

# cloud-hidden friends letter

A ZEN BUDDHIST PERIODICAL IN THE SPIRIT OF THE UNIVERSAL DHARMA

Issue #26

First Issue of 1988



*Samantabhadra (Fugen Bosatsu)*

The Cloud-Hidden Friends are a religious shared-correspondence group. Some of us are inclined towards Zen, and most of us are Buddhists, but the Dharma spirit we aim for is a free-ranging and universal one.

Our "subscription fee" is not a monetary one. We would rather have your participation. This could be by writing a letter now and then for our pages, or by personally replying to one of the letters in the CHFL.

Hopefully our letters will help us to open up more to each other, and perhaps more than a few good friendships in the Dharma might result.

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."

CHFL, c/o The Floating Zendo, 753 44th Ave., San Francisco, CA 94121

1. Spring has arrived here in San Francisco. Amazing. Also the Hanamatsuri Flower Festival, celebrating the birth of the Buddha, will soon be here.

This issue is out a little later than originally expected, but that seems to be becoming normal. One reason for the delay is that your letters have been coming in rather slowly. That all seems fine to me, since it seems better to follow the natural flow of things. Do remember, however, that if we haven't heard a word from someone for a long time, it will be presumed that they no longer wish to be on the mailing list.

2. There was a "World Buddhism in North America" conference which was hosted by the Zen Lotus Society at Ann Arbor last summer. It was very successful, and hopefully there will be more of such in the future. One of the very fine things that resulted was a statement of basic principles, drawn up by the leaders of the conference in a spirit of consensus. I think it is well worth including here:

#### CONFERENCE ON WORLD BUDDHISM IN NORTH AMERICA

### Statement of Consensus

The participants at the Conference on World Buddhism in North America held in Ann Arbor, 10-17 July 1987, wishing to express the convictions and sentiments that brought them together, asked that a special panel discuss the spirit and convictions behind the Conference to express them in a consensus statement that would serve as a reminder for future meetings. The Panel was composed of Conference Co-Chairmen Bishop D. Nakamura, Ven. Ratanasara, Ven. U. Sitananda, and Ven. Samu Sunim, and Conference Coordinator Prof. L. O. Gomez. The Panel also consulted Conference Co-Chairmen Ven. Maha Ghosananda, Ven. Vivekananda, and Bishop S. Yamaoka, and received written and oral comments from Conference participants. As a result of its consultations and deliberations, the Panel presented the following statement to the Conference:

#### A. Spirit of the Conference:

We see this Conference as the first of a series of meetings to affirm our common heritage in the teachings of Shakyamuni. These meetings declare and confirm our debt of gratitude to the tradition and seek, in a spirit of friendship:

1. to create the conditions necessary for tolerance and understanding among Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike.
2. to initiate a dialogue among Buddhists in North America in order to further mutual understanding, growth in understanding, and cooperation.
3. to increase our sense of community by recognizing and understanding our differences as well as our common beliefs and practices.
4. to cultivate thoughts and actions of friendliness towards others, whether they accept our beliefs or not, and in doing so approach the world as the proper field of Dharma, not as a sphere of conduct irreconcilable with the practice of Dharma.

#### B. Common Reflections:

Recognizing that there are points of doctrine or practice on which we have yet to reach an agreement, and others on which we may never reach an agreement, we discussed the ideals we cherish and wish to further in practice and understanding of Dharma. In the spirit of the Conference we offer the reflections of the Panel and of a special session of the Conference as an example of the process of dialogue that we wish to encourage in future meetings. The Panel, considering suggestions from Conference participants, outlined a common ground for dialogue in a partial list of ideals acceptable to a wide spectrum of Buddhists as common, if not exhaustive, expression of their aspirations:

1. We recognize Shakyamuni Gautama Buddha as the historical source for the transmission of Dharma in this age. We therefore regard him with reverence and gratitude. We accept the benefits of his enlightenment and infinite compassion, as well as the enlightenment and compassion of numberless Buddhas of the past, present and future.

2. We express our respect for Shakyamuni Gautama Buddha's teaching by taking refuge in the Three Jewels: Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.

3. Among his teachings we accept the centrality of our aspiration for the fruits of enlightenment and liberation from suffering, for self and others, in a spirit of compassion towards all beings.

4. We hold as central to the spirit and goals of Buddhism the Four Truths taught by Shakyamuni: suffering, its cause, its cessation, and the Noble Eightfold Path that leads to the end of suffering.

5. We share a commitment to make every effort to conform to the ethical ideals of Buddhism, which we summarize in the Tenfold Right Conduct: not to take life, not to take what has not been given to us, not to practice sexual misconduct, not to lie, not to use harsh speech, not to engage in idle talk, not to slander, not to hold thoughts of covetousness, not to keep anger and resentment, not to keep and foster deluded thoughts. But above all, we strive to practice the positive implications of these ten precepts: compassionate caring, generosity, contentment, truthfulness, kindly speech, meaningful speech, harmonious speech, generous thoughts, compassionate thoughts, clear thoughts.

6. We recognize that there are many aspects to the Path, and many doors to the City of Liberation. As followers of the Path we must examine our own path in light of the principles of clear, selfless awareness, and selfless love. In accordance with the principle of compassion, we believe in the necessity for tolerance and accept the possibility of a variety of valid or effective paths. In accordance with the ideal of the enlightened mind, we realize that conventional expressions of truth are manifold. Therefore, we are open to the discussion and recognition of differences in interpretation and practice in the Dharma.

7. We understand that compassion also entails tolerance outside the fold of our own religious and secular communities. We reject in particular the practice, and even the hope, of imposing religious beliefs by coercion of any kind, by manipulation or force.

In the spirit of the above statements we affirm our desire to persevere in our effort to appreciate our differences and recognize our agreements. We therefore pledge ourselves to continue to discuss the issues that concern us and hold us together, and to that purpose reaffirm our intention to organize similar meetings on a regular basis and in a variety of locations.

NEWS & NOTES

3. Our last issue had a few errors, and Norman Moser has sent along a note about some corrections:

Dear Cloud-Hidden Friends:

In my zeal to get 3 related poems on beauty as perceived by a latter-day modernist in the last issue, I inadvertently typed a couplet ~~xxxx~~ at the end of the <sup>next to</sup> last stanza of the 1st poem, "The Beauty of a Human Being," with a crucial missing word that so altered the meaning as to totally reverse the effect intended. The operative missing word in #25 is "never"—so that it actually should go like this:

yet somehow there is this mysterious control  
the dancer never leaves the highwire.

the idea being, of course, in the context, that the dancer & the acrobat are pretty much the same or inseparable, as indeed in life they often seem to be one & the same.

Hope everyone there at the house is well & well-fed & happy as bums or toadfrogs at the lake, by the way! Li'l Dave & I are having a great,

Happy holidays & 88! Will work up another piece for ye befo the year slips on under the bridge...

Yorn,  
Norman M.

4. Remember, what keeps us going is your participation, and of course your appreciation. I'm sure, for example, that if you personally replied to some letter appearing in the CHFL, the author would be more than delighted, even if you have included a few criticisms.

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Ananda Dalenberg  
Clerk, CHFL

## An American Way Of Zen

ZEN MIND, BEGINNER'S MIND. Shunryu Suzuki. Weatherhill, N.Y. & Tokyo, 139pp, '70 \$4.50, paper.

When some of us on the scene in North Beach & SF State and their environs first began our Zen adventures in the late 50s guided by Snyder & a few others, we noticed almost at once that the only writer-philosophers who could stand up to the likes of Watts, Daisetz T. Suzuki, Benoit, Humphreys & Waley, etc, were Jung, Sartre & Camus. The reason was so plain it probably didn't occur to us at the time: Watts, D.T. Suzuki, Benoit et al were the only non-Western philosophers who spoke with conviction, insight, depth & perceptiveness about the lives we were living in that vivid Postwar period of Existentialism, poetry, jazz, Civil Rights actions & the first of our famous 'Police Actions' just over our shoulder. Slowly, by degrees, this new package of philosophy & religion made more and more sense, until at length it has become a new way of life for many of us.

The first books that affected us very, very deeply in this vein were Watts' Way of Zen, The Spirit of Zen & Zen Buddhism, Suzuki's Introduction to Zen Buddhism, Essays in Zen Buddhism & Studies in Zen, + Beatrice Suzuki's Mahayana Buddhism, along with Benoit's The Supreme Doctrine, Humphreys' Zen Buddhism, Reps/Senzaki's The Gateless Gate & Snyder's Myths & Texts. I don't like to come on like a scholar even if I were one, so I won't now.

Just let me say this. All these books were the works of fine professional scholar-philosopher-writers, even though Daisetz Suzuki, 'ole man' Suzuki as I call him around the house, also passed several years in temples & monasteries, if I recall aright. Shunryu Suzuki, on the other hand, was never a professional writer. He had always been in the temple, going up the ranks from novitiate to monk to priest to Master. What we have in this marvelous little book are his talks, you really can't call them lectures because they aren't at all scholarly. He's speaking not about Satori but about ordinary aspects of life as we live it in or out of the monastery, and by God, it makes a pretty darn good little book, quite readable I'd say, as conceived & taped by Marian Derby (our M. Mountain, I presume).

In fact, he's at his best when he's pointing to a quite concrete example as he does in this wonderfully telling passage:

"Bread is made from flour. How flour becomes bread when put in the oven was for Buddha the most important thing. How we become enlightened was his main interest. The enlightened person is some perfect, desirable character, for himself & for others. Buddha wanted to find out how human beings develop this ideal character--how various sages in the past became sages. In order to find out how dough became perfect bread, he made it over & over again, until he became quite successful. That was his practice.

"But we may find it not so interesting to cook the same thing over & over again every day. It is rather tedious, you may say... (B)ut it will not be difficult if you are full of strength and vitality.... So if you do something, you should be very observant, & careful, & alert. Our way is to put the dough in the oven and watch it carefully. Once you know how the dough becomes bread, you will understand enlightenment. So how this physical body becomes a sage is our main interest. We are not so concerned with what flour is, ...dough is, or what a sage is. A sage is a sage. Meta-physical explanations of human nature are not to the point."

(p. 56)

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This tells us that if we gaze to the heavens and do not pay attention to what we are about, we are not living right, in Zen or out. In other words, if you're pretty sure you're on the right path, wonderful, so be it, continue what you've been doing all along, repetitions & all. If not, changes are in order. My original Master, Deneal Amos, often spoke about life in the same exact way. Simply & plainly, about understandable stuff.

Later on Master Suzuki speaks of simplifying the "complicated mind" until there is no shadow effect brought about by the fact that many of us are acting as though we are trying to do two/three things at once, kill "two birds with one stone," for instance. He goes on thus:

"That kind of thinking always leaves its shadow on their activity. The shadow is not actually the thinking itself. Of course it is often necessary to think or prepare before we act. But right thinking does not leave any shadow. Thinking which leaves traces comes out of your relative confused mind." (p. 62)

His purpose here seems to be to restore us to "strong, straightforward, clear mind," where an action is just itself, not symbolic or trying to achieve too many things at once. I have sometimes thought that we like sports so much because there we achieve or witness a beautifully realized, uncomplicated action at its purest. You usually know when you've just shot a perfect arrow, made a great pitch, hit or pass. But the paradox is that you know it a split-second after you just did it. I have often wondered if Zen isn't trying to get us to the point where we are conscious of the pure act even as we do it. Or would the point be, simply to do the action with no discernible thought at all while doing it? Ballplayers often say not to think about it when you are doing it, and performers, artists & poets often say the same thing or something similar. Most fascinating point. I can't resolve it now, either. The point is, you can't intellectualize Zen or anything else livable. It simply doesn't work--unless you're a pro scholar, I guess. I.e., it ain't enough to just read (Zen) books--if you ain't livin' yer Zen every day, every moment, you just ain't with it. You're just gooin' around.

Master Suzuki's not at his best in my opinion when he says things like "Reality cannot be caught by thinking or feeling mind. Moment after moment to watch your breath, watch your posture, is true nature. There is no secret beyond this point." I've heard Watts wax like this on occasion too, & didn't think it came off then either, although I'm a diehard Watts fan all the way. Why is that activity more "true" nature than many another? Bit too cryptic for my taste, sorry--though admittedly, in the larger context (few pgs.) it makes better sense. Perhaps the second language here somewhat foiled our sage? Possible.

Whereas, in ole man D.T. Suzuki's Zen and Japanese Culture or Watts' Nature, Man and Woman, Psychotherapy East & West, for just two examples of many, we have thinking-feeling Master Zen-writers who compare with any the world over including Freud, May, Fromm, Mead, etc, in every sense or value you can name, be it philosophy, humor, charm, insight or even entertainment in best sense. And Master Suzuki probably belongs in this select company with just this one small book, with just very occasional slight falterings like the one noted above. Mostly Shunryu Suzuki comes home all the way with his own genuine brand of humor, insight, revelation, etc, if you're just wee bit patient with him.

Zen books preceding this one were addressed to the worldwide English-speaking audience, including Britain and probably India & so on. But this is the first book addressed specifically to Zen's American

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friends, readers, students & colleagues. And in a way, that's really the point, as in this warm breezy passage he concludes his quite delightful offering:

"...Hyakujo established the rules and way of Zen life in China. He was interested in expressing and transmitting the freedom of true mind. Zen mind is transmitted in our Zen way of life based on Hyakujo's rules.

"I think we naturally need some way of life as a group & as Zen students in America, & as Hyakujo established our way of monastic life in China, I think we must establish an American way of Zen life. I am not saying this jokingly, I am pretty serious. But I do not want to be too serious. If we become too serious we will lose our way. If we are playing games we will lose our way. Little by little with patience & endurance we must find the way for ourselves, find out how to live with ourselves & with each other. In this way we will find out our precepts. If we practice hard, concentrate on zazen, & organize our life so that we can sit well, we will find out what we are doing....(T)he important thing is to obey your rules without discrimination. This way you will know the pure Zen mind. To have our own way of life means to encourage people to have a more spiritual and adequate way of life as human beings. And I think one day you will have your own practice in America.

"...And if you do not understand me just now, someday you will. Someday someone will understand. I will wait for the island I was told is moving slowly up the coast from Los Angeles to Seattle.

"I feel Americans, especially young Americans, have a great opportunity to find out the true way of life for human beings. You are quite free from material things and you begin Zen practice with a very pure mind, a beginner's mind. You can understand Buddha's teaching exactly as he meant it. But we must not be attached to America, or Buddhism, or even to our practice. We must have beginner's mind, free from possessing anything, a mind that knows everything is in flowing change. Nothing exists but momentarily in its present form and color. One thing flows into another and cannot be grasped. Before the rain stops we hear a bird. Even under the heavy snow we see snowdrops and some new growth...."

If other CHF-ers would comment on other favorite Zen books of 70s/80s, it would sure aid one Zen writer-fellow in his search up the trail, & also Weishaus, a few months back, & this reviewer tonight, will have started a CHF trend. And now I've finally properly 'paid' for this gem of a book given me by a dear ole CHF pal year or two back.

--Norm Moser

For the CHFL, from John Boyd

3 Canterbury Road, Islington, Ontario, Canada. M9A 5B2

Dear Cloud-Hidden Friends:

Having fairly recently made it through 60 years of living on this good earth, I decided to look back over my life's journey thus far, and to record my impressions and perceptions. It strikes me that some of these might be of some interest to our C-H Fellowship. In addition I'm inspired by Irv's beautiful letter in our last issue...he manages to say so much that is of value, and does it so eloquently and gently...many thanks. Perhaps we could invite ourselves to share significant highlights of substance in our own journeys? What follows is an abbreviated excerpt of what I think might be of some particular interest to those disposed to a Zen/Buddhist/Taoist perspective.

"During the past 15 to 20 years of my life, a certain guiding pattern of values has gradually emerged and cast its profound influence on the way that I have come to view and experience all things. This pattern of values and priorities has been shaped or guided by my growing awareness of the importance of the spiritual domain in all matters, as well as my growing realization that all of life's systems or manifestations seem to be deeply and beautifully interrelated within the larger scheme of things.

Curiously enough, my interest in matters spiritual, has always been free of any theological structures or religious affiliations, and all paternalistic or authoritarian figure-heads have always failed to capture my allegiance... particularly the concept of God as the benevolent father figure! So I have journeyed in my own way, until I came across (some 6 or 7 years ago) my first awareness of the teachings and wisdom of Zen Buddhism, wherein I have found much that resonates with much that I had long been seeking to understand, refine and express - yet, to this day, I avoid donning any specific labels of affiliation whatsoever! In fact I have come to believe that ALL labels are ultimately limiting and divisive, and can only serve us at a fairly rudimentary level.

It appears that my "personal space" has been seeking to evolve towards some kind of transcendent level of consciousness beyond all labels.... a space where one is free to embrace the "all oneness" that is present beyond all boundaries and beyond any sense of separation or division, and certainly beyond the dictates of ego abetted thought... how close and yet how far, it is impossible to say, as my journey continues more enchantingly than ever... I may never know, and it matters not at all! This "challenge" (I'm a little suspicious of all challenges, as they are all too often generated by our ego needs) to feel comfortable and complete and secure without any labels of affiliation, has continued to fascinate me, as I have more and more come to see this as one of the major traps that we constantly get ourselves caught up in.... to be a little repetitive, and with apologies to those who are "put off" by repetitions.... I see all labels and strong affiliations, based on high principle, doctrine or belief, as double-edged swords, that serve to provide us with symbolic security and identity, while at the same time robbing us of our only chance to know the true meaning of personal freedom and inner peace.... of truly experiencing the state of unity consciousness, wherein is revealed the full magnificence of unconditional love and compassion.

Though I cannot single out anyone of the following experiences as worthy of higher ranking than any other, collectively they represent, I believe, some important "indicators" which I have found helpful or useful in trying to determine "where I am" on my journey, and whether my general direction seems "productive" of inner peace and worthy of pursuance.

Perhaps one of the most consistently dominant patterns, has been my growing "disinterest" in things - particularly in all things and objects acquired, craved, sought after, collected or depended upon; in the whole social superstructure that so abundantly and wastefully sustains our consumer orientation towards insatiable market-place appetites. Stores and places where "things" are gathered together for purchase, exhibition, amusement or

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entertainment, have come to hold little or no interest for me. The "bare necessities of life" seem more than enough (given that I live in a pretty affluent society!), and what little I do need seems to come my way at little or no cost.... like excellent second-hand clothes from a good friend who can afford them!

I have also noticed a growing "lack of ambition" to prove, sustain or be anything other than what and who I am at this moment, which has helped to bring me an ever deepening sense of self acceptance, personal quietness and inner peace.... it is very hard to put this (the experiential side of these qualities in particular) into words, but it all seems to come down to an expansive sense of our universal goodness.... of being deeply connected to all things, and in knowing the real meaning of unconditional love coupled with infinite compassion. The odd person has questioned whether or not I might be deceiving myself and really dropping out of life! But my own sense is that quite the opposite is true. That ambition and having to prove myself (not that I was ever really ambitious in the first place!) to myself or to the outside world, is nothing but a self-imposed mill-stone - no doubt carefully put there by a crafty ego - round my neck.... all necks!

Increasingly the joined concepts of service and humility have become more and more insistent and actively meaningful in my life.... "good friends" so to speak, that simply feel totally appropriate and fulfilling, and which have made it easy for me to do many "demeaning or lowly" (when measured by conventional thinking and standards) jobs/chores without any sense of personal loss or self-depreciation.

Coming to terms with the beautiful symbiosis that exists between life and death, has, perhaps more than anything else, helped to nurture my growing sense of inner peace, as well as showing me how profoundly our ontological fearfulness sustains us in perpetual terror of our own mortality... of losing out... of feeling endemically insecure... of being taken advantage of... etc. The "real test" of course of whether or not my own "homework" has been correctly perceived, will quite naturally have to await me at the end of my own journey... this I know!

I have also found enormous value in the notion and practice of "surrender" - of letting go - of going with the flow of life in very quiet ways. Of not having to be in control of my destiny, but rather in tune with the great whateverness that life constantly presents us with. Control, I am convinced, is very much a double-edged sword, and we must learn to know when it serves us and when it creates conflict, brings sorrow or otherwise limits us in the process of seeking to become more self-aware and free. I am sure that in my case, some who know me, have interpreted this use of "surrendering" as indicative of indifference on my part; but the fact is that I find that most of the choices/decisions that we are ordinarily called upon to face in the course of every day, tend to be difficult or complicated by reason of our ever compelling ego needs "contaminating the picture". To the extent that we can get beyond the dictates of ego, so can we see the futility of being trapped within the fear controls that keep us in bondage and unable to surrender! I certainly seem to have been blessed with the good fortune of being able to apply a growing sense of flexibility to most things and circumstances that my life presents me with.

An interesting by-product of these attitudes or experiences has been that I have gradually come to be less and less interested in food and eating per se, either as a means of self-pleasuring or social sustenance, together with many social activities ordinarily thought of as central or indispensable to the "enjoyment of the good life". The "big food scene" has lost its appeal for me, as I have learned to find a much deeper sense of fulfilment from simply getting to know myself and being as true to that knowledge as possible.... and it is free!

The journey of course continues quite naturally, yet I cannot predict (nor would I want to try) what lies ahead. All that I can say with some certainty, and share with anyone reading these comments, is that my life, in its own mysterious way, has unfolded slowly and gently towards an evermore fulfilling and peaceful quality that defies description. What, I ask myself, is the



central feature of whatever process might be guiding my own journey? But I cannot "pin it down"....or tell another about it with any sense that I might succeed in so doing...it is a mystery that I can only approximate in the telling with words.Perhaps more than anything, it has to do with letting go of ego generated illusions, that then can enable us to surrender to some higher unity and vision of oneness, where a most beautiful sense of simplicity is seen to permeate all things. How thin our words become as we try to come close to the truth!- they can't "keep up" with what we want to communicate!

I have found that collectively all these "elements" have helped to reveal to me the normally hidden power and blessing of unconditional love....which I have come to believe is the ultimate human blessing! So I am blessed!?! So?

I will finish these comments by suggesting that everyone continue their own grand journey of self-discovery in their own particular way, and to do so more with intuitive abandonment, openness and trust, THAN with scholarship or diligent conscious effort. The ability to give up seeking pleasure and satisfaction in whatever we do, is more likely to bring us these treasures in totally unexpected ways, than is conscious striving and effort to this end! At least this is my perception. The journey is packed with treasures and joy. ....in the celebration of the wholeness of all life."

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I cannot finish this contribution without a few words for sister Diane Ames, who tells us of her parking-lot experience in our last issue #25. It seems to me that your behaviour was totally appropriate given the circumstances, and not in the least out of line with any high teachings - though presumably somewhat contrary to your perception of what such teachings should provide? Though you may wish to be rid of your expressed anger, it was at that moment and under those special circumstances an integral expression of yourself....and I would suggest that, in the deep acceptance of this fact, lies your best chance of transcending its (the experience's) power (in memory) over you. Any Buddhist (or anyone else for that matter) who tries to suggest (including yourself!) that you should not feel anger/rage in such a situation, is not worth listening to and may likely be laying a guilt trip on you!

Thank you for sharing your experience and pain with us all....I certainly appreciate your courage and honesty, as well as the opportunity to reflect on your experience.

With love and appreciation and best wishes for 1988.



John H Boyd DEC. 87

Ho! to you all dear Cloud Hidden Friends,

I note that the Letter has redefined itself as a "Zen Buddhist Periodical". This, it seems to me, is only naming the reality that time and contributions created. But, I remain a Taoist, Christian, Buddhist, Hindu Gestaltist - not necessarily in that or any other particular order and tend to indulge in expressions of sentimentality and personal feeling that I imagine to be UNZEN. Thus, with mild trepidations, but hardly not without humor, I submit the following copied from the Friends of Peace Pilgrim newsletter:

## SYMPTOMS OF INNER PEACE

Be on the lookout for symptoms of inner peace. The hearts of a great many have already been exposed to inner peace and it is possible that people everywhere could come down with it in epidemic proportions. This could pose a serious threat to what has, up to now, been a fairly stable condition of conflict in the world.

### Some signs and symptoms of inner peace:

- \* A tendency to think and act spontaneously rather than on fears based on past experiences.
- \* An unmistakable ability to enjoy each moment.
- \* A loss of interest in judging other people.
- \* A loss of interest in interpreting the actions of others.
- \* A loss of interest in conflict.
- \* A loss of the ability to worry. (This is a very serious symptom.)
- \* Frequent, overwhelming episodes of appreciation.
- \* Contented feelings of connectedness with others and nature.
- \* Frequent attacks of smiling.
- \* An increasing tendency to let things happen rather than make them happen.
- \* An increased susceptibility to the love extended by others as well as the uncontrollable urge to extend it.

(no copyright)

P.S. We now have (with enormous gratitude) an old house on the side of Mt. San Bruno in Brisbane CA that's becoming (with some small worries) an ecumenical semi-urban mountain hermitage. Please feel 100% welcome to drop in for a long or short visit. I can send you a map and directions.

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The idea of keeping a daily journal fascinates me. Darwin did it. So did Buson, and people like Issa and Ikku; and so did many myokonin, those people who could write daily and not give a fig if some balding scholar scolds them for doctrinal errors and stumbling over the buddha's feet, and lousing up the significance of upāyakaśalya (善巧方便). The world is full of critics. No wonder the feeling prevails that we are functioning in a network of monitors, and monitors monitoring monitors.

In the first five hundred years of the Sakyamuni's mission the teaching was suited to 'time' and 'capacity'. It does not seem too difficult to enter the way in this epoch although there is little doubt that "Time and Capacity" is wrong; we seem to live in a McGoo-type society, "people are always somewhere where they are not." In spite of the mappo period, the darkened ages of unenlightenment, Hume discovered an interesting insight into things and thereby almost caught up with the buddhists: There is an untelligibility of the dependence of one thing upon another!

Things can be improved, I believe, if we can bring ourselves to keeping journals. At least support an interest in the CLOUD OF HIDDEN FRIENDS, a project where we do not have to hear some one behind us say, "But the world is round, not flat!" I do not remember whether it was Alice who first said it---or one of her friends? "Now's the time to talk about kings, sealing wax, shoe laces, cabbages, and all sorts of things". In any case, at first glance the pool looks awful shallow. Recently I met one zen buddhist. one theravada-tibetan layman. one inmate (by mail) on death row. and one solitary printer who has told me nothing about his life, politics, religion, or family; he did say, however, that he did not write poetry. An alcoholic Indian friend of mine flew to Los Angeles, and I may ~~not~~ not see him again. We live in a very strange world, and I wonder how many of my acquaintances have noticed it. Invariably, my friends say, "I don't care"; and I wonder, deeply, what are they talking about?

gassho,  
  
elson b snow

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94109

Dear Fellow Pilgrims:

It seems to me that flowers are especially at home in Buddhism. A Buddhist festival or altar without them seems somehow incomplete. It seems significant too, that two of the greatest of the Buddhist Sutras are named the "Lotus" and the "Flower-Garland".

Also the very origins of the Zen School are said to lie in the "Flower Sermon", where the Buddha, instead of giving his usual lecture to the assembly, just silently holds up a flower. No one understands except Mahakasyapa, who smiles in response, and thus the transmission of Zen is said to begin.

I have long been wondering about that flower and its meaning. For one thing, I'd guess that it is meant to be symbolic of the Buddha Nature which is deeply within us. All we need to do then is to simply open our eyes to this truth.

I've also long wondered about just what kind of flower it was. Many accounts say it was an "udumbara" flower. The udumbara is important in Indian mythology because it is an incredibly beautiful flower that blooms extremely rarely, perhaps only once in hundreds of years.

The symbology here may also then be that Enlightenment is a very rare and beautiful event. You don't really expect to find Buddhas and Great Zen Patriarchs on every street corner. Yet that puzzles me, because it must also be true that it is something right in the middle of ordinary life, for it is taught that each and every one of us has the Buddha Nature. Yet what chance do you or I have of becoming something like a rare and beautiful udumbara? I'd say almost none whatsoever.

I was sitting in a coffee shop not long ago worrying about udumbaras, and contemplating the people walking by and trying to be utterly honest about the state of their flower-nature. It seemed to me unmistakably clear that only a very few of us are anything at all like "beautiful people". Whatever our nature may ordinarily be, it certainly does not appear to be that of an udumbara. Could it then be that the Sutras are somehow mistaken? Could it actually have been some other kind of flower, more in accord with our more ordinary everyday Buddha Nature?

Somewhat excited by that possibility, I begin exploring the subject. At first I thought it should be a flower that was humble and simple, like some wild flower. Perhaps a daisy or a dandelion. But then, looking at the people going by again, it seemed clear that we are far too tainted with civilization, and too crooked and out of shape for that. Next I thought that more appropriate would be something that could survive only under very special conditions, such as some odd hothouse hybrid. But we are a little too tough and common for that. It should

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be a humble and very homely flower, with great constancy somehow, and adaptable enough to be able to survive even in a modern city. Suddenly the answer seemed to be so obvious. Its a geranium! That udumbara is actually a geranium!

That seemed to make such perfect sense. Geraniums are rather awkward, and not very graceful in limb. Not at all like a ballet dancer. Indeed, they are generally of a somewhat crooked shape, and often seem to be more limb than flower. However they do blossom most faithfully, and with great constancy. I can't imagine a more homely flower. They are definitely not "beautiful people". Nor are we. Geraniums, however, are strong enough to somehow persist, even when civilized and put in pots and mostly neglected. They have a humble kind of beauty which is not at all overwhelming, and they don't get "oohs" and "aahs". They can not be claimed to be something special, but even so, we are won over by them anyway-- by such a modest and faithful smile, such openness and trust. And although they are all too easily broken, they somehow persist, even when faced with great adversity.

So I'd say we ought to be more like geraniums. We should affirm more our original true geranium Buddha Nature. Furthermore, that is not too ambitious a goal. Anyone, anyone at all, can be a geranium.

In meeting people during the course of an ordinary day, I try to remember that the inmost nature of everyone is the Buddha Nature. Ordinarily in Zen practice that would take the form of hailing someone with a short bow from the waist with palms folded. Often this might be only in thought, but with the same kind of spirit. I find this to be a very valuable practice, but also very difficult. However, it becomes so much easier when I remember to think of geraniums. I don't actually say "Hi there, geranium" to someone, but I do find the silent thought to be a great help.

I think it is important to remember the gentler side of Zen, which often tends to be neglected. These days, Zen seems to be far too somber, and there often seems to be so much emphasis on a hard and severe practice with a more macho kind of spirit. But after all, the origins of Zen do actually lie in flowers and smiles.

Namaste,

Ananda

Dear Friends,

I have gathered little "litanies of liberation" over the years which I still sound out when things are foggy for me. They follow below for effect after an excerpt from the insights of a beautiful being in Cardiff, Wales: "Self-Assertion and Self-Negation in Buddhist Psychology", Journal of Humanistic Psychology, Vol 27, No. 2. Spring 1987 175-195. Hear Ye: From David Fontana: "The person who has achieved self-assertion may enjoy apparent happiness in his or her life, and may become an outstanding success in career terms, but unless self-negation is achieved there will be no ultimate satisfaction in anything, because both the self and the things that gratify the self are doomed to impermanence and the sorrow of parting and loss. .... Self-assertion (in the west) is often interpreted as insolence and is suppressed rather than guided and understood. In adult life (in the West) the self-assertive person is valued and rewarded .... And if all else fails men and women can misuse their self-assertion on each other and their children." And I add, on the universe. Anyone interested in child education should read the whole article. **IT IS**

(IN CHILDREN)

**BEAUTIFUL!**

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Gone Gone To The Other Shore  
Gone Beyond Awake! **Fulfilled!**

The Truth Always Near At Hand  
The Way Always Near

The Path Before Me  
Broad and Well Paved

Only requirement: Cease Leaving Self  
In Search of Something External

Have Found the True Path Beyond All Doubt:  
Place myself in the Freedom of the Sky.

**DONT BE MISLED LOOK DIRECTLY, WHAT IS THIS!!**

*Gassho, and much peace!*

CHFL

AceyDuecey: Got your note from Japan. I, too, turn 60 next year. "Progress" is our least important product. But the psycho movement has led to the substitution of "GROWTH" as the new (?) goal. The ULC dwindled because the insiders didn't want to set up the necessary systems for expansion. And, like you, by now, I could care less.

OLE', MARIAN - Welcommen !

KLAUS: there is a book: WHEN SOCIETY BECOMES AN ADDICT by Anne Wilson Schaef, psychotherapist (circa 1986).

IRV THOMAS: 60 years old ? and you anticipate the last third of your life ? NO ! 60 is just the half-way point. By the time 2030 comes around, people of 60 today will clearly have a 120 year life span. They can look forward to 20 or 30 years of an active "middle-aged" life. That is enough for another career: 4 years for another degree, 3 years internship and 15 years of professional development. The 90 year life span is the frozen thinking of 1945.

"- - 'one cannot serve God and Mammon.' For those who would pursue a balance, it need be noted that balance is not a direction but a summarizing concept - - we actually pursue, at any given moment, either a material or a spiritual realization and hope that a balance will result." NO! Proper thinking about polarization or duality is that we all exist (whether we like it or not) in the middle, in the medium, in the vast continuum of grays. Remember the correct answer is: Neither THIS NOR THAT. Because we are alive, where we are is both spiritual AND material, both God AND Mammon.

JOHNNY BOYD: DAVID OLDFIELD: The Psychiatric Institute Foundation Wash.DC: There is now occurring in our socio-culture an Archetypal shift from the Heroic to the Fool - Foolish. For the Fool there are always 360 paths at every moment.

DILEMMA: the Hero is always more articulate whereas the Fool is playing and dancing and can't be bothered to stay and talk: to sit down and be disciplined. The Fool's Assumptions, imagination, fantasies, patterns, and images are not yet articulated.

An archetype's uniform has a mask with a specific lens to see through. Heroic: power brings power images. The Hero HAS a body whereas the Fool IS a body - BEING.

In every accomplishment system there are subversive influences.

PATA-physics = scenes of imaginary solutions - acting as if we know what we are talking about. None of us does anyway, we just fake it. Now we can stop the denial.

The Medicine Wheel is not for making YOUR view-point dominant but merely to bring yours to the gathering - and all others, too. I need them all in order for the wheel to be whole - for myself and others - necessary to heal the earth. We all want to turn the wheel and move around it - seeing out in new ways.

We Americans have lost our collective identity - of who we are - Americans. The culture shifts first to a cult of the old culture (which we purists see as corruption of the old culture). So the population can buy their cult (or a piece of it) but have no culture.



Mythology is the container of time - of the meaningful past, present and future. When the myth falls apart and only the present is available to us, we become lost. Thus pollution, corruption, etc are a destroyed myth IN FACT. "Look what they did to my song". When a myth dies, the Hero is denigrated into a stereotype (Rambo).

From mastery to marriage - from power to freedom [in true and extended freedom there is nothing to rely on other than self]. But beware: ANARCHY goes to license. We fear decay as the reverse of progress.

The Protestant work ethic stands on the theory that one works so as to BE good: ie the fear of being bad (guilt). Fear > control > power and Power accretes: power + wealth + information > more p,w,i. We must shift away from OWNING (control - the Heroes power) to ACCESS (the Fool's freedom from burden) Since nowadays, we can't win, why try (compulsively)? Instead, play the Fool.

DIANE AIMS: Life is both good and evil. Living in our indoctrinated and conditioned USA, we deploy extreme denial mechanisms and try to live at the good pole. But it takes effort, energy, action to acheive that. To become quiescent, we take no action and accept the reality (that which is) - and the totality of it: all that which lies between the poles. There is no sin in reaction - we were made that way by "that which is" and thus we are that.

Sanskrit Mantam HAM-SA (translated I am THOU) comes from YAM-SO (Proto-Indo-European) which translated is I AM THUS. On the in-breath, HAM, hold it one second and on the out-breath, SAAAA, and hold it one second before the next breath. HAM (I AM) and we are INSPIRED. In that condition we experience being full of spirit for an instant. In order to breath out we push the air out = EXPRESS and in that act we EXPRESS the SPIRIT into life - we become an EXPRESSION of GOD. Finally in that moment of emptiness, we experience the void.

The middle road is recommended.

ANANDA be blest: 4th para: "- - conceptual thought - - is a subtle form of grasping." Not so subtle: CONCEPT = CONCEPTUS pp of CONCIPERE: to take to oneself > to take into the mind or womb from CONCEIVE = CONCIPERE (Lat) = COM: comprehensively + CAPERE: to take

= KAP (PIE): grasp = HABEN (Ger), HAVE, HOLD, HEAVY, HAVEN  
= CAPERE (Lat): take, seize  
= CABLE, CAPTURE, CATCH, PERCEIVE, ACCEPT

"New Age - - How one believes is as important as What one believes." How one does NOT believe, also. But more, how one acts - or doesn't.

Salut, Prosit, Namaste, Gesundheit, Luv -  
an' have a Meritricious hollendaze:

