

cloud-hidden friends letter

A ZEN BUDDHIST PERIODICAL IN THE SPIRIT OF THE UNIVERSAL DHARMA

Third Issue of 1987

Issue #24



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 a contributor to the CHFL.

Hopefully our letters will help us to open up more to each other. 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 Zende, 753 44th Ave., San Francisco, CA 94121

NEWS AND NOTES

Third Issue, 1987

I'm sitting here trying to work this new word-processor computer, as you may have noticed on page one and two. However, if you think this may herald a new era of competence and efficiency in the CHFL, there is little cause for worry. The next issue ought to be out in maybe two or three or four months.

There recently was a conference of "home-grown" (or second generation) North American Zen Teachers. About half of the 36 who were invited attended. The host was the Rochester Zen Center, founded by Phillip Kapleau Roshi. There purposely was no formal agenda or conclusions about anything. Sharing and fellowship was more the aim, and that did indeed happen. It was interesting to contemplate what it might have been like if it had been all first-generation fiery and stubborn founder types. The conference was a repeat of a similar event last summer, which was hosted by the Ann Arbor branch of the Zen Lotus Society. Next summer the host will be Zen Center of San Francisco, and it possibly may become an annual event. One of the themes at the conference was the meaning of such categories as lay and priest and monk or whatever, as they may be related to our own times and culture. It would be so helpful if at least some of the confusion about such were cleared away. Another theme was the lull in the rapid growth of many Zen groups in former years. Most groups seem to be able to now enjoy the luxury of pausing to take a deep breath, and to contemplate more deeply why we are here. Declining membership then can be viewed as a mixed blessing.

You may have noticed that recent issues of the CHFL have been getting slimmer, even though many if not most of us have been getting larger. Any help you can give in reversing the trend would be much appreciated.

You may have also noticed a bit of a change in our address, with the term "Floating Zendo". It was originally a term often used by Nyogen Senzaki some time ago in referring to his Zen wanderings on the west coast. In his later years he commented:

"I carried the Zendo with me as a silkworm carries its cocoon. The silk thread surrounds me unbroken. It may weave a brocade of autumn leaves, or a spotless spring kimono for the coming year. I only feel gratitude to my teacher and all my friends, and fold my hands palm to palm,

Remember that if you want to write to one of our contributors, who may be off wandering somewhere on the mount, and you don't have their address, you can always write in care of a Floating Zendo at 753 44th Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94121, and we will forward.

Ananda Dalenberg, CHFL Clerk

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Ho! To all you cloud-hidden friends. It's been long since I've contributed words to these pages but I've read and greatly enjoyed all of yours.

"The Tao moves in mysterious ways". I've been blowing and blown along - never really sure which is which - through a year of rapid changes: "Taoist-Gestalt-Psycho-Drama" (in Gia Fu Feng's words) eviction from Stillpoint Hermitage, re-migration to California, cycling through four different entry-level jobs in four months or so, suburban-urban apartment living in Redwood City, unexpected and generous inheritance of what should easily be enough; (Lao-Tzu says that "anyone who has enough is rich") and emerging realization that the best and possibly only way for the self-indulgent rebel that I am to practice the whole-ly life is to put a pack on my back (hips, "hara" & pelvis actually now with modern hi-tech design) and head for the hills away from all the very charming luxuries and distractions of Sillycon Valley.

With knee cartilage too fragile to practice lotus posturing meditation, I do it walking, standing, resting and reclining/setting the trusty Casio multi-alarm for five minute periods lest I slumber off and roll down a hill. I continue to practice A Course In Miracles recycling through the workbook, add The Miracle of Mindfulness - A Manual on Meditation in which the Vietnamese Zen Master, Thich Nhat Hanh says that; "The Miracle Is to Walk on Earth" and also claim Han Shan as teacher and guide offering you Burton Watson's translation of one of his poems:

My mind is like the autumn moon
Shining clean and clear in the green pool
No, that's not a good comparison
Tell me, how shall I explain?

So, from time to time, especially while walking uphill, I sit down and scribble in a notebook. Most of what I write is embarrassingly poor I think, but I mother myself, offer encouragement and advice and display my wares like a proud and blessedly blind parent:

Entered Laurel Canyon again
Returning from Sunol in this Ohlone Wilderness
Aching legs, sore feet, sweaty crotch
Itching poison-oak rash
Can I stand this much reality?
No, it's not easy but it's so good
Outside,
On the earth with grasses and rocks
under trees.
Did I come this way?
Or did this way come to me?

I don't know. I'm still learning it: Praising God, Praising Tao, Lie down close eyes and glow: A joyous warm spot in the great magnetosphere. Gratitude.

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Dear Cloud-Hidden Friends,

Spring has finally arrived in Yamhill. I am reminded that although rural Oregon is not the cultural center of the universe, its beauty is second to none. The iris are too beautiful to be picked for my o-butsudan; it will have to do without.

I have been thinking alot about the first Noble Truth. It seems, to me, that the fact of suffering is both the beginning and the end of Buddhism. Years ago I read David and Indrani Kalupahana's book The Way of Siddhartha: A Life of the Buddha. I remember being struck at the time over how foreign the whole thing seemed. Over and over in the book (which is basically a very literary rendering of selected passages from the Pali Suttas), the Buddha says that true nirvana is the ending of rebirth that takes place at death (of a Buddha or Arhat). During life the closest thing to nirvana is freedom from attachment and thus from passion, hatred and delusion. But true nirvana is the ending of rebirth. I remember thinkin "how bizarre!" There is nothing that seems more exciting or more consoling than the idea of rebirth. If someone could prove to me that I would, without a doubt, be reborn again and again, I would be tickled pink. Next life, I am going to be a world class musician specializing in Russian music (a love of mine). Then, I would like to be a sculptor, then a rock star, etc., etc. If Buddhism is putting an end to rebirth, maybe I'll be a Christian (though there are only two possible rebirths [three if you count purgatory]; neither of which really excite me).

I remember a time at temple when Laurie and I were listening to a talk on the Four Noble Truths and right in the middle of the talk, Laurie leaned over to me and said, "That's the problem with Buddhism in a America--no one here believes that life is suffering!" I was stunned by the rightness of what she said. She doesn't consider herself a Buddhist, in part because of this hurdle. She doesn't want to believe that life is suffering.

Of course, later Buddhism, as it developed into its Mahayana forms, came to regard nirvana in other, perhaps more humanistic, ways. And yet, the emphasis on suffering and the ending of suffering remains. Without true awareness of the first Noble Truth, there is no Buddhism and the second, third and fourth Noble Truths along with Nagarjuna's, Shinran's, Dogen's, Suzuki's, your and my insights are

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useless. In Alcoholics Anonymous (a very American "Buddhist" group?), without the actual experience that "my life has become unmanageable" the rest of the program is worthless and cannot be followed.

But doesn't this deny the other three truths? It doesn't deny them, it just admits that we never get to them. We become so enthralled by the teachings and by the practice of Buddhism that we don't notice that we're working very hard at standing still. We're stuck! Maybe this is a false issue like being paranoid when they're not out to get you. Maybe, but I don't think so. I feel that somehow this point helps us to understand why, after all our efforts, we have accomplished so little. Unconvinced of the truth of "life is suffering," we are still knocking at the gate; never entering and moving on to "the cause," "the ending" and "the path to the ending of suffering."

At the moment that "life is suffering" is real and actual for me (not a vague sense that life--out there--is suffering), I take refuge in the Three Treasures (or perhaps I am taken in "in refuge" by the Three Treasures). "Taking Refuge" is considered the first step in Buddhism, a kind of initiation or baptism. Could it be that it is the last step as well? How very simple yet incredibly difficult this is! By this reasoning Buddhism becomes a "skillful means" for increasing suffering until it becomes unbearably real and actual: and then we live our lives bearing it! (If you were to go to an AA meeting and declare that "life is suffering," I'll bet that very few if any of the members would gainsay you.) Could it be that, with all of our knowledge and experience of Buddhist teaching and meditation, we still have not "actualized" the first of the Noble Truths? Perhaps that's why I keep running away and coming back. Maybe I am "building up steam" to hit the first Truth head on.

The problem is that I am sure I would much rather be a connoisseur of Russian music!

Gassho,



June 5, 1987

Dear Cloud-Hidden Friends,

I am 41 years old, married, and a student at the Institute of Buddhist Studies, which is the seminary of the Buddhist Churches of America. The B.C.A. is a Jodo Shinshu organization, the Jodo Shinshu being a Japanese Pure Land school. In fact, the Shinshu is the largest single Buddhist school in Japan, and the B.C.A. is probably the largest Buddhist organization in the United States. You have never heard of it because of

(1) the B.C.A.'s tireless resistance to discovery by the outside world, lest it become anything other than a Japanese-American organization. (I am not the only non-Japanese-American member, just very nearly. You know the others, as they are all regular contributors to Cloud-Hidden Friends). But the B.C.A. cannot claim all of the credit for its own obscurity; part of that must go to

(2) Western writers on Buddhism, who have largely ignored the Shinshu and

(3) spiritual bookstores, most of which have failed to notice the few available books on Shin in English (D.T. Suzuki's Shin Buddhism, for example).

So if any of you are by now curious as to what Shin Buddhism might be, I can't just tell you to run down to your favorite bookstore and buy some book. There are hardly any books, and they're not there anyway. The B.C.A. used to have an obscure mail order bookstore, but it isn't operating now because of a typical B.C.A. foulup. So I have decided that appending one of my own essays on the subject is a better idea than nothing.

WHERE BUDDHISTS GET GRACE

A Christian recently asked me how we can believe in salvation through grace if we don't believe in God. Where is the grace supposed to come from? Since I can understand why he would find this a puzzling question, I have decided to try to answer him.

Grace, in our view, comes from Amida Buddha. He is what we call a transcendental Buddha, not a god. He didn't make the world and he doesn't run it now. He does not intervene in human affairs; therefore he does not answer prayers. This is all a great relief to me, as it makes it possible for me to get a little grace without having to believe six impossible things before breakfast like the White Queen.

The only sort of prayer that Amida may be said to answer is the nembutsu, which you could consider a request for grace (except that even the request is not the worshipper's doing but Amida's. I will try to explain how that works later; wish me luck). Actually he doesn't grant us grace so much as he is grace. He is the very principle of compassion. He is enlightenment itself.

Although the human mind inevitably tends to personify Amida, he is in no sense a person. Rennyō was urging devotees not to personify him back in the fifteenth century. Of the many explana-

tions I have heard of just what Amida is, the best, no doubt, is that Amida is the Absolute Truth. But since the Absolute Truth is what the Buddha grasped when he became enlightened and what the rest of us limited mortals will never fully grasp until we become enlightened, too, it can be helpful to discuss definitions that are less complete but more manageable. Shinran mentioned one of my favorites when he wrote, in his Notes on 'Essentials of Faith Alone', "Buddha-nature is none other than Tathagata [Amida]."

Although Buddha-nature is generally defined as the potential for enlightenment within every sentient being, I don't think one needs to think of it as an entity, a sort of little Buddha inside us trying to break out. Like all phenomena (as Buddhists see them) Buddha-nature is not really a thing; it's a state of affairs. Specifically it's the fact that our self-delusion, no matter how determined, can never be complete. A traditional analogy is that no matter how dense the clouds of ignorance may be, there has to be a break in them sooner or later; some light will shine through.

Jodo Shinshu scholars have long debated the question whether man possesses Buddha-nature or not. This is natural, given the school's (in my opinion perfectly correct) belief that the benighted ego is incapable of saving itself. But if we didn't have Buddha-nature, how would we ever even realize that we need saving? My own feeling is that, as so often happens, making the question an either/or dichotomy only confuses the issue. It would be as misleading to say that I have Buddha-nature as to say that I don't have it.

On the one hand, Buddha-nature has little to do with what Zen teachers call my "small self:" the elaborate self-constructed delusion that is my ego. Although it's capable of great self-deception on this or any other subject, the ego is actually determined to avoid enlightenment as long as it can; the last thing it wants to do is self-destruct. Preoccupied as it is with protecting and defending its own existence, how could it be expected to do anything so threatening as seeking release from its own spider web?

Yet every now and then, I do seek release from my ego's own traps. How? Because the ego is not an escape-proof prison. The seemingly massive self-constructed wall that separates "me" from everything else is an illusion after all, and, like all illusions, it's not nearly as solid and impenetrable as I think it is. The wall has its cracks. I'm simply putting that another way when I say that I have Buddha-nature.

Thus although it looks like I'm asking for Amida's help, we say that I'm not doing it myself; it's Amida's doing. After all, aren't I doing it in spite of myself? I am doing it because, finally, I can be touched by a reality beyond the fortress-like little box I think I live in. You can call it Amida Buddha or you can call it Buddha-nature. Personally I would think it misleading to call it "God." The term "God" is weighted down with too much awkward and wholly unnecessary theological baggage.

Besides, grace is not something that's handed to us by divine caprice. To me asking where the grace is supposed to come from is like asking where gravity comes from. We experience grace because of Buddha-nature and Buddha-nature is just part of the

intrinsic nature of things. We would know that it's is all around us if we weren't always frantically blinding ourselves. To quote Shinran more fully:

Buddha-nature is none other than Tathagata. This Tathagata pervades the countless worlds; it fills the hearts and minds of the ocean of all beings. Thus, plants, trees, and land all attain Buddhahood.

End of essay. By the way, if there are any unhappy "Zen burnout" cases out there, don't give up on Buddhism! Our school has specialized in burnout cases ever since it was founded by a Tendai burnout case seven hundred years ago. Write to me and I'll try to tell you how to order such books as there are or find a Shin priest to talk to or whatever you prefer.

In gassho,

Diane Ames

Diane Ames

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Dear Friends,

The last issue (#23) opened with Deneal Amos' reflections on an approaching birthday. I turn 38 in 11 days & find the same sorts of thoughts rattling about: "Not young-not old." & "Will I ever be confidently skilled?" The latter question has been nagging persistently for more than 20 yrs. After teaching Tai Chi at no charge for 11 yrs. I find Berkeleyans too jaded to be interested in something for nothing. I would like to hear how the practice is incorporated at New Canaan. I know I'd never "be at home in the world I'm trying to create," but these utopian endeavors are what make this world more hospitable whether people like Deneal & I ever create anything new or not.

Jerry Bolick, since we're set on Jōdo-shin plan B (accepting our nerd-selves as accepted) what do we need with Prof. Unno's notion of all paths eventually leading to Shinshu? They don't on any discrete reading of "Jōdoshinshu". In the sense that Amida names the Dharma-kaya, it is uninteresting that all paths lead onto the great way of Ō Nembutsu. In the same sense, a follower of Jesus might validly say that we are all anonymous Christians, since that is their name for devotees of the ultimate body of Truth. Your urge to meditate needn't be the hedging of the religious self. It's like doing the laundry. You don't need to wear clean clothes in order to know the truth. Nonetheless, I prefer clean clothes, and knowing the truth does not, of itself, cleanse your clothing - so I do the laundry dhayana.

Lorin Paull's letter reminds me that I am writing on Holy Saturday. I don't know who Yeshua Ben Jousef really was. This Jesus fellow, however, is said to have spent this day in the underworld - which is a very Bodhisattva-like thing to do. We can't reconstruct (accurately) our historical founders. Siddhartha looks mostly like a legalistic seer of the surface to me, and as much less worthy of the subsequent (Mahayana) tradition than Jesus is. Let's (we Buddhists) revere the Bodhisattva ideal without pretences of knowing who founded it or who may have fulfilled the attendant vows.

I diverge widely from Ananda on my view of Gautama Siddhartha. I fear that revering that product of a meager 6 yrs. search would be to strengthen normative, armchair Buddhism. (Which, despite its defects, I acknowledge as the most significant Buddhist 'school' in the West.) When the arm-chair Buddhist tells us not to be "attached", he/she means - "be attached to what I say is true & valuable and abandon your own intuitions." Sakyamuni is usually invoked to authenticate pronouncements of such manipulative, anal-retentive nonsense, and demythologizing him is the only way I can see of disarming the spiritual thugs who abound in Buddhist tradition. The only value to the concept of "non-attachment", I believe, is in reading it as simply saying - "It is destructive to live your life on the basis of unexamined presuppositions." This point was made more clearly by Siddhartha's contemporary and pedagogic superior, Socrates.

When Yellow Mouse speaks of growth impelling him to "kill the Buddha in me", I concur & find the project to be predicated upon the debunking of the Buddha in tradition. I didn't feel that "psychological" or existential comment was lacking in the initial Dharma Friends' dialogue. Yellow Mouse may see a problem in the record of that discussion that I missed as a participant, nonetheless. The question of our talk's meaning

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in terms of the participants' personal development is well asked. Whatever our notions & insights, the key question is "What are we doing to make it real." (John H. Boyd take note.) I don't know who the Buddha/Christ within myself or within tradition is for sure. I do know that we must appropriate tradition for it to have value, and that this appropriation requires tireless use of the paring knife. May we all proceed vigorously as we pare away & then appropriate, pare away & then appropriate. We needn't fear the pruning of tender or precious shoots in our traditions. If it's really essential it will grow back stronger.

I imagine Kannon looking upon me with a half-smile/half-frown & I echo the Alan Parsons Project - "I'm damned if I do and damned if I don't, but I love you." (There is no Alan Parsons group, but only a project, - very Buddhistic!)

Forgive me brothers & sisters,
for I know exactly what I'm doing,

John H. Boyd

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M9A 5B2

MAY 4th. 1987

Dear Cloud-Hidden Friends:

Spring is a time for renewal when we tend to become more aware of the greater regenerative aspects of Nature and Life in general....a time for re-inspiration and re-affirmation!

Over the past few months, I've had a growing sense (rightly or wrongly) that our "cloudy fellowship" has been somewhat complacent about supporting brother Ananda's continued commitment to our ongoing exchanges. Surely we can take the trouble, once in a while, to share our experiences, thoughts, inspirations or whatever? He needs our support if he is to continue this commendable undertaking and all the responsibility that this entails. I know that it is all too easy for us to sit back and let others be the active ones in maintaining the "life blood" of the CHFL. So may I suggest that we upgrade our collective responsibility by way of a more equitable contribution on the part of all of us....and what better time to do this than in Springtime! Let us all help to renew what is essentially ours!

I have just been reading Bernadette Robert's "The Experience of No-Self", with considerable interest, and wonder if others who may have also read this book have any comments? Personally I had considerable "trouble" in coping with her own Catholic conditioning/bias in a few places regarding her particular understanding of God in the general scheme of things, YET in the wider context of her contemplative journey, she writes deeply about those areas of human consciousness that take us beyond the self. It is quite a remarkable depiction of a journey beyond words and thought, and well worth looking at/reading....and she uses words!!

With love and peace to all,

John H Boyd

A Bit of an Essay for the CHF
From the Floating Zendo

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On Bodhisattva Pranidhana
And Altruistic Prayer

The altruism and compassion so characteristic of the Bodhisattva Way is inseparable from "Pranidhana", a Sanskrit term variously meaning prayer, deep aspiration, and vow.

Pranidhana is often found in the form of a Great Vow. It may appear to be almost impossibly heroic. The vow to save countless sentient beings would be a good example. Such a vow seems fitting for the great saints, but for a more ordinary mortal, it would seem to be far too lofty to be taken really seriously.

Another form of Pranidhana, which may be equally profound, is altruistic prayer, and as such it may be quite close to the heart of the ordinary Buddhist. A good example would be the Four Great Bodhisattva Pranidhanas. They are very important in the Northern Buddhist tradition, and are often recited several times a day in both temple and home. They may have originally been great vows for the few, but now they have been transformed into a kind of prayer for everyone, for it is taught that the inmost nature of everyone is that of the Bodhisattva. Translating them into English then should be in this context.

The First Pranidhana might then be "Sentient Beings are numberless. May we all attain salvation!". If instead it were translated as a heroic great vow, it might become "Sentient Beings are numberless, I vow to save them all!". The latter obviously has a quite different meaning, and I don't think it is what is intended. Instead, it should be a kind of prayer meant for everyone. At least that is my understanding.

The Second Pranidhana is concerned with extinguishing the klesas. The klesas are such passions as greed, hate, and delusion, and these, at the same time, represent torments and anguish. In themselves they never find rest, and are never exhausted. Only True Wisdom can bring them to an end. The Second Pranidhana, as a prayer, then might be "The worldly passions are inexhaustible. May they be brought to an end in Wisdom!". Here "Wisdom" is only implied, but it does round out the sense of it.

One might hope that there would be only one really correct translation of the Pranidhanas from the original Chinese. The nature of the Chinese language is such, however, as to allow and encourage a wide range of possible translations and interpretations, and this is in a sense also its virtue. Indeed, Buddhism seems to be much more at home with a more pluralistic perspective, and in that sense, there would hopefully be many varying translations of the Pranidhanas.

As for prayer in Buddhism, it can be said to exist only in a special sense. Although petitionary prayer to an outside deity seems to exist in one form or another in most religions, it has at most a minor role in Buddhism. Prayer, for the Bodhisattva, is not for one's own benefit, but for the benefit of others. It originates from altruism and selflessness, rather than egoism and selfishness. This is not only ethically

significant. It also applies to true nature of things, since the Buddhist teaching is that an isolated separate self is an illusion. All Being is deeply interdependent throughout the universe. In the Zen tradition for example, Thich Nhat Hanh refers to our deeper self as "Interbeing", while Huang Po speaks of "Universal Mind", and Hui Neng of "Essence of Mind". The Buddha, upon becoming enlightened, is said to have exclaimed; "Marvelous! Marvelous! All sentient beings have the Tathagata Wisdom and Virtue!".

In Buddhism then one can only say "I vow" or "I pray" in a very special sense. The translation might often much better be rendered as "We", "We all", or in some other way expressing more our Interbeing.

Rather than some ontological doctrine, it is perhaps the image of "Indra's Net" that most beautifully and clearly conveys the meaning of our Interbeing. It is said that the whole universe is like Indra's net. Each being, or each moment of reality, each moment of consciousness everywhere, is as if it were one of the intersections of the net. At each intersection is found a beautiful jewel. The net then is composed of countless such jewels and intersections everywhere. Also each jewel perfectly reflects every other jewel in the net. All jewels then are interrelated and interpenetrating throughout the universe. In this way, one jewel is found in all, and all in one.

In this context, the power of Buddhist prayer comes from not somewhere outside of our being. It comes from deeply within, and is somehow shared by all. The Four Bodhisattva Pranidhanas then, translated as a prayer for everyone, might be as follows:

Sentient Beings are numberless.
May we all attain Salvation !

The worldly passions are inexhaustable.
May they be brought to an end in Wisdom !

Ways to enter the Dharma are limitless.
May they everywhere be mastered !

The Way of the Buddha is unsurpassable.
May it be supremely realized !

These Pranidhanas seem very basic. For example their historical association with the Four Noble Truths is evident: there is suffering, but also release from it ; there is craving as the cause, but also its cessation; there is a Way to Liberation in the Dharma, and this is true for everyone; and the Buddha Way is such a Way, and it is unsurpassable.

I understand the Four Pranidhanas as also being a kind of prayer for the universe. I don't think of them as being limited to Buddhism, although the fourth one would then need some explaining. Nor do I think they are intended as being the only form of such a prayer. If then they do not happen to closely match one's own prayer for the universe, it should be no problem. I think each jewel would be delighted to see countless other versions appearing everywhere. A.D.

CHFL

5/6/87

Dear Jerry Bolixed: I have been contemplating your Plan B "Banal Man" ever since I saw your cartoon. Is there a third alternative? Obviously not "The Hero(-ine)", but WHAT? Perhaps, the FOOL?

For Lorin'dePaulled: Your picnic of sprinkled wine reminds me of IKKYU and his temple altar dedication. So when you are out there in the great "outside", remember to use the sprinkler God gave you. Whatever you sprinkle is then dedicated exactly to the extent that your intent is holy. Maybe SR retreated from the cherry bees to find the proper place to dedicate.

To the Toronto Bold: [Serious ! Serious !] You pose "ONTOLOGICAL FEAR (as) - THE single greatest antagonistic element in our lives -". FEAR - YES !, but ontological? = is the study of being, whereas you are pointing to the fear of NON-BEING. Many Seers have pointed out the weakness in the argument: that man is so apt at self-sacrifice. I offer a series of words for your attention: fear of inferiority, insignificance, lack of meaning or what I call NOTOKness, distinguished from OKness or self-esteem.

On your point #2 "Hate", I would prefer "anger". But perhaps both are required plus disappointment, resentment, hostility then anger and hate.

You pose the origins of the above as being in some kind of metaphysical "separation". But I accept your question: "Whence does our endemic sense of insecurity originate? - - What - bring(s) out our need to become so highly defensive -." I suggest that your intellection is correct but that the focus must be shifted to the infant's inability to verbalize (not just a shift to the right brain): see Alice Miller's For Your Own Good; Prisoners of Childhood; Thou Shalt Not Be Aware .

Your analysis on "consumerism" was enlightening. Thanx. One of the cardinal sins: "Greed", is encouraged, reinforced until the people fail to recognize the evil inherent in the exercise of their greed - hedonism. As you point out, in a society of conformity, one's individuality crucifies him - yet if he compromises, he crucifies himself. The society strenuously conditions the masses into compulsive greed.

But I question: " - (one) who is deeply secure in (his) own inner sense of being, needs no tangible exchange or verification from the outside to bolster feelings of personal worth and general security." NONE? at all? Not even a smidgen?

To ALL: "Rise, Take up thy bed and walk !"

JESUS to scribes: "(Is it) easier to say 'Thy sins be forgiven thee'; or to say, (9Matt6): 'Arise and walk?'; (2Mark9): 'Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?'"

"But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith he)

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(9Matt6): Arise, take up thy bed and go into thine house;
(2Mark9): I say unto you, Arise, and take up thy bed and go thy way into thine house.";
(5John11): "Rise, take up thy bed and walk."
(It being the sabbath, it was not lawful to carry a bed.)

ARISE: to get up, move upward, ascend; originate,
 come into being, (birth) = ARISAN (OldEng) = RISAN
RISE: to get out of bed; move from a lower to a higher position;
 to extend upward; to be erected, to become stiff, erected;
 uplift oneself (to meet the challenge), to return to life
= RISE, ROSE, RISEN = RISEN, ROS, RISEN (MidEng)
= RISAN, RAS, RISEN (OldEng) = RISAN (Teut): RISE, REAR, RAISE
= ER (PIE): to set in motion
= AR (Teut): to be, exist > ARE, ART
= ARNJAOST (Teut): EARNEST, serious, ardor
 = ERNEST: vigor in battle
= ORIRI (Lat): to arise, appear, be born > ORIGIN
= REI: to flow, RUN > RILL = RIVUS (Lat): stream > RIVER
 = REINO = RENOS (Gaul): river > RHINE
= ERGH: go = ORGHEYO = ORKHEISTHAI (Grk): dance > ORCHESTRA
 = ER + GHE: to release, let go = to release into motion
THUS ARISE, RISE = to put one's Self into action thus into
existence, to begin to flow, dance, to make vigorous appearance
in the scene, seriously impacting on the environment THUS to lift
oneself up to meet the challenges of life THUS coming into being,
returning to life - having been reborn THUS awakening to true
consciousness.

TAKE UP: to raise, lift;

BED: a place where one sleeps
= BHEDH (PIE): to dig > garden plot, sleeping place
= BHE: to warm > BATH, BAKE + DHE: set, put > lay down,
establish
= BHEDH: an established warm place of nurture or security.
THUS BED is the place you have established as warm and secure
where you may continue habitually asleep: unawake, unaware,
unconsciously controlled.

WALK: to go on foot; roam about, stroll;
 to conduct oneself or behave in a particular manner:
 social class or occupation: walk of life
= WALKIEN (MidEng) = WEALCAN (OldEng): to roll, toss, roll up
= WEL 3 (PIE): turn, roll
 = WALTZ; WALLON (Ger): roam; VOLVERE (Lat): roll; VALLEY
THUS WALK is not merely to put one foot in front of another, but
rather to conduct one's manner of life, behavior, by moving
through one's world, environment, surroundings in such A Way:
consciously and responsibly chosen Walk of Life: social class,
profession, occupation. Not some way proposed by a religion
(external authority) but, Jesus proposed, the Father and the

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Kingdom being within, that one do that which he wants to receive (reap), a self chosen Way.

"Rise, Take up thy bed and walk !"

RISE ! = Put one's Self into action and meet life's challenges: flow, dance and make vigorous and serious impact on the environment THUS truly come into being, be reborn and awaken to true consciousness;

TAKE UP THY BED -: Take control over that established secure place where you have been asleep, unawake, unaware and unconsciously controlled;

- AND WALK !: Move through your environment in some social role in a consciously and responsibly self-chosen behavior or Way, in which you do that which you want to receive.

CONCLUSION:

PUT one's Self into action and meet life's challenges: flow, dance and make vigorous and serious impact on the environment THUS truly come into being, be reborn and awaken to true consciousness ! TAKE control over that established secure place where you have been asleep, unawake, unaware and unconsciously controlled; AND MOVE through your environment in some social role in a consciously and responsibly self-chosen behavior or Way, in which you do that which you want to receive.

yellow mouse



Dialog with Shadow

Misanthrope - One who dislikes Mankind

My SHADOW I'll call my misanthropic self.

My CONSCIOUS SELF talks the language of love, of the oneness of humanity, of the precious spirit of life, the eternal, the infinite, the unknowable and mysterious.

My Shadow says we're biological creations, pure and simple; physically we've evolved from lower forms and our mental life, too, is due to evolutionary processes. A rational, scientific understanding of the "human condition" it sees as theoretically possible. That talk about spirit, energy, the divine, and things metaphysical is self-deluding --- in a sense a delusion of the grandeur of the human specie. My Shadow thinks poorly of mankind, of its institutions and conventions. It rejects or at least is puzzled by altruism. It wants to portray all of us as basically mean-spirited, self-serving, and self-aggrandizing. My Shadow is particularly critical of the kinds of touchy/feely activities that emerge at weekend growth workshops; it mocks the instant intimacy and trust that occurs, dismissing them as superficial and unsubstantial. My Shadow is alone and self-contained, distancing itself from "loving" connections with others; it's harsh, judgemental, critical, indignant, unforgiving, rigid, certain, and intellectual.

My Conscious Self has in recent years been aware of and delighted in experiences and feelings best called spiritual---the language of energy, flow, LOVE, the TAO are found meaningful and useful. My Conscious Self when coming from love is big, accepting, unconditional in its regard, and humorous.

There is a mutual exclusivity to the points of view, the personality facets outlined above such that either one or the other predominates. Thought. Take for example the matter of mental illness and criminality. For both my Shadow and my Conscious Self there is a problem and fascination with the psychiatrically labeled and pathologically criminal -- how to think about these unfortunate people. Where is the spirit, the imprint of the divine that the Conscious Self sees in all? If there is a logical flaw in the argument, in the basic premise, says the Shadow, the whole point of view of the Conscious Self crumbles.

The Conscious Self retorts, "Life is full of wonderful mysteries we can't ever possibly understand. So why not use the model, language, and imagery of love, spirit, and the cosmic to structure and map our experiences of self and our world --- rather than be programmed to be mean-spirited."

And the Shadow quickly responds, "AHA, you see then, it's really quite arbitrary which model we use --- it's all interchangeable, so why argue about one point of view over the other."

And the Conscious Self says, "Sure, but just look at what and where it gets you. When you come from love, you get love; when you come from smallness you get smallness. That is reason enough for choosing LOVE, LIGHT, LIFE. And we really don't have to obsess about "ultimate" realities that are forever unknowable."

And the Shadow responds, wearing a most uncharacteristic benevolent smile, Buddha-like in his all-knowing countenance, "But, my friend, to experience the love, the light, and the life, you need ME who casts the Shadows of HATE, DARKNESS, and DEATH."

Marvin London

Nyogen Senzaki (d. 1958) was a real zen pioneer in America. He was very much an individualist, and "non-union" as far as official Zen is concerned. He preferred a simple and direct way, uncluttered by fancy robes and Zen titles. There is a fine sketch of his life in Rick Field's book "How the Swans Came to the Lake", a priceless source book on the history of Buddhism in America. Rick includes these final words by Senzaki to his students:

I imagined that I was going away from this world, leaving all you behind and I wrote my last words in English. Friends in the Dharma, be satisfied with your own heads. Do not put on any false heads above your own. Then, minute after minute, watch your step closely. These are my last words to you.

[He went on, since, as he said, he felt that he owed some explanation.] Each head of yours is the noblest thing in the whole universe. No God, no Buddha, no Sage, no Master can reign over it. Rinzai said, "If you master your own situation, wherever you stand is the land of Truth. How many of our fellow beings can prove the truthfulness of these words by actions."

Keep your head cool but your feet warm. Do not let sentiments sweep your feet. Well trained Zen students should breathe with their feet, not with their lungs. This means that you should forget your lungs and only be conscious with your feet while breathing. The head is the sacred part of your body. Let it do its own work but do not make any "monkey business" with it.

Remember me as a monk, nothing else. I do not belong to any sect or any cathedral. None of them should send me a promoted priest's rank or anything of the sort. I like to be free from such trash and die happily.

A.D., Editor

FINIS

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