

cloud-hidden friends letter

ISSUE #6, NOV.-DEC. 1983

A Special Issue in Honor
of Alan Watts, 1915-1973.

OUR PAGES ARE YOUR LETTERS

Cloud-Hidden Friends
753 44th Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94121



The "Cloud-Hidden Friends" are a small non-sectarian religious correspondence group. We meet mostly by sharing our thoughts on the Dharma together in our "Letter".

Rather than giving some definition to the word "Dharma", we would rather emphasize the freedom of the individual to come to his own understanding about such. As a group we would aim more at a dialogue, and would emphasize the spirit and practice of the Dharma rather than some doctrinaire or sectarian formula.

In that spirit we look to Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki and Alan Watts as our "honorary founders". Although they are usually associated with Buddhism, and Zen in particular, their spirit was also a free and universal one, including Christianity, Hinduism, and Taoism etcetera. Their Dharma then seems to somehow belong equally to us all.

In a more universal spirit then we are a zen group. However we might also turn to someone like Thomas Merton to exemplify the kind of openness and dialogue we have in mind. In his later years, he commented that he could see no contradiction between Christianity and Buddhism, and that he had determined "to become as good a Buddhist as I can".

Since our pages are your letters, we ask as our "subscription fee" that you write us a letter now and then in the "spirit of the Dharma". Poems, songs, tales, drawings and such are all more than welcome. We will try to publish everything we receive, but this might not always be possible. Letters should be of a reasonable length, and if you so request, we will type them up for you. It is presumed we will forgive each other a few typing errors etcetera, since perfectionism could easily paralyze us.

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

It is our intention to be as democratic in spirit as is possible. It does seem that we do at least need a "Clerk" of some sort to do the photocopying, coordinating, and mailing etcetera. This role might be thought of as similar to that of the "Clerk" in Quakerism, and it seems a good model for us to follow. Your comments on these matters would be appreciated.

Our phrase "Cloud-Hidden" is taken from the title of a book by Alan Watts. He in turn borrowed it from a ninth century 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."

A.C.D., Clerk

178,

Bridge Breckenridge
Harbin Hot Springs
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This friend of mine was telling me that life is a lot easier if people think you're a little bit crazy so I decided to change my name from "Breck" to "Bridge". This was about two days ago so right now I'm having a little trouble remembering what my name is but I think I'll get it down in a couple of months.

Visiting here at Esalen Institute for awhile - a place that Alan Watts contributed greatly during its formative years by drawing large audiences here for his lectures. An image comes to mind from an evening in 1969: Alan co-lecturing with a Hassidic rabbi in the lodge. They were sharing stories, ideas and jokes illustrating the similarities between Zen and Hassidic traditions. At the end of the lecture Fritz Perles walked out of the lecture hall over to the coffee stand making vigorous brushing motions with his hands over his head, shoulders and arms, looked at me and said loudly, "covered with shit! Nothing but shit!" (Later that evening Alan and Fritz were in the hot baths together laughing uproariously)

Fritz used to say that there are only four kinds of language; chickenshit, bullshit, elephantshit and poetry. Alan himself would frequently point out that Zen was a tradition in which the greatest truth is said to be beyond words - outside the mind.

But Alan had a golden tongue, a powerful memory and a sharp wit. We didn't just listen to his lectures. He took us with him. We explored the East and the West, the present and the past, the Judeo-Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist and scientific traditions. The Newtonian and Einsteinian universes. We became wiser than our fathers and forefathers yet kindly and tolerant of their amusing follies and occasionally awed by the wise ones. East meeting West, science meeting mysticism right here in California we were building the foundations for a new age.

People always wondered if Alan was enlightened and hoped that he could give them spiritual counsel. He offered little if any such assistance and often poked fun at gurus, masters, meditation and other spiritual practices, invited no disciples, drank and smoked a lot, left his first wife with two children for a second and then left the second with four children for a third. He ate meat, occasionally smoked grass and experimented with LSD. It seemed that he spent most of his life talking: talking and writing, talking and eating, talking and drinking, talking and smoking. He wrote all those books that everybody was reading in the 50's and 60's and many are still reading now thirty years later. He talked in auditoriums, lecture halls classrooms, bookstores, cruise ships, airplanes, cars living rooms and on radio and television. He apparently stopped talking after he died, but I sometimes wonder about all these new books that are being channeled from somewhere or other.

Many of us around Alan felt that we were a part of an intellectual revolution. Eastern mysticism, particularly Taoism and Zen, were coming to the west and change us, enlighten us and change the world. Now just a few years later there are Zen Centers, human potential centers, Tibetan temples, Yoga groups, cult groups, communities, Moonies, Rajneeshpuram in great numbers taking root and flourishing here in the Pacific Northwest and in other places all over the country. We could never say that Alan was the cause of it all. He was our Herald Angel whose eloquence (elephantshit, bullshit, chickenshit and poetry) is a rich compost that has fertiized our land for the flowering of the new age.

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SEARCHING FOR THE HERMIT IN VAIN

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

Chia Tao

A calligraphic version,
 by Chungliang Al Huang

Dear C H Friends,

Often when we think of old friends whom we used to know we remember where we first met them and all the circumstances surrounding our first encounter.

For me I first remember "meeting" Alan Watts in my buying his Psychotherapy East and West and taking it with me for company while I joined my brother-in-law who wanted to go stripper fishing on the Cape Cod Canal. I had no interest in his sport but felt it might be a great time to get into this book. I planned to curl up under a nice shade tree and see what it was all about. I believe I had just begun to sit Zen (about 18 years ago) and had often heard his name bandied about the zendo.

It was mid July and a perfect summer day. I watched my brother-in-law make a few long casts into the fast running canal and I turned to Alan. For about one hour I became completely engrossed in Alan's text. I could not put it down until my sportsman companion shouted he had hooked onto a good one. I ran down to the rocks and boulders on the edge of the canal and as I did so dropped my paperback deep through a crevasse in the irregular stones and granite. His fish had thrown the hook and was now liberated to the cool waters of the Atlantic again.

Now I started fishing. For the next hour I experienced a most tantalizing and frustrating form of sport. The book was trapped in a large under the rocks enclosure and I could see it being swept in by the thrust of the tide almost where I could reach it through the hole in the top of the cavern. Then it would playfully elude my reach and float away again. This went on, until at last out of reach. My associate I must add would have never picked up such a book much less have brought it to the Cape Cod Canal. He watched me and his line for over an hour when he gave up in disgust at me and his lost fish. It was only a cheap paperback (then \$1.25). How could I almost drown in the canal over such a stupid thing? The day was for him a zero and for me my first tongue tip taste of Alan Watts. It was the beginning of a long relationship with his printed word and his melodious voice via tape. First on WBUR Radio here in Boston for four years. Now we can catch him on WMFO Tufts University. Currently and for the past five years there has been an Alan Watts Fellowship in this area where we listen to a tape on Sunday morning 11:00 A.M. followed by a brunch and good conversation and peopling as he called it in one of his talks. His Electronic University was also here for awhile.

What does all this mean? Anyone who says he knows is lying! Alan remains a threat to most of our goal oriented culture. I suppose many CHF have a notebook of bits of sayings we have all come across which we think may be of importance sometime. In the back of mine I had clipped some quote from Alan in a subculture (what's that?) newspaper. Title: Wander Wonder. He says these two words are probably the same. At the end of his two columns in which he describes how we as the universe are incarnate curiosity and that as long as we are curious we go on living, when we stop we die. He concludes: "After you discover there is really nothing to discover you can wander about the world in a different way. The Chinese poets speak of wandering in the forests, one's thoughts wandering in the great void, of going along with the streams and clouds and birds and not being in search of anything; it is good to just drift." Gratitude, gratitude Alan for your life and ours. I'm going to drift off this page.

Much peace,
Richard

LETTERS RECEIVED

Marian Mountain
Coastlands
Big Sur, CA 93920

181,

Dear HoBo Friends,

Like most Western zen practitioners I was strongly influenced by the writings of Alan Watts. Sometimes I think that Alan comes closest to representing the first original spirit of American zen. What appealed to me most about Alan was the way he acted as a kind of bridge between what he called "beat zen" and square zen". An example of how Alan showed his admiration and respect for teachers at both ends of the zen spectrum is given by Werner Erhard, the iconoclastic founder of the est training. Werner tells of a time when he and Alan were speakers at a seminar in San Francisco. At dinner Werner noticed almost everyone in the dining room was wearing saffron robes. When Alan swept into the room he seemed to know everyone there. Alan greeted each priest warmly in a respectful and correct Buddhist way. When Alan saw Werner, who was seated at the end of a table, his cloak of reverence fell away. Alan threw up his arms and cried, "You rogue, you," and embraced Werner.

As a student of Suzuki Roshi's I was interested in how the two zen teachers got along. I had heard that Alan had called on Suzuki several times at the old Sokoji Temple in San Francisco. One day in the mid 60's I asked Suzuki what he thought of Alan Watts. "I don't understand him," was Roshi's rather cool reply. This answer made me feel like a child whose father has told her, "I don't understand your mother." There was nothing I could say to help Roshi understand Alan but I did think of something I could do which might help bring these two great teachers closer together. A dharma sister of mine, Barbara Heistand, had been a friend and student of Alan Watts before she began practicing zazen under the guidance of Suzuki Roshi. Barbara had mentioned to me that Alan would be giving a seminar at her Los Altos home in a few weeks. I suggested to Barbara that she invite Suzuki Roshi to the seminar. She did and Suzuki accepted the invitation with enthusiasm.

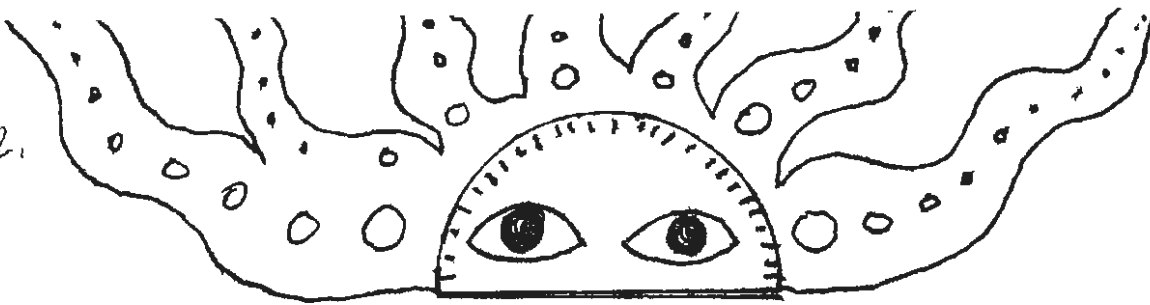
The plan worked. From all the reports I heard later, including an animated one from Suzuki himself, the Zen master thoroughly enjoyed the experience and gained a better understanding of Alan's bodhisattva spirit by watching him in action. This was the beginning of a warmer and more intimate friendship between the two teachers.

If Watts and the two Suzukis were alive today I'm sure they all would understand and strongly support the broad zen spirit expressed in the Cloud-Hidden Friends Letter.

With palms together,

Marian

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"My home is aboard the ferryboat Vallejo which is tied up at the north end of Sausalito close to San Francisco. You may think a ferryboat is a rather weird place to live. But I've always loved weird things."

-- ALAN W. WATTS

* * * *

Dear Cloud-People:

I moved to California in the spring of 1978, so I never got to meet Alan Watts in person. However, his work and spirit has had a profound effect on my life, and that is why I often refer to him as my "spiritual guru."

In 1982 I put an ad in a Russian River newspaper, under the "personals" column, for the purpose of developing new friendships outside the city. I received a note from a man named Bill Watkins, advising me he lived in both the Russian River and Sausalito. I called him and during the conversation he mentioned he was once good friends with Alan Watts & Jean Varda. I was intrigued since I had always wanted to visit the S.S. VALLEJO (the old ferryboat Watts & Varda lived on) in Sausalito. Bill invited me for lunch.

I asked the bus driver in San Francisco to let me off at GATE 5 in Sausalito. I got off the bus and found myself in the midst of a narrow winding road near the waterfront, where a proliferation of old, interesting, rusty mailboxes were struggling to survive amid the tangled weeds. Many times I had passed by this area, en route to the Flea Market, and always wondered what mysteries were hidden beyond my immediate range of perception.

I followed the road a short distance and came upon a small weather-worn sign: VALLEJO. "This is it!" I exclaimed, and from that moment on I seemed to be walking on air. I stood in front of the old ferryboat utterly amazed, gazing at the huge mass of seableached splinters. A colorful, mystical archway on the gangplank curiously reminded me of a resplendent sun, or a foreboding octopus, with two large eyes that seemed to be staring back at me in awe. A gentle fog was hovering over the bay, and everything seemed to sway in the wind. I stood there silent, alone, watching a hundred Renaissance flags flap in the wind, and listened to the tinkle of windchimes. The sea and sky seemed to be married in a metaphysical bliss! Everything was pervaded with the essence of a mysterious elan vital.

I walked across the parking lot and saw Bill standing in his yard opposite the ferryboat. We introduced ourselves and he invited me inside and prepared a delicious chinese lunch. We sat talking about Watts and Varda, then I asked if it would be possible for me to go aboard the boat. He took me aboard and introduced me to Marion Saltman, a wonderful woman, who has kept the Vallejo afloat for the last 12-13 years. She was a humanistic psychologist, conducts art shows on the boat, as well as play therapy sessions for burned-out adults. She, too, had been a good friend of Watts and his widow Jano.

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The interior of the boat was full of Varda paintings, plants, folk art, mystical objects, instruments, a wonderful old puppet stage, a long handbuilt table, a papier mache horse hanging from the ceiling, unusual rugs, wooden art structures, a sandbox: a potpourri of colorful bohemian debris haphazardly strewn about in a fascinating array. Referring to the dust, Marion said, "It's not easy trying to keep Watts out of the corners!"

During the weeks that followed Marion went to the hospital for a hip operation, and I was inspired to do a primitive painting of Alan Watts, wearing a long robe, a halo around his head, and standing with outstretched arms on the gangplank of the Vallejo smiling. I visited Marion and gave it to her for the boat. She was delighted and invited me to have an Art Show in the beautiful gallery aboard the ferryboat. It was the answer to my prayers!

Since then I've had the pleasure of meeting Jano Watts, Virginia Goldstein (Varda's widow), and a host of other Watts devotees. I even wrote to my friend Lee Baker -- then living in Florida -- who had always liked Watts' books, and arranged for him to come to California and live with Marion on the Vallejo.

"Gate Five carries an occult meaning in sundry ancient mythology," wrote Kenneth Anger. "In ancient pictographs, the city, the center of culture, has four pedestrian gates. These are tangible; they can be seen; physical entrance can be shown. But the city also has a fifth gate, which cannot be shown because it is not tangible, and can be entered only in a metaphysical way. This is the gate to illusion."

For those of you have not yet had the experience of visiting the Vallejo, I urge you to do so. Perhaps you can add your own creative contributions to her allure -- as she continues to follow "the watercourse way."

With Gasshō,

Joe Lawrence Lembo
P.O. Box 99444
San Francisco 94109



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IN HONOR OF ALAN WATTS

Surely one of the most fundamental teachings of Buddhism is that everyone has the Buddha Nature. Or maybe I should say everyone and everything, since all of nature is included. Buddhist art often conveys that sense, particularly in Chinese landscape painting of the Zen and Taoist schools. Mountains and rivers half-hidden in the clouds, and perched on some precipitous cliff will maybe be a tiny little tea house where two old friends sit taking it all in, telling stories and composing haiku, and laughing uproariously about something, about what I can only wistfully wonder. D.T. Suzuki in his books manages to somehow convey much of the same quality. It is the kind of thing that Alan Watts loved so deeply.

Admittedly this is a much idealized image of Zen that does not easily mesh with the world in which we actually find ourselves. Commenting on the matter, Alan used to say that he didn't find it so difficult to perceive the Buddha Nature in mountains and trees, but when it came to London taxicabs, that was something else again. He would add that it was his lifelong ambition to perceive the Buddha Nature of a London taxicab. From what I hear that is setting up quite a goal, and I'm not completely certain that he ever got that far.

Although taxicabs are not my problem, realizing the Buddha Nature in my own everyday life is. My lifelong ambition is not very different from Alan's. Having been at such for a long time now, I can certainly say it is not easy.

On the other hand I am convinced there are moments in all of our lives when we perceive something like the Buddha Nature, even if infrequently and only in some vague intuitive way. The occasion might be a beautiful sunset, a flower, a humble old monk, a waitress, the stars, or washing the dishes. Or it might be in regard to some great saint of the past that we respect and love, like Bodhidharma, St. Francis, Ramakrishna, or D.T. Suzuki, although he might here object. Even so, it is still true that the Buddha Nature is in everyone.

Given that we all sometimes perceive the Buddha Nature, such a moment seems to call for something more than some event entirely within ones own head, like perhaps some cry of joy or something. That is particularly a problem for many of us with a Protestant background, like myself. We have no sign of the cross, mudras, or mantras. I remember for example being in Jerusalem a number of years ago, standing before the tomb of Christ. I felt overwhelmed, but didn't know what to do. I just stood there, with my bare face hanging out. Suddenly it occurred to me that I could bow, just as I had learned to do when studying Soto Zen in Japan. So I bowed from the heart, and that seemed to fit perfectly.

It might be fair to say that in Soto, bowing in good spirit is the essence of practice. Do a good job of that, and everything else ought to naturally follow along behind. Just hail the Buddha Nature in everyone and everything, and when we meet we bow to the Buddha Nature that is within you, and within me. Usually it is a quarter bow from the waist, with hands held in gassho, palms together held in front of chest, bowing so to the Buddha, to the saints of the past, to one's ancestors, to loved ones now gone, to ones seat, to the rice bowl, to the bathtub, and to all.

Obviously in Soto there is the danger of it all becoming a mere formality, and it is true that is what often happens. Nevertheless bowing is a kind of universal archetype. It is something one can actually do with ones body, rather than just another intellectual trip.

Early in the morning then you can find me in front of my little home altar lighting a candle and bowing, bowing also to those of the past whom I respect and love, including a very special bow to one Alan Watts. My little ceremony sometimes is accompanied by words, but I'm at least half convinced that what is more deeply eloquent is lighting a candle and bowing silently.

That sounds as if I'm talking more about love than Zen. Actually Zen is rather soft-hearted inside, although it likes to swagger around with a kind of macho exterior. However it soon goes back to bowing to the patriarchs, teacups, and cherry blossoms.

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Certainly one of the characteristic features of Zen is its emphasis on silence. 185,
Other schools emphasize sutras, mantras, chanting and such, towards which I am somewhat inclined myself. Indeed there is a short mantra which has become very important to me, partly because I think it so perfectly expresses the spirit of bowing. It is just one word, "Namo" (nah-mo), meaning "to give homage to, venerate, salute; an exclamation of adoration". It is derived from the Sanskrit root "namati" meaning "to bow". Many of the great mantras open with it, such as "Namo Amida Buddha", "Nam Myo Ho Renge Kyo", "Namo Tasa Bhagavato Arhato Samma Sambuddhasa", and "Namo Bhagavatyai Arya-Prajnaparamitayai". In all of these Namo has the sense of being an exclamation of adoration, and sometimes it appears alone as such. Adoration of what? I would say to the Buddha Nature which is in each and everyone of us, Namo to the great open sky, to a flower, and to a London taxicab.

There is a passage in the Lotus Sutra that warns of the dire fate of those who are so gross as to go through an entire lifetime without uttering a single Namo. I don't think much of the effectiveness of such warnings but I would agree that there must be at least a few moments in everybody's life that call for a bow from the heart, maybe accompanied by something like Namo.

Sometimes then in my little morning service I might exclaim "Namo Bodhidharma! Namo D.T. Suzuki! Namo Alan!". I don't know if it would work to Namo a London taxicab or not. Maybe that would be getting a little too ambitious. To those we love however, it is easy.

I often think of Alan as a great teacher. He certainly has been so for me. It would seem then his name ought to somehow reflect that. I sometimes call him Dai Yu Alan, meaning great hero or great founder. He was given such a title posthumously in his crossing over ceremony back in 1973. That ceremony by the way was half Christian and half Zen, as might be expected from one who delighted in crossing over boundaries. On that occasion he was given the Zen title of "Dai Yu In Yu Zan Myo Ko Dai Zen Jo Man". You can see why I have shortened it a bit to the first two words, Dai Yu. In full it means "Great Hero, Alan Watts, founder, opener of the Great Zen Samadhi Gate".

For those of a Zen persuasion, that would be a good name for him. A few of his old friends however half playfully and half seriously call him Alan Paramhansa, and I feel drawn to that myself. It too means "Great Teacher", and more literally "Great Swan", the swan being a symbol of the Absolute in Indian Mythology. I'm not so sure there are very many who think of Alan as a Great Swan, but another possible translation is "wise old bird", and I think many would agree that fits him rather well.

Mythologically the swan is said to be able to separate milk from water, or the divine essence from the confusion of this world. That does remind me of Alan, who seemed to get at the heart of it, to sift it all out somehow, whether the subject was Christianity, Buddhism, psychedelics, or whatever.

The Hamsa symbolism is sometimes also in the form of two swans representing the Absolute, one called Ham, and the other Sa. Also Ham is said to be the sound of our outbreath, and Sa of our inbreath. Thus whether we know it or not we are all repeating "Hamsa, Hamsa", the name of the Absolute. It can also be regarded as being "Sa Ham, Sa Ham", with the meaning "That I Am" (sa-aham). I would say the two together make a beautiful mantra indeed.

In any case Alan was some kind of wise old bird, and with considerable justification he might be referred to, half playfully and half seriously, as Alan Paramhansa.

I can't help but noting that as I finish this letter we are left with the sound of our own breath.

Gassho,

Ananda Claude Dalenberg,
753 44th Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94121

1961

Original 1973 Ceremony as Published in the Windbell

CEREMONIES OF CROSSING OVER

ALAN WATTS

(1915-1973)

*Led by: Zentatsu Baker-roshi
Kobun Chino-sensei
Claude Dalenberg*

Roshi:

All your ancient karma
From beginningless time
Born of body, speech and mind
Is now fully resolved.

All your ancient karma
From beginningless time
Born of body, speech, and mind
Is now fully resolved.

All your ancient karma
From beginningless time
Born of body, speech and mind
Is now fully resolved.

Let us recite the ten names of Buddha:

Everyone:

Homage to Dharmakaya Vairochana Buddha,
Homage to Sambhogakaya Lochana Buddha,
Homage to Nirmanakaya Shakyamuni Buddha,
Homage to the future Maitreya Buddha,
Homage to all Buddhas in the ten directions,
past, present and future,
Homage to Manjusri the perfect wisdom Bodhisattva,
Homage to Samantabhadra the shining practice Bodhisattva,
Homage to the many Bodhisattva Mahasattvas,
Homage to the Maha Prajna Paramita.

Roshi:

Alan, as you well know, there are four practices in Buddhism:

The first is the Precepts, knowing how to survive, finding out how to live in this world. And you knew well how to survive, and taught us all, this whole society, how to live, in so many ways you taught us. I now give you all the Precepts, the True Mind of Buddha that sounds as thunder.

And the second practice is understanding, wisdom, Prajna, the transforming light that through your clarity led so many of us into wiser paths.

The third practice is compassion, putting yourself in the place of others, knowing the ultimate concern and care for the world and its beings—animate and inanimate—service. And you have served us so well, showing us the true meaning of this vow.

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The fourth is the lineage. The understanding that is out of time and yet one with it. That is for all ages, all world systems, and yet one with this present age, the understanding and being of the universal source of all wisdom, all light and life.

And so I give you a Buddhist name now, to recognize this lineage, a name based on your home place, Druid Heights, where you felt so comfortable, and where you peacefully left this world. Yū Zan Myō Kō, Profound, Mysterious Mountain of Subtle, Penetrating, Transforming Light: Profound Mountain, Subtle Light; and because you are a great hero, a great founder of a new spiritual world; founder, opener of the Great Zen Samadhi Gate, I give you this title, Dai Yū In in front of your name, and Dai Zen Jō Mon after your name. A title given very rarely, once a generation or a century.

Dai Yū In Yū Zan Myō Kō Dai Zen Jō Mon:

Please take refuge in the Buddha.
Please take refuge in the Dharma.
Please take refuge in the Sangha.

Please completely take refuge in the Buddha.
Please completely take refuge in the Dharma.
Please completely take refuge in the Sangha.

Now you have completely taken refuge in the Buddha.
Now you have completely taken refuge in the Dharma.
Now you have completely taken refuge in the Sangha.

Roshi returned to his seat and chanted the 'Mantra of the Secret Treasure of the Gate of Sweet Dew,' three times, preceded by the Dharma drum which faded as he began to chant and rose again each time he finished.

Chino-sensei then offered tea and said:

With formless form you have come.
With formless form you are going.
This is how you are with us—
We are with you—
Showing what is the nature of awakening.
We are very grateful.

Claude Dalenberg then offered sweet water and said:

O Monk of mind
Broad as the sky
Not clinging
To any special Dharma.
Going, going beyond going!
The word of the Buddha
Knows no discrimination.
Thus he gave.
A gentle rain of the Dharma falls on this land.
We are grateful.

1988

Roshi then offered food. After the Flame Lighting Mudra—the circling of the flame clockwise and counter-clockwise—Roshi said:

Alan, Dai Yū In Yū Zan Myō Kō Dai Zen Jō Mon,
Here is your lineage from Buddha through the Buddhas
and Patriarchs to you.

Alan Watts was a philosopher, a poet, a calligrapher, a
lover, a friend, a Dharma reveller, a revealer, a
great founder of the spirit for all of us.

He saw the true emptiness of all things.

He taught us to be free. To see through the multiplicities
and absurdities to the Great Universal Personality
and Play.

He gave us the Dharma Eye of a new age.

Our blessings go with You now.

Wide Mind, Joyous Mind, Careful Loving Mind.

For the true life is beyond life and death, origination
and extinction.

We are with you in the many paths you opened for us.

HOoooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!

Go! Go! Great Hermit! Great Founder!

Philip Whalen then read a tribute written for Alan by Gary Snyder:

He blazed out the new path for all of us,
and came back and made it clear. Explored
the side canyons and deer trails, and
investigated cliffs and thickets.

Many guides would have us travel single
file, like mules in a pack train, and
never leave the trail. Alan taught us
to move forward like the breeze—tasting
the berries, greeting the blue jays, learning
and loving the whole terrain.

Roshi then shook his staff and said:

Alan gave this monk's staff to Suzuki-roshi at Tassajara monas-
tery, and Suzuki-roshi gave it to me before he died. Suzuki-roshi
used it at my Abbott's Installation Ceremony, the last ceremony
he ever performed. Now I shake it for you, Alan, to help you
on your way.

*After the priests chanted the Shariraimon, the family and friends offered incense
while everyone chanted the Dai Hi Shin Dharani followed by the Maha Prajna
Paramita Hridaya Sutra in English and Japanese.*

Roshi:

We have offered light, tea, sweet water, food, flowers,
And we have chanted many things for you,
O Alan
May your great spirit rest
And may we rest and move with you
Coursing in this new peace you have shown us.
Blessings on you and all beings, animate and inanimate.

Green Gulch Farm Zendo November 18, 1973



Crossing Over Ceremony

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SOME READINGS RECOMMENDED BY ALAN WATTS
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* Only those items cited in at least 3 of Alan Watts' books are here included. The full original list includes over 600 separate items. A bibliography of Alan Watts' own publications is included, but is not intended as authoritative or complete. The original list was prepared for use as a "further-reading guide" for an on-going discussion group on the philosophy of Alan Watts in San Francisco. Copies of the full list are available. Suggestions and inquiries are invited. Please write the Bodhi Friends, 753 44th Av., San Francisco, CA 94121.
 Note that the Alan Watts Library is now under the care of Zen Center, at 300 Page St. in San Francisco. Its permanent home will be at Z.C. in Green Gulch.

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1. This is issue #6, a special issue honoring Alan Watts, 1915-1973, this being the tenth year of his crossing over.

The original funeral ceremony back in 1973 was half Christian and half Zen Buddhist, as might be expected from one who had little use for sectarian boundaries. Note that it includes a poem by Gary Snyder, who was amenable to having his own contribution to this issue in that form. The ceremony itself is I think quite interesting, and certainly is a departure from the ordinary.

The bibliographical list was contributed by the Bodhi Friends, via A. C. Dalenberg. Note that the full list is available by writing in care of the C.H.F. Letter.

Our next issue should be out a little before Christmas.

2. Al Huang (see calligraphy, page 3) is the editor and co-author of Alan's book; Tao: The Watercourse Way (Pantheon, New York).
3. Alan Marlowe writes that he is helping in a fund-raising campaign for a World Peace Center at Lumbini Garden, the birthplace of the Buddha in Nepal. He has been asked to write an article on the subject of peace and needs help. He would welcome your ideas, and also needs literature on the History and extent of the peace movement, and names and addresses of organizations active in such. Write him at P.O. Box 956, Boulder, Co. 80306.
4. Marian Mountain writes: "Even though I bow to the bodhisattva spirit that prompted the clerk to ask for volunteers to send dumb letters so potential contributors wouldn't be scared off by what the clerk felt was the too high quality of recent contributions I think the suggestion was dumb. If there is a problem, and I'm not sure there is, I don't feel it has anything to do with perfection. After all good writing is nothing more than clearly expressed writing. If you are interested in communicating you surely want to try to express yourself clearly. But there may be a potential problem. This is the one of slipping into a purely intellectual discussion group. Whenever I send out a sample issue to someone I feel might be interested in reading and contributing to the CHFL I suggest they tell something about themselves in their first letter. It isn't egoistic to tell people where you are coming from. It's friendly. So please: no more dumb letters: more personal letters."
5. We are planning to assemble all of the six 1983 issues into one stapled-together volume. They are available to all of you but the photocopying costs for such are considerable. We then ask for a contribution when ordering. Ten dollars would not be far off the mark. This also would provide newcomers a chance to catch up with the rest of us. As the months go by, this is beginning to be a problem. As for the current issue, it will continue to be at no charge.

Ho !

Ananda Dalenberg
Clerk