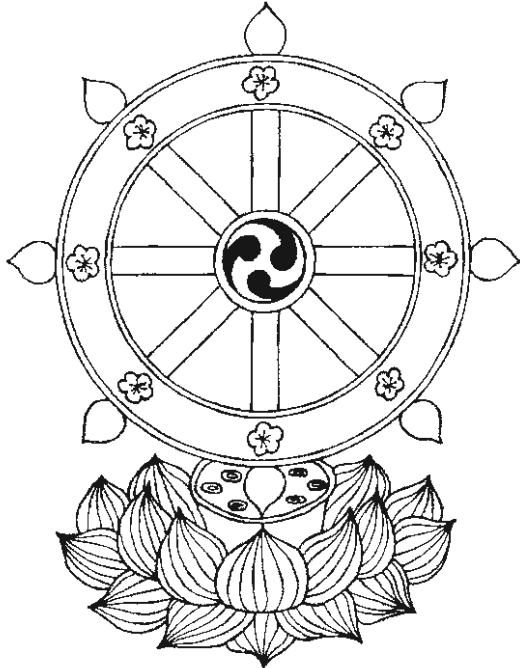


# cloud-hidden friends letter

ISSUE #21, Fifth Issue of 1986

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

Searching For The Hermit In Vain

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

The "Cloud-Hidden Friends" are a 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.

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

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Greetings! Here is the fifth issue of 1986. The next issue will be out in time to meet the New Year, and to catch a bit of the Holy Day spirit. New Year seems to be evolving into a kind of universal holiday, which suits the CHF just fine.

Some of you might be interested in the Alan Watts Fellowship, 187 College Ave., Somerville, MA 02144. Below is an excerpt from their Newsletter:

#### THE MIDDLE WAY

A vital concept to understand if one is to understand Taoism is that every being in the universe that is in any way sensitive is aware of a hierarchy of beings above it, and a hierarchy of beings below it. In this way, Watts refers to each species as thinking of itself in 'human' terms. The point is that whatever you are, since in this hierarchy and indeed within each society you can see an equal distance (that is, to the horizon) in all directions, you are almost literally 'In the Middle'. This is the true meaning of the Middle Way. According to Watts; the definition of human is that point from which your looking.

#### A MUTUAL EATING SOCIETY

Another aspect of the realization of the Middle Way is the concept of the universe as a 'mutual eating society'. It has been argued that everything that anything or anyone ever does is ultimately for the purpose of eating. A part of the hierarchy in which we are again in the middle of is that of those whom we eat, and those by which we are eaten. It is impossible to exist without eating other sensitive beings (plants are of course included), therefore the only recourse that is morally reasonable is to reverence the beings one is eating, and to cook them as well as possible, and to enjoy them to the fullest. In addition, of course, you must ultimately take YOUR place as the food of the others in the chain, and not to attempt to have yourself soaked in poison and sealed in an impenetrable contraption to keep your dead body from being eaten to take its place in the chain. In the past, Watts has mentioned that the meaning of Jesus Christ offering his body and blood (bread and wine) is related to the concept that it is impossible to live without killing many things, for food at the very least, and they should be respected and revered. The fact that the slaughter of our food is isolated from our view in our society is not a favor to our spirituality, and is reminiscent of science fiction stories about isolated societies full of culture with sub-cultures of slaves dieing so that the cultural society may survive.

#### A CENTER OF TENSION AND RESISTANCE

Hypothesizing about the external network of knowledge and communication in our own society, and its future, Watts conceptualized a system in which individual privacy disintegrates and ones thoughts become visible to any who care to look. As this occurs, the only defense would be not to care! If the sensation of resisting the world disappears, ego will have gone as well and one would be able to act without self-consciousness. This is of course one of the ultimate ideals of Zen. I wonder what implications this has about our fears of the threat of Big Brother - would our response be to be controlled or to be liberated spiritually. If in jail, would we as a society treat it as imprisonment or as a sabbatical for liberation?

This would be a complicated way of removing the seperation between self and other, which can result in the elimination of ego. It could be a path to total societal enlightenment. As the differences between us become more and more unimportant and transitory, perhaps. . . .

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Ananda Dalenberg  
Editor, CHFL

Joel Weishaus  
 2812 Garfield SE #E  
 Albuquerque, NM 87106

Dear CHF:

I've been waiting for a friend to arrive from Europe, a month overdue. Someone with whom I experienced the Haight-Ashbury Days, and travelled with in Japan. So memories have been tugging at me. All that stuff I was afraid of because I was afraid of using the past as a crutch. The "I know \_\_\_\_\_" complex.

Now I know we are made of the past: it is our soul. When the world was created it was already a memory. (Who remembered?) We live with this, evoke it, build with it. We are only Now; but Now is always.

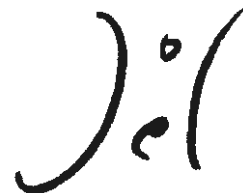
A year ago I even gave up 18 years of poems, gave them to the university for archival safety, keeping no copies for myself. But tomorrow I will see them again. Like pieces of myself, I will welcome them home.

I've been also thinking about how the world used to be so mysterious to me, and how it had become simply absurd. Wars, arms races, so-called power, greed, an economy built on greed. Now I know that mystery and absurdity are coeval. They arrive together, holding hands, giggling. It is why spiritual power is so dangerous. Enlightenment doesn't change one's soul. The passions are still there: it is who we are. Beyond that, even I am not I. But life is not beyond that. Only trust a teacher who plays the fool. One who plays the saint is a fool.

Now I remember Marian Mountain when she played the saint. She sat & sat & sat through freezing winter and the bites spring; while the other monks swam, she sat & sat. And when finally told to leave the monastery, she sat in the wilderness. As she says in her letter, "Zazen transformed my life from one of confusion to one of relative clarity." And, I might add, rare maturity. For sitting is not a matter of the posture of one's body, but of one's mind.

Marian's letter (in #20) is filled with remembering, and questioning her memories without judging them. She has never stopped, (how could she?) doing zazen. Her head sits on her trunk, questioning the memories that she is. This extraordinary woman.

With palms open,



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Dear Friends:

Not so long ago I was talking to a friend about alcoholism and the difficulty of overcoming it. I said something glib about it being a matter of will power, and she corrected me: "No, will power is what makes alcoholics; alcoholism/compulsive behavior comes from being self-willed. It's surrender (to the terms of existence) that's difficult to accomplish. I must agree to give in." I knew that this was true. I was reminded how close I had come to giving up my own life and my freedom because I would not accept the world's inequalities and injustices. In basic training in the army we called this "fighting the problem". Instead of rising to the occasion we fought the (training) problem. "Maybe a tantrum will make the problem go away." Hui Neng, when he was two or three, used to say to us, "I'll cry you!" Meaning, he would abjure his happy self in order to punish us for opposing his will.

Isn't it true that a lot of our suffering is self-inflicted, that we choose the role of victim as a protest against the vagaries of fate? How else can we explain our ability to laugh at pain in a game or a bar fight, but go into killing depression over a disagreement or the loss of a prized possession? Or how about the contrast between fasting and going to heaven, and starving and dying miserable? This kind of behavior begins when we are children. To children, not being fully informed, it seems like being grown is a matter of being able to do what you want. Then too, for all of our infancy, all we had to do was cry to get what we wanted. It's natural to assume that the exertion of the will caused our satisfaction. At the moment, and maybe always, this tendency is being exploited to garner votes and to sell all kinds of commercial products. It is also being used to cut us off from each other and disrupt family and community. It may be that some of the circumstances of life are grossly unfair or intolerable. And maybe these conditions appear to be caused by the willfulness of others. There is still the question of whether these conditions cause our unhappiness. It is, indeed, possible to be poor and happy, dying and liberated. We must come to see that the selfishness of others is born of their desperation, not their hostility. Their willfulness has not made them happy--only more desperate. Should we go on insisting/hoping that ours will work for us?

Another, more concealed version of our willfulness is our insistence that we just want to "understand", "be treated fairly", "be treated decently"--then we'll cooperate. It doesn't matter what form the rules come in; we don't want to obey, to give up our self-determination, to lose life as we know it. There are no "deals" we can make with life. Our understanding will not really make life easier for us. If it could, all Ph.D's would know their own liberation. Unfortunately, just because we are born free and ignorant of that freedom, we often get the impression that we willed our success. That's why it's so important that we be honest with ourselves and each other. It is said that the cure rate for therapy is the same in the waiting room as on the couch. If that is so, and I believe it, it is because we have stopped insisting that someone or something is wrong, and finally said, "I am unhappy." "I am in need."

I wish to testify that we must give in--bottom line--practice non-attachment, non-expectation--method--be still, in order to realize the truth of our liberation.

Suffer the condition of life this moment and discover happiness, yours and mine. Myself, I am a poor sinner fighting the waters of life, afloat only because the gods made me to be. Having nearly drowned several times, I can only accept my reflexive fear, not conquer it. Through regular practice I am just able to breathe and laugh in the midst of my struggles. It's OK, because I'm only here for a while, and when I tire I know I'm going home. My struggles are amusing, if you will, but they neither cause nor deny the happiness I choose to be.

Lear Ananda, and the CH Friends:

Thank you for another catalyst for my memory bank: your letters reached back over the short feet of time and I am again in San Francisco, the year is 1957, January the month and I pull up my 1956 black and white Mercury Montclair with the white sidewall tires in front of 2030 Broadway, THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ASIAN STUDIES, fresh from Cleveland, Ohio (The Mistake on the Lake) to study with Alan Watts, Rom Landau, Ragavan Pillai et al. And to bring a touch of "Soul" to the sometimes arid halls of the West meeting the East. Yes, Gia-fu is our family, but I do not truly feel him as dead. The word has no meaning in the REAL world. I see him as much now as I did when he was "alive". When my father died and began to "miss" him, it dawned on me one day that I never sat down and talked with him ANYway!!!

Another temporary "reality" is the warm rays of the morning sun as I sit here on my balcony on the 17th floor overlooking Central Park. These are the hours of my inner self: from 6 am to noon when I do what I want to do, not what I have to do which occurs from Noon to Midnight. But that's not really so bad either because I am the boss and am pursuing my dream of helping to create a Garden of Eden upon the Earth where each recognize each other as expressions of the one Divine Spark we call the SUN (Buddha, Sol, Krishna, Christ, the Chi, God, the Tao, etc.). What fun I am having experiencing the birth contractions of a New Age! And what forces oppose this birth! Somebody's going to get hurt if we don't watch out! But the water has burst forth and its tide cannot be reversed.

Sorry I missed you at the last WHOLE LIFE EXPO in San Francisco. It's one of the few that I have <sup>not</sup> spoken at. Just did so in Pasadena last month and will do so again in Boston on August 24th. I do a lot of radio, TV prison seminars, talking to high school dropouts, and speaking in colleges, and on the streets. I also have my own Cable TV program for the past 9 years and it would be a blast to interview you and as many of the old gang as we could muster. They are crossing over quite rapidly these days: Alan, Gavin Arthur, Sam Lewis, Lew Welch, Big Daddy Eric Nord, etc. etc. I keep forgetting that Time does exact its toll unless you learn as I have the secret of eating natural foods principally the Sun. I'm still 37 like Walt Whitman-just about to begin! Which leads me to tell you how we are making money. We are the distributors of Dick Gregory's Bahamian Diet which is good for those overweight, those underweight, and those under vitalized! And their (our) principal product is Pollen from the Flowers which in Bodhi-Vision is our Father, the Sun dropping his sperm into the hungry vaginas of our mother Earth, which we call flowers. Each teaspoon of this pollen is the nutritional equivalent of 2 ½ BILLION fruits and vegetables! Try it, you'll like it! I'll even sign you up as a distributor and then you will have plenty of money to continue on with your work. Contact Emmet Scales who is on the team and lives in Oakland: Emmet T. Scales, Jr., (R) 832-0941 Wk: 642-6363.

I like hearing about your life through your letters and often wonder how the other members of the Gang are doing. But I see that most have each gone their separate ways and hardly ever see each other again tho living in the same area. But I am the Stitcher and will sew us all back together.

continued

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But maybe people don't want to be stitched together again! Maybe they were not spiritually stitched together in the first place, even though they married! Even ole "Alan Vital" himself divorced twice! As the old Zen Master used to say: "Very difficult!" On the other hand we may be coming into an age where you can be married to LIFE and yet be free. As you know, I have held the hands of many a fair damsel myself yet never married. Perhaps I could not bear to deprive ANY woman of the pleasure of my company! Or at least any woman who turned me on. I understand Alan Watts very well! I also understand the power of continence and the redirecting of that Stream of Light upwards to the Kings Chamber rather than downwards into the Pit.

I envy your pertinacity to have continued your CLOUD-LETTER all this time. I have been meaning to do the same but never could get around to sitting down and writing them out. Before our Center was torn down by Jimmy Carter and his boys, I never had time and now I am TAKING the time, each morning. But there's not much left this morning since I also let my mind wander and letters like this often take 10 or 12 hours or days or years to write.

PEACE & LOVE TOWARDS AQUARIUS,

Kanya

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For the CHF

Richard W. Boerstler  
115 Blue Rock Rd.  
So. Yarmouth, MA 02664

Dear CHF,

Some few (fewer the better) thoughts concerning good ole Alan Watts and Zen Master Bankei (1622-1693). I'd like to get some conversation going among those who know them both better than I do. At this point I sort of feel that Alan was a reincarnated Bankei. Now that I'm an expert on the underground Master having read and reread Peter Haskel's translation of the essence of his work, I can only say, WOW !! you were right Alan all the time! All my aching knees and my torn cartilage, up and down mountain after mountain only to find that hours of zazen were great but along with Da Free John " we are always the unconditional self-existing radiant consciousness", so why start the search if you are already there. If other CHF have read BANKEI ZEN, Peter Haskel, Ed., Grove Press 1984, I'd like your view of his UNBORN Buddha mind. His remarks on "studying old waste paper" are beautiful! Apparently D.T Suzuki became one of Bankei's champions also. To close my tirade, Bankei says our innate, intrinsic, original and uncreated self is our unborn nature and we can't practice it but only abide in it.

A Hi! and a Ho! to you all. Also my past caught up with me and the J. Humanistic Psy. just published "Meditation and the Dying Process" Vol.26 No.2 Spring 1986. If any CHF would like a reprint massage my ego and I'll send you one. Peace.

Richard.

Dear Friends

For some time now I have been involved with a group of students from the S.F. Zen Center in trying to develop some daily social work practice. We feel it is a natural outgrowth of our Buddhist life. We have been informally researching buddhist literature and history for spiritual guidance and precedence.

This is an on-going dharma search and commitment to help others and live the bodhisattva vow "I shall not enter into final nirvana before all beings have been liberated." Many of us already do social work in our everyday lives but we would like to find some common path. In practical terms we are very fortunate to have places to sleep and enough to eat. We are part of a Sangha which includes all beings and we have been shown a way to live day by day (sitting, for me, from Suzuki Roshi.) At the same time there is great suffering all around and within us. Right now, in our neighborhood, people come to the kendo and by our doors who don't have homes or families and rarely get a good warm meal.

I am interested in hearing from any of you who do social work and /or know of buddhist teachers and teachings (historical or contemporary) who practice in this way. We are trying to be more than a ~~discussion group~~. Looking for practical examples, concrete programs ala Mother Teresa, Saint Anthony's, only Buddhist.

Thanks in advance for any help. Will try to keep you updated as things develop.

Michael Canright  
319 Page St.  
S.F. 94102

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THE MOTHS AND THE FLAME

Moths gathered in a fluttering throng one night  
 To learn the truth about the candle's light,  
 And they decided one of them should go  
 To gather news of the elusive glow.  
 One flew till in the distance he discerned  
 A palace window where a candle burned--  
 And went no nearer; back again he flew  
 To tell the others what he thought he knew.  
 The mentor of the moths dismissed his claim,  
 Remarking: "He knows nothing of the flame."  
 A moth more eager than the one before  
 Set out and passed beyond the palace door.  
 He hovered in the aura of the fire,  
 A trembling blur of timorous desire,  
 Then headed back to say how far he'd been,  
 And how much he had undergone and seen.  
 The mentor said: "You do not bear the signs  
 Of one who's fathomed how the candle shines."

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Another moth flew out--his dizzy flight  
 Turned to an ardent wooing of the light;  
 He dipped and soared, and in his frenzied trance  
 Both Self and fire were mingled by his dance--  
 The flames engulfed his wing-tips, body, head;  
 His being glowed a fierce translucent red;  
 And when the mentor saw that sudden blaze,  
 The moth's form lost within the glowing rays,  
 He said: "He knows, he knows the truth we seek,  
 The hidden truth of which we cannot speak."

Not in the past, present or  
 future,  
 Not a million light years  
 away.  
 But Here--Now,  
 Among raging flames,  
 and flowing streams.

To go beyond all knowledge is to find  
 That comprehension which eludes the mind,  
 And you can never gain the longed-for goal  
 Until you first outsear both flesh and soul;  
 But should one remain, a single hair  
 Will drag you back to despair--  
 No creature's self can be admitted here,  
 Where all identity must disappear.

The whole show but one  
 lone puppeteer  
 Hid behind his screen of art.  
 He tears it away  
 reveals himself alone  
 And all illusions  
 vanish into nothing.

Conference of the Birds  
 Farid Ud-Din Attar

*Matt*

Replies:  
 c/o Greg 1740 N. Arthur  
 Fresno Ca. 93705



Dear Friends:

SOME BRIEF REPLIES

Marian M., thanks, i only wish i was that breezy, though i do smile a lot, but it is probably from a lack of vital brain activity.

John Boyd, thanks, your last article was totally awesome. "We actually create our own enemies in order to sustain the need to believe in a divided sense of reality." Gasp! Great!

Ananda, thanks for putting the 16 Bodhisattva precepts together with the 14 Interbeing Precepts. Such compilations are really an aid to all of us, especially retro-retards like i.

Lynn Olson, thanks for sharing the parable of the Two Rivers and the Path. Christ! that's how i wake up in the morning. If only i could take that first narrow step.

Yellow Mouse, thanks i think? Hell i still can't figure out what you are trying to tell me. Forgive me mouse friend, i'm just not good a word atuffus, roots and all. I do appreciate your trying.

Rene Pittet, thanks, i often don't get around to thanking those folk who drop a jewel in my lamp, and i've neglected so many other CHF people as well, Your article #19 was quite warm hearted, and the lines: "All things are on fire with passion. This wntire world is a never ending soma sacrifice, immortality poured forever into the fire of time.", and, "The whole world is the body of Christ and it is the wafer of our deliverance" was incredible and beautiful beyond description. I'm currently reading "Shout of Buddha" by Haya Akegarasu, The feeling: though sometimes different is the same.

Ken O'Neill, thanks though i'm not comfortable with computers (haven't even mastered a hand held calculator, can't set a digital watch). i do like your idea of both spreading the availability of written Bodhi stuffus and organizing Buddhist get-togethers to find ways of working harmoniously together. Also read your article on "Trouble in the Pure Land". I don't know, so i can't say i totally agree, but do feel you approached it from a truthful place, and where reasonable. But wow! Intense or what? thank you.

your friend and mine

ed star  
Om Shanti

A Note from the CHFL Editor

Some of you seem to be getting a bit behind in contributing a letter for the CHFL. Remember there is the alternative however of now and then dashing off a postcard to one of our members. A "CHF Card" is enclosed with each issue for such purposes. I'm sure we all love to get such mail, so why not.

As for New Years cards etc., that seems best left entirely up to your own creative imagination.

Remember that if you don't have someone's address, you can always mail it in care of the CHFL.

Ananda Dalenberg  
CHFL Editor

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Lynn Olson  
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Yamhill, OR 97148

Dear Fellow-Travelers,

Reading through the letters in the last issue, I was struck by how diverse we all are. Some of the letters are intensely intellectual, others mellow and folksy, some reflective, some polemical, some matter of fact, others sarcastic. Where I fit in all this, I am not sure. But, I am convinced of its value both in terms of reading other's and writing my own.

I have been thinking about a line in Krishnamurti: "Confused minds make confused choices." For me this is the starting point (and also the ending point). In the "Parable of the Two Rivers and the Path," this is the desert and the two rivers, the beasts and the bandits. This is standing at the foot of the path, trying to decide what to do: shall I turn back and fight the beasts and the bandits, shall I shut down and stay put, shall I attempt to cross the path? All ways are death and lead to death. This is "confused minds make confused choices."

Asking "what should I do?" doesn't help, of course; it is part of the problem--trying to resolve the problem instead of actually dealing with it. Trying to resolve the problem is a movement away from the problem, which intensifies it. I can't help but think of Maida Sensei's words, "'This world is hell. Nothing. It is so clear.' Then don't ask me, 'What shall I do now?'" It is like stepping on a nail; a problem that is all too clear. It is not necessary to ask "what do I do now?" It is not necessary to think about or discuss the nature of nail-ness, or the nature of pain, or the merits of puncturing one's foot or not puncturing one's foot. The perception of the nail leads to an immediate solution. In fact, the words "leads to" are unnecessary. The feeling of the nail puncturing the foot is simultaneously the lifting of the foot off the nail. I have stepped on a nail before; I didn't have to ask what to do next. I jumped up, off the nail. The true perception of suffering is the ending of it.

The parable expresses the quality of suffering, of danger which pervades the Dharma. Since there is death in all directions, it would probably be far better to stay out of the desert altogether. If only we could. If only that were an option. (Maybe it is an option for you) Unfortunately, I discovered myself in the desert of delusion only after having been there for quite some time. I have tried to express the danger and the menace that I feel in the Dharma (and the sense of helplessness and humanness that arises from that encounter) in a poem called "Dharma-realm":

Desert-bleak: it is a  
Wasteland--

continued

Stark  
Desolate  
Nothing is growing  
There is no green or red or blue  
or any color  
It is empty and cruel  
or rather, indifferent

I sometimes walk here: alone  
in the early hours when I can't sleep  
The moon is always dark  
Drawn to this spot  
wide-eyed, I stand  
uneasy, nervous yet  
captivated by its otherness

I step into the light of the streetlamp--  
it makes no difference:  
Light has no effect on the darkness--  
in this place  
I step into the shadow and  
disappear completely:  
I have no effect on the desolation--  
of this place

It's quiet here; the still/steelness  
of the trap  
I can feel the movement of the emptiness:  
Some rough beast, slouching and hungry,  
utterly inhuman  
I am in the condition of prey

It is dangerous; I know that too  
What is human is foreign;  
we have no place here

I keep returning  
I don't linger; it is not a  
place for contemplation  
It is contemplation itself:  
Stark  
Desolate

I am so very human--  
in this place.

Obviously, my sense of the Dharma is not a "place" of enlightenment but more a realm of "endarkenment," to quote Dr. Haneda. And yet it is not so bleak as to be hopeless because "humanness" is a blessing and perhaps a gift.

In gassho,



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Dear Fellow Students:

The Chinese seem to have a special gift for correlating the spiritual or abstract with ordinary everyday things or activities. One example would be in Zen where short verses of spiritual mindfulness are commonly recited while doing ordinary things. Some of the same spirit can be found in Chinese Christianity. A good example would be these prayers (from the Oxford Book of Prayer) :

## Chinese Women

- L. Prayer when opening door:  
P. I pray thee, Lord, to open the door  
of my heart  
to receive Thee within my heart.
- L. When washing clothes:  
P. I pray thee, Lord, to wash my heart,  
making me white as snow.
- L. When sweeping floors:  
P. I pray thee, Lord, to sweep away  
my heart's uncleanness,  
that my heart may always be pure.
- L. When pouring oil:  
P. I pray thee, Lord, to give me wisdom  
like the wise virgins  
who always had oil in their vessels.
- L. When posting a letter:  
P. I pray thee, Lord, to add to me  
faith upon faith,  
that I may always have communication  
with Thee.
- L. When lighting lamps:  
P. I pray thee, Lord, to make my deeds  
excellent like lamps before others,  
and more, to place Thy true light  
within my heart.
- L. When watering flowers:  
P. I pray thee, Lord, to send down  
spiritual rain into my heart,  
to germinate the good seed there.
- L. When boiling water for tea:  
P. I pray thee, Lord, to send down  
spiritual fire  
to burn away the coldness of my heart  
and that I may be hot-hearted  
in serving thee.

## Chinese Men

- L. On building a wall:  
P. I pray thee, Lord, to make my faith  
as firmly established  
as a house built upon a rock,  
so that neither rain nor wind  
can ever destroy it.
- L. On pruning a tree:  
P. I pray thee, Lord, to purge me  
and take away my selfishness  
and sinful thoughts,  
that I may bring forth  
more fruits of the Spirit.
- L. On tending sheep:  
P. I pray thee, Lord, to protect me  
from evil  
and keep me from want,  
daily carrying me in Thine arms  
like a lamb.
- L. On winnowing grain:  
P. I pray thee, Lord, to winnow away  
the chaff from my heart  
and make it like the true wheat,  
fit to be garnered in Thy barn.
- L. On writing a book:  
P. I pray thee, Lord, to forgive  
my debt of sin  
and write my name in Heaven,  
making me free in body and soul.
- L. On planing wood:  
P. I pray thee, Lord, to make me  
smooth and straight,  
fit to be a useful vessel,  
pleasing to the Lord.
- L. On drawing water:  
P. I pray thee, Lord, to give  
living water,  
to quench my thirst,  
and wash away the stains,  
from my heart.

A.D.

A PLAN FOR A BOOK

## PREFACE

Ever since I have been involved in the psychological, spiritual, mystical, linguistic mind game, I have used such words as meditation, contemplation, perception, careful, observation, alert, attentive, directing attention, awake, awareness, etc. I have noted that Zen masters, Sufi teachers, Gurdjieff, Gurus, Tibetans, humanistic psychologists, teachers of the "New Age" religion, even donJuan and Timmy Leery (sic) use these words "trippingly off the tongue". After I attained a level of adeptness and some sophistication, I began to want rather exact descriptions of certain postures and behaviors. So I asked myself: "Just what does a person do when he meditates, prays, contemplates, perceives, observes?" And "What does one direct when he directs attention?" And "What must I do (what behavior?) in order to be aware, alert, awake?" And so I looked these words up in the dictionary. That told me little or nothing. But I noted that there was such a thing as word etymology: the study of word derivation. Which led me to other dictionaries and these Indo-European roots.

It's fascinating to contemplate that era in mankind's his-story when the first tribes came down out of the Persian foothills to the grassy plains beside the Euphrates (from Avestan Hupreta = Hu (good) + per (across) + ethwa (to go): a good ford) River and began the agricultural era and built permanent towns. That began about 8000 to 11,000 BC or 10,000 years ago. Indo-European" encompasses everything in the Old World except African, Oriental and residues of savage primitives, all of whom dominated by this language's sophistication and power, although imposing their own local dialects upon it. The sound signifying "one" is "oine". One can make the sounds and discover how the mouth shape and tongue-palate movements, including nasality will yield "one", "ein", "ain", "un", and many others.

The beginnings of language occur with the translation from sounds to writing. That event was seen as a religious one. Sentences did not spring into being miraculously, in fact even words were not the first step. The first step, making marks, is, of course, symbology. The mark, on stone, or tablet, was a symbol. It did not symbolize a sound - necessarily. It symbolized an idea. That idea was also symbolized by a sound. Thus Alpha, Aleph, Alif (Arabic: the mark: 1), the first letter of the holy alpha-bet(a):

AL: other, all, grow, nourish  
 + LEIP, LIF, LIFE: to stick, adhere, continue, remain  
 and LEUBH: love, dear, leave (permission),  
 Al-lief is a NAME and NOT a letter. It was used to stand for the unfathomable timeless mystery which, by definition, evades all mental grasp: the Greek Chaos. It also was used for the number one: unity: all that is AND all that is not. Thus, at that time, the WORD (LOGOS) was a combination of letter symbols making up a very complicated and sophisticated conceptual system. And it was sacred. One may study this today in either Hebrew or Arabic.

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And what was my surprise when I made my primary discovery ? Here I am, thinking that I am one of the most knowledgeable men in Western Civilization (a culture prone to hubris) and here I have been using words (trippingly) wrongly. It is I who has been ignorant - IGNORANT !! MY arrogance had been unbounded to be using these words with such faith and confidence. It was faith in an idol with clay feet. And my scientific confidence crashed.

The truth is within us and not out there in anything. And that includes dictionaries and all of man's scholars and ages of confidence and tradition. If you have been like I, then you will be crushed by the realizations that arise from the knowledge of the origins of these words.

The words which I wanted to know about formed themselves into several different groupings, which I have used as my chapter headings. I separated Seeing and Perception from the rest, as I felt it had to do with directing sensory receptors. I separated Attention from Meditation for Meditation may use attention, yet it is not Attention. It wasn't until much later that I discovered that Awake, Watchful etc. were different from Alert and Attentive.

That these words ultimately fit together and reinforce one another in one great conclusion was beyond my comprehension at the start. But they do.

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Dear Fellow Students:

I wrote this for the Windbell recently, and I thought it might be of interest.

## Sokoji, and the Other Half of Our Practice

by Ananda Dalenberg

I often think of the early beginnings of Zen Center at Sokoji Soto Zen Temple in San Francisco. Sokoji was very important to us in those early days, and I think it remains symbolically important for us even today. In fact, the role of Sokoji in the development of Zen Center has become a kind of koan for me.

In those days Zen Center occupied only a corner of Sokoji. It was, however, adequate for our size, and we felt quite at home in sharing space with the Japanese-American congregation there. We also shared in having the same teacher, Abbot Shunryu Suzuki, who was the head of both Sokoji and Zen Center. There was then some inner sense of unity between the two groups.

As Zen Center grew, our differences became greater, and the two groups separated. The reasons were various, but I would say it was mostly because of a difference of views in regard to practice. At Zen Center we were very enthusiastic about zazen, and it was very difficult for us to conceive of real zen practice as being anything else.

The Japanese-American congregation at Sokoji, on the other hand, seemed to share almost none of our enthusiasm for zazen. They instead emphasized religious ceremonies and temple social life. Nor were they unique in this respect, since their practice was actually representative of the average Soto temple in Japan.

Sokoji practice was then quite different from our own. In general we didn't really understand what it was all about, nor did we really appreciate it.

Nevertheless, there seemed to be good reason to believe that the Sokoji side of practice represented at least half of actual Soto Zen. What that other half was all about became quite a koan for me.

My koan was greatly reinforced because our teacher, Abbot Shunryu Suzuki, obviously felt some really fundamental concern not only for zazen, but also for the Sokoji side of practice. Very important to him too was his home temple in Japan, where again there was little zazen. At least half of his life was devoted to a practice of which most of us had little appreciation or understanding. For such reasons, I felt that I understood only some of the zazen half of his teaching.

In struggling with my koan, I kept on expecting some revolutionary insight appropriate for the New Age generation. After quite a few years, I have come up with a not at all revolutionary answer. In fact it is so simple, I can't help wondering if maybe I am very slow in understanding what was very obvious to almost everyone else from the very beginning.

What then is the other half of our practice? The Bodhisattva Way, just as simple as that. At root that is what Sokoji is all about. I'd even go so far as to say that is what most of Soto Zen in Japan is all about.

The answer to a koan is of course a very individual thing. My answer is only one among many, and it may not be very meaningful to anyone else.

It is no doubt true that Soto Zen temple practice in Japan is mostly a matter of religious ceremonies and such. But what is the one great fundamental ceremony that gives a depth and context for everything else? Obviously it is the great ceremony of Jukai, initiating one into the Bodhisattva Way by receiving the sixteen Bodhisattva precepts. Also Jukai is something meant not just for a few, but for everyone, including both lay person and priest.

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All this should be quite obvious. Perhaps I was so slow in seeing it because of my own pride and arrogance in regard to our practice — a common affliction of all too many of us. Some of us were even so proud as to dream of re-awakening Japan to the true spirit of Zen, which of course was our kind of zazen. We also thought that our teacher should at least be called "Roshi", if not some title considerably greater. Actually however he preferred being addressed by the much more modest term "Sensei". Occasionally he would be asked if he were enlightened, and he would reply that he was not. That too did not fit in at all with our own grand notions about ourselves. The practice at Sokoji, on the other hand, was very modest and not at all pretentious.

Over the years I have come to appreciate more and more the depth of such modesty. Certainly, Zen these days would benefit from a very large dose of it.

One might at first think that the teaching Suzuki-sensei gave us emphasized zazen so much that everything else became secondary. But that would be to forget that he also gave us the Bodhisattva Way in the form of the great ceremony, Jukai, and the sixteen Bodhisattva precepts. With both zazen and the Bodhisattva Way, I feel I really begin to understand something of his life and practice.

Apart from my koan, or any koan, it is obvious that the Bodhisattva Way is fundamental in Buddhism. The Bodhisattva precepts of course do not appear as some exciting New Age invention, but are rather as old as Buddhism, and are, perhaps in some sense even older. Such things as helping others, and refraining from falsehood, avarice, hatefulness, and self-pride may not be very fashionable these days, but in Buddhism they are obviously fundamental.

In taking on my koan, I was not at all prepared to end up with sixteen koans instead of one, but this seems to be the case. Each precept is in itself said to be not only an endless practice, but also a deep and profound koan. Take the precept "Not to kill" for example. What does it mean in a world where "all sentient beings" also includes animals and plant life, and life exists by consuming other forms of life? What does it mean in terms of war and pacifism, and the defense of innocent peoples from slavery and aggression? And if our planet Earth is a great living being, how does that apply?

The Bodhisattva precepts are deep enough to fill a lifetime of practice, or rather, many lifetimes. I would also say they are so deep they include the true spirit of zazen.

When the two sides of practice are included within each other, I think my koan will mostly come to an end.

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P.S. The 16 Bodhisattva precepts are the 3 Refuges, the 3 Pure precepts, and the 10 Grave Precepts, as follows:

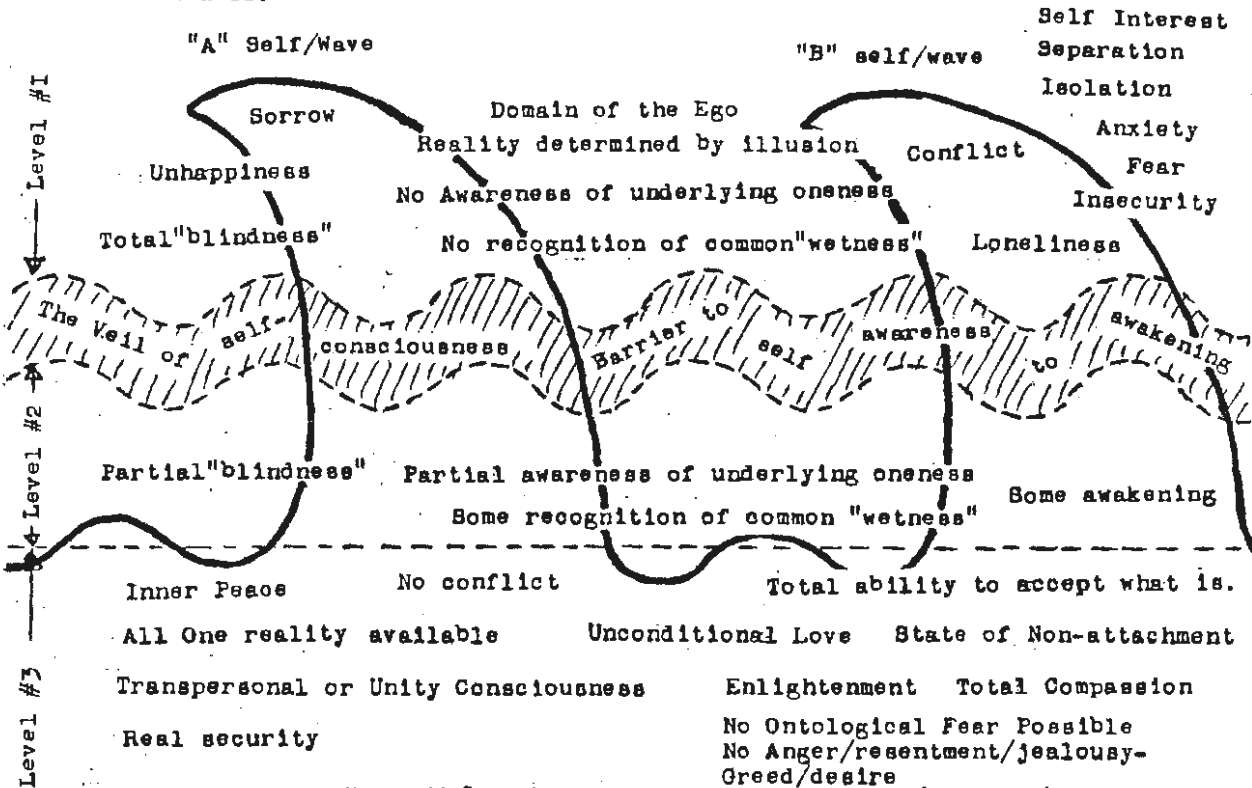
- To take refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.
- To cease from the unwholesome, practice the good, and help others.
- Do not kill. Do not take that which is not given.
- Do not misuse the body or sexuality. Refrain from falsehood.
- Do not trade in wine or delusion.
- Refrain from slander or divisive speech.
- Refrain from self-righteous and disparaging speech.
- Refrain from avarice. Refrain from hatefulness.
- Do not be unfaithful to the Three Jewels.

A.D.

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Reflections on Human Consciousness... "Waves and the Great Ocean"

This diagram represents a partial depiction of how human consciousness and/or our personal "blindness" operate, within a conceptual framework of "waves" and the great underlying unity that is the oneness of "ocean". It tries to explain how each of 3 levels of being relate to each other, given that every "self/wave" is but a part of the greater "ocean" body of water, where the common factor is the "wetness/oneness" of unity consciousness.



Explanations:- The veil/barrier to self awareness...to being aware of a much greater underlying whole (level 3)...the great body of universal "wetness/water" cannot be seen through this veil/barrier. It differentiates level 1 from level 2, where there is some awareness of level 3 and what it contains, even though this can be pretty limited.

The full realization of what lies available at level 3 can only be realized/seen/experienced/understood from within that level - as the power of/for self deception and illusion are still very active outside of level 3. This self deception and illusion are endemic and highly active within level 1, where total "blindness" is the most dominant characteristic, as are all consuming self-interests, a sense of separation or isolation, anxiety, fear, insecurity, ambition, greed, desire, wanting ever more, terror of loss and dying (to mention but a few).

The most important feature of this diagram is the recognition that each "A self/wave" sees and experiences itself as totally separate from every other "B self/wave". They cannot recognize their common "wetness/ocean" connection, the fact that they are ALL an integral part of the great unified body of ocean.

by J.H.Boyd.

Please note that I wish to make no claim to the originality of trying to "explain" the different levels of awareness by putting it all within a "wave/ocean" format. Others have already suggested that this is a useful framework...a useful tool...though I have obviously freely added some of my own favoured concepts, prior to sharing it with our Cloud-Hidden friends.

J.H.B.

## "Man Does Not Die"

Know thou, Oh Prince of Pandu that there never was a time when I, or thou, nor any of these Princes of the Earth was not. Nor shall there ever come a time hereafter when any of us shall cease to be.

As the soul wearing this material body experiences the stages of infancy, youth, manhood and old age, even so shall it in due time pass on to another body, and in other incarnations shall it live again and move and play its part.

Those who have attained the wisdom of the inner doctrine know these things and fail to be moved by aught that cometh to pass in this world of change. To such life and death are but words, and both are but surface aspects of the deeper being.

Man does not die. Ignorance and false teaching make man fear death. The Cosmic Cycle proves life is eternal. Man does not die. He changes. Death is the word used to indicate the change. Under the law of the Cosmic Cycle invisible vapor becomes visible ice, and ice returns to vapor. There is no end. Cosmic processes work in cycles, and all things are eternal. Under the law, we become visible as spirit envelops itself in a mantle of matter called man, and we become invisible again when spirit withdraws from that physical form, while the form disintegrates and returns to the cosmic reservoir of all things.

Belief that death is the total extinction of man is a modern one, and is based on the erroneous theory that life is a chemical process instead of a cosmic principle. According to that theory, life begins when the chemical process begins, and ends when the process ends. Scientists who believe that theory reject as heathenish superstition the biblical doctrine that God is spirit, and that the state we call being alive is the effect of spirit acting on and through matter as stated in John the Gospel. Some have passed through this cycle and report their experience in these words:

"Death is not what it seems. It is a joyous birth. Born again. Into a life more beautiful than we ever dreamed of here."

The ancient masters taught that life and death are but words that describe the surface aspects of the inner being. They are the words that describe the red and white colors of the revolving power called Cosmic Spirit.

They describe the visible and invisible stages of the Cosmic Cycle through which man passes.

The Bible says: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. We shall not sleep in death, but we shall all be changed to the spiritual life."

Man is made up of a procession of phantoms in the midst of which there strides an unknowable Reality. That unknowable Reality represents God, Life, Man — The Eternal Trinity, the 3 in 1 and the 1 in 3.

Under the law of Cosmic Cycles, all things move in circles and all things are eternal. Under that law man changes from a physical to a spiritual being as the Bible says.

But he does not die. Matter is eternal and so is life. We do not die!

A little while, a moment  
Of Rest upon the wind . . .  
And another woman shall bear  
The spirit of Gia-fu Feng  
— Peace & Love