

David Schneider, 1973

June 17, 2010

Laura Ross 1998 MALS 2006, Interviewer

Location: Telephone interview from Germany

[Digital recording begins]

Ross: I think we're recording now.

Schneider: Alright.

Ross: This is Laura Ross. The date is June 17, 2010. I am on the telephone with David Schneider. He's class of 1973. David is in Germany. He's a senior teacher, an [indistinct] in the Shambhala Buddhist tradition. I'm in Portland and this is a gap interview about Buddhism at Reed for the Reed Oral History Project.

Maybe you could start off by telling a little bit about what attracted you to Reed?

Schneider: What attracted me to Reed. Well, let's see. One thing was its geographical location, which was just about as far away as I could go from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where I was in high school, and still stay in the continental United States. I had heard good things about it. I mean it was just kind of, I only applied to a couple or three schools. When Reed accepted me I decided to go there. It's hard to remember. It was like some sort of magnetic pull. I didn't know many people who had gone there. We didn't have any like alumni in my family. I heard

good things about it and about the Northwest, and I really just wanted to get away from Pittsburgh and as far away as possible.

Ross: Do you recall any of your first impressions of Reed?

Schneider: Sure. I recall them very vividly. I mean it was beautiful, and it was green, and I was a runner, at that time I started doing long-distance running. It wasn't fashionable in 1969 to be a runner. It was only nerds who did it but I was doing it. I don't know if there's a golf course across the street from Reed, but there was back then so I used to go running on the golf course, and I just felt completely happy being in a green, pretty place, although the air from the paper mill didn't smell all that good always. Still it felt like an enormously healthy place. It was creative. I got to meet a lot of really interesting people right away. I mean, you know, yeah.

Ross: And you arrived, would that have been 1969?

Schneider: Yes.

Ross: Which was a tumultuous time in Reed's history, but it seemed like a healthy, happy place to you when you arrived there?

Schneider: I hear it was a tumultuous time. I heard they fired the director of admissions after they let my class in, but I didn't experience it that way. I mean. Happy, healthy, I mean I don't know. Basically I had been part of a high school that was a large, 4,000-person high school.

Reed at that time was about 1,100 people so it was much more intimate. My high school was extremely mixed in every different, racially and ethnographically, very different sort of way of cutting it up. And Reed it seemed sort of like a smaller kind of community that was focused on, focused pretty much on learning and things along the cutting edge of learning, which was exciting. There were interesting, exciting people around. I loved everything about it, but then this was the difference, challenging. I didn't pick up much on the tumult around. I knew there were a lot of druggies around. I suppose not more than now. But I was really pretty much right in the hippie phase. It was kind of an exciting place to be.

Ross: I think our connection is pretty good, but you're cutting out a little bit so I may interrupt you as we go on to say, what was that you just said?

Schneider: Feel free. Feel free.

Ross: I apologize for that. It's for the transcription.

Schneider: Don't worry.

Ross: But it sounded like you were talking about how it was kind of the height of the hippie era and there were drugs on campus. And one of the things that I've heard other people say is that some of the people who were experimenting with drugs found their way to Buddhism somehow by doing that.

Schneider: Yeah.

Ross: Is that your sense of what some people did? Not all people obviously. And if so, can you explain that a little bit?

Schneider: Sure, I can try. There was definitely a bridge from the psychedelic world into the Buddhist world. That was in San Francisco and in the [indistinct] on the East Coast. I think it had to do with the fact that psychedelic drugs —LSD, mescaline—and that was mostly what was around in that regard—they had the effect of really opening your mind up to a much bigger view than normally a person would have. So once you had that view it was, it only lasted as long as the drug, but you actually saw things that were not completely dependent on the drug, and if you wanted to kind of have that bigger, more open mind, or access to it more often, one had to take responsibility for opening one's mind oneself, according to, you know, so that was sort of the Buddhist approach to it. So I think this kind of psychedelic bridge had to do with this bigger view of the mind. And again, certainly in the Bay Area, San Francisco Bay Area, there was an inclusion of Buddhist teachers in the psychedelic community. I mean, Suzuki-roshi, with whom I eventually was able to study, went to the Human "Be-In." There were a number of people who sort of had a foot in both communities, or who at least knew what they were doing with psychedelic drugs and who were also Buddhist. You can't really be a Buddhist and do them very often but it did open people's mind and provide a kind of entree, as I say, to this bigger mind. I don't know if that's making any sense to you.

Ross: Oh it does. Yes. Now I understand that Suzuki-roshi visited Reed and gave a talk on campus at some point. Is that true?

Schneider: He did, yes. I was there. Yes.

Ross: What do you remember about that?

Schneider: I remember that he gave it in the Commons. Commons was full. He began by saying that he didn't know exactly how to address an audience that wasn't made of his students, but that he would try. And then he began to talk about suffering. The first noble truth of Buddhism. And he gave a very beautiful talk, and this was the prelude to a weekend sesshin, a little sitting, a weekend-intensive sitting that we had arranged for him. We being the Portland Zen Center, which was sort of affiliated with the San Francisco Zen Center, that's why he came up there. And he subsequently did do the first morning, and then I don't know whether he did more than that. He got sick, and then he flew back to the Zen Center. He was quite ill. When he got back to the Zen Center I believe he went to bed and basically never got up again. So this was I think in late spring of '71 and he died in December '71.

Ross: Hmm. So it might have been the last official teaching he gave?

Schneider: Well, I think, no. He did do an installation ceremony for Richard Baker, his dharma there. But I don't think he took any more trips after that. He was pretty ill. But he came to Reed, he talked and he did the first part of this weekend sitting, and it was extremely beautiful to

have him around. He was attended by someone, a guy called Reb Anderson, who is now Tenshin, I think is his dharma name, and he was an abbot at the Zen Center. I think he's an abbot emeritus or something like that now. And the two of them came up, and it was determined that Suzuki-roshi was sick enough that he would not be able to continue with the program, and we flew him back.

Ross: Do you recall how students responded to him?

Schneider: They seemed very respectful. They listened attentively. They asked some interesting questions. More than that I don't recall.

Ross: Do you recall whether there were any faculty or staff or administrators at the talk?

Schneider: Ahhh. You know I can't visualize any of them but I have the sense that there were some there. But I can't corroborate that with names and faces and facts, I'm sorry. But I think there would've been some there.

Ross: And you said his visit was arranged by students?

Schneider: There was a sitting group on Clinton Street. I think it was even called the Clinton Street Zen Center. And it was a satellite. The main students there all were San Francisco Zen Center students or had all either had contact with Suzuki-roshi or wanted to have contact with him.

Ross: Do you recall at what point as a student you got involved in the circle of people who were practicing Zen?

Schneider: Yes, I remember very distinctly. It was the spring of '70. (pauses) Let's see. I was pretty disappointed with my own kind of situation at that point. Maybe it was even, yeah, I think it was the spring of '70, and I was trying to meditate. You know, you're done with the sex, drugs and rock and roll and I, like many of my generation, had tried pretty much all those things as far as we could take them, and it didn't seem to be doing much good. In other words, I didn't feel much happier, and I actually felt I was doing some harm to friends and people I loved. So I decided to stop that, and it seemed like the next thing on the agenda was meditation. That was not an uncommon idea. You know the Beatles were meditating, and it seemed like it was the next sort of thing to do. So I bought a book at the Reed College bookstore (laughs) called "Meditation Inward Art," and I tried out various meditations in there more or less unsuccessfully. Then I bought a book about Zen, called "The Three Pillars of Zen." It was also available in the bookstore, and that book seemed much more straightforward to me: "if you want to meditate, do this. Sit like this, put your legs like this, put your body like that." It was real concrete, specific instruction. And then one day, after one of my runs, I was still running all this time as well, I went into the sauna in the men's locker room, and I saw a guy kind of trying to pull his legs into the lotus posture, and I asked him what he was doing. He said that he was a meditater and that he was trying to keep his legs limber and meditate without as much pain in his legs, and I sort of foolishly announced I too was a meditater (Ross laughs) even though really I hadn't done much of it, and he and this other guy, there were two of them in there, said you should come sit with us because we have this little house on Clinton Street, and we do these sittings, and we're doing a

one-day sitting coming up this Saturday. So if you'd like to come, come along. So I did. I went along. So that was, they gave me instruction on how to do it, and I sat with them, and I continued to go there and sit with them. Then I think it was the next year, my next year, but it was still 1970, on Thanksgiving, they had a kind of a feast. Like a Thanksgiving dinner. And someone was driving everyone home after that. Suzuki-roshi's book had just come out and they dropped this one woman off and she asked us if we wanted to come in and look at the book. And so we did and I don't know if you've seen "Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind," but the hardback cover was a picture of Suzuki-roshi's face. I saw that face and I thought, my goodness, whatever that man is doing I want to do. Want to be like him. And so I realized I hadn't met him before, hadn't even seen him. I think they maybe played some of his talks at some of the sittings. But anyway, [this was] Thanksgiving vacation and then I think during Paideia, or as soon as possible after that I hitched down to San Francisco from Reed and just arrived at the Zen Center. They were not prepared for people to do that and they said find a place to stay in the neighborhood and practice, which was fine with me. So it was directly a connection of meeting Zen people at Reed that led to my going to Zen Center.

Ross: Just to clarify because our sound quality is going in and out.

Schneider: Alright.

Ross: So you were introduced to these, you began exploring meditation second semester your freshman year.

Schneider: Yes.

Ross: And then by the fall semester of your sophomore year you were sitting regularly with the people in the Zen House on Clinton Street?

Schneider: On Clinton Street then. Yeah. It moved later.

Ross: And then spring semester your sophomore year is when you dropped out to go to the San Francisco Zen Center?

Schneider: No. No, no. No, I hitched down to the Zen Center. I was there several times in 1971, the beginning, I did a couple of seven-day sesshins.

Ross: Did you say sittings?

Schneider: In Zen they're called 'sesshins'. It's a Japanese term meaning "gathering the mind." I did two of those in the beginning of 1971. They were held fairly regularly at San Francisco. I think I did one on Easter vacation and I did another one a little later. At the end of '71 Suzuki - roshi died. But I didn't go to any of the ceremonies because I only had kind of beginner contact with him.

No, I stayed at Reed through the first semester of my third year. I completed the first semester of my third year, and then I dropped out and eventually made my way to the Zen Center.

Ross: Did you drop out in order to go to the Zen Center or were there other reasons?

Schneider: There were a mixture of reasons. I dropped out to practice Zen more intensively and also to study various things. I was taking a very heavy course load, and I felt I couldn't quite go as deeply as I wanted to into the things I wanted, you know, I was trying to study. I couldn't see a way to kind of cut back, although I'm sure there would've been if I'd been more reasonable about it. But I basically dropped out to go get myself into a community. I was going through not an easy time at that point. I was taking a heavy course load. I was trying to get up early to practice meditation. I wasn't living with other meditators. I was living on my own. So you can get into very strange spaces that way.

Ross: Mm-hmm. It seems like this is the second or maybe third instance I've heard of a Reed student who was interested in Buddhism, dropping out to pursue that interest more deeply.

Schneider: Mm-hmm.

Ross: How prevalent was it?

Schneider: How what?

Ross: How prevalent was it? How many Reed students who were meditators ended up dropping out of Reed to pursue their interest in Buddhism?

Schneider: I don't know how many did it. I don't think it was that prevalent. I think it was [indistinct] if you've talked to three, you might have talked to all of us. There were a whole lot of Reed students that ended up at the Zen Center. And not just in this generation. That happened before, too. It happened with the Gary Snyder, [1951] Philip Whalen, [1951] Lew Welch [1950] generation as well. You know about all that, I'm sure.

Ross: I do. I guess it makes me wonder, did your generation know about that and was that part of your interest in it?

Schneider: Well, sure. Yeah. We certainly knew Gary. Lew came to campus while we were there, you know, and gave a talk called How I Work—

Ross: What? What was it called?

Schneider: How I Work as a Poet.

Ross: Okay.

Schneider: It's a published talk. You can find the book of that title, "How I Work as a Poet." I didn't know much about Philip Whalen although I am deep into writing his biography at this point.

Ross: You're into writing Lew's—

Schneider: I'm writing Whalen's biography.

Ross: You're writing Whalen's biography, okay. Wow.

Schneider: No one's written one yet, yeah.

Ross: Interesting.

Schneider: Yeah. (laughs) It's for the University of California Press.

Ross: Wow. That's really exciting. Do you know when it's going to be out?

Schneider: No. I wish I did. It's a long project. He lived a long, highly literary life and had a lot of interesting experiences and interesting friends, and so it's a lot of work, and I'm not well situated to be doing it, which is to say I'm in Germany and all the materials are there in California, or Reed, or New York. And all the remaining friends are there, so, it goes slowly. But it's going.

Ross: That's great.

Schneider: I think probably two years or a little more.

Ross: Well that's exciting. We'll have to make sure Reed gets a copy of it.

Schneider: I have to watch out that the magazine doesn't [inaudible] I noticed that the last time there was a piece about the Beats there was a strong reaction against it from, I don't know, the science folks or whoever else.

Ross: Oh yes. Well some people feel it's a subject that's been exhaustively mined in the magazine.

Schneider: Yeah.

Ross: Which is not to say we wouldn't love a biography of Whalen. That's different.

Schneider: I don't think it has been exhaustively mined. There's been a lot written, but it's mostly been this sort of surface stories. There's a lot more to say.

Ross: That's interesting. Wow. And so when you were a student you knew of him or you knew him personally?

Schneider: When I was a student at Reed, I didn't know Phil personally. I didn't know Gary personally. As I say, Lew came to, I don't think I met him personally, but I definitely listened to his talk. I know Gary now. Philip was one of my closest friends at the Zen Center so we became close. And I think it was a connection that I had gone to Reed. And also that I had studied with, as he had, Lloyd Reynolds [English and Art professor, 1929-1969], kind of the secret force behind all of the Zen at Reed.

Ross: Can you say more about that?

Schneider: Well, Lloyd Reynolds paid attention to Asian art and Asian calligraphy and also Western spiritual mysticism, Blake specifically among others.

Ross: Who specifically?

Schneider: Blake. William Blake.

Ross: Blake.

Schneider: And I knew when the Portland Zen people decided to start a little group, what I heard, they went to Lloyd and said we're thinking about starting this little sitting group. Do you think that's too presumptuous? And he said, 'Of course it's presumptuous. Now go ahead and do it.' (both laugh)

Schneider: And he also, the last time I saw him was not at Reed but at a place called Multnomah, up in the Columbia Gorge.

Ross: Multnomah Falls?

Schneider: Yeah.

Ross: Okay.

Schneider: There was a calligraphy retreat that he ran up there, and he had me give meditation instructions to the entire retreat.

Ross: Now, did Lloyd have a sitting practice?

Schneider: Umm—He came to the meditation. He not only had me give instruction on the opening night of this retreat, he announced there was going to be meditation the next morning, which he hadn't told me he was going to do. And he came and sat there with us. I don't know that he had much of a sitting because he was really quite old then. But he definitely supported people practicing Zen. He thought that was great. He had been Snyder's advisor on his, one of Snyder's advisors. I think he and David [Heath] French [Anthropology and Linguistics Professor, 1947-1988] had been Snyder's. Lloyd was certainly Philip Whalen's advisor on his senior thesis. And he was certainly the advisor to at least one or two of the people I was close to in the Zen world in Portland. So he was a major figure. He was an ancestor. He was like one of the benefactors.

Ross: Were there other faculty members who were supportive of your interest in Zen?

Schneider: Were there other faculty members?

Ross: Yes.

Schneider: Is that what you said?

Ross: Yes.

Schneider: Ah. I [inaudible] did. Except as I say it kind of made me crazy trying to do all this heavy practice on my own and carry a heavy load at school. So my advisor, I can't remember who it was, a very kind man, very sweet, he talked to me very reasonably and you know he tried to keep me in school but he definitely wanted me to feel healthy and he was seeing that I wasn't feeling healthy. He supported whatever I tried to do. I felt supported. I was also, I think in my third year I was living with a faculty member and his family. A guy called George [Westbrook] Mulford, [French Professor, 1968-1971] who was teaching French of some kind. Back then. Very nice guy. His wife was Christine. They had a little baby called Zoey. I don't know if any those people are still connected to Reed. But they were very nice people. They didn't mind that I got up early and meditated. (he laughs)

Ross: What department were you in?

Schneider: Well. That was the problem. I think finally, I had all these interests. They were trying to get me to focus on something. I think I finally decided anthropology was the most, sort of all encompassing. So I tried to do that. But I was studying music with Fred [Frederic] Rothchild '34 [Music Professor, 1953-1978.] I took a Gregorian chant course from Leila Birnbaum [Falk] [Music Professor, 1969-2009] is that her name? And I was studying microbiology. I had a lot of interests. I wasn't terribly focused. I was sort of more omnivorous.

Ross: Mm-hmm. What else do you think is important for us to understand in terms of how this, I guess I'll call it a movement at Reed, how it originated or maybe what caused it to end? Because to my knowledge it probably did end a few years after you left.

Schneider: Yeah. I think there's still a sitting group in Portland.

Ross: In Portland, yes. I don't think Reed students per se, I think they have to go off of campus.

Schneider: Well we did too. There wasn't anything on campus. It was off campus. Like I said on Clinton Street. But I understand what you're saying. It's probably not as, I don't know. There was a certain openness back then, a tolerance and openness that I found very admirable at Reed. I think it's connected to the fact of those ancestors of Lloyd and Gary and Philip and Lew and Don Berry [1953,] another person who was around. He actually came to some of the sittings. He was a writer. I think that had to do with the fact that Reed had this reputation of being sort of open and tolerant—and thank goodness it did—without sacrificing academic rigor or its standards. It was still a tough school. But I think demographically it was open to more things. I think it kind of closed up after that. I think it got straighter. I think it got more into physical sciences, possibly. I don't know. I know they stopped teaching calligraphy after a while. Lloyd had left but I was studying with Bob [Robert J.] Palladino [Art Professor, 1969-1984] and then he left. I think they just steered the school slightly in a different direction. Maybe kind of diminished somewhat, or kind of tightened the focus away from the very open, tolerant way.

Ross: I'm wondering how to think about this with respect to Reed's unofficial motto of atheism, communism and free love?

Schneider: What was it?

Ross: You know. Atheism, communism and free love is the school's unofficial, tongue in cheek motto.

Schneider: Right.

Ross: I know there's some debate about whether or not Buddhism is a religion. But I do think, I wonder if students who were interested in some other kind of spiritual tradition or religion, whatever you want to call it, that it might not have been as tolerated? It might not have been as well tolerated. I'm not sure.

Schneider: After I left I didn't pay attention to what was happening there because I was so absorbed in my Zen life. I think Buddhism is a religion, yes. But I think you don't have to belong to Buddhism to get a lot of good out of meditation practice. You can be a person who has a daily sitting practice or four or five times a week. Even fifteen, twenty minutes a day, something like that. And I think that would help tremendously with general sanity and also school work and concentrating your mind. But that kind of wasn't so clear that it was like that. Zen maybe is not a religion. But Buddhism for sure is a religion. It has all the marks of it. It's not a theistic religion. There's no God involved. But it has everything that otherwise sort of

characterizes a religion, which is to say spiritual practice, group practice and a body of teachings and you know, a charismatic founder.

Ross: Mm-hmm.

Schneider: Whether someone wants to identify themselves as a Buddhist, that's a whole other story. In my case I really just wanted to meditate.

Ross: Mm-hmm.

Schneider: I was sure that for some reason I needed to do that and I can't tell you why I knew that. Maybe—who knows. Whether you believe in past lives or not, I don't know. But maybe there was some kind of thing pushing me to do it. I certainly felt very strongly motivated to do it.

Ross: It seems like the Reed students who became interested in this were maybe small in terms of their percentage of the overall student population, but it seems like most of them have stayed involved in Buddhism ever since.

Schneider: Oh yes. Oh yeah.

Ross: Can you talk about that maybe?

Schneider: I think you have to be pretty sincere or pretty motivated to do this stuff. At college age, you're a pretty open person. Things get to you at that age. They kind of really get to you. Buddhism really got to me. I think it got to a lot of us. And Suzuki-roshi got to us. Even though he died, and there was a lot of difficulty finding a [inaudible] to practice, I think the ones who are into it, you kind of have to be really into it to do it. Like certainly [indistinct] school other than Lloyd. There wasn't anybody against it. But nobody was saying, "go meditate," right? You had to do this on your own. And around your rather challenging school work.

And I think also Portland is this sort of challenging place in that its grey and wet a lot, and it tends to push people inward, and that's a good place in my mind. [inaudible; sound cutting out] right time and people did stay with it. The people that I began practicing with at Reed I know where most of them are right now. They're still practicing.

Ross: A lot of them are still in California, right? Or still affiliated with the Zen Center there?

Schneider: I think so.

Ross: I'm curious—oh, go ahead.

Schneider: Either the Zen Center or affiliate or satellite centers.

Ross: I'm curious how you ended up in the Shambhala tradition.

Schneider: Yeah. One of the Zen centers there [sound cuts out]

Ross: Oh I'm sorry. You're cutting in and out again. Could you start over?

Schneider: One of the times I was at the Zen Center, early on, when I saw Trungpa Rinpoche, so I got to see Trungpa Rinpoche and Suzuki-roshi together.

Ross: I think what you said, one of the times you saw Suzuki-roshi in San Francisco, Trungpa Rinpoche was also there and you saw them together?

Schneider: Yes, that's right. And he came to the Zen Center regularly. He loved Suzuki-roshi. I mean I have written about this in other places. If you'd like to see something, I can send you something.

Ross: Oh that would be wonderful.

Schneider: And I also wrote a book that describes the break up of the Zen Center. It's not focused on that but it does describe the break in one of the chapters. And the break up in 1983. A lot of us sort of scattered but then kept practicing. So maybe I'll point you to that book. It might give you some background.

Ross: Oh, I would like to read that. It would be very interesting.

Schneider: It's called Street Zen. Street Zen.

Ross: Street Zen. Okay. [sounds of laptop typing]

Schneider: It's available.

Ross: I'm sure I can find it on the Internet.

Schneider: Yeah, definitely.

Ross: Okay.

Schneider: And then I can send you something about Suzuki-roshi and [inaudible]. But anyway the Zen Center blew up, which is what it felt like. My teacher at that point, Baker-roshi, left, and I couldn't at that time. I had a little, kind of a complicated domestic scene. Then Baker-roshi got involved in doing other things. I didn't want to go to that scene. I had always liked Trungpa Rinpoche. I began asking him about studying with him, and he wasn't discouraging. Although he wanted to make things clean with Baker-roshi. He didn't want to be someone who stole students. That wasn't his style. He was very traditional in many ways. He was famously wild in certain ways, but actually as a Buddhist teacher he was quite conservative and traditional. So at one point, I asked him if I could study with him and he said yeah. That's how it happened. Of course there's much more to that.

Ross: Sure. It seems like such an interesting time in so many ways.

Schneider: Yeah, it was. I was young, and as I say, it kind of got in my system early and powerfully.

Ross: Besides introducing you to Buddhism or besides being the place where you began your meditation practice would you say Reed had any other influence on your later life or career?

Schneider: Well sure. Partly because I got into writing this biography of Philip Whalen that meant I had to be able to work with his papers at Reed. I hadn't been back. I'll probably have to come up there at some point. Rick Levine [1970] and I keep planning to do a road trip up there. But [inaudible] Gay Walker '69 [Library Staff, 2002-] is her name at the library. She was extremely helpful in pointing me to what was available in the archive connected to Whalen.

Ross: Yes, she's really wonderful. She works a lot on this project as well.

Schneider: Please give her greetings from me.

Ross: I will, I will. She'll be delighted to hear from you.

Schneider: And you can tell her the book is progressing. (he laughs)

Ross: Okay. I will. Do you think there's anything else that's important for us to understand about these student Buddhists at Reed that we haven't gotten to cover yet?

Schneider: You know, there's something, but it's hard to, there's no logical explanation for it, this thing that I want to say. And I have to describe it also in this book about Whalen because he lived at the Lambert Street house with Snyder and Welch and Don Berry '54 and all those other people, that other generation. And this thing is, I don't think we have a way to talk about it in the Western tradition, which is sometimes there is just a confluence of energies and people that makes things special. You can see it like San Francisco, the Haight Ashbury, the bands of the time, or with the Beatniks earlier in New York, for example. Those are a few examples. They look from the outside almost magical because one can't quite understand why this group of people in this particular place is feeling the way they are and having the effects that they are having but it's sort of undeniable. That happened certainly in the late '40s or early '50s at Reed, and I think it happened again in the late '60s and early '70s at Reed and I'm not sure why except you could point to Lloyd who was involved with both groups. Only sort of peripherally. He was someone all those people loved, and he was someone who promoted an open mind, a sort of exploratory mind, trusting yourself even if it didn't look standard. But I think they're also other magical entities that are just hard to put a name on, and I think they were operative.

Ross: Hmm.

Schneider: (laughs) I'm sorry I can't put it any more clearly than that.

Ross: I think you're very clear. I think I understand what you're saying. It's very interesting to think about. I definitely know what you're talking about. It's interesting to try and think about what could be behind it or if there is a way to explain it or if it just kind of happens sometimes.

Schneider: Yeah, I know. It interests me too. Like I say I tried to explain it, I wrote a chapter about Whalen and Snyder's friendship, for example, and in that chapter I try and talk about the Lambert Street house a little bit. It was definitely, it was a scene, sometimes just scenes arise, you know. And there's a central point. The Buddhist term would be *mandala*, a gathering of energy, a confluence of things. It has a powerful effect on everybody involved in it, and it has an effect beyond the people involved in it. It happens from time to time.

Ross: Interesting.

Schneider: Yeah.

Ross: Well I know it's pretty late in Germany right now. I don't want to keep you too long.

Schneider: It's eleven. We're good for a little longer. It's my daughter's birthday today so I'm kind of wiped out. But, yeah. It's nice to talk.

Ross: I think I'm out of questions. I'll turn off the recorder and mention a couple of practical things to you. One is that—

[digital recording ends, End of Interview]

[Transcribed by Leah Beth Ward, August 16-17, 2010; audited by Amanda Waldroupe '07, September 20, 2010; edits by narrator October 18, 2011; final read by Mark Kuestner, October 20, 2011.]