

August 10, 1996

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Dear David,

I promised to send you recollections of Suzuki
Roshi, which I want to do and am sorry for the
delay.

There's not a lot. I squeezed my ^{own} memory dry
for significant things over my five years of writing,
but here are some items - mostly things I heard about,
which I thought you should tell with input from
those with first-hand memories.

I remember in winter 71-72 after Suzuki's death,
a meeting in the Zendo at Page St. where people
shared memories and grief at SR's passing - a
rare event of shared emotion. Peter Schneider, crying,
talked about SR saying to him how surprised he
was to be famous - that he always expected to
live and die an old, ordinary "temple guest."
years earlier

And I remember, at a guests' Shama combat
at Saccagawa (?), Peter demanding of SR an
answer to some paradoxical zen question - Peter
fierce & stern - and SR laughing and asking,
"Peter, why are you always so serious?" at which
Peter groaned and dropped his head into his hands.

There's
serious
+ there's
serious

I remember crooked cucumber & eating pickles quietly stories that I assume you've got lots on. And his images of gayer as being the frog sitting on the lily pad, waiting to eat each bug (each though!?)

I remember the tales of forgetfulness, especially the \$10,000 check from the IBM bigwig (details right?) that got left in his desk unattended at Sokoji.

I remember smoking ~~grass~~ grass with her and his brother John's wife Cindy at Buchanan St. before going to evening gayer, & afterwards SR bowing to each sister as they left. I was behind John, and as he passed by after bowing to SR, SR flashed at him a look of intense concern, suspicion, and doubt - no doubt aware of the dealing and trying to size up this character. It struck me in that instant as a break in a glom - a sudden personal reaction.

(Jiska?)
I remember her after being his personal attendant, for awhile, saying, "Man, I deeply appreciate the way he does everything, his deep "cool"!" And her has many stories of his struggle about not becoming a priest, when others were so eager - Ed Brown "beating down the door" to enter the priesthood.

I remember Alan Marlowe describing a big party at Tass, where everyone let go, Ed fucked Meg for the first time, things got wild.

(Ken?)

And her making hash-oil cookies at Tass, getting ? so stoned her had to babysit him for two days and was back under deep suspicion as a loose cannon. Actually ? ^{Ken} was her roommate & found the cookies & scarfed them down not knowing their potential. ? ^{Ken} came then to Minnesota for a while - wanted to suggest himself by begging!?. Wife was Gogi?

Joan

Tass to

And her said, Baey came to be spiritual, but picked up a cute you student (male) for a boy toy - waving the lucky victim.

Dorothy

I remember Barbara Horowitz bringing vegetables to SR and Okeson and repeating his comment that it was wonderful that the compost she collected from them ^{daily} returned as beautiful food.

and her horror that she came to their door one day and heard them arguing loudly & angrily inside. Unthinkable, unimaginable that they did this.

I remember a lecture where he said when he went to the grocery store, he always felt so "sorry" for the wilted and old veggies everyone was passing by,

so he'd buy them rather than the fresh, beautiful ones.

and his lecture where he said that as a young man in the monastery he came to a feeling of deep freedom — and then had a huge desire to go out and help others — he had a sense that it was selfish to stay and enjoy his own peace at the monastery.

and has told me how angry he became once at Tass, at a little boy guest who began fishing in the creek. He said at least Tass should be a place where beings were not harmed.

has told how angry he became at the big heavy guy — an early student, kind of whacko, who went to Hollywood and tried movies (Philip?, but not taken) — who came back and complained about "your" (i.e. SR's) practice — and enraged at this deluded personalization of the way of zen, SR struck him repeatedly with his stick, shouting, "awaken under my anger!"

and during his illness, at Tass, SR sneaking into the kitchen to chat, instead of staying

in bed, and Oleson, furious, scolding him, and leading him away, back to his sickbed.

Well, David, this is about all that comes back to me now. Oh, yes, I remember his comment about how whatever we did, we sacrificed. When we enjoyed the beauty of Tass, we sacrificed San Francisco. And the reverse. Above all, I carry forever a sense of his depth, his simplicity, his joy, his sense of completion & finality, his suchness! We were blessed to walk, for a time, at his side.

I had dinner with Bob Pising, who was back in Minneapolis a few days. He commented on how important you were to his son Chris, and how helpful.

I'm in the woods for 4 more weeks, then back to teaching full time. It's an inner city college. I'm 55. I'm really too old to be a bronco buster any longer. I may have to get out of the game soon.

Have you met my old pal David Bromige?
Teacher at Sonoma. Lives in Sebastopol. Good guy.

yours, Eric Storli