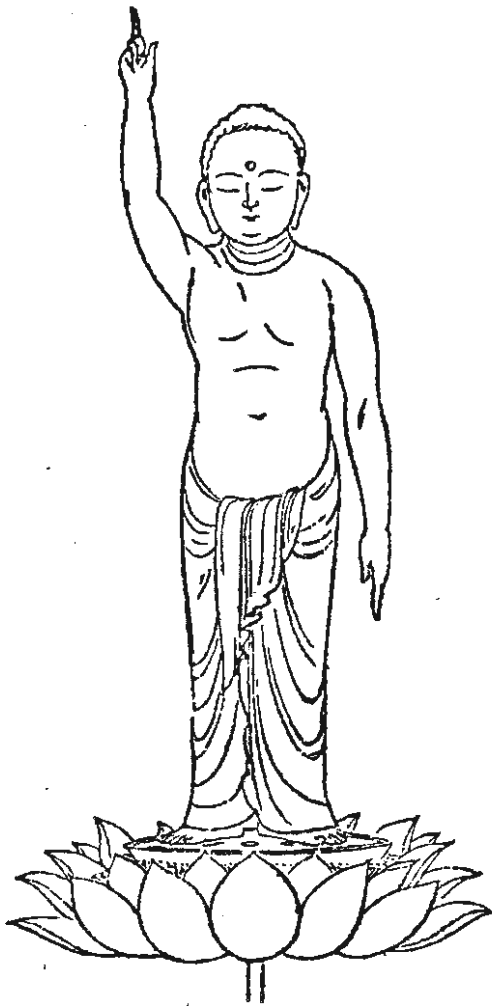


cloud-hidden friends letter

ISSUE #23 Second Issue of 1987



The Buddha's Birth

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

NEWS & NOTES

This is the second CHF issue of 1987, a little late as usual. As a matter of fact, such delays have become so frequent that it would seem best not to plan on any definite schedule. Instead, future issues will come out whenever it seems appropriate, although at least several issues a year can be expected.

Those of you having difficulty in finding some topic to write about for the CHF might try telling about some book which has been important to you in your life and practice. I keep on hearing about books both old and new which probably are real gems, but in one lifetime there is no way I can begin to keep up with it all. However, if we could share our discoveries with each other it might be of some real help.

The CHF has as its honorary founders D.T. Suzuki, Alan Watts, Nyogen Senzaki, and Shunryu Suzuki Roshi. This is perhaps quite meaningful to those of us of the older generation, but it may appear to be mostly a matter of ancient history to the newer generation. At this point then it might be best to dispense with the "honorary founder" thing, since what the CHF is all about seems to be quite clear without such. Your comments on this matter would be appreciated.

There was a time not many years ago when it seemed necessary to go to Asia if one wanted to really study Buddhism. Now there seem to be meditation centers everywhere, and study programs abound. This summer there are several interesting conferences. The Conference on World Buddhism in North America is one in particular, from July 10-17. For information write Zen Buddhist Temple, 1214 Packard Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104. 313-761-6520.

You all probably know that Trungpa Rinpoche passed away recently. His many students must feel a great loss. He was a great teacher, and he has made a profound contribution to Buddhism in the West.

Trungpa Rinpoche was a good friend of Suzuki Roshi, and always kept a picture of him on his altar. He once told of how lonely he felt when he first came to America. He looked everywhere for a real Dharma friend, and finally met Suzuki Roshi. Summing up how he felt about getting to know him, he exclaimed "Oh how long I have waited, and now at last my friend, Suzuki Roshi - someone who isn't trying to shove his trip down my throat!" Now that sums up the problem of human relations rather well, I'd say, and it might provide a great lesson for all of us.

Ananda Dalenberg

MORNING PRAYER (with Old-fashioned air)

2. Salutations

To all the gods,
 old and new--
 Chaque Wak-an Tanka Masau,
 Allen & Gary & Henry M.,
 Anais & Pablo & Sappho,
 Black Elk, DeNeal, Cristos,
 Mohammed Allah Rama Krishna,
 Trickster,
 Coyote
 Raven Queztlcoatl,
 Cronos Zeus
 Diana
 Apollo,
 Prometheus
 Bacchus Dionysius
 & Pan,
 Chief Joseph, Helen,
 To the great seven Muses of ancient Greece,
 the great seven gates of ancient Thebes
 & the 77 wonders of the world. . .
 To all the other gods and goddesses!
 And to Maya, Madre de Dios,
 & el Senor Gautama Siddhartha Sakyamuni
 Buddha, el Dios Grande!

12.26.86

Berkeley

Norm Moser

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For the CHF, Family, and All
January.

Deneal Amos
New Canaan Academy
Canaan St., RR 1 Box 87
Canaan, NH 03471

Birthdāy number 59 approaches (Thursday the 22nd). Not young - not old.
The impulse to reflection beats strongly in the arteries of the mind.

Trained, educated, experienced, will I ever be confidently skilled? It's
an interesting time to have this question arise because this is a year I've felt
good and good about even though the ratio of ups and downs has not changed that
much. I think the question masks some still lingering hope of managing life or
controlling outcomes.

I understand now that my father, when he used to tell me that he didn't
understand the world I lived in, was not complaining to my defensive ears but
confessing to a growing realization he would have to forgive without understanding.
I asked him once how it felt to turn 63. He answered "I thought that by the
time I was 60 I'd have everything figured out. But the times just keep changing
and the changes seem to be more frightening. I find myself just learning how to
be 63."

I've been, in my worldly mind, a utopian since I was twelve. Do you ever
wonder if you would be at home in the world you're trying to create?

Our practice has three basic exercises: sitting meditation, T'ai Chi and
Zen Basketball (anything). One of the exercises we do before we do the T'ai Chi
is a very slow motion arm stretching called the I Ching. This exercise brings
about a change in our sense of the timing of life and with it a sense of calm-
ness and well being that we ordinarily imagine to be dependent upon a change in
our empirical circumstances. I feel better as I relax and become centered. I
can do this anytime. So where is this utopia I seek? What is the nature of
creativity?

In our warm New Hampshire dining room are flies fighting the panes that cut
them off from the (sic) outside world. In the dining room they can live forever,
but like my thoughts they are constantly struggling to get out, find a little
excitement, go find a robin to bite.

See y'all down the road, y'hear?

Yours,



Dear Cloud-Hidden Friends:

Greetings to one and all!

I feel compelled, like many of you in recent issues, to open by expressing a deep sense of gratitude to all who participate in this effort. The CHF provides untold sustenance for me in this too lonely business of self reflection. Your thoughts and comments are consumed immediately upon arrival, and read again at a slower pace over the interim weeks and months. This effort of ours fills needs at many different levels for me, and, I am certain, for many others, so, please, all of you, continue to write and share.

In going over several past issues, I found myself looking for Marian Mountain's letter in Issue #20, wherein she expresses some ambivalence over her diminished desire or need for zazen.

I've thought about your comments and concerns over and again Marian. I don't recall when, but in and around that same period (of your letter), Ananda wrote about his changing attitudes and impressions concerning practice. Kenneth Rexroth addressed this also in an interview for Zero.

Tets Unno once said that at a variety of levels, all traditions eventually turn to the Pure Land teaching of Shinran; that is to say that our own desire for spiritual progress inevitably gets in the way of any lasting "progress." True or not, it seems to me that many among us do move in altogether unexpected directions when it comes to our "practice." And from what I have observed, one of these directions is or has something to do with the flowering of some kind of spiritual maturity. After years of sustained effort, practice seems to become internalized and the accumulated effect of that effort begins to express itself in ways difficult to understand. At any rate, one of the more tangible results seems to be the letting go of the need for our props and impliments, our scripts and roles.

My Mother-in-law has been a staunch Catholic for over 70 years now; a woman of prayer. When I first married my wife, almost 20 years ago, my Mother-in-law wore her Catholicism like a banner and used it like a club: family gatherings were called for every conceivable religious holiday, priests were invited, the rosary dutifully recited; confessions that one had not attended church were met with powerful silence and disapproval.

Over the years though, the demands she placed on herself and others lessened. For a while I thought it was old age; but now I see it differently. I see that she simply does not need all that stuff anymore. What I mean is that she doesn't seem to need to play a role anymore; she has let go. If she can make it, and she usually does, once a day in church is enough; if she can't, well there's always tomorrow. No longer does she pressure or even ask if the children have gone to church; but she is always pleased to find out that they did. But she is a master of prayer--standing prayer, sitting and kneeling prayer, bus prayer, t.v. prayer and reclining prayer. She carries her church and her Jesus inside and all of life has become a place and expression of prayer; join her or not, it's all the same.

I was not aware or attentive when my Mother-in-law was making this transition of letting go, but Marian's comments made me look carefully at my own feeling when (quite the reverse of her), after many years of not sitting, I recently felt a very strong urge to do so. I've been amazed at the anxiety I've experienced. "I practice Jodo Shinshu; what am I doing?" "What kind of example am I setting when I say 'you don't need it,' while all the while I am in fact scrambling for my pillow each day?"

Why all of this angst? What I think we've run up against Marian (i should

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really only speak for myself) is what Lynn Olson has referred to as the religious self, the religious personality. This self is the collection and reflection of the props, costumes, scripts and roles we use and cling to to assure ourselves that we are, in fact, doing something religious or spiritual. And when we find ourselves drifting away from all of this structure that defines our spiritual life, we experience anxiety and, or a host of other feelings, when, in fact, from a "Buddhist" point of view, this drifting away from the known and into the unknown, the undefined, and doing so without the attending angst, is not only a sign of some kind of maturity, but probably the best "example" we can set, despite what we may urge others to do. What do you think?

Searching in vain for Amida,
While...all the while,
He peers over my shoulder,
Amused and accepting.

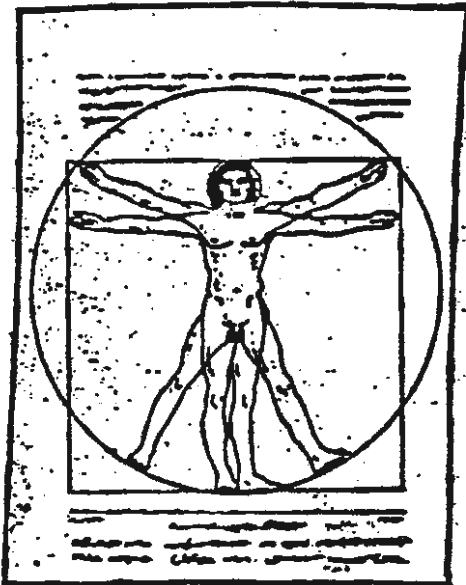
Gassho,

Jerry
Jerry Polick
San Francisco

P.S. Been thinking of an outline for a possible course:

JODOSHINSHU BUDDHISM "1A"

PLAN A



PLAN B



IT'S NOT HOW WELL WE LIVE OUR LIVES --
BUT HOW WELL WE ADJUST TO PLAN B

dear cloud-hidden friends;

like all correspondents who are not authentic letter-writers, I have let matters slide and owe my fellow-travellers a note: and there really was a love stamp in my last issue of CHF. I was intrigued by Loren's letter; there are such things as portable shrines, but, "Ascent of Amida"? Are you sure? I would think it was a descent; or what is known in jodo-shu as raigo! Did he have any bodhisattvas with him? Were there any purple threads showing? Also, I am not sure that the San Jose Betsuin is the only traditional style temple in North America---I have been told, however, that its height was shortened to accomodate local earthquake codes.

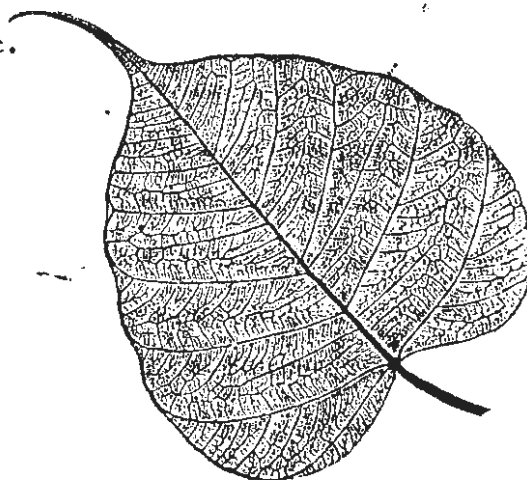
Of all things: A family friend presented me with a bonsai tree on new year's day: reminding me that a fundamentalist preacher tpld Miura san that Japanese has the souls of bonsai, not realizing that the reference may contain a hidden bit of wisdom, if only he had ability to stop, look, and listen!

"A shadow in the round mirror in the tower of a millionaire,
or a silhouette in the square mirror in the palace of the Chin Emperor;
Who knows where they have come from?"

a few months ago I read a rotten review of an excellent little book with a very wrong title (however): The Tantric Poetry of Kobo Daishi: Put together by Morgan Gibson and Hiroshi Murakami. The reviewer (English Buddhist) said the poetry was not good (it was not zen haiku!), and she quoted the well-known axiom that a poem must BE, insisting that this information was gleaned from William Carlos Williams (sic). What a mish-mash of misinformation. Actually, the TEN IMAGES OF KOBO DAISHI presented by Murakami and Gibson was very well done.

AT REXROTH'S GRAVE

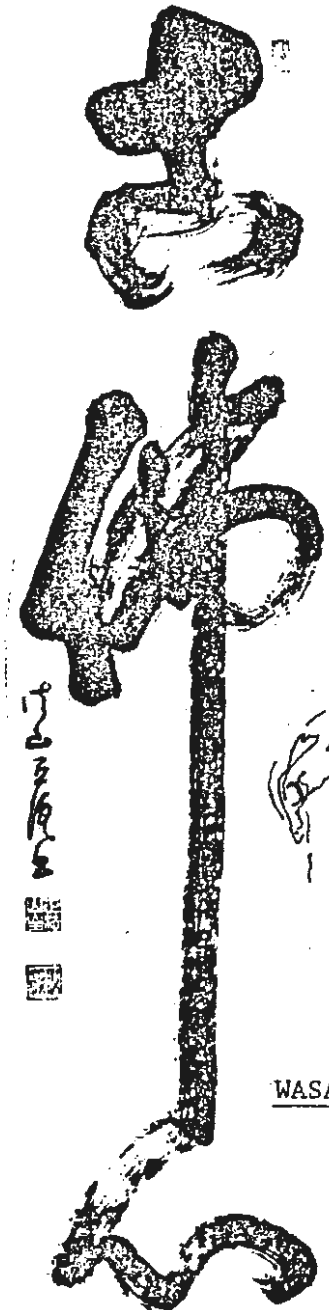
Off the bluff, white sails wind
Among oil rigs pumping the Pacific.
Every grave but Rexroth's
Faces toward the sea.
He faces the continent
Alone, an old explorer,
Hawk-eyed, sharp tongued
Walking inland with his oar.



---Sam Hamill

Gibson is an authority on Rexroth, and just published a good source book on him. I mention Rexroth, because I'm sure he is one of our spiritual heroes in the cloud-hidd pantheon.

Gibson has studied rinzai and soto zen, shingon, and Tibetan Buddhism.



WASAN:

rebirth
endless
enactment of sakyamuni's biography
leading all forms of life to bliss and peace

WASAN:

bodhisattva assemblies
sravakas
men
devas
excel in wisdom
in a land of serenity --
equal in
body marks
adornments
recognized everywhere
in all worlds



I do not know how to put this famous scroll into English: I give up! Does it mean that "FROM ANTIQUITY COMES THE BUDDHA-MIND" ? (kō busshin)

E.B.S.

Dear Cloud-Hidden Friends,

Even as I write, snow is falling in my Denver Yard. Still, I know Spring is on the way. A few brave croci are showing in the neighbor's front garden. I am looking forward to picnic time. (Picnic- from Fr. Piquer, to pick and nique , Fr. trifle. (Yellow mouse, you have gotten me to look things up.) I have just found nice, for example. It is old French for stupid. Now for a poem in the same language!

Mangez sur l'herbe

Eat on the grass

Dépêchez- vous

Hurry up

Un jour ou l'autre

One day or the other

l'herbe mangera sur vous!

The grass will eat on you!

Well, next week is Mardi Gras- Fat Tuesday. In English, Shrove Tuesday, from O.E. scrifan, to write- a day for confessing. Funny I always thought it was from shrivel. (O. Norse for shrink, wither and wrinkle.) After Shrove Tuesday comes Ash Wed. This is followed by 40 days of prayer and fasting. (Sundays and Holidays excepted.) Then comes Good Friday, Holy Sat. and Easter Sunday. The meaning of these events has been locked up in the folklore of the Mediterranean for so long it is hard to separate the two. Imagine a Judean teacher, a fully aware person. He is disposed of by Roman colonial officials for treason, disloyalty to the King- Emperor and heresy. (Take your choice.) Later, when a cult based on his ideas becomes the established church of the empire that done him in, blame for his execution is shifted to locals of his own race. Can anyone separate Yeshua Ben Yousef (A.K.A. Jesus) and his ideas from the two millenia of " stuff" which has accumulated around him? Many other governments and religious groups have exploited his personality for their own use.

Back to Spring for a moment. What then of Spring, Easter and another celebration of the Equinox, Hana Matsuri? A Neisi friend of mine, a priest , once told me, " The little old ladies in my congregation don't know the difference between Easter and Hana Matsuri, the flower festival!" This recalls the birth of the Buddha when he stepped forth from the womb and said, " I am Lord of Heaven and Earth!" Flowers rained from the sky that day. It is observed with a flowered canopy and pouring sweet tea over a statue of the baby Buddha. It is a charming ritual and a special time for children. There is also Ohanami, the cherry blossom festival. This always involves a picnic and sometimes , a liberal consumption of sake beneath the trees.

Earlier we talked about New Year celebrations. Here is an idea for a Spring celebration. Take a picnic out to a blossoming tree and pour sweet tea or Asti Spumate (diet Pepsi?) over someone you love and say, " You are Lord of Heaven and Earth!" Spring should be given special notice. It is more than just the beginning of the tanning season! Get off your zafu or your prayer rug, put down your mala or you'oo-juzu and get outside. Enjoy!

Here is a koan: Why did Susuki Roshi have a disciple drive him to G.G. park to see the cherry blossoms and have him drive away without getting out and smelling them? Maybe it was chilly out. I am sure I could not have resisted. Maybe you get used to cherry blossoms after a while... in another fifty or 75 years or so.

In Gassho,

Lorin Paull

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Ananda Claude Dalenberg

Dear Fellow Students:

The "Light of Asia" by Sir Edwin Arnold has long been an important book to me. It is poem about the life of the Buddha, in blank verse and about one hundred pages long. It is based mostly upon Asvaghosha's poem, adapted somewhat to suit Western needs.

It represents a side of Buddhism which is very helpful in understanding how it has been possible for Buddhism to become the faith of so many common people everywhere, rather than being limited to a relatively few monastic and philosophical types. Buddhism is also a religion of the people, and of the heart.

The Light of Asia was first published in 1879, and has gone through well over a hundred editions since. At one time it was amazingly popular, and it is probably the most often-read book about Buddhism in the English language. It is not unlikely that one's grandparents were at least somewhat familiar with the book. The New England transcendentalists championed it. Oliver Wendell Holmes thought so highly of it he compared it to the New Testament. Yet serious students of Buddhism today are often only vaguely aware of it. Perhaps one reason is that today our tastes in poetry have changed so greatly from the Victorian era. I don't think it is merely a matter of fashion however, and I suspect that the Light of Asia is a classic that will continue to be around for at least a few centuries more.

Sir Edwin Arnold was a great pioneering interpreter of Indian religion to the West. He was important not only for his translations, but also in helping with various Buddhist causes. For example he led for years a struggle to return Bodhgaya to Buddhist hands, as seemed right for the place where the Buddha attained enlightenment. Today it is a Buddhist rather than a Hindu shrine in large part because of his efforts.

He himself believed in Theosophy. At that time the Theosophical Society was a world-wide movement, and had an amazing influence. Theosophy does not claim to be another religion. Rather, its aim is to represent the essential spirit of all religions. In Theosophy then there is no real conflict in being both a Theosophist and a Buddhist, or whatever, and Sir Edwin Arnold is a fine example of such a spirit.

I was first attracted to Buddhism mostly for philosophical and intellectual reasons. That however seemed to leave out something very essential, but I didn't quite know what. With the Light of Asia, however, it all seemed to make so much more sense. Ever since then on Buddhist holy days I set aside some time to read a selection or two from the Light of Asia. I can't resist then including here a selection from the first few pages, about the birth of the Buddha.

continued

The Light of Asia

by Sir Edwin Arnold

*The Scripture of the Saviour of the World,
Lord Buddha—Prince Siddārtha styled on earth—
In Earth and Heavens and Hells Incomparable,
All-honoured, Wisest, Best, most Pitiful;
The Teacher of Nirvāna and the Law.*

Thus came he to be born again for men.

Below the highest sphere four Regents sit
Who rule our world; and under them are zones
Nearer, but high, where saintliest spirits dead
Wait thrice ten thousand years, then live again;
And on Lord Buddha, waiting in that sky,
Came for our sakes the five sure signs of birth,
So that the Devas¹ knew the signs, and said
"Buddha will go again to help the World."
"Yea!" spake He, "now I go to help the World
This last of many times; for birth and death
End hence for me and those who learn my Law.
I will go down among the Sākyas,²
Under the southward snows of Himalay,
Where pious people live and a just King."

That night the wife of King Suddhōdana,
Maya the Queen, asleep beside her Lord,
Dreamed a strange dream; dreamed that a star from heaven—
Splendid, six-rayed, in colour rosy-pearl,
Whereof the token was an Elephant
Six-tusked, and white as milk of Kamadhuk—
Shot through the void; and, shining into her,
Entered her womb upon the right. Awaked,
Bliss beyond mortal mother's filled her breast,
And over half the earth a lovely light
Forewent the morn. The strong hills shook; the waves
Sank lulled; all flowers that blow by day came forth
As 'twere high noon; down to the farthest hells
Passed the Queen's joy, as when warm sunshine thrills
Wood-glooms to gold, and into all the deeps
A tender whisper pierced. "Oh ye," it said,
"The dead that are to live, the live who die,
Uprise, and hear, and hope! Buddha is come!"
Whereat in Limbos numberless much peace
Spread, and the world's heart throbbed, and a wind blew
With unknown freshness over lands and seas.

And when the morning dawned, and this was told,
The grey dream-readers said "The dream is good!
The Crab is in conjunction with the Sun;
The Queen shall bear a boy, a holy child
Of wondrous wisdom, profiting all flesh,
Who shall deliver men from ignorance,
Or rule the world, if he will deign to rule."

In this wise was the holy Buddha born.

Queen Maya stood at noon, her days fulfilled,
Under a Palsa in the Palace-grounds,
A stately trunk, straight as a temple-shaft,
With crown of glossy leaves and fragrant blooms;
And, knowing the time come—for all things knew—
The conscious tree bent down its bows to make
A bower about Queen Maya's majesty;
And Earth put forth a thousand sudden flowers
To spread a couch; while, ready for the bath,
The rock hard by gave out a limpid stream
Of crystal flow. So brought she forth her child
Painless—he having on his perfect form
The marks, thirty and two, of blessed birth;
Of which the great news to the Palace came.
But when they brought the painted palanquin
To fetch him home, the bearers of the poles
Were the four Regents of the Earth, come down
From Mount Sumeru—they who write men's deeds
On brazen plates—the Angel of the East,
Whose hosts are clad in silver robes, and bear
Targets of pearl: the Angel of the South,
Whose horsemen, the Kumbhandas, ride blue steeds,
With sapphire shields: the Angel of the West,
By Nāgas followed, riding steeds blood-red,
With coral shields: the Angel of the North,
Environed by his Yakshas, all in gold,
On yellow horses, bearing shields of gold.
These, with their pomp invisible, came down
And took the poles, in cast and outward garb
Like bearers, yet most mighty gods; and gods
Walked free with men that day, though men knew not:
For Heaven was filled with gladness for Earth's sake,
Knowing Lord Buddha thus was come again.

But King Suddhōdana wist not of this;
The portents troubled, till his dream-readers
Augured a Prince of earthly dominance,
A Chakravartīn, such as rise to rule
Once in each thousand years; seven gifts he has—

The Chakra-ratna, disc divine; the gem;
 The horse, the Aswa-ratna, that proud steed
 Which tramps the clouds; a snow-white elephant,
 The Hasti-ratna, born to bear his King;
 The crafty Minister, the General
 Unconquered, and the wife of peerless grace,
 The Istri-ratna, lovelier than the Dawn.
 For which gifts looking with this wondrous boy,
 The King gave order that his town should keep
 High festival; therefore the ways were swept,
 Rose-odours sprinkled in the street, the trees
 Were hung with lamps and flags, while merry crowds
 Gaped on the sword-players and posturers,
 The jugglers, charmers, swingers, rope-walkers,
 The nautch-girls in their spangled skirts, and bells
 That chime light laughter round their restless feet;
 The masquers wrapped in skins of bear and deer,
 The tiger-tamers, wrestlers, quail-fighters,
 Beaters of drum and twanglers of the wire,
 Who made the people happy by command.
 Moreover, from afar came merchant-men,
 Bringing, on tidings of this birth, rich gifts
 In golden trays; goat-shawls, and nard, and jade,
 Turkises, "evening-sky" tint, woven webs—
 So fine twelve folds hide not a modest face—
 Waist-cloths sewn thick with pearls, and sandal-wood;
 Homage from tribute cities; so they called
 Their Prince Savārthasiddh, "All-Prospering,"
 Briefer, Siddārtha.¹

'Mongst the strangers came
 A grey-haired saint, Asita, one whose ears,
 Long closed to earthly things, caught heavenly sounds,
 And heard at prayer beneath his peepul-tree
 The Devas singing songs at Buddha's birth.
 Wondrous in lore he was by age and fasts;
 Him, drawing nigh, seeming so reverend,
 The King saluted, and Queen Maya made
 To lay her babe before such holy feet;
 But when he saw the Prince the old man cried
 "Ah, Queen, not so!" and thereupon he touched
 Eight times the dust, laid his waste visage there,
 Saying, "O Babe! I worship! Thou art He!
 I see the rosy light, the foot-sole marks,
 The soft curled tendril of the Swastika."²

The sacred primal signs thirty and two,³
 The eighty lesser tokens. Thou art Buddh,
 And thou wilt preach the Law and save all flesh
 Who learn the Law, though I shall never hear,
 Dying too soon, who lately longed to die;
 Howbeit I have seen Thee. Know, O King!
 This is that Blossom on our human tree
 Which opens once in many myriad years—
 But opened, fills the world with Wisdom's scent
 And Love's dropped honey; from thy royal root
 A Heavenly Lotus springs: Ah, happy House!
 Yet not all-happy, for a sword must pierce
 Thy bowels for this boy—whilst thou, sweet Queen!
 Dear to all gods and men for this great birth,
 Henceforth art grown too sacred for more woe;
 And life is woe, therefore in seven days
 Painless thou shalt attain the close of pain."

Which fell: for on the seventh evening
 Queen Maya smiling slept, and waked no more,
 Passing content to Trāyastriṅśhas-Heaven,
 Where countless Devas worship her, and wait
 Attendant on that radiant Motherhead.
 But for the Babe they found a foster-nurse,
 Princess Mahāprajāpati—her breast
 Nourished with noble milk the lips of Him
 Whose lips comfort the Worlds. -----

A. D.

A BRIEF PERSONAL OUTLINE OF LOVE AND ITS PROFOUND RELATIONSHIP TO FEAR

The following comments and observations are but a brief outline of the profound relationship that exists between love and fear. It is my hope that eventually an expanded exploration of this relationship might become a small book dealing with what is perhaps the greatest dichotomy that life ever presents us with - namely the enigmatic struggles between our fearfulness and our transcendental desire to know the full meaning of unconditional love in our lives.

.....

Today countless numbers of people are faced with an ever increasing sense that life is burdened by many fearful and highly intimidating insecurities that defy adequate explanation, and which seem to be unresponsive to our most intelligent efforts to understand what is going on. We might even speculate that we are collectively experiencing more "free floating" fear and anxiety today than ever before in our history, and all this amidst an unprecedented abundance of material prosperity! In some ways it would appear that the more we enjoy a high material standard of living, the more fearful and insecure we can become! There appears to be a growing imbalance between the various manifestations of our endemic fear, despair, conflict and sorrow, and those of our personal courage to be, to love and to feel secure, whole and fulfilled. So much so, that if we fail to redress this critical imbalance between the forces of "light and darkness" in our lives, it seems to me that our ultimate capability to survive as a species must be seriously questioned.

To my way of thinking, our ONTOLOGICAL FEAR (1) is unquestionably THE single greatest antagonistic element in our lives, and the opposing force to love; not hate (2) as we commonly think.

A world full of fear is a world condemned to lovelessness, because it is fear that effectively blocks off our capacity to know love. It is fear that imprisons us within jails of our own making. It is fear that thus entraps us within our own blindness, leaving us with no easy way of escape. In fact most of our attempts "to be free from fear" only seem to take us ever deeper into the dark abyss of our endemic fearfulness and away from the power of love. Our "clever" minds and reason frequently step in with an endless array of "external escape routes", but usually these simply take us further in the wrong direction, helping only to compound our general sense of insecurity and despair.

It is in trying to offset our generalized and often somewhat unconscious fear of life, that we embark upon an insatiable and relentless quest for the love we know we need but cannot find. Although we may wish to deny this, it is no exaggeration to suggest that our search for love is the most persistently compelling undertaking that life, in one way or another, imposes on us. It underwrites practically the whole spectrum of human behaviour. Intuitively we know that the only valid antidote to our fearful condition lies in having access to the power of love that resides semi-dormantly, within each human being, as an integral part of our essential nature. Ironically it is the very presence of the awesome bondage that fear and anxiety place upon us, that prevents us from naturally becoming the loving persons that potentially we are all capable of being. It is one of the great anomalies of life, that in our search for safety, security and protection, we effectively cut ourselves off from the only power capable of bringing us genuine personal freedom and inner peace. We often seem to be seeking safety as an escape from life, and in our frenetic search to avoid or circumvent life's uncertainties, we inadvertently lose sight of its deeper significance and treasured possibilities.

1. The fear of non-being...of not existing...of death and dying.
2. Hate is always our "projected expression" of an inability to love...it is an expression of personal frustration and despair in the face of no love. It is but one of the many manifestations that signify the presence of fear in our lives. It also indicates a serious deficit in our ability to love and to be compassionate. Hate is always looking for a self-justifying "object" upon which to attach itself to - an object worthy of sustaining our need to blame!

Perhaps we need to find the courage with which to ask of life those "big" questions, that alone can bring us (hopefully) a glimpse of the vast unknown - a "taste" for the great mysteries that life holds. Questions that can help us to fathom the importance, significance and power of unconditional love. Questions that can take us towards some kind of a meaningful dialogue with our innermost fears and uncertainties, thereby releasing us into the arms of our own capacity to love. We must, I feel, ask these profound ontological questions of ourselves, knowing full well that in all probability there are no answers! What is it that so predisposes us to becoming so chronically fearful? Why and of what are we so afraid? Whence does our endemic sense of insecurity originate? Why is it so difficult to be a genuinely loving and lovable person? What are the elements in life that bring out our need to become so highly defensive and ever protective of our frail sense of self? The questions are endless! And yet in trying to pursue these enigmatic questions, my personal quest has increasingly been leading me to believe that there are certain key factors that do indeed tend to determine our capacity to know love and to have its power operational in our lives.

Our deepest ontological fear may very well have its origins within our earliest sense of separation - the experience of being on our own and split off or cut off from the greater original whole, containing our most profound sense of completeness. The self-conscious awareness of the separation between me and you, between subject and object, between the observer and the thing being observed, which endemically sustains the illusion of our separateness, and which we subsequently try to reclaim throughout our lives via our ongoing quest for love. Many wise thinking visionaries have suggested this source or explanation for our primary sense of fearfulness.

No doubt that arising from this primary sense of separation, we come to experience a basic existential anxiety and fearfulness around our inability to establish a meaningful and internalized (and thus permanently secure) sense of self. A sense of self (identity) that needs no external validation or justification to maintain itself. A sense of self that is uniquely ours and yet deeply bonded to all others, private and yet not isolated, and which cannot be "taken away or lost"....a deeply secure and permanent sense of self, which ironically can most readily be "surrendered" or "given up" (without any sense of loss!) when prevailed upon to do so by unconditional love.

Conversely any sense of self that is, either partly or wholly, externally defined, must invariably carry within itself the enormous burden of a chronic anxiety, which is constantly refueled by all the uncertainties and variances of life. Such an identity can always be eroded, "taken away" or in some way "lost or stolen". It can never be taken for granted or felt to be secure. It has no foothold in the true or inner sense of self. Its existence is determined by the external world....the world of circumstance, fashion, image, mode, affectation, social status, rank etc....Such an externally defined sense of who or what we are, can never allow us any valid escape from the awesome conditions of insecurity that underscore our fearfulness and inability to love.

It would of course be a rare individual indeed who could wholly claim an internally defined sense of identity, and for the majority of people it is a matter of maintaining a healthy balance between the two. Up to a certain point, our external identity serves many practical purposes, and it is only when there is a serious imbalance that greatly favours the external domain (as is all too common in our contemporary society), that we become extremely suggestible and insecure. Such people's sense of who they are is always precariously balanced and fickle, and requires an inordinate amount of time and energy to simply uphold its uncertain existence.

It should be noted that the whole foundation of our highly compulsive consumer orientated society is based upon the need to uphold this externally defined identity. Consumerism depends upon maintaining a fluid state of social insecurity and anxiety present at all times, and our externally defined person simply has to "consume" all the appropriate image making symbols, in order to keep his or her protean sense of self afloat and updated. Such people have to "ingest" ever more and more - not only as direct substitutes for the much sought after love, but also as a means of constantly remodelling their sense of self anew in accordance with the prescribed dictates of our powerful advertising and fashion mandarins. Sadly, it frequently means that such people are caught up in having to give things to themselves...of "being good" to themselves....of

"feeding" themselves, simply because that is all that they are left with! Conversely the person who IS deeply secure in their own inner sense of being, needs no tangible exchange or verification from the outside to bolster feelings of personal worth and general security. Such a person is prevailed over by the power of love and has no need of reassurance from the external domain vis-a-vis consumption. Under these circumstances of having love's presence active in our lives, there is nothing to be proved, defended or ingested as a means of bolstering up one's self esteem or identity. It is thus obvious that anyone who experiences themselves as predominantly defined externally, must live under the constant threat and fear of losing the very tenuous thread from which hangs their whole raison d'etre; such people are faced with their "existential death" every time that this delicate thread is threatened with being cut.

If WE ARE predominantly what is "outside", and this "outside" is lost or removed, then we too will cease to exist! The threat of non-being (of symbolic death) is an ever present nightmare for an awful lot of people in our society who attempt to define themselves externally. Such people have no (or at best very little) access to their own capacity to love. A mighty penalty courtesy of fear!

There are of course many varied expressions of both our inability to love and the presence of fear and anxiety in our lives, yet to explore these in any detail would be somewhat beyond the scope and intention of this present statement. However, a few particularly significant examples need to be briefly mentioned before concluding these remarks. Among these is our compelling desire to avoid personal responsibility for our own lives, and our increased craving (sometimes unconsciously) to be taken care of and protected by all manner of social agencies, institutions and surrogate paternal or maternal figures. The implications of this for any kind of social or personal commentary are of course enormous and far reaching, as it breeds and fuels powerful dependency needs and wants, as well as promoting a sense of personal impotence and helplessness. Increasingly this set of underlying social and psychological dynamics, takes us towards demanding the instant gratification of pleasures, appetites and rewards, within increasingly vicarious and synthetic milieus. Our lives are thus dominated by a growing need to ingest and to have, not only food, but everything and anything! Our sense of insecurity is ruthlessly exploited by all manner of social and commercial interests, and nowhere is this more blatantly obvious than in the area of so called love and sexuality.

In considering the high level of complexity which surrounds any attempt to deepen our understanding of how fear and love related to each other, it is extremely important to recognize the fact that our minds have an extraordinary propensity for providing us with our own "suitable" reality. Our minds can help us to rationalize, deny or affirm almost anything at all, in order to help us avoid responsibility, pain, conflict, frustration or doubt. When fearful, we seem more likely to gravitate towards states of being or constructs of reality and belief, that tend to be rigid, entrenched, inflexible and conservative. Our attitudes tend to be negative and generally determined by considerations of resentment, jealousy and all manner of defensive postures.

On the positive side, love is always the supreme liberating force, which brings us personal freedom, inner peace and compassion unlimited. It is a powerful agent of self-healing (in all its dimensions) bringing us unlimited harmony and a profound attunement within the wholeness of all life. It is the supreme "light force" of life that dispels all darkness and which transcends the fear of death.

The supreme challenge and responsibility facing all of mankind today, is to find the means through which the enormous power of love may be released and made abundantly available within all of us. It IS my conviction that the ONLY direction in which we might hope to realize the active presence of love's transformative power in our lives, IS by understanding and overcoming the intimidating forces of darkness that ontological fear so tenaciously envelops us with. We need to know the origins and elusive nuances of our fearfulness, in order to transcend its power over us. Either way, we need "to die" to our present unworkable realities, in order "to be reborn" within the full realization of unconditional love and compassion.

John H. Boyd
Toronto
February 1987

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CHFL and AC hill and dale:

LOVE = LUFU (OldEng) = LEUBH (PIE): to care, desire, love
 = LIUBAZ (OldEng): dear, beloved = LIEF
 = LOUBH = LEAF (OldEng): pleasure, approval, permission, LEAVE
 = geLAUBJAN (Teut) = GELEFAN (OldEng): to hold dear
 > BILEFAN: esteem, trust = BELIEVE
 = LUBH (Teut) = LUBO (OldGer) = LUFU = LOVE
 = LUBHE = LIBERE (Lat): to be dear, pleasing
 = LIBIDO (Lat): pleasure, desire

AMOUR (MidEng, OldFr) = AMOR, AMARE (Lat): to love
 = AMMA (PIE): various nursery words
 > AMAH (Lat, Sanscrit, Chinese?): mother;
 > AM- > AMICUS (Lat): friend

THUS north of the Alps, LOVE is what pleases one (even if it be masochistic), while south of the Alps it refers to nurturing mother love. The words do not translate. In the depths of one's mind (soul, being), the sounds vibrate on different frequencies creating different unconscious feelings, emotions: (a) conscious intentionality; (b) innate biological drives.

Dear SantaKlaus: For myself, I "know", "understand" the answer, the secret. I do not pursue "it" any longer. I do pursue knowledge in all its places of man, angels, rocks, flora and fauna and their relationships. I also find new ways to say the old eternal verities - I thirst for your expression of the "truth" for it is God - the Cosmic Reality/Being, Brahma - expressing through you.

BUT - that I know IT - is not that I AM it. To "go beyond" Buddha, to die to Self, to surrender to God, to kill the Buddha in me, to drop off the body, mind, self, to make the ego shrink, dwindle, be unseated from the throne - to ALWAYS keep THE eye on the Beloved, like Bro Lawrence: wash each dish for the Lord - etc, etc - is - - HARD - - !!

So I search through all of mans' minds for the Word that will aid me to actualize (not simply know) - TO BE. "Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief."

Tom WYC: As above, but word problems: "Recognition", "awareness", "realization". It is true: TAT TVAM ASI: That art thou ! I AM BEING. My ego RECOGNIZES, is AWARE, REALIZES that this is the truth - absolutely, unqualifiably, unconditionally. Therein ("My ego - -") lies the trouble. "- we find it (self: ahankara) to be 'our consciousness' - a misleading expression; it should be 'the consciousness that we are.'" (The Pinnacle of Indian Thought: 122: Ernest Wood, Quest).

Don't tell me it can't be spoken (LaoTse). But to live it without doubt - or with doubt that does not affect (taint) behavior - or with doubt that taints behavior but without guilt - or with guilt but shrugging it off - etc, etc. ???

To the low-keyed star: Interesting "dialogue". But nobody commented psychologically. What does any of this mean for the development, growth and understanding (of the world) of the speakers ?

My NewYear ACT: Thanks to every one of you for your inputs that help me to grow, resolve my life, reach to higher levels.

ThanxThanxThanxThanxThanx !!! And another \$5 for ACC.
 here's to ya'll
 yeller moose

