gratifying to be able to share this kind of spiritual dilemma with members of the CHFL.

With palms together,

Mesa Mountain

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PO Box 231
Yamhill, OR 97148
June 10, 1986

Dear Fellow-Travelers,

After reading the Cloud-Hidden Friends for quite a while, I have decided to take the plunge. My name is Lynn Olson. I am husband to Laurie and father to Insoon (a Korean name for a wonder-full 11-year old girl). I live in the wilds of rural Oregon, on a farm outside a town called Yamhill (that's right, Sweet Potato Mountain), where I have lived most of my life. Besides Yamhill, I have lived in a mountain commune (during the early seventies) and in monasteries in Korea and Japan, and most recently in Oakland, CA while attending the Institute of Buddhist Studies and the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley. I was a practicing Zen Buddhist for about 12 years before taking up the Nembutsu path. The change happened as a result of a number of traumatic events, which maybe I will feel like sharing another time.

Enough biography--on to more contemporary concerns. Just a couple of weeks ago I graduated from IBS/GTU and will be going to Japan at some point to be ordained. I have mixed feeling about ordination. On the one hand, it is a rite of passage, especially at Nishi Honganji where the event takes 10 days. On the other hand, it has very little to do with transformation or liberation and alot to do with religion and ritual, which the Buddha warned against as an active impediment to awakening. I'll probably go through with it for the simple reason that it fascinates me.

Although I am connected to the Buddhist Churches of America, I am really somewhat of a loner; I am much more connected to the orchards of my homeplace than I am to city-sized institutions. I seem to long for Sangha and yet find myself constantly walking away from it. I no longer bemoan this trait as a shortcoming but simply accept it ("I am what I am and thats all that I am" as Popeye used to say) while at the same time making what connections I can. This does not mean that I don't want to serve the BCA in some function but only that I am more comfortable on the outside. Obviously there are some contradictions here; it's okay, life's more interesting this way.

Like other C-H Friends I honor many of our past teachers and I especially am thinking of Krishnamurti as the news of his passing reaches me. His teachings helped me much in accepting the fact that there is no path that I have to follow. In fact there may not be a path except as I walk it.

Lately, I have been reflecting alot on shinjin and the process involved in shinjin. In connection with this I have been paying special attention to the "Parable of the Two Rivers and the Path." I am including it here because some may not have read it

or might enjoy another look at it.

Far off in the west there is a river, immeasurably deep, divided into two parts: one is a river of fire flowing endlessly to the south and the other is a river of water flowing endlessly to the north. Crossing the two rivers is a narrow path four or five inches wide. It is one hundred steps from the east to the west bank. The water splashes the path and the fire scorches it, without ceasing.

A traveler has gone far into the vast and solitary wilderness; there is no one to be seen. But bandits and wild animals lurk there; they fight with each other to kill the traveler, who they see is alone. Afraid of death, the traveler runs to the west and comes suddenly upon the river. "I can see no end to this river either to the north or south. In the middle is a path, but it is exceedingly narrow. Although the two banks are but slightly separated, how is it possible to cross? Assuredly this day I shall die. If I turn back, brigands and wild beasts will press closer and closer upon me. If I run north or south, beasts and poisonous insects will contend with each other to attack me. If I venture on the path westward, surely I will plunge into the two currents of water and fire." Horrified by the danger on all sides and seeing the path, the traveler cries out, "If I turn back now, I shall die; if I stay, I shall die; if I go forward, I shall die too. As I cannot escape death in any way, I would rather follow this path. Since there is a path, it must be possible to cross." At the moment of this insight a voice comes from the eastern bank saying, "You should determinedly follow this path. There will certainly be no danger of death. If you stay you will die." And from the western bank a voice urges, "Come at once singleheartedly and right-mindedly. I will protect you. Do not fear that you will fall into the calamities of water or fire." The traveler, having heard the exhortation on this side of the river and the call from the other, immediately acquires firm resolution in body and mind and decisively takes the path, advancing directly without entertaining any doubt or apprehension. After a step or two, the bandits on the eastern bank yell out, "Come back. The path is treacherous. You cannot cross it. Undoubtedly, you are sure to die. We have no evil thought in pursuing you." The traveler hears the voices but, without even looking back, quickly and singleheartedly crosses over the rivers to the western bank. Free from all danger, the traveler finds a good friend and is overjoyed. This is the parable.

I find this parable very valuable for helping me to understand my own process of shinjin. Relating the different facets of the story to my own life and inner journey, I find the parable an excellent map to this unknown territory. The aloneness, the terror at facing my own instincts (the beasts?) and my own karmic baggage (the bandits?), the rivers of fire (hatred) and water (greed), the standing at the edge, paralyzed with the horror of death both psychic and physical, the urgings of the

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Dharma: these are all common themes in my own search for understanding and emancipation.

Enough--there is alot more reflection to be done on this parable and a multitude of other Dharmic stuff. I would love to hear other people's thoughts and feelings about this parable. Thank you all for letting me share with you. I am looking forward to your letters and more sharing in the future.

in Gassho,

Lynn
P.S. This letter is substantially the same as one I wrote to the Nembutsu Circle. It's just a way of getting started. I promise a more personal response in the future.

For the CHF

13705 NE 9th Place #C0201
Bellevue, WA 98005-2845
June 16, 1986

Dear Cloud-Hidden Friends,

This is my first letter to you via the public pages, and I hope to contact many of you personally as well. I have only recently learned of your correspondence through a maze of sources including the very helpful Ruth Costello and A.C. The only source I have for a guide for this letter is Marian Mountain's suggestion that first letters tell readers something about where the writer's coming from, so that's what I intend to do.

My interest in Alan Watts began with The Book about a year ago and has expanded with every other work I have read by or about Alan. My interest in Zen began earlier with R. Pirsig's popular narrative, which led me to Eugene Herrigel's original story of Zen training. I read Suzuki and others while studying Eastern and Indian philosophy and am interested in life and ways of living in China and Japan.

I also have a general interest in philosophy and am currently doing graduate work and teaching at the University of Washington in Seattle in the philosophy department. I am quite interested in the chemistry of consciousness and the experimental age of living which seems to have been lost for the most part. I am heartened by the discovery of Stillpoint in the last CHF letter and R. Breckenridge can expect many questions from me. I am a great reader of utopian novels, both negative and positive, and one of my favorite works is Walden Two by the great B.F. Skinner.

I am a great lover of the peaceful life, music, and the natural sciences, and I hope to share more in future letters. I leave you with

Peace

Mark L. Ranum
Mark L. Ranum

CHFL:

Lorin a Paul: u lef me outa yer dedication, Aw-sheeit - wasamata, no gots no guts? im as Amuric'n as yer nex ol' buddy, u talktuh "ClouHiddenfrenz", buhnot me? Well, Ah Omhum t'you too.

Dear Rene: thanx heaps for your history of Esalen, we all benefited from it.

Robertglenn: Hello, stupid ol'man. I did the Tai Chi and whatever that noisy confrontation was at Stillpoint. If any of you Frenz have \$150 a month and want and can use a visit to the stillpoint of life at 7000 feet in the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo in Colorado - GO, don't stop to think - GO!

Johnny Boid: But as "reality" must include "evil" as well as good, then the "ultimate" is as much hell as it is "heaven". Since "Samsara is Nirvana" (IKKYU), then we are now in "Hell" - RIGHT WHERE WE BELONG. The "job" you outline then is to fully accept this truth. In fact, since we adamantly REFUSE to do that, there is no WAY to "GENTLY begin to explore our own constructs of reality". Our love for our neuroses leads to very effective defenses that yield only to dynamite. (For "love" read: belief, obsession, addiction, attachment, compulsion, etc)

Kenny O'Neill: My expertise in etymologies is Indo-European which includes Sanscrit, but not Chinese or Japanese. My work is a direct critique of the Amer-english words used to translate an eastern term, that is to challenge the translator but not the eastern terms themselves. Thus I can study and correct the usage of "teacher", but not "Sensei". Ask me Sanscrit words and I'll do my best.

ADEPT: highly skilled, an expert

= ADEPTUS (Lat): having attained (knowledge or skill)

= pp of ADIPISCI: to attain = AD: toward + APISCI: to reach for

= AP: to take, reach = APERE (Lat): to attach, join, tie to

= pp APTUS (Lat): fit, suited = APT, INEPT

= AD: to + APTARE: to fit = ADAPT

= APEX (Lat): something reached > summit, top

= CO-AP (Lat): link together = COPULATE, COUPLE

THUS an ADEPT is not one who has attained to completion of the process, ie: perfected. He is highly skilled but not yet reached Satori; he is still reaching. But he is far beyond being a novice. As we have had pointed out to us time and again, the Zen masters of old were talking to experienced "adepts" and not ignorant (arrogant) westerners (see the Blue Cliff Record).

to HED START: My Tribe: METIS (Fr): mixed = METIS (OldFr): mongrel

= MIXTICIUS ("mestis") ALSO MESTIZO (Sp): mixed

= MIXTICIUS (VulgLat) = MIXTUS, pp of MISCERE (Lat): to mix

MIXED, MIX (Eng) = MIXT (MidEng) = MIXTE (NorFr) = MISCERE (Lat); pp

= MIXTUS (200 BC) = MIXT-AZ; -US = -AZ (PIE): he who or that which

THUS MIXT-AZ: he who or that which is mixed = a MIX

MIXT-: to mix = MIK-ST (STA: to erect, stand - SHUSHUMNA ?)

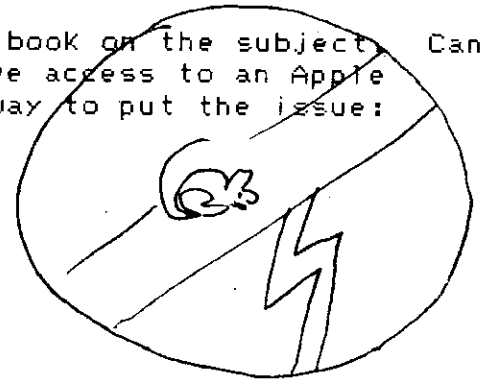
from MEIK (Proto-indo-European: before 4000 BC)

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MEIK (PIE): to mix = MEI + K; K = GHE: to release, let go = MEI-GHE
MEI: to change, move, go ALSO small, mild
to tie, bond, covenant
to fix, build (fences, fortifications):
(fix as in repair) THUS to "mend fences".

THUS MEI-GHE-STA-AZ = MEIK-STAZ = MIXTUS = MESTIS = METIS: to build,
erect and then release that energy which ties small apparently
insignificant things together and changes them into something
defensive thus correcting, repairing, fixing (maintaining)
institutional, established fortifications (shields): the protection
mechanisms that shelter the people.

GREG GIBBS: Your word "reliance" put me to a lot of study to see
that I do shift authority away from myself to "the book" (dictionary)
being able then to say: "Don't blame me if you don't like the
results." Thanx.

As to the "Who are we?" bit, I have a book on the subject. Can
you read an Applewriter file, ie: do you have access to an Apple
computer? Incidentally, that's the wrong way to put the issue:
"WHO? are we." is more correct.



For the CHF, A Note from Ananda and Breckenridge

Dear Friends:

I was talking to Breckenridge the other day and he has come up with a
marvelous solution to the problem of trying to stay awake while practicing
recliner zazen. Radio Shack now has a handy little pocket alarm clock with a
snooze alarm button, which if pressed will silence the alarm for four minutes
before it goes off again. He says it keeps you quite wide awake even when
reclined. It also works well as a reminder for the practice of mindfulness
during the day. By the way, in regard to the latter, we were both deeply
impressed by a book about such practice in relation to meditation and
prayer in Catholicism. Sadhana, A Way to God. Christian Exercises in Eastern
Form. By Anthony de Mello. Image Books, Doubleday.

I noticed an interesting bumper sticker the other day:
It seems my karma has run over your dogma.

Enough,
A.D.

Dear Fellow-Travelers:

Duz my eyes deceive me, or did I see a call in the last issue to competetize publications & such? Believe I did. Now I duz hate to come on like a bewhiskered ol Zenman a-hidin out on some mountain trail somewheres (which acourse have done many a time), but I do really wish we could keep computers out of our concerns, meeting-places, homes, etc. I mean, do we really need em? Course we don't! Computers join my list uv utha fancy doo-dads we can do without: War, espec. Atomic/Hydrogen Bombs & even nuclear-power, TV, etc.... Personally I feel the worl was a lot better orf afore these things came into the picture. (Course, war aint new, but I do sorta mean modern warfare as practiced in our lifetime/s.) I could go on & add to the list cars & other such modern contraptions, but won't. I drive ole junkers, curr. one is 14 years old, seems ok now I hope. Cars in big city life, where I am now, make you very mobile re jobs & also in courtin...could go on at length on all this, but will spare ye. *(Also yer lit safer goin around in a car...)*

Otha thang I wanta talk about tonight is an odd one: meself. Hard to do that fer a feller like meself, so bear with me. Feel lak I'm talkin to family. Back in April I had a minor (?) stroke which lost me my R. periphial vision, more visible in R. eye, but happens in both eyes same time. Been werkin, sorta on/off as a Sub. Teacher in Berkeley district. One o my Kaiser tells me he wouldn't return to werk fulltime same as I aint. So fer, however, he wouldn't sign a Worker's Comp. or Disability form to that same effect. So in Sept. I may return to work 3-4 days a week or whatever I can manage & am curr. seeking other employment. How do you folks fit in? poems by me (OPEN SEASON, \$4. postpd), plays, \$4., short stories (EL GRITO del NORTE, \$7.). Or ye can subscribe to the new 80s Book-series at \$25.....includes all listed above espec. the READER Anthol. too, + 3 other books of poetry already in print by Hadassah Haskale, Tim Holt & Morton Felix & perhaps 1-2 others yet to come out.

Those who've especially enjoyed my adventures in CHFN might also like to know that ye can also order a xerox copy of a long commercial-length book of essays (zeroxed from ms.) called SPIRITUAL JUDO, with Appendix fer c. \$18. & without Appendix fer c. \$15. Appendix is mostly text/Notes, etc. ALL prices are postpaid.

At the moment I am recuperating thro the Summer & savings, etc, may last c. 2 weeks more. Then, if don't get \$3-500. PEN Emergency Grant, will have to return to temporary werk sooner than usual fer Summers. But rest assured, 1, 2 or even 3 mos. down the line, I can still put to use any order ye send. It aint xackly charity, but mighty close I admit. Check yer finances but also, see how ye feel about the project. Don't do something regretfully or hesitantly. Do it w/Joy or don't bother. I've helped many a person in my time. Now--I aint ashamed t say it, I'm sorta in yer need wee bit rite now. Ye know I'm gon survive 1 way or t'other. Ye cud nek it bit easier....

Yorn, *Norm Moser*

Dear C.H.F.,

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What a joy to be reminded about the heritage that has come to our shores via India, China, Korea, and Japan. This heritage is important as Ananda suggests in his review of Namu Dai Bosa, which is a wonderful account of the transmission of the Dharma. One interesting comment about this came some years ago at the Cambridge Buddhist Association, I think, offered by one of the 2 authors below introduced: "Zen is an evolved religion" and what are the limits of its growth? ***** Another of my 5 star personal resources is ZEN ART FOR MEDITATION by Holmes and Horioka with whom I sat in zazen for many years at the above mentioned zendo. Why talk any more! Here is one excerpt to experience what Prof. Holmes and Horioka (A Shingon priest) have tried to do. Perhaps more another time: Zen tenets!!! You've got to be kidding!!

(STUDY PICTURE 5-10 MINUTES)

NO EGO

Tenet 6: *There is no ego in the sense of an endlessly enduring, unchanging private soul or personality that temporarily inhabits the body.*

PLATE 12: What a triumph of suggestion is this picture by Sesson of a storm at sea. A few strokes of this Zen priest's brushes have created the evocation of a fierce onshore gale that bends the bare branches of the tree, sends surf crashing on the shore, and drives the frail little boat scudding down the waters, almost burying its nose in the waves. Two men, bowed under the blast, play their necessary parts during the tempest, steering the boat and keeping its rigging secure. The tree has endured many such trials, which after all are only temporary. The edge of the shore sometimes beats back the pounding surf and at other times stretches out warm sands as a playground for children. The little boat and its crew have their moods, too, which are part of the moods of the sea and the wind.

What is the "real" mood of the sea: Is it savagely seeking victims or benevolently providing food for us? What is the "real" nature of the tree: Is it stubbornly strong or gracefully pliant? The boat: Is it a utilitarian vessel to hold a catch of fish or an agile, almost living creation, protecting its crew from the rage of the mighty elements? The men: Are they masters or slaves, casually confident or stoically enduring?

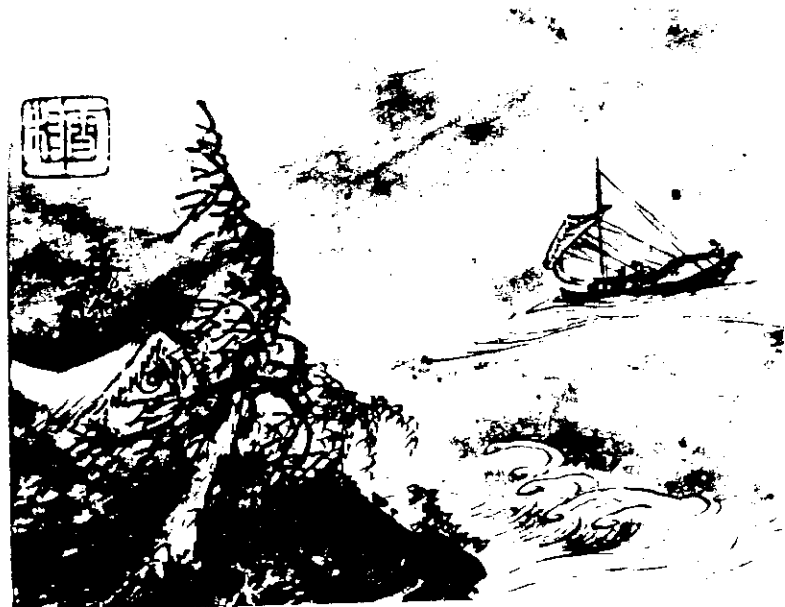
None of these, yet all. What are they really, in themselves? A nonsensical question. What are you? The you that is always the same is fictional. *Fictional* means "created." The fictional you, who has a social security number, a driver's license number, a credit-card number from each of a dozen companies, and so on, does exist unchanged. This person's name is on checks and application forms and letters. This person exists in filing cabinets and computers. But the living you who signs the income-tax form and the living you who signs a love letter are quite different. The person who signs an

TENET 6 (CONT.)

application for a social security number at sixteen is immeasurably different from the one who signs for social security payments at sixty-five. The goof at golf is the panther at Ping-Pong.

As you sit here quietly, enjoy your quiet self. Forget your activist self. Such forgetting is not a denial of real self. There is no real self to deny—a self that persists always in one pattern, one mood, one degree of intelligence, one turn of affection. The living you is always changing. Live now; accept yourself as you are now. There is no one to be always blamed, no one to be always praised. Each moment you are lifted by a different wave, blown by a wind from a different quarter, charmed or threatened by a different coastline. Each moment you are responding differently, as your chemical combinations change and result in different reactions to changing external stimuli. If the winds seem too strong, know that they will subside. If the waves seem too high, remember the calm of the depths below the waves. The tree and shore accept both storm and calm. You also must accept, perform. Go with what's happening and be part of it, with no ego to set itself apart. You will find accepting much pleasanter than trying to insist that the universe accommodate itself to a certain ego that feels itself to be the eternal, unchanging center of the whole show. This little boat will survive the storm as it suits its motions to the wave's heave and the wind's most furious blast.

*



FUMIHIDE NOMURA COLLECTION

Plate 12.

Tenets

- 1: The realities of the life are most truly seen in everyday things and actions.
- 2: Everything exists according to its own nature. Our individual perceptions of worth, correctness, beauty, size, and value exist inside our heads, not outside them.
- 3: Everything exists in relation to other things.
- 4: The self and the rest of the universe are not separate entities but one functioning whole.
- 5: Man arises from nature and gets along most effectively by collaborating with nature, rather than trying to master it.
- 6: There is no ego in the sense of an endlessly enduring, unchanging private soul or personality that temporarily inhabits the body.
- 7: True insight does not issue from specialized knowledge, from membership in coteries, from doctrines or dogmas. It comes from the preconscious intuitions of one's whole being, from one's own code.
- 8: In emptiness, forms are born. When one becomes empty of the assumptions, inferences, and judgments he has acquired over the years, he comes close to his original nature and is capable of conceiving original ideas and reacting freshly.
- 9: Being a spectator while one is also a participant spoils one's performance.
- 10: Security and changelessness are fabricated by the ego-dominated mind and do not exist in nature. To accept insecurity and commit oneself to the unknown creates a relaxing faith in the universe.
- 11: One can live only in the present moment.
- 12: Living process and words about it are not the same and should not be treated as equal in worth.
- 13: When we perceive the incongruity between theories about life and what we feel intuitively to be true on the nonverbal, nonjudging plane, there is nothing to do but laugh.
- 14: Zen art has this characteristic quality, that it can fuse delight in a work of visual art, knowledge of life, and personal experiences and intuitions into one creative event.
- 15: Each of us develops into a unique individual who enters into unique transactions with the world as it exists for him.

THERE ARE 2 PLATES AND MEDITATIONS
FOR EACH TENET. A WONDERFUL
EXPERIENCE.

RICHARD

FINIS