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Jyan-Lung Lin

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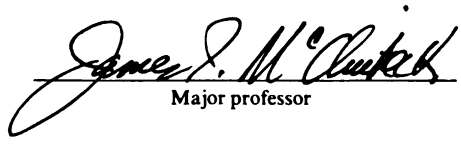

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GARY SNYDER'S POETRY: A STUDY OF THE FORMATION AND TRNASFORMATION OF HIS ENLIGHTENED VISION

By

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ABSTRACT

GARY SNYDER'S POETRY: A STUDY OF THE FORMATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF HIS ENLIGHTENED VISION

By

Jyan-lung Lin

Since the appearance of Jack Kerouac's *The Dharma Bums* (1958) and Alan Watts' *Beat Zen Square Zen and Zen* (1959), Gary Snyder's poetic reputation has increased dramatically. His books received sympathetic and serious criticism in the 1960's from such important poet-critics as Kenneth Rexroth and Robert Bly. In the last two decades at least three full-length studies of Snyder's mind and art have been published. More recently, a number of critics have attempted to explicate his esoteric allusions to Zen Buddhist thought. Yet no critical study of Snyder's poetry presenting his spiritual development as well as the transforming visions that come with his Buddhist enlightenment has been written. My study makes a start. In discussing Snyder's poetry, I rely on Zen methodology while placing his work within American literary tradition, dating back to Emerson, which seeks new sources of inspiration from the Orient.

The introductory chapter looks briefly at Snyder's life from a chronological perspective, which includes his direct contact with Zen Buddhism and Oriental literature. The second chapter contains an introduction to Zen Buddhism and poetry in that tradition, and a discussion of Snyder's poetics - his imagism grounded on the principle of Zen aesthetics and his

elliptical style suitable for expressing the inexpressible. In the third chapter, I examine his holistic vision of the phenomenal and the noumenal. The fourth chapter reveals the process of his spiritual development from self-examination to an exercise of social wisdom. The fifth chapter deals with his transforming visions, suggested by his sense of humour, his daily activities, and the unique Zen moods underlying his poetry. In the final chapter, I evaluate Snyder's poetry and make some comments concerning its contribution to American literature as well as to the ecology movement.

Snyder's best work stems from his vision of an integrated and unified world. It not only influences poets but attempts to create in the reader a change of consciousness. His Zen Buddhist insights presented through sensuous images are the source of a poetry of incredible power and beauty. He has learned from the Orient a poetry of spontaneity and startling originality which expands the range and depth of a literary tradition deeply rooted in the American past.

For my parents-in-law Tse-ching and Pi-yun Lin Lai

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ABBREVIATIONS

AH *Axe Handles* (San Francisco: North Point, 1983).

BC *The Back Country* (London: Fulcrum, 1967).

EHH *Earth House Hold* (New York: New Directions, 1978).

LOIR *Left Out in the Rain* (San Francisco: North Point, 1986).

MRWE *Mountains & Rivers Without End: Six Sections, Plus One* (Bolinas, California: Four Season, 1970).

MT *Myths & Texts* (New York: New Directions, 1978).

OW *The Old Ways: Six Essays* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1977).

PTI *Passage Through India* (San Francisco: Grey Fox, 1983).

POW *The Practice of the Wild* (San Francisco: North Point, 1990).

TRW *The Real Work: Interviews & Talks 1964-1979*, ed., Wm Scott Maclean (New York: New Directions, 1980).

RW *Regarding Wave* (New York: New Directions, 1970).

RCMP *Riprap, & Cold Mountain Poems* (San Francisco: Grey Fox, 1965).

TI *Turtle Island* (New York: New Directions, 1974).

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Critics tend to regard Gary Snyder as an "ecological poet" because of his recognition of the importance of the reintegration of man and nature, his deep concern with the fate of the environment, and his outspoken advocacy for ecological awareness. Such a label provides a starting point for understanding Snyder's poetry. But it can also mislead because Snyder is a Zen Buddhist, and his works are grounded on Zen Buddhist ontology. In *Earth House Hold*, Snyder mentions the three aspects of the Dharma path - wisdom (prajna), meditation (dhyana), and morality (sila) - which direct the course of his poetic development. Wisdom, as Snyder explains, is "intuitive knowledge of the mind ... that lies beneath one's ego-driven anxieties and aggressions." Meditation is "going into the mind to see this for yourself - over and over again, until it becomes the mind you live in." As to morality, it is viewed by Snyder as leading naturally from the simultaneously occurred wisdom and meditation, as "personal example and responsible action, ultimately toward the true community (sangha) of 'all beings'" (EHH, 92). Parallel to this spiritual movement from self-examination to

an exercise of social wisdom is the development of his writing which, as Dan McLeod observes, "has moved from the still, almost purely meditative lyrics of *Riprap* to the celebration of the human family as a vital part of a broad network of relationships linking all forms of life in *Regarding Wave*, to the eco-politico poems and essays in *Turtle Island* which contains his most didactic poetry."[1] In short, Snyder's poetry of environmental concern is the inevitable outcome of his mystical perception of the Buddha nature discoverable in all things, animate or inanimate.

Gary Snyder is considered by Bob Steuding, the first critic ever to write a full-length study of Snyder's work, to be a "strikingly different poet." He is "strikingly different" from other American poets not because he is ecologically aware but because he is the only major contemporary American poet able to absorb the Zen Buddhist world view. As Steuding points out, "No poet in American literature has made Buddhist psychology so completely his own."[2] To understand Snyder's poetry, one must therefore go deep into his spiritual world, which, to use Bert Almon's words, is itself "a trail over the slick rock of [Snyder's] poetry, providing a path where we might see only a difficult physical terrain."[3] The intent of this study is to discuss Snyder's poetry presenting his enlightened vision - its formation and transformations. In doing so I rely on Zen methodology while situating Snyder within a larger, American

poetic context by comparing his vision to that of his American predecessors, extending as far back as Emerson and Thoreau, who did not fear to cross cultural barriers to seek new sources of inspiration from the Orient.

A. Snyder and His American Predecessors

As the first Orientalists of American literature, Emerson and Thoreau shared a broad interest in the Orient, covering Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. However, as many critics have pointed out, the Oriental influence on Emerson and Thoreau is primarily the wisdom of the Brahman. In *Emerson and Asia,* Frederic Ives Carpenter focuses on Emerson's debts to Indian religion and philosophy. He traces Emerson's interest in Brahmanism back to his early interest in Plato and then to Neoplatonism, which, according to him, is "the fusion of Greek Platonism with a mysticism brought from the Orient by way of Alexandria."[4] Arthur Christy, in *The Orient in American Transcendentalism,* relates Emerson's doctrines of the Over-Soul, Compensation, and illusion to the corresponding Hindu doctrines of Brahman, Karma, and Maya.[5] Christy also notes that while critical of Hindu pessimism and the caste system, Thoreau focused his interest on Hinduism and learned largely from it a mystical love of nature, which helped him find his place in American literature.[6] Moncure D. Conway, one of Thoreau's acquaintances, even compared him

to a Yogi: "Like the pious Yogi, so long motionless whilst gazing on the sun that knotty plants encircled his neck and the cast snake-skin on his loins, and the birds built their nests on his shoulders, this poet and naturalist, by equal consecration, became a part of the field and forest."[7] And Sherman Paul in *The Shores of America* singles out the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the greatest Indian philosophical poem, and the *Laws of Menu* as the most important Hindu books that helped to bolster Thoreau's thought, and suggests that Thoreau was more indebted to Hinduism than his mentor: "For although Emerson found the Hindu doctrines of the soul and karma congenial to his thought, Thoreau captured their spirit, their insistence on behavior and the way of life."[8]

Whitman's Orientalism was first recognized by Emerson and Thoreau. Emerson described Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* as "a remarkable mixture of the *Bhagavad-Gita* and the *New York Herald*, and Thoreau found it "wonderfully like the Orientals."[9] More recently, V. K. Chari notes that the central concept in Whitman's poetry is "the dynamic, cosmic 'I' of the Upanishads, the atman-brahman - attained through a process of universalizing the 'ego,' by meditating on the universal nature of the self, its at-one-ness with the all."[10] And O. K. Nambiar in his *Walt Whitman and Yoga* (1966) points out that Whitman's views are at times similar to the spirit of Yoga, and his *Leaves of Grass* can be read as a modern Yoga guidebook.[11] In "A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd

Roads" (1888) Whitman admitted that he had read "the ancient Hindoo poems," among other classics, as "some further embryonic facts of *Leaves of Grass*." In *The Great Circle*, Beongcheon Yu has pointed out that Whitman's "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" (1859), describing a boy's initiation through his witness of a mockingbird grieving over the loss of its mate, was inspired by the Ramayana, "one of 'the ancient Hindoo poems' he read in preparation for the first edition of *Leaves of Grass*."[12]

Although the Transcendentalists's Oriental interest is largely in Hinduism, it should be noted that Hinduism, whose major texts, such as the Upanishads, had already been in existence long before the appearance of Buddhism, provided a point of departure for the Buddha's teaching. Hindus believe in the essential Self (Atman), or the Absolute (Brahman), of which every human and every thing is a part. They reject the conscious self (Jivatman), which tends to measure, form, and divide things with various motives, and thus veil the one underlying reality of Brahman. This motivated action of measuring, forming, and dividing things is called Karma, which always requires further action. It can not solve any problem, but creates still more problems to be solved. To attain "freedom" (Moksha) from the enslavement of the relative comprehension of the world (Maya), from the trap of Karma, Hinduism teaches us to disentangle our essential Self from our self consciousness. The method is a yogic discipline: the

practice of no conception (Nirvikalpa), of taking action spontaneously without seeking a result.

Buddhism agrees with Hinduism except that it denies the Upanishadic distinction between the essential Self and the conscious self. "The true Self is no Self," or "the original Mind is no Mind," is the fundamental teaching of every school of Buddhism. This fundamental teaching of Buddhism is said to be grounded on the Buddha's experience. After having sat under the Bo tree for seven years to penetrate the cause of human enslavement to the relative comprehension of the world, the Buddha found that all his efforts had been in vain, that the essential Self was no where to be found. He did not transcend the distinction between the absolute and the relative until he "gave up." This simple action of "giving up" suddenly awakened him to the fact that there was no essential Self to be grasped, that is to say, there was no distinction between the relative and the absolute. The Buddha's teaching is not quite the assertion that there is no essential Self at the bottom of our self consciouseness. The point is rather that the essential Self is not something to be grasped either by direct experience or by concepts. Any attempt to conceive it, believe in it, or seek for it immediately engages the operation of the conscious self, which is itself a Karma.[13] The Buddha's intuitional experience, with no reliance on conventional Hindu teaching, and his focus on the present, with no distinction between the past and the

future, are the original teachings of Buddhism.

Due to its kinship with Hinduism, the forerunner of Buddhism, American Transcendentalism has been found by many scholars comparable to Buddhism, particularly to its Zen sect. For instance, Donald D. Eulert found a haiku quality in Emerson's vision and style.[14] Robert Detweiler declares that Emerson, with his emphasis on intuitional experience, self-reliance, and the miracle of the moment, comes quite close to Zen.[15] Van Meter Ames in his *Zen and American Thought* sees Emerson as an "American Bodhisattva." And with a clear knowledge of the merging in sixth century China of Buddhism and Taoism, Ames proceeds to compare Thoreau to the Taoist.[16] D. T. Suzuki, after noting the "cosmic feeling" in *Walden*, declares that Thoreau is much like the Japanese Zen poets Basho and Saigyo.[17] Even Emerson himself considered the Buddhist to be a Transcendentalist.

> If there is anything grand and daring in human thought or virtue, any reliance on the vast, the unknown; any presentiment, any extravagance of faith, the spiritualist adopts it as most in nature. The oriental mind has always tended to this largeness. Buddhism is an expression of it. The Buddhist who thanks no man, who says, "Do not flatter your benefactors," but who, in his

> conviction that every good deed can by no possibility escape its reward, will not deceive the benefactor by pretending that he has done more than he should, is a Transcendentalist.[18]

Aware of the similarity between Zen and American Transcendentalism, some critics have attempted to compare Snyder's Buddhist thought, his personality and life style to that of the Transcendentalists, Thoreau in particular. Herbert Fackler notes that Snyder's *Cold Mountain Poems* is "a kind of Zen Walden Pond."[19] Charles Molesworth, while noting *Earth House Hold*'s dedication to Oda Sesso Roshi and its indebtedness to Zen philosophy, thinks it possible to read the book as a very American testament: "here the prototype would be Thoreau's Walden - that mixes personal experience with a universalizing vision addressed to the largest questions."[20] In his introduction to *The Real Work* (1980), a collection of Snyder's interviews and talks, Scott McLean considers Zen and American Transcendentalism to be two parallel threads Snyder has followed.

> Gary Snyder's poetry has continued a tradition first pursued in late eighteenth-century Romantic thought and carried on in American literature most notably by Thoreau: a belief that the "outer and inner life correspond" and

> that poetry is "the self-consciousness of the universe," the voice of the universe reflecting on itself and on the interdependence of outer and inner nature .... But if Snyder's work follows this thread in European and American literature, the bases for his poetry lie elsewhere .... [His] attention to phenomena in order to discover poetic form in that reality was sharpened by the meditative teachings of Japanese and Chinese poets leading to mind before language and in what is now more than twenty-five years of Zen practice, a discipline which takes one "to anything direct - rocks or bushes or people." (*TRW* xi-xii)

Moreover, while making no mention of the parallel insights of Zen and American Transcendentalism, Snyder, in his first long prose effort, *The Practice of the Wild* (1990), quotes most often Thoreau and the Japanese Soto Zen master Dogen to uphold his vision of the oneness of mind and nature. Suffice it to say that Snyder's Zen with its transcendental nature of mysticism, paradoxism and wise passivism can be better understood in the light of American Transcendentalism.

Eliot's interest in Hinduism and Buddhism is well-known.

In 1911 he returned to Harvard from Paris and took up his two-year study of Sanskrit and Pali with Professor Charles Lanman. During the second year he studied Indian philosophy with Professor James Woods. In *After Strange Gods* (1934) Eliot mentioned his study of Hinduism and Buddhism, which left him "in a state of enlightened mystification."

> Two years spent in the study of Sanskrit under Charles Lanman, and a year in the mazes of Patanjali's metaphysics under the guidance of James Woods, left me in a state of enlightened mystification. A good half of the effort of understanding what the Indian philosophers were after - and their subtleties make most of the great European philosophers look like schoolboys - lay in trying to erase from my mind all the categories and kinds of distinction common to European philosophy from the time of the Greeks. My previous and concomitant study of European philosophy was hardly better than an obstacle. And I came to the conclusion - seeing also that the "influence" of Brahmin and Buddhist thought upon Europe, as in Schopenhauer, Hartman, and Deussen, had largely been through romantic

> misunderstanding - that my only hope of really penetrating to the heart of that mystery would lie in forgetting how to think and feel as an American or a European: which, for practical as well as sentimental reasons, I did not wish to do.[21]

Although he did not wish to forget "how to think and feel as an American or a European," Eliot is clearly indebted to Hinduism and Buddhism. At the time of his composition of "The Waste Land," because he had to face his mentally unstable wife and his own artistic sterility, Eliot even seriously considered becoming a Buddhist.[22] To transcend this two-fold impasse and his personal sentimentalism, Eliot adopted the mythical method to view his personal situation from a universal frame of reference, including Hinduism and Buddhism. His major Buddhist reference appears in the third section of "The Waste Land," which puts the Buddha's "fire sermon" on lust in parallel with the scene of a love affair between a clerk and a typist set against the polluted city, symbolic of the modern society as a waste land. His reference to Hinduism is seen in the last section, "What the Thunder Said," which uses a fable recorded in the Upanishads, telling how gods, men, and devils interpreted their father Prajapati's monosyllabic word Da respectively as "be self-controlled," "be charitable," and "be compassionate."

More deeply than "The Waste Land" is Eliot's *Four Quartets* indebted to Buddhism and Hinduism. The book is found by critics closest to Hinduism in theme and structure and to Buddhism in spirit. Russell T. Fowler singles out the *Gita* as the most important inspirational source for Eliot's *Four Quartets*: "Its influence, however, has a central importance, both structurally and thematically, to the last of the four and to the *Quartets* as a whole."[23] Harold E. McCarthy, on the other hand, declares that "Of all Eliot's works, taken separately, it is the *Four Quartets* which is closest to the spirit of Buddhism."[24] Throughout the book, Eliot meditates on time and eternity, action and inaction, movement and stillness. To reconcile the relative and the absolute, he follows the suggestion of Krishna, one of the reincarnations of Vishnu the Hindu Preserver, that one act with no thought of the fruit of action so that one's conscious self can be wiped clear and one's discriminating mind be transcended. In "The Dry Salvages" he sang:

> Here between the hither and the farther
> shore
> While time is withdrawn, consider the
> future
> And the past with an equal mind ....
> And do not thinks of the fruit of action.
> Fare Forward ....
> So Krishna, as when he admonished

Arjuna on the field of battle. Not fare well,

But fare forward, voyagers.[25]

In suggesting that a "selfless" action be taken to eliminate the conception of time and space, Eliot also uses at the heart of the book the now well-known phrase, "the still point of the turning world," which may be read as a key to the book, suggesting the familiar Buddhist image, "the Wheel of the Dharma." The Buddhist uses the image of the spinning wheel to represent the forever changing/turning phenomenal. At the axis of the wheel there is the Dharma, the heart of things, which is still and silent. Like the Buddhist, Eliot uses in his book a similar image to emphasize that at the center of "the turning world" there is the noumenal, the world of non-distinction.[26]

Eliot's "The Waste Land," as critics have pointed out, has had a profound influence on Snyder's work, particularly his *Myths & Texts*. In *Gary Snyder*, Bob Steuding, after comparing Eliot's concept of tradition and his mystical vision to Snyder's awareness of his place in time and his mysticism, proceeds to discuss the similarities between "The Waste Land" and *Myths & Texts*. He says: "In Myths & Texts, Snyder employs and adapts to his own needs the themes, technique, and general purpose of 'The Waste Land'; and as a result, he produces a work similar in content and in style, if radically different in spirit." Although he argues that "The Waste Land" may be regarded as the paradigm of *Myths & Texts*, Steuding admits:

"in Myths & Texts, Eliot's presence is found most obviously when comparing his sections III and V to Snyder's 'Burning.' Eliot's sections I, II, and IV, with their sense of illicit love, sterility, guilt, and shame contrast to the generally lusty and psychically uncomplicated drift of Myths & Texts." Then Steuding focuses on the numerous points of comparison between Eliot's "The Fire Sermon" and "What the Thunder Said" and Snyder's "Burning." He draws connections between both poets' vision and attitude -- their awareness of "the existence of the void and the transience of sentient life," their sense of purgation and abandonment, and their final suggestion of acceptance and peace.[27] Steuding's discussion indicates that without a knowledge of both poets' influence by Oriental thought, any comparison of their works will have to stop at the technical or thematic level.

While "The Waste Land" had an effect specifically on Snyder's *Myths & Texts*, *Four Quartets* had an influence on Snyder's poetry in general. Its view of the conscious self as responsible for the categories of action versus inaction, past and future, ascent and decline, movement and stillness, and its suggestion of the sort of "selfless" action as a way of reconciling the relative and the absolute are the core of the Buddhist theory and practice, on which many of Snyder's poems have grounded themselves. Expressing the Buddhist attitude of mind, the book is Snyder's favorite Eliot work. In *The Real Work*, Snyder says: "And so Eliot, without maybe even

consciously being aware of it, points us some profound directions. *Four Quartets* is my favorite Eliot work, and I think that it is a major work" (*TRW* 56-57).

As for Pound, he agreed with Whitman that the British literary tradition was not the only source from which American poets could learn. He did not fear to cross cultural barriers to seek new sources of inspiration. The Orient, in particular, was an example and a source of values for Pound. Because he emphasized the social function of literature and the role of poet as teacher and preserver of culture, Pound excitedly turned to Confucianism and translated almost all of its major texts. In "Canto XIII," as Dan McLeod notes, Pound alluded to Confucius' view of himself as a preserver of culture.

> The blossoms of the apricot
>
> blow from the East to the West,
>
> And I have tried to keep them from falling.[28]

On the other hand, due to his misunderstanding of Buddhism and Taoism, Pound regarded the two as the arch-rivals of Confucianism and dismissed them as negative forces that brought chaos into the Chinese empire. His rejection of Buddhism and Taoism is seen throughout the China Cantos. However, Pound as a poet was more interested in seeking from the Orient something that could confirm the aesthetics of his Imagism -- a theory grounded on the "objectivist logic" of Schopenhauer, passed through the work of Henri Bergson to the

British Imagist T. E. Hulme, attempting to encounter directly what L. S. Dembo calls "essential reality," with a perception free, in Dembo's words, "of conventional reason, sentiment, and even of conception itself."[29] Thus Pound paradoxically reverted to the technical aspects of the imagistic Chinese and Japanese poems, which had their roots in the Buddhist-Taoist philosophy of egolessness, of the unity of all life forms. For instance, the nineteen Chineses poems he translated in *Cathay* were written largely by Taoist-Zenist poets such as Tao Yuan Ming, Li Po, and Wang Wei. And his famous "In a Station of the Metro" is modelled on an old haiku written by the Japanese poet Moritake. From T'ang poetry and Japanese haiku Pound learned such techniques as line division, syntactical ellipsis, and super-imposition of one image upon another. These techniques provided the basic structure for many of his poems and made possible his creation of a poetry "harder and saner ... nearer the bone," with "fewer painted adjectives," and "free from emotional slither."[30]

Pound's Confucianism, with its emphasis on the socio-political function of poetry, has been a model for Snyder. Bob Steuding has demonstrated this influence of Pound's Confucian literary thought on Snyder by comparing "Canto XLV" and *ABC of Reading* with Snyder's *Earth House Hold* (1969).[31] Moreover, Pound's integration of Oriental imagism and ellipsism in his poetic theory has had a great influence on contemporary American poets, Snyder among them. Before he

came into direct contact with Chinese poetry, Snyder had read Arthur Waley's and Ezra Pound's translations. Because it was not Waley but Pound who experimented with the Chinese structural techniques, it is fair to say that Snyder's first knowledge of these techniques wass from Pound. Although Pound's knowledge of the cultures of China and Japan was not as profound as that of Snyder, his commitment to Confucianism and the Buddhist-Taoist Imagism paved the way for Snyder to till the soil of Zen, which blends the three branches of Chinese philosophy. In the title poem of his *Axe Handles* (1983), Snyder uses "axe and handle," a metaphor he borrows from the Chinese *Book of Songs*, (700-1200, B.C.), to express the mentor-disciple relationship between Pound and himself:

"In making the handle
Of an axe
By cutting wood with an axe
The model is indeed near at hand."
My teacher Shih-hsiang Chen
Translated that and taught it years ago
And I see: Pound was an axe,
Chen was an axe, I am an axe
And my son a handle, soon
To be shaping again, model
And tool, craft of culture,
How we go on. (*AH* 6)

B. Toward a Zen on Turtle Island

Snyder was born in 1930 in San Francisco. When he was one and one-half years old, his family moved to the state of Washington and opened a dairy farm in a rural area and remained there until 1942. During this period, Snyder became interested in nature. As he recalls in *The Real Work*, "As early as I was allowed, at the age of nine or ten, I went off and slept in the woods at night alone. I had a secret camp back in the woods that nobody knew about; I had hidden the trail to it. As soon as my father figured I knew how to put out a campfire, he let me go off and cook for myself and stay a day or two" (*TRW* 92). When he was twelve, Snyder moved with his family to Portland, Oregon. At this time he was strongly attracted to American Indian culture. He sewed his own moccasins and made his own arrows, spending much time in the woods camping and hiking. The summers of 1943-45 he worked in a camp at Spirit Lake, Washington, where he obtained his first taste of mountaineering. As he recalls, "It was here that I got my first taste of high country and where I learned the rudiments of mountain climbing and back packing, and changed over from lowland wilderness to alpine wilderness. What I learned there I extended later into Forest Service and logging and mountaineering experience."[32] At the age of fifteen he became the youngest member of the Mazamas Mountain Climbers, an adult club that required the climbing of a snow peak for

membership.

Snyder's early sympathy with the natural world, his youthful experiences, and his awareness of man's exploitation of nature led him to seek in Zen Buddhism an experiential philosophy whereby he could become an advocate for wilderness and ecological awareness. In reply to Peter Barry Chowka who asked him to recount the context of those years that led him to Buddhism, Snyder said:

> When I was young, I had an immediate, intuitive, deep sympathy with the natural world which was not taught me by anyone. In that sense, nature is my "guru" and life is my sadhana. That sense of the authenticity, completeness, and reality of the natural world itself made me aware even as a child of the contradictions that I could see going on around me in the state of Washington, in the way of exploitation, logging, development, pollution. I lived on the edge of logging country, and the trees were rolling by on the tops of trucks, just as they are still. (*TRW* 92)

In 1949 when he studied in Reed College, Portland, Snyder first heard about the mystical naturalism of Zen, which believes that the Buddha nature can be discovered not in man

alone but in all that exists, sentient or insentient. He began teaching himself to sit in meditation. By this time he was also studying Oriental culture. As he recalled in *The Real Work*, he read Ezra Pound and Arthur Waley's translations of Chinese poetry, a translation of Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching*, and some texts of Confucius, the Hindu *Upanishads, Vedas, Bhagavad-Gita*, most of the classics of Chinese and Indian Buddhist literature. Moreover, he became particularly interested in Zen, a mixture of Mahayana Buddhism and Taoist tradition, and decided that he should someday go to Japan and study it:

> The convergence that I found really exciting was the Mahayana Buddhist wisdom-oriented line as it developed in China and assimilated the older Taoist tradition. It was that very precise cultural meeting that also coincided with the highest period of Chinese poetry - the early and middle T'ang dynasty Zen masters and the poets who were their contemporaries and in many cases friends - that was fascinating. Then I learned that this tradition is still alive and well in Japan. That convinced me that I should go and study in Japan. (*TRW* 94-95)

One year after graduating from Reed College in 1951 with

an interdepartmental degree in Anthropology-Literature, Snyder went to the graduate school at Indiana University studying linguistics and anthropology. But soon he quit and hitch-hiked back to San Francisco. There he roomed with a former classmate, the poet and Zen Buddhist, Philip Whalen, who further piqued his interest in Zen. In 1953 he left San Francisco and worked as summer fire lookout at Sourdough Mountain in the State of Washington. In the fall of 1953, to prepare himself to go to Japan, Snyder enrolled in the Oriental Languages Department at the University of California at Berkerley. Also in that season he met with Kenneth Rexroth, then San Francisco's literary patriarch. In 1955 Snyder began translating Han-shan, a Zen lunatic of Chinese T'ang Dynasty, under the guidance of Chen Shih-hsiang, his teacher of Chinese poetry. As critics have pointed out, it was during his translation of Han-shan that Snyder's style was assured. Before he translated Han Shan, Snyder had tried his hand on other Chinese T'ang poets in the Zen tradition such as, Wang Wei, Meng Hao-jan, Liu Tsung-yuan, and Wei Ying-wu. As Dan McLeod observes, that some of his translations "were published in multiple versions may even indicate that back then Snyder was still uncertain of his own style. By the time he turned to Han-shan, however, his hand was sure."[33] As his *Cold Mountain Poems* (1965) shows, the generalized imagery, the extreme terseness and colloquial language are actually Han Shan's style. Only the landscape or "setting" is largely that

of the American West. This style was soon reflected in *Riprap* (1959), particularly in "Mid-August at Sourdough Mountain Lookout." The poem uses the landscape of the Sourdough Mountain in the State of Washington in presenting scenes not as settings but as natural forces that integrate humankind. This Han-shan, as well as Chinese, way of presenting things has provided a tradition for Snyder's poetic practice. Also in the year of 1955 Snyder met Allen Ginsberg. Through his association with Ginsberg, he met Jack Kerouac and other Beat writers such as Michael McClure and Philip Lamantia. He soon joined them in giving the now historic poetry reading at the Six Gallery in San Francisco, which culminated in Ginsberg's reading of "Howl," bemoaning the destruction of "the best minds" of his generation. Thus Snyder helped to start the movement, later known as the San Francisco Renaissance.

Although his involvement in the Beat movement was short (he met Ginsberg in September, 1955, and left for Japan in May, 1956), Snyder is lumped together with the Beats not just because he joined them in justification of hitchhiking, pot-smoking, and sexual promiscuity, in rejection of post-war America's intellectual standards and mass culture, but because he shared with them a strong interest in Zen. The Zen craze of "the beat generation" has been properly explained by Alan Watts from a broad cultural perspective: the war against Japan, the publications of D. T. Suzuki's essays on Zen and other anthologies of Zen stories, the attraction of a non-

conceptual, experiential philosophy in a climate of scientific relativism, and the appeal of Zen arts to the modern spirit of the West and of Zen's mystical naturalism to those seeking the reintegration of man and nature.[34] It is this Zen fervor that turns "the beat generation" from an all-out attack on American business civilization into a search for the significance of life, from furious, reckless, and crazy into "beatific. " In taking interest in Far Eastern art and religion, the Beats found themselves in the line of turning to the East for inspiration, which was started by Emerson and Thoreau and continued by Pound and Eliot.

Of all the Beat writers, Snyder is the best in absorbing Zen Buddhist thought. According to his colleague Jack Kerouac, Snyder had already been well-discplined in Zen even before he went to Japan. In *The Dharma Bums* Snyder (Japhy Ryder) was described by Kerouac as leading a monastic life, typical of a Zen Buddhist.

> Japhy lived in his own shack which was infinitely smaller than ours, about twelve by twelve, with nothing in it but typical Japhy appurtenances that showed his belief in the simple monastic life - no chairs at all ..., but just straw mats .... He had a slew of orange crates all filled with beautiful scholarly books, some of them in Oriental languages, all

> the great sutras, comments on sutras, the complete works of D. T. Suzuki and a fine quadruple-volume edition of Japanese haikus .... In fact if a thief should have broken in there the only things of real value were the books.[35]

In his first meeting with Kerouac, Snyder was so well-trained in Zen that he was able to point out that Kerouac was wrong in making a distinction between Mahayana Buddhism and Zen, which differ from each other only in practice and style.

> I can't recreate the exact ... brilliance of all Japhy's answers and comebacks and come-ons with which he had me on pins and needles all the time and did eventually stick something in my crystal head that made me change my plans in life.[36]

As Kerouac admits in *The Dharma Bums*, it was Snyder who taught him to approach Buddhism not through prayer but through meditation, not to follow the Buddha's truth in an emotional and ethical way but to enter the world of Zen where ego was discarded, and come out wholly alive. Everything Snyder did - his translation of Han Shan, his talks on haiku, his mention of Zen masters's sayings and doings, and his openness toward nature - was inspiring to Kerouac. Under Snyder's guidance, Kerouac finally became initiated and dedicated his book to Snyder's hero, Han Shan.

In 1956 Snyder went to Japan to undertake formal Zen training on a scholarship from the First Zen Institute of America. From that year until 1968, except for nine months (1958) spent in San Francisco, six months (1961-62) traveling with Ginsberg and Peter Orlovsky through India, and a brief stay (1964-65) at Berkeley teaching English, Snyder spent most of time in Japan. In "As For Poets" in *Turtle Island* (1974) Snyder suggests that he is the first American poet who has ever spent so many years studying Zen in Japan:

> The first
> Water Poet
> Stayed down six years.
> He was covered with seaweed. (*TI* 87)

"Stayed down six years" refers to the longest period (1959-64) that Snyder spent in Japan. As seaweed is one of the Japanese favorite daily foods, symbolizing the culture of Japan, "He was covered with seaweed" represents Snyder's life thoroughly absorbed in Japanese culture whose core is grounded on Zen. In "The East West Interview" Snyder more clearly describes his experiences of studying Zen in Kyoto under Oda Sesso Roshi:

> I spent my first year in Japan living in Shokoku-ji, learning Japanese and serving as personal attendant to Miura Isshu Roshi. As my first teacher, he instructed me to continue my studies with Oda Sesso Roshi, who was the head abbot

> of Daitoku-ji at that time. So I went to Daitoku-ji, was accepted as a disciple by Oda Sesso, and started going to sesshins and living periodically in the monastery .... Oda Roshi was an especially gentle and quiet man - an extremely subtle man, by far the subtlest mind I've ever been in contact with, and a marvelous teacher whose teaching capacity I would never have recognized if I hadn't stayed with it, because it was only after five or six years that I began to realize that he had been teaching me all along. I guess that's what all the roshis are doing: teaching even when they're not "teaching." One of the reasons that you have to be very patient and very committed is that the way the transmission works is that you don't *see* how it works for a long time. (*TRW* 97-98)

In 1969 Snyder returned permanently to the United States, continuing his Zen and poetic practices. Since then he has become increasingly active in advocating the natural world and ecological awareness. In his effort to restore the eco-system, Snyder has never shuned the media. Instead, he has published many articles in popular magazines and lectured

in many universities across the nation. In 1972 he was selected along with poet Michael McClure by the Portola Institute to attend the "United Nations Conference on the Human Environment" in Stockholm, Sweden. Along with his concern with the fate of the environment, Snyder has always cared about the development of art and culture. In 1977 he worked in Governor Jerry Brown's administration as a member of the California Arts Council, which was not peopled by wealthy patrons of the arts as were similar organizations in other states, but by working artists themselves. Without getting paid, he regarded the time he gave to the Council as public service time, hoping to get public support for the arts and bring artists and communities together.

Moreover, Snyder has always had a strong sense of mission to spread his Zen Gospel throughout what he calls "Turtle Island," an Indian term for America. Three years after his return to the United States, Snyder built his own home near Grass Valley, California, in the Sierra Nevada foothills, where he and a group of friends have established the Ring of Bone Zendo, hoping to work toward a Zen on Turtle Island. In an interview conducted in 1988, Snyder lays out his plan of turning America into a Zen Utopia.

> I am working toward a "Ch'an on Turtle Island," which for me means an earlier and more open and more T'ang Chinese sort of spirit, old women trading insults and

> teacakes with wandering monks, really chopping literal wood and carrying actual water, a Ch'an for ordinary people and a few ghosts and spirits thrown in, on a real continent of mountains and streams on which we ask how to include the sagebrush and the rabbits or the farmworkers and the growers of Manteca and Turlock in our Zendos as well as the highly educated slightly troubled professionals."[37]

"Old women trading insults and teacakes with wandering monks" refers to an interesting dialogue between the Zen master Te-shan (780-865) and an old woman selling teacakes. Before he was converted to Zen, Te-shan had been a learned Dharma-lecturer. Because he lectured most frequently on *The Diamond Sutra*, he was nicknamed "Diamond Chou." One day, due to his doubts about the teaching of sudden enlightment by the Zen master Lung-tan, he decided to have a Dharma battle with Lung-tan. On the way to Lung-tan's place, he met an old woman selling teacakes, which in Chinese are called "mind-refreshers."[38] Being tired and hungry, Te-shan put down his pole with two baskets of his teacher Ching-lung's commentaries on *The Diamond Sutra*, trying to buy some teacakes. The old woman, out of curiosity, asked, "what is it in those basket?" "Ching-lung's commentaries on *The Diamond Sutra*," answered Te-

shan. The old woman said, "I'd like to ask you a question. If you can answer it, I will give you some good "mind-refreshers" (teacakes) for free. But if you can't, please go away. Now, according to *The Diamond Sutra*, 'The past mind cannot be obtained, the present mind cannot be obtained, and the future mind cannot be obtained.' What mind is Your Reverence intended to refresh?" To this the learned Te-shan could not answer.[39]

"Really chopping literal wood and carrying actual water" is a phrase borrowed from Pang-yun, a famous Zenist of T'ang China, who said: "supernatural power and wonderful functioning are found / In the carrying of water and the chopping of wood."[40] This famous Zen phrase is often quoted to suggest that to become enlightened, one needs only to live an ordinary life because the wonderful function of the Buddha nature is to be found no where but in his everyday life. By referring to the dialogue between Te-shan and the old woman selling teacakes, which suggests the incredible popularity of Zen among ordinary people in T'ang China, and by quoting Pang-yun Snyder reveals his dream of turning Turtle Island into a Zen Utopia. In this Utopia even an old woman selling teacakes is able to wage a "Dharma war" against the learned monk, and every ordinary person knows that the Buddha nature is to be found in his "ordinary mind" as well as in mountains, rivers, plants, and animals.

In an interview conducted in 1989, Burr Snider mentioned

Ginsberg's prediction that Snyder would "end up living in a mountain cave" like his spiritual hero, Han Shan, which made Snyder laugh:

> I didn't come up here with the idea of leaving the world, I always thought of this place as more like a base camp in the mountains from which I could make raids on the world down there. Which is exactly what I did for years. I'd swoop down and make raids on the treasures of student bodies at universities, making my living reading my poetry.[41]

Snyder's mind, as Burr Snider puts it, "is adept at operating at the highest most universal levels while diving into the thicket of mundane concerns, and he seems always to be searching for synthesis among the fundamental contradictions of existence."[42] Snyder's Zen activism is, in fact, the inevitable outcome of his existential awakening, whose process is one of the main concerns of this study. To understand Snyder's work presenting the process of his search for a synthesis of the universal Mind and the mundane world, it is necessary to introduce Zen Buddhism and poetry in that tradition, engaging Snyder's poetics shaped in accord with the principle of Zen aesthetics.

CHAPTER II

THE REAL RAZOR'S EDGE

As Zen Buddhism was brought from India to China in the sixth century, the Chinese word "Ch'an," in Japanese "Zen," was transliterated from the Sanskrit word "Dyana." However, since the Chinese T'ang dynasty (613-907), Zen has become different in meaning from the original "Dyana." While Dyana aims at putting down any thought in the mind by a methodical practice of yoga, Zen is simply a proper way to sit with no intention to put down the thought in mind. Unlike Dyana, Zen is not an excercise or discipline with an ulterior motive. It is meditation in the purest sense of the word. For the Zen Buddhist where there is motive, there is no meditation. Although Zen differs from Dyana in insisting on a purposeless meditation, it does not deny that there are two selves in men, the conscious self and the essential Self, and that it has an aimless aim at reintegrating both.

In China and Japan numerous Zen stories have been told to suggest the coexistence of the two selves in men. The most interesting one is recorded in the Zen text *Mumon-kan*:

> One day, when Hui-neng [638-713], the sixth Chinese Patriach of Zen Buddhism,

> went to a certain temple in Canton where Yin-zong was preaching the *Nirvana Sutra* to his audience, he saw two monks arguing about a flag and the wind. One monk said: "The flag is moving." The other one said: "The wind is moving." Each of them insisted on his own opinion; there seemed to be no way to end the quarrel. Then Hui-neng said to them: "The wind is not moving. The flag is not moving. It is your mind that is moving."[1]

The profound comment made by Hui-neng may be interpreted on two different levels. On one level, he is telling the monks that it is their conscious self that makes them distinguish the movement of the wind from the movement of the flag. On the other level, he is suggesting to them that neither the flag nor the wind functions. It is the essential Self that functions through external objects.

The idea of two selves existing in men is also held by American Transcendentalists. In "The Over-Soul" Emerson wrote:

> What we commonly call man, the eating, drinking, planting, counting man, does not, as we know him, represent himself, but misrepresents himself. Him we do not respect, but the soul, whose organ he is,

> would he let it appear through his action, would make our knees bend. When it breathes through his intellect, it is genius; when it breathes through his will, it is virtue; when it flows through his affection, it is love.[2]

Thoreau also noted the two selves within him:

> I only know myself as a human entity; the scene, so to speak, of thoughts and affections; and am sensible of a certain doubleness by which I can stand as remote from myself as from another. However intense my experience, I am conscious of the presence and criticism of a part of me, which, as it were, is not a part of me, but spectator, sharing no experience, but taking note of it; and that is no more than I than it is you. When the play, it may be the tragedy, of life is over, the spectator goes his way. It was a kind of fiction, a work of the imagination only, so far as he was concerned.[3]

Whitman, too, was fully aware of the coexistence of the real Me and its early partner when he said: "I cannot understand the mystery, but I am always conscious of myself as two - as

my soul and I: and I reckon it is the same with all men and women."[4]

The essential Self is generally designated by the Zen master as the self-nature, Tao, or the noumenal. This true Self, as Hui-neng explains, is "fundamentally pure and clean," "fundamentally beyond birth and death," "fundamentally complete in itself," "fundamentally immutable." Its content, as Hui-neng continues to explain, is the absolute voidness of the inner nature and the outer nature as a whole: "The wondrous nature of wordly men is fundamentally void and does not contain a single thing. The absolute voidness of the fundamental nature is also like that .... The voidness of the universe is capable of containing all things of various forms and shapes .... The voidness of wordly men's nature is also like that."[5] The essential Self with the Void as its content is the source of all things. In *In My Own Way* Alan Watts comments on the Zen Buddhist Void, which he considers started this universe:

> Although Westerners speak of "conquering space," they have a radical prejudice and a blind spot with respect to the importance of nothingness. They balk at it as people used to balk at thinking of the world as round. To them, nothingness is the awful-awful, the end, the demise which, we most fervently hope, is not to

> be the ultimate destiny of man and the universe. Yet this is due to a freaky lapse in our logic which affects our theology, our science, our philosophy, and our most vivid emotions. No one seems to have realized that you can't have something without nothing. How can you know "is" without understanding "isn't"? Try to imagine a solid without any space through and around it. Try to imagine space without any solid, including yourself, within it. For if something implies nothing, then nothing in turn implies something. To be or not to be is *not* the question, for reality, like electricity, is a pulsation of positive and negative energy. The big bang with which this universe is supposed to have started was, as they say in Zen, "the Void gnashing its teeth."[6]

The essential Self, in terms of its completeness, originality, purity, and creativity, is comparable to what Emerson called "the soul," "the aboriginal Self," or "the eternal One." In "The Over-Soul" Emerson described "the eternal One" as "self-sufficing and perfect," and "the soul" as "original and pure."[7] And in "Self-Reliance" he

interpreted "the aboriginal Self" as the origin of all things which is beyong human understanding:

> What is the aboriginal Self on which a universal reliance may be grounded? .... The inquiry leads us to that source, at once the essence of genius, of virtue, and of life, which we call Spontaneity or Instinct. We denote this primary wisdom as Intuition, whilst all later teachings are tuitions. In that deep force, the last fact behind which analysis cannot go, all things find their common origin. For the sense of being which in calm hours rises, we know not how, in the soul, is not diverse from things, from space, from light, from time, from man, but one with them and proceeds obviously from the same source whence their life and being also proceed. We first share the life by which things exist and afterwards see them as appearances in nature and forget that we have shared their cause."[9]

Where the content of the essential Self is the Void, which is immutable and permanent, the contents of the conscious self are the intellect, the will, the emotion, and

all the senses, which are changeable and transient. In contrast with the essential Self which is as pure as a mirror, the conscious self with all its unsteady contents is apt to be influenced by external objects and therefore is impure. Like dirt on a mirror, it is responsible for the concealment of the pure, essential Self and for the relative comprehension of things: good and evil, subject and object, enlightenment and unenlightenment. As the Zen master Yung-chia sang in his "Song of Enlightenment,"

> Mind is an organ of sense with things for its object,
> Both are like the dust which settles on a mirror
> Which becomes bright when the dust is rubbed away:
> Self-nature is realized when mind and dharma vanish.'

Since the impure, conscious self is to blame for the concealment of the self nature, the final goal of Zen is to purify our conscious self so that the mirror-like, original nature can be revealed. In "This Day, O Soul" in *Leaves of Grass* Whitman described his effort to keep his dirt-like consciousness clean so that the Soul can faithfully reflect like a mirror the outside phenomena:

> This day, O Soul, I give you a wondrous mirror;
> Long in the dark, in tarnish and cloud it lay -
> But the cloud has pass'd and the tarnish gone;

.... Behold, O Soul! It is now a clean and bright mirror,

Faithfully showing you all things of the world.[10]

However, in purifying the conscious self, Zen does not try to seek or grasp the essential Self. Following the original teaching of the Buddha, Zen does not believe that there is any essential Self to be sought or grasped. For Zen where there is seeking or grasping, there is no essential Self. An attachment to the essential Self produces no less Karma than an attachment to the conscious self. Nor does Zen make any distinction between the absolute, essential Self and the relative, conscious self for the Absolute is in the world of relativity. As D. T. Suzuki says, the essential Self, the Absolute is "beyond the world of opposites, a world built up by intellectual distinction ... a spiritual world of nondistinction which involves achieving an absolute point of view." Lest such a definition postulate a distinction between the Absolute and the relative, Suzuki immediately adds: "The Absolute is in no way distinct from the world of discrimination .... The Absolute is in the world of opposites and not apart from it."[11] From this we see that the essential Self, though beyond all distinct forms, is not outside the phenomenal world. It remains at the bottom of our consciousness and functions through every object in the universe. In commenting on his own poem, "As for Poets," which integrates the five basic elements of the physical world

in the essential Self or Mind, Snyder says: "Now, we are both in, and outside, the world at once. The only place this can be is the Mind" (*TI 114*). Therefore, to reach the essential Self, according to Zen, one must not desire it or distinguish it from the world in which one lives, but simply purify the contents of one's conscious self by living a natural, spontaneous life.

The Zen teaching that we live a simple, unaffected life without seeking or desiring the Tao corresponds to the Transcendentalist's doctrine. In "The Over-Soul" Emerson considered "simplicity" to be the only way to the universal Self, which is unapproachable to the complicated mind. He said: "The simplest person who in his integrity worships God, becomes God; yet for ever and ever the influx of this better and universal self is new and unsearchable."[12] Thoreau also emphasized the necessity of simplifying our life in order to return to "the perennial source of our life": "In proportion as he simplifies his life, the laws of the universe will appear less complex, and solitude will not be solitude, nor poverty poverty, nor weakness weakness."[13]

As this simple, natural life is after all a way of life, it is by no means apart from work and social responsibility. On the contrary, it is tied to both. Work in the Zen monasteries is regarded as one of the most important activities. As Master Po-chang said, "One day / no work, / One day / no food."[14] In fact, Po-chang's rule for work is

not just a way for self-support. It is itself an important element in meditation, aiming at bringing body and mind into one. This Zen principle of self-support, which comes close to the Transcendentalist principle of self-reliance, has a style that involves others. It sets an example for people to follow in reaching the essential Self. As Snyder says in *The Real Work*,

> It's a way of using your mind and practicing your life and doing it with other people. It has a style that involves others. It brings a particular kind of focus and attention to work. It values work. It values daily life. It values such old-fashioned terms as responsibility and commitment. At the same time it has no external law for doing it. So you must go very deep into yourself to find the foundation of it. In other words it turns you inward rather than giving you a rule book to live by. Zen is a practice that is concerned with liberation, not with giving people some easy certainty. (*TRW* 153)

Just as Zen is aimed at awakening people to the spiritual world of nondistinction and turning their experience of awakening into a way for everyday life, Zen poetry attempts

not merely to point at the Absolute but to present the poet's everyday life, which is itself a practice of Zen. For many centuries Zen masters have used poetry to express their nearly inexpressible experience and transmit the Dharma. Since they live a life that is totally harmonious with nature, which provides them with the opportunities to observe natural objects, the changes of seasons, and the impermanance of life, and since they remain in a state of mind in which the line between the Absolute and the relative is erased, many of them are able to write poems which are so profound as to be able to compete with the works of the greatest poets.

The Zen masters' habit of presenting their life experience through poetry is not unexplainable. Chinese and Japanese Zenists have a saying: "Zen and poetry are one." They believe that poetry and Zen function analogously. Like Zen, poetry is, to use a favorite Zen Buddhist simile, like the finger pointing to the moon, a common symbol for the self-nature. After the moon is seen, the finger must immediately be forgotten. Such an attitude still persists in the Far East, as is evident in the Zen background of Chinese lyric poetry and Japanese haiku. This view of poetry as a mediating art is not exclusively Eastern. In the West, many romanticists believe that poetry functions as a religion. Keats had this instinct: "Beauty is truth, truth beauty." In "Nature" Emerson insisted that language, particularly poetic language, was grounded in natural facts which participated

directly in the spiritual essence of all things:

1. Words are signs of natural facts.
2. Particular words are symbols of particular spiritual facts.
3. Nature is the symbol of spirit.[15]

Like Emerson and Keats, Whitman saw no difference between poetry and religion. He viewed himself as a priest rather than a poet and referred to his poetic vocation as "the impulse of spirit."[16]

Strictly speaking, poetry is not producible. It comes as a result of the mysterious convergence of the senses and that which is beyond the senses. As Thoreau said, "Poetry is the mysticism of mankind."[17] Indeed, poetry can not be independent of the inscrutable, essential Self. When the poet arrives at the awareness of beauty, he arrives at it by practice of not an intellectual but an intuitional capacity to open the mind to the unaccountable sources. This moment of awareness is what we call inspiration. Such an inspiration will either engage the poet in a spontaneous creativity, or leave him with some impressions which will later be recalled and refined when the mature moment of creation comes. Although new forms of beauty may appear in the poet's creative process, they are originated in his mystical awareness of things reflected in the mirror-like, essential Self.

That the essential Self contains art in itself, that it is where beauty comes from, explains why the world's greatest

poets always reveal the range and depth of their spiritual life, and why the most profoundly religious works, such as Buddhist sutras, the Bible, and Emerson and Thoreau's writings, are so full of poetic strains. The theory of the fundamental identity of poetry and religion may disturb some modern critics, but who can deny that Buddha's holding up the flower in silence before his audience and Christ's silence before Pilate are purely poetic. As R. H. Blyth argues, "When therefore we say that religion is poetry and poetry is religion, we mean that it is so whether we realise it or not, and that from the beginning, these two being one, our distinction of Reality into Religion and Beauty is both baseless in fact and destructive to both. One dries up into lifeless dogmas, the other vapours into groundless fantasies."[18]

As a Zen adept as well as a poet, Snyder is well aware of the close relationship between Zen and poetry. In his foreword to *A Zen Forest: Sayings of the Masters*, Snyder writes:

> The Chinese (and almost everyone else) consider the T'ang poetry of the eighth century to be the crown of their literature. The poems of this period ... are the ones most often raided for Zen quotes .... We are speaking especially of the poets Wang Wei, Li Po, Tu Fu, Han

> Shan, Liu Tsung-yuan .... Contemporary with these poets were the greatest creative Ch'an masters Shen-hui, Nan-yueh, Ma-tsu, Pai-chang, and Shih-tou. For whatever reason, the Golden Age of Chinese poetry is also the Golden Age of Ch'an .... The major Ch'an literay productions, Wu-men Kuan, Ts'ung-jung Lu, Pi-yen Lu, Hsu-t'ang Lu, are from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It was a second Golden Age of Ch'an and another era of marvelous poetry, one in which many poets were truly influenced by Ch'an."[19]

Snyder not only sees poetry as, to quote Thomas Parkinson, "one of a set of instruments in a spiritual quest" but uses it as "a finger pointing to the moon."[20] Like Whitman, he uses poetry as a kind of "ferry boat," determined to take his passengers to what the Buddhist calls "the other shore," a meeting point of the inner nature and the outside world. As he states in an interview entitled "The Landscape of Consciousness,"

> We can reach beyond our social nature and see our relationships in nature, or reach inward and see the relationships that hold there. It's here, too, that we can

> understand the Buddhist concept of oneness and uniqueness .... It's at this level of awareness that I feel all these relationships; My best poems come from such a state and plot these relationships for a listener, who really knew about them but did not know that they knew. (*TRW* 4)

To achieve his purpose of "pointing to the moon," Snyder always makes sure that his poetry is transparent, so transparent that we should not see the poetry but what it points at. His is Eliot's effort: "to write poetry which should be essentially poetry, with nothing poetic about it, poetry standing naked in its bare bones, or poetry so transparent that we should not see the poetry, but that which we are meant to see through the poetry, poetry so transparent that in reading it we are intent on what the poem *points at*, and not on the poetry, this seems to me the thing to try for."[21] And in ferrying his passengers to "the other shore," Snyder always does so by presenting not "his self" but "all of our selves." In *The Real Work* he says:

> We all know that the power of a great poem is not that we felt that person expressed himself. We don't think that. What we think is, "How deeply *I* am touched." That's our level of response.

> And so a great poet does not express his or her self, he expresses *all* of our selves. And to express *all* of our selves you have to go beyond your own self. Like Dogen, the Zen master, said, "We study the self to forget the self. And when you forget the self, you become *one* with all things." (*TRW* 65)

To express "all of our selves," Snyder has to solve a thorny problem. Insisting that human life partakes of the all-inclusive essential Self, his philosophical commitment as a poet is to faithfully represent this essential Self. But immediately there is a problem. The all-inclusive Unity cannot, by its very nature, be represented directly. As a poet he is thus engaged in the paradoxical task of seeking to express something that he stresses from the outset remains inexpressible. His is a problem also faced by Su-shih, the most highly regarded Chinese Sung dynasty poet, whom Snyder describes as "a Ch'an adept as well as poet and administrator."[22]

> The mountain, the Buddha's body,
> The river, his preaching.
> Last night, eighty-four thousand poems.
> How to make them understand?[23]

Whitman also recognized that words could not faithfully convey the intuitive knowledge of the essential Self:

I swear I see what is better than to tell the best,
It is always to leave the best untold.

When I undertake to tell the best I find I cannot,
My tongue is ineffectual on its pivots,
My breath will not be obedient to its organs,
I become a dumb man.[24]

Like Su-shih and Whitman, Snyder more than once talks about the inexpressibility of the essential Self:

> A poet sort of faces two directions: one is to the world of people and language and society, and the tools by which he communicates his language; and the other is the non-human, non-verbal world, which is the world of nature as nature is itself, and the world of human nature - the inner world - as it is itself, before language, before custom, before culture. There's no words in that realm. There aren't any rules that we know and that's the area Buddhism studies, and that's why you can't talk about it: because it's not concerned with anything that you can talk about.[25]

Yet, of course, Snyder does not always remain silent. Instead, he has taken on, to use Robert Kern's words, "the

seemingly paradoxical burden of finding a language for a reality that is prior to language, for an 'utterly incommunicable' nature that is non-verbal by definition - a problem somewhat analogous to Milton's task of relating events of the pre-fallen world in a fallen language, in a language that is itself a result of the fall."[26]

In approaching the nearly inexpressible essential Self, Snyder avails himself of a strategy similar to that which Emerson believed had been adopted by Whitman: "Man stands on the point betwix the inward spirit and the outward matter. He sees that one explains, translates the other: that the world is the mirror of the soul."[27] Emerson's comment is not groundless. Read Whitman's "When the Full-Grown Poet Came."

> When the full-grown poet came,
> Out spake pleased Nature (the round impassive globe,
> with all its shows of day and night,) saying,
> *He is mine;*
> But out spake too the Soul of man, proud, jealous
> and unreconciled, *Nay, he is mine alone;*
> - Then the full-grown poet stood between the two,
> and took each by the hand;
> And to-day and ever so stands, as blender and
> uniter, tightly holding hands,
> Which he will never release until he reconciles the
> two,
> And wholly and joyously blends them.[28]

In "Road and Apple Interview" Snyder reveals a poetic strategy similar to Whitman's.

> The true poem is walking that edge between what can be said and that which cannot be said. That's the real razor's edge. The poem that falls all the way over into what can be said can still be very exciting, but the farther it is from the razor's edge the less it has of the real magic .... And then some of them fall too much in the realm of what can't be said. Then they are no longer poems; they are meditation themes like the koan. (*TRW* 21)

Snyder's strategy of walking the line between what can be said and what can not be said as applied to his poetry is the use of the imagistic and elliptic methods. As a Zen poet who has to use poetry as a mediating art, Snyder rejects not language itself but its intellectual qualities. Since the object world is that through which the non-verbal, absolute identity reveals itself, Snyder loves and uses widely in his poetry vivid, concrete images, which are highly suggestive in their conceptions, and allows them to serve as mysterious symbols pointing to the unseen. His highly suggestive images are at the same time generic in their conceptions. This generalization of imagery, as Jody Norton points out,

"accomplishes two ends: it denies the reality of individuation (the proper) without refusing particularity (the common), and it implies that the embodied experience of the poem is neither personally nor historically unique."[29] As his poetry shows, Snyder's effort to evoke as a real presence the essential Self that lies beyond its own powers of explanation, to use Robert Kern's words, is to "allow things to speak as much as possible for themselves, in a language stripped of subjective preconception and historical or cultural encrustation." By allowing things to speak for themselves, according to Kern, "Snyder finds himself on the common ground with some of the aims and values of modern poetry in general, particularly with its 'objectivist' desire to encounter reality directly and immediately, to see things as they are."[30]

In letting things speak for themselves with little or no lyrical interference, Snyder seems to agree with the anti-Romantic modernist-objectivist that reality in poetry should be consistent with that in science, and that objective criteria be developed for creating poetry. In presenting things directly and using no words unneeded, he exhibits a strong affinity for Pound's Imagistic method and Williams Carlos Williams' theory of ideas contained in things and liberated by poets. However, Snyder, like many other contemporary poets, tends to reject Eliot's and Stevens's calls for a creation of order out of disorder and favors a non-created, pre-existing order. In *The Practice of the Wild*

he says: "Nature is orderly. That which appears to be chaotic in nature is only a more complex kind of order" (*POW* 93). Snyder's poetry in general is a passive nature full of vision. It values the imagination and rejects the stylistic aspects of poetry. In this respect, Snyder also seems Romantic. He is among the poets of the second half of the twentieth century, who, as Hyatt Waggoner suggests, paradoxically return to selected Romantic ideas after absorbing the objectivist, pseudo-scientific notions of Pound and his followers.[31] In short, it appears that Snyder's poetic quest is for a synthesis of the materialistic Imagism and the visionary Romanticism. As Robert Kelly in *A Controversy of Poets* has indicated, "The use of images constitutes a part of Vision .... Image is a vehicle for Vision."[32]

Yet, even such a view of Snyder's poetry as a synthesis of Romanticism and Imagism can also mislead because Snyder is a Zen Buddhist and his imagism is grounded on an important principle of Zen aesthetics. His is Basho's method: "Learn about a pine tree from a pine tree, and about a bamboo plant from a bamboo plant." "By learning about a pine tree from a pine tree, and about a bamboo plant from a bamboo plant," as Basho's disciple Doho explains, "Basho meant that the poet should detach the mind from himself, and by 'learn' that he should enter into the object, the whole of its delicate life, feeling as it feels. The poem follows of itself." This method has been compared by Lucien Stryk to Keats's "Negative

Capability": "The poet implies that the true artist does not assert his own personality, even if imagining himself possessed of one. Rather he identifies as far as possible with the object of his contemplation, its 'personality,' without feeling that he must understand it."[33]

In *The Real Work*, Snyder reveals his knowledge of this imagistic method.

> I quote to you one of Basho's disciples who took down something Basho once said to a group of students. He said, "To learn about the pine, go to the pine. To learn about bamboo, go to the bamboo. But this learn is not just what you think learn is. You only learn by becoming totally absorbed in that which you wish to learn. There are many people who think that they have learned something and willfully construct a poem which is artifice and does not flow from their delicate entrance into the life of another object." (*TRW* 67)

This kind of Imagism is inconceivable apart from the most important Zen practice of "no mind" or "no thought." According to Hui-neng, "no mind" or "no thought" means that "the mind is not stained by external objects." "'Not' is not a thing," Hui-neng continues to explain, "and 'thought' is

thought of nothing; 'not' is not dual, is not the passion-mind, and 'thought' is thought of the self-nature."[34] From Hui-neng we learn that to remain in a state of "no mind" or "no thought" is not to sit like a piece of dead wood but to "see" into the nothingness of the self-nature. However, this "seeing" should not postulate a distinction between the seer and the seen. As Wu-men (1183-1260) said, "The True Self which is seeing has been seen into."[35] Echoing Wu-men, Snyder sings in "Puite Creek" in *Riprap*: "A clear, attentive mind / Has no meaning but that / which sees is truly seen" (*RCMP* 6). When commenting on Snyder's mental state as such, Charles Molesworth says that Snyder is "borne to the edge of non-existence."[36] This non-existence of self is the core of Emerson's teaching: "the act of seeing and the thing seen, the seer and the spectacle, the subject and the object, are one. We see the world piece by piece, as the sun, the moon, the animal, the tree, but the whole, of which they are shining parts, is the soul."[37]

Another method Snyder uses to walk "the real razor's edge" is an elliptical mode. It involves such structural techniques as syntactical ellipsis, line division, and super-imposition of one image upon another, which he learned first through Pound and later directly from Chinese T'ang poetry and Japanese haiku. The Chinese and Japanese ellipsism can not be understood without a knowlege of the Chinese language itself. The most remarkable characteristic of the Chinese language is

that it is uninflected. It uses no gender, number, or case for the noun, and no tense, or person for the verb. A transitive verb in Chinese can be used without a subject and a predicate, and a noun can be used without a definite or indefinite article. More importantly, most Chinese nouns have verbal qualities in them. Thus a five-or-seven-character line often contains five or seven nouns. Such a poetic line, consisting of a selection of concrete image units with syntactical ellipses, strives to present directly the actual situation without going through an analytical process.

Theoretically one can put two or even more such poetic lines together and make them into a longer line and still make sense in Chinese. But the Chinese T'ang poets insist on breaking up the lines into small units with five or seven characters to each unit and call them "shih line." Between each line and its successor there is little transition. The ellipsis of enjambment is aimed at isolating each line as an independent image unit so that its visuality can be increased. Such a method of line division also produces a montage-like effect, that is, by juxtaposing two image units it creates a third which is different in effect from both, capable of drawing the reader into an intuitional recognition of the unseen.

One year before he translated Chinese poetry, Pound had learned from Japanese haiku, which was influenced by T'ang poetry, such mutually related techniques as line division and

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super-imposition. His "In a Station of the Metro" is an example:

> The apparitions of these faces in the crowd:
> Petals on a wet, black bough.[38]

Although in the poem no enjambment is used between the two image units, articles and prepositions are still employed to make the English understandable. It is not until *Cathay* that Pound began to experiment with the syntactical ellipsis: "Surprised. Desert turmoil. Sea sun."[39] Such elliptical patterns, after being modified, continue to appear throughout *The Cantos*. For example, "Rain; empty river; a voyage; / Fire from frozen cloud, heavy rain in the twilight / Under the cabin roof was one lantern." And "Sun up; work / sundown; to rest / dig well and drink of the water / dig field; eat of the grain / Imperial power is? and to us what is it?"[40]

More excitedly than Pound, Snyder turns to the Chinese and Japanese ellipsism with which to honeycomb his poetry and makes the ellipsis itself a form with which to express the formless. His use of monosyllabic diction and elliptical phrasing is particularly evident in his first collection, *Riprap* (1959). After *Riprap* Snyder developed a wider variety of poetic modes. But he has never abandoned this elliptical style which increases his detached, impersonal tone. For instance, we see in *Turtle Island* (1974): "Snow-trickle, feldspar, dirt" (*TI* 33); in *Axe Handles* (1983): "sky cloud gate milk snow," "wind-void-word" (*AH* 71); and in *Left Out*

in the Rain (1986): "manzanita, valley oak, redwood, / sugar pine, our folk / sun, air, water, / our toil" (*LOIR* 134). In these lines Snyder uses no verbs or verbals, no articles, prepositions or connectives. He simply lumps nouns together. These generic pictures force the reader to forget about the poet as a speaker and watch things detachedly as they really happen. These lines, if put vertically, would look like Chinese shih lines. As Wai-lim Yip points out, Snyder in "Eight Sandbars on the Takano River" does put his lines vertically and make them look like a five-character "shih line":[41]

well water
cool in
summer
warm in
winter (*BC* 44)

Snyder's experiment with the vertical "shih line" can also be seen in "Hiking in the Totsugawa Gorge" in *Regarding Wave* (1970):

Pissing

Watching

a waterfall (*RW* 74)

In Snyder's other poems where verbs or verbals may be used and articles and connectives employed, the personal

pronoun, the lyric "I" is almost always omitted. Take, for example, "North Beach Alba" in *The Back Country* (1968):

> walking half-drunk in a strange pad
> making it out to the cool gray
> san francisco dawn -
> white gulls over white houses,
> fog down the bay,
> tamalpais a fresh green hill in the new sun,
> driving across the bridge in a beat old car
> to work. (*BC* 75)

The elision of the subject teaches egolessness. It suggests the poet's rejection of an anthropocentric view of nature and man's dominant place in it. It also calls implicitly for a harmonious interplay between man and all other things. From this view, the natural objects depicted in the poem should not be regarded as a mere setting. They co-exist peacefully with the hero, who is universalized by the omission of the subject.

In addition to syntactical ellipses, Snyder frequently employs in his poems the techniques of line division and super-imposition to build a sense of distance or space. The most extreme example of his use of space to invoke the reader to regard it as part of the content is "The Songs at Custer's Battlefield" in *Left Out in the Rain*:

> Crickets and meadowlarks today;
> that day - (*LOIR* 159)

The space in Snyder's poetry not only allows the reader to

imagine and associate, but, more importantly, forces him to dive deeply into the unknown. For instance:

> Sunday dinner in Ithaca-
>
> the twang of a bowstring (BC 24)

The two examples given above are both in the form of haiku. This confirms Thomas Lyon's opinion that the haiku is "the guiding principle of Snyder's poetics."[42] Like a traditional haiku, Snyder's poem is divided by a "thought pause" into two parts or two image units. The two parts are not structurally linked by any enjambment but simply super-imposed. They produce no special effect if viewed separately. But if spliced together, they create a contrast between the mundane world, as represented by "Sunday dinner in Ithaca," and the other world, as signified by "the twang of a bowstring." As the tension between the speaker's daily activity and the seemingly unworldly sound is created out of the ellipsis, the two image units are not to bring themselves into focus but to emphasize what is left unsaid.

As Snyder's imagistic method which allows things to speak as much as possible for themselves is inconceivable apart from his Zen practice of "no mind," his elliptical method is not independent of his Buddhist conception of the void. As Jody Norton remarks,

> Snyder's use of sparely modified, generalized imagery indirectly reflects the Zen Buddhist conviction of the

> pointlessness of intellection. An insight into the nature of Mind cannot be passed on by means of elaborate descriptions, dense figuration, or esoteric allusion, because all such devices depend on the understanding - which is inherently discriminatory and hence powerless to comprehend the Void. Such in-sight cannot, in fact, be passed on at all. At best it can be coaxed out, elicited; and to accomplish this, both Snyder and his models seek to provide the reader with a maximum of imaginative freedom.[43]

By recognizing space as a positive element and emphasizing that the unspoken is as essential as the spoken, Snyder deftly "coaxes out" his insight. By eliminating all elaboration of ideas and descriptions, he transforms the personal into the universal and creates a tension which quickens the reader's perception of the inexpressible. This elliptical method links him to Pound and Williams, who may not have been able to accept the philosophical basis of Chinese and Japanese poetry - the Zenist-Taoist assumption of the unity of all things. On the other hand, his Zen Buddhist Imagism, his quietly gazing upon some external object until by recognition and reflection he transforms it into poetry, puts him on the common ground with Charles Olson, whose version of the objectivist desire to

experience reality demands "getting rid of the lyrical interference of the individual as ego."[44] It also draws him near to what Hyatt Waggoner calls "the new poet" who believes that he "must lose his self-consciousness and immerse himself in 'process' in order to render a fragment of chaos 'concrete in a moment of time.'"[45] These two methods permit Snyder to walk what he calls "the real razor's edge" and provide the reader with a starting point for understanding his poetry of Zen.

CHAPTER III

DARK AND LIGHT

Since 1959 Snyder has published fourteen books. The books contain his translations of Zen texts and Zen poems as well as his references to his Zen study. More importantly, they contain poems which express Snyder's vision of the identity of the phenomenal and the noumenal, poems which reveal his spiritual range in the various stages of development. These poems can be best understood in the context of Ts'ao Tung (Soto in Japanese) Zen. Of the five sects of Zen Buddhism, the Ts'ao Tung sect had been most dedicated to the study of the phylosophical aspect of Zen Buddhism and, before the period of South Sung China, had established the so-called Ts'ao Tung philosophy, also called Zen philosophy. Since its appearance the philosophy has been widely studied by Zen students regardless of sect and for more than a thousand years has had a profound influence on Zen-related arts, especially poetry. It is grounded on a basic idea that the noumenal and the phenomenal, designated by its founder Tung-shan (807-869) as Dark and Light, are interpenetrated.

The Dark-Light concept, according to Tung-shan, is

formed in accord with the teaching of the *Jewel Mirror Samadhi* which he inherited from his master Yun-yen. The key sentences in the *Jewel Mirror* go as follows: "The Dharma of Suchness, directly transmitted by buddhas and patriarchs, / ... is like a silver bowl heaped with snow and the bright moon concealing herons - / When classified they differ, but lumped together their whereabouts is known."[1] As the key sentences in the *Jewel Mirror* suggest, the way of obtaining the Dharma is to see the noumenal, signified as "a silver bowl," or "the bright moon," and the phenomenal, represented as "snow," or "herons," as an undifferentiated identity. In his Yu Lu (Record of Sayings) Tung-shan more clearly explains that the noumenal, which he describes as dark, dynamic, and ungraspable, is the foundation of the phenomenal: "There is something the upper part of which props up the heaven, the lower part of which props up the earth, is as black as lacqer, and is always in motion. In the midst of this motion, it can't be grasped."[2] Since the noumenal is the foundation of the phenomenal, it penetrates to all things and manifests itself through the phenomenal, which is designated by Tung-shan as the Light. Tung-shan's Dark-Light concept may be compared to Emerson's Idealism which regards "the visible" as given rise to and supported by "the invisible." In "Nature" Emerson wrote: "The visible creation is the terminus or the circumference of the invisible world."[3]

As it is well-known that the five sects of Zen Buddhism

are all branched from Hui-neng, the Dark-Light idea of the Ts'ao Tung sect may be regarded as a continuation of Hui-neng's teaching, which was shaped in accord with the *Book of Changes* (*I Ching*), especially its concept of Yin and Yang, representing two relative forces, from whose interaction comes the Creation. In his *Altar Sutra* Hui-neng says: "If someone suddenly asks you about the Dharma, your answer should be based on a pair of extremes depending upon each other for their existence, until both are wiped out, leaving nothing behind"[4] Hui-neng's teaching of reaching with extremes beyond extremes can be better understood if compared to Emerson's insistence on dualism as the basis of Unity. Emerson wrote in an 1851 journal entry: "Dualism I see but one key to the mysteries of human condition, but one solution to the old knots of fate, freedom and foreknowledge; the propounding, namely, of the double consciousness."[5] Emerson's theory of double consciousness is not a justification of the relative view of the world but an affirmation of man's capability to perceive both the relative and the absolute. As he sang in "Brahma,"

> Far or forgot to me is near;
> Shadow and sunlight are the same;
> The vanished gods to me appear;
> And one to me are shame and fame.[6]

Emerson's strategy of polarity, as Jonathan Bishop observes, allows him "to stress first one aspect of the Soul and then

another, the pair appearing, to the understanding mutually opposite but, to the reason, complementary parts of a whole."[7]

Snyder is well acquainted with the Ts'ao Tung Dark-Light concept. In *A Zen Forest*, forwarded by Snyder, there are numerous Zen sayings expressing the Ts'ao Tung idea. For example: "A black chicken / walks on / the snow"; "Bring / black water / into a black barrel"; "A white horse enters / the pampas flower"; "The bright moon reflects / the pampas flowers; / The pampas flowers / reflect the bright moon"; and the one taken from the *Jewel Mirror*, "To heap a silver bowl / with snow; / To hide a white heron / in the bright moon."[8] Similar examples can be seen throughout Snyder's poetry: "white gulls over white houses" (*BC* 75); "crows and a white bird circle" (*PTI* 27); "Well water / cool in / summer / warm in / winter" (*BC* 44); and "white radish root / a foot long / by its dark / dirt hole / green top / her son" (*BC* 44). This Ts'ao Tung idea is explained more clearly in Snyder's *The Real Work*:

> The poet holds the dark and the light in mind, together. Which, by extension, means birth and death in its totality. We worship not only the positive forces, the life-giving forces, not just that ... there's also death, there's also the unknown, there's also the demonic. And that's the womb and the tomb, that's

> samsara, that's birth and death, that's
> where the Buddhist goes in. And that's
> where poetry goes in: That's where poetry
> gets its hand on something real. (*TRW* 81)

As Snyder's suggests in his statement, the Ts'ao Tung Dark-Light idea is a key to the understanding of his poetry. Indeed, the idea of holding "the dark and the light in mind, together" has become an important source of inspiration for many of his poems. Take, for instance, the following poem which appears in Snyder's travel journal, *Earth House Hold* (1969).

> sun patches in the gorge
> whitechuck river
> white foam falls,
> thru the tops of spruce and hemlock
> white sailing clouds.
> the brilliance of *black*. (*EHH* 97)

From a non-Zen perspective, the source of the daylight is the sun, which whitens the river and its foam "thru the tops of spruce and hemlock" and through the "white sailing clouds." From this view, the sunlight that whitens all things is simply a natural phenomenon. But from a Zen standpoint, a natural phenomenon does not exist independently. It has its root in noumenon. The sunlight which whitens all things, as Snyder puts it in the poem, is "the brilliance of *black*," which is italicized to suggest the noumenal. Snyder's view of the

light as the reflection of the dark corresponds to the Ts'ao Tung idea that the essential Self functions through all things in the universe.

While the Ts'ao Tung idea of Dark and Light is expressed directly in the preceding poem, it is merely suggested in the following haiku in *The Back Country*.

A great freight truck
lit like a town
through the dark stony desert (*BC* 31)

On the surface, it is the light of the freight truck that brightens the dark desert for we can see that the desert is "stony." But from another perspective, it is the darkness of the desert that makes the freight truck look so bright "like a town." The light of the truck and the darkness of the desert in their mutuality signify that the Absolute and the relative are inconceivable apart from each other. The light and the dark are no doubt two different things. But from the view that they must depend upon each other for existence, they should not be regarded as separate entities. Snyder's Zen vision of Dark and Light penetrating to each other correponds to Whitman's view of the interdependence of "the unseen" and "the seen."

Clear and sweet is my soul, and clear and sweet is
all that is not my soul.
Lack one lacks both, and the unseen is proved by the
seen,

Till that becomes unseen and receives proof in its turn.'

In the two poems discussed above, the sensuous images through which Snyder presents his Buddhist insight are American. Both poems are set against the landscape of American West. In the following haiku, his imagery expressing the Ts'ao Tung idea is more oriental. The first line is a modified version of a traditional Japanese stone garden, and the second line sounds much like a Ts'ao Tung Zen saying.

Palm fringing stonefield
crows and a white bird circle (*PTI* 27)

The first line is simple, consisting only of two generalized images, "Palm" and "stonefield." Nevertheless, it is as profound as a Japanese stone garden, where only one or two unhewn rocks surrounded by an expanse of raked sand can be seen.[10] In a stone garden, which is actually a Zen-related work of art, stone represents the phenomenal, and sand the noumenal. As the phenomenal and the noumenal are interdependent, stone and sand are interpenetrable. To be more exact, sand is the substance of stone and stone is the form of sand. In the first line of the poem, "stonefield" is comparable to an expanse of sand in a stone garden, and may as well be regarded as suggesting the noumenal. Fringing the "stonefield" is the one single "palm," which is as conspicuous as the usually singular stone in a stone garden. As stone represents the phenomenal, "palm" suggests the world of

distinction. Like the interpenetrable sand and stone, "stonefield" and "palm" when classified differ, but when lumped together represent the Absolute and the relative as a whole. The second line -- "Crows and a white bird circle" -- can easily pass for a Ts'ao Tung Zen saying. "Crows" with their black color suggest the Dark or the noumenal, and "a white bird" no doubt represents the Light or the phenomenal. They circle around each other, suggesting the mutuality of the Absolute and the relative.

In expressing the Ts'ao Tung idea, many traditional Zen poets also employ the images of stillness and motion, silence and sound. For instance, Basho in his often quoted haiku "A Spring Day" approaches stillness from motion:

> Old Pond:
> frog jump in
> water-sound.[11]

Like Basho, Snyder sometimes uses the images of stillness and motion to express his Buddhist assumption of the unity of the Absolute and the relative:

> the boulder in the creek never moves
> the water is always falling
> together! (*EHH* 2)

The poem, in terms of its tone, theme and structure, resembles the first half of Snyder's own 1953 translation of Wang Wei's "At Deer Hedge":

> Empty, the mountain-

not a man,

Yet sounds, echoes,

as of men talking.[12]

As Wang juxtaposes the emptiness of the mountain with the sounds of men talking to hint at the mutuality of the noumenal and the phenomenal, Snyder in the first two lines of his poem super-imposes the stillness of the boulder with the falling of water to suggest the same idea. Like Wang, Snyder views the two opposing aspects of nature not as distinct from but as dependent upon each other for existence. Only when the boulder remains still, does the falling of the water become possible. On the other hand, only when the water falls, can the stillness of the boulder be perceived.

Snyder's Zen vision presented in this poem may also be compared to Eliot's view of the noumenal as the center of the ever changing phenomenal. His "never moving boulder in the creek" is like Eliot's "still point," and his "always falling water" like Eliot's "turning world." At the intersection of stillness and movement there exists the world of non-distinction. As Eliot sang,

At the still point of the turning world,

Neither flesh nor fleshless;

Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is,

But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,

> Where past and future are gathered. Neither movement
> from nor towards,
> Neither ascent from decline. Except for the point,
> the still point.
> There would be no dance, and there is only the
> dance.
> I can only say, *there* we have been: but I cannot say
> where.
> And I cannot say, how long, for that is to place it
> in time.[13]

In his *Mysticism and Philosophy* W. T. Stace makes a comment on Eliot's "the still point of the turning world," which helps to understand Snyder's superimposition of the falling water upon the still boulder. Stace says: "There is no specific reference to any regular or mystical conception here. But the inner meaning of the metaphor of the motionless axis of the spinning planet is plain. It is that the world of sense - to use Plato's phrase - is a perpetual flux, yet at the heart of things there is stillness and silence."[14] Like Eliot, Snyder believes that the relative comprehension of the world is as groundless as the conscious self that makes it. Stillness and motion, like any other pair of extremes, are not opposed to but co-operative with each other. They always come "together" as a piece.

To express the Ts'ao Tung Zen idea, Snyder also extends his images of Dark and Light to those of silence and sound.

"Rainbow Body" in *Regarding Wave* offers a good example.

Cicada fill up the bamboo thickets:
a wall of twanging shadow
dark joints and leaves
northwest wind
from the China sea. (*RW* 26)

The poem is set against the background of Suwa-no-se Island, in the East China Sea, near the coast of Kyushu, Japan, where Snyder married his third wife, a Japanese named Masa Uehara. "Cicada" in Chinese has the same pronunciation as Ch'an. It is often borrowed by Zen poets to suggest the call of the Tao, the sound of silence. Read this Basho haiku:

What stillness!
The voices of the cicadas
Penetrate the rocks.[15]

"Bamboo" is also a popular Zen image. Its top symbolizes the starting point for an enlightened Zen student to take a step further toward the final union with the essential Self. As Snyder says, in his translation of a famous Zen saying, "When we get to the top of the hundred-foot pole, keep going" (TRW 41)! By splicing together the two popular Zen images, Snyder produces an effect that neither of them alone can produce. While the bamboo thickets alone stand for silence and the cicada by themselves represent noise, a juxtaposition of them -"Cicada fill up the bamboo thickets" - indicates their interpenetration.

In the second and third lines Snyder connects the bamboo thickets to the Dark or noumenal by describing them as "a wall of shadow" with "dark joints and leaves." As the bamboo thickets are connected to the Dark, the cicada with their terrible noise may be associated with the Light or phenomenal. Snyder's vision of silence and sound as a piece recalls Thoreau's view of them as two sides of a coin. In *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, Thoreau equates silence with the invisible noumenon and sound with the visible creation, which is the framework and foil of the noumenal.

> Silence is audible to all men, at all times, and in all places. She is when we hear inwardly, sound when we hear outwardly. Creation has not displaced her, but is her visible framework and foil. All sounds are her servants, and purveyors, proclaiming not only that their mistress is, but is a rare mistress, and earnestly to be sought after. They are so far akin to Silence that they are but bubbles on her surface, which straightway burst, an evidence of the strength and prolificness of the under-current; a faint utterance of Silence.[16]

Snyder's view of silence and sound as penetrating to each

other is further suggested in the final two lines. When the "northwest wind" comes "from the China sea," the silent bamboo thickets start "twanging," and the noisy cicada in turn become silent. The reciprocal penetration of the sound of the cicada and the silence of the bamboo thickets is dictated by the "wind," which symbolizes the Tao, the undifferentiated identity of the Buddha-nature.

In the poems discussed above, the images of dark and light, stillness and motion, silence and sound are used separately. In "The Wide Mouth" in *Regarding Wave* they are lumped together to express the same Ts'ao Tung idea.

A thick snow
soft falling
the whole house open.

Snowflakes build up on a
single dark green spray of pine

The sparrow
swung and shrieked
in a swish of snowy clustered points,

shew
his wide pink mouth.
house-cleaning.

Not a sound,

white world,

great troubles. (*RW* 8)

In the first stanza Snyder tries to present the Ts'ao Tung idea by hinting at the interrelatedness of motion and stillness. The first two lines, "A thick snow / soft falling," represent motion; The third line, "the whole house open," signifies stillness or the Void. In "As for Poets" in *Turtle Island* the open house image is also used to represent the Void or noumenal: "A Mind Poet / Stays in the house. / The house is empty / And it has no walls" (*TI* 88). Snyder's consistent use of the empty house image to represent the Void is inspired by the Zen master Nan-chuan (748-835) and Han-shan.[17] When explaining the Tao or the self-nature to his disciple Chao-chou (778-897), Nan-chuan said, "it is like the Void, like a great house, empty and open."[18] In *Cold Mountain Poems*, Han-shan wrote, and Snyder translates: "Cold Mountain is a house / Without beams or walls / The six doors left and right are open / The hall is blue sky" (*RCMP* 52). Since the phenomenal is given rise to and supported by the noumenal, the falling of the thick snow (phenomenon) must occur within the stillness or voidness of the open "house" (noumenon).

While in the first stanza the snow with its action of "soft falling" represents motion, in the second stanza, after its flakes build up on a "single dark green spray of pine,"

its motion turns into stillness and its color white is in contrast with the spray's color "dark green." The third and fourth stanzas have their focus on the noisy sparrow, who "swung and shrieked" and "shew his wide pink mouth," against the background of the still and empty "house." In the final stanza silence - "Not a sound / white world" - is juxtaposed with sound - "great troubles." The contrast between the noisy, black sparrow and the still, white world is not to show the difference between the phenomenal and the noumenal but to suggest their interpenetration. The "troubles" are "great" only when there is "not a sound." The black sparrow with its "wide pink mouth" becomes the focus of our attention only when contrasted with the "white world." On the other hand, the vast stillness of the empty "house" is perceived only when it is broken by the shrieking of the sparrow.

As the Ts'ao Tung Dark-Light idea is formed in accord with the Yin-Yang concept in the *Book of Changes*, Snyder's poems presenting the Ts'ao Tung idea echo the concept of Yin and Yang. Take, for instance, "No Matter, Never Mind" in *Turtle Island*.

> The Father is the Void
> The Wife Waves
> Their child is Matter.
>
> Matter makes it with his mother
> And their child is Life,

a daughter.
The Daughter is the Great Mother
Who, with her father/brother Matter
as her lover,

Give birth to the Mind. (*TI* 11)

The Zen view of the self-creation of the universe presented in this poem is parallel with the Yin-Yang concept in the *Book of Changes*. In explaining the process of the self-creation of the universe, the *Book of Changes* first hypothesizes the origin of the universe as the Supreme Pole (Tai Chi). From the Supreme Pole the two relative powers of Yin and Yang emanate. From the interaction of the two powers the four dimensions occur. The four dimensions with their mutuality give rise to the eight situations - heaven, earth, mountain, lake, thunder, wind, water, and fire. According to the *Book*, the Supreme Pole is the creative while the two relative powers of Yin and Yang are the receptive. There is a cooperative relationship between them. That is, the creative gives the condition for creation, and the creation must be completed by the receptive themselves. In turn the two relative powers with their inner cooperation will become the creative and give the condition for creation. This is the *Book*'s principle of changes in the universe.

In the poem Snyder first defines "the Father" as the Void, the origin of the universe, which correponds to the

Book's hypothesis of the Supreme Pole as the first creative. In the *Book* the Supreme Pole is also called Wu, meaning Nothingness or the Void, in which nothing has been formed yet. Although Wu represents a state in which nothing has been created, it has in itself a sort of life-giving force called Yu, meaining Somethingness. According to the great Chinese Buddhist teacher Seng Chao (384-414), whose philosophy has a profound influence on the later Zen school, it is impossible to elucidate Wu without explaining its counterpart Yu, for Yu and Wu, representing the phenomenal and the noumenal respectively, are interpenetrated:

> All things have that in them which makes them not be yu and also have that in them which makes them not be wu. Because of the former, they are yu and yet not yu. Because of the latter, they are wu and yet not wu .... Why is this so? Suppose the yu is really yu, then it should be yu for all time and should not owe its yu to the convergence of causes. Suppose the wu is really wu, then it should be wu for all time and should not owe its wu to the dissolution of causes. If the yu owes its yu to its causation, then the yu is not really yu .... But if all things are wu, then nothing would come about. If

> something comes about, it cannot be
> altogether nothing.[19]

Hence, Snyder defines the counterpart of the Father/Void as the Wife/Waves. The Father-Mother relationship is identical with that between Yang and Yin, which in Chinese literally mean male and female. From their interaction, which actually occurs within the Void or creative itself, comes "Matter." The receptive "Matter," a Yang, will in turn become the creative by interacting with his Mother, the life-giving force contained in the Void. From the mutual penetration of Yin and Yang comes "Life," a daughter, whose marriage with her "father/brother Matter" gives birth to the Mind. By describing the incestuous relationship between mother and son, father and daughter, brother and sister, Snyder presents the idea of the interdependence of the two relative powers. The final result of their interpenetration is the Mind, the Void itself, which is the beginning as well as the end.

These are Snyder poems that explicitly use the Yin-Yang oriented theory of Ts'ao Tung Zen. Other poems use the theory implicitly, and are likely to be ignored if not carefully examined. "Work To Do Toward Town" in *The Back Country* is a good example.

> Venus glows in the east
> mars hangs in the twins,
> Frost on the logs and bare ground
> free of house or tree.

Kites come down from the mountains
And glide quavering over the rooftops;
frost melts in the sun.
A low haze hangs on the houses
firewood smoke and mist
Slanting far to the Kamo river
and the distant Uji hills.
Farmwomen lead down carts
loaded with long white radish;
I pack my bike with books -
all roads descend toward town. (*BC* 52)

The poem has the quality of Chinese landscape painting, which is generally Taoist-Zenist oriented. The influence of classical Chinese landscape painting has been pointed out by a number of critics. Dan Mcleod in his insightful article remarks on Snyder's particular interest in Chinese Sung Dynasty "Streams and Mountains Without End" painters.[20] Bob Steuding uses "Work To Do Toward Town" as an example when analyzing the scroll-like quality in Snyder's poetry:

> The movement of his gaze goes from the planets to the mountains, down over the houses, to the river slanting far away to the distant hills, and then, with the mention of the farmwomen going to market as he packs his bike with books, moves on and down the hill to town. This adept,

> vertical movement creates a sense of distance very much capturing the visual proportions and lengthened effect of the classical Chinese scroll.[21]

However, it is seldom noticed that Snyder, in presenting the cooperation of cosmic forces, follows ancient Chinese painters to use the structural pattern of Yin and Yang. In a Chinese landscape painting, Yang and Yin are usually represented as mountains and waters, heaven and earth, high and low. In *The Practice of the Wild,* Snyder mentions this traditional Chinese representation of Yin and Yang.

> Mountains ... have mythic associations of verticality, spirit, height, transcendence, hardness, resistence, and masculinity. For the Chinese they are exemplars of the "yang": dry, hard, male, and bright. Waters are feminine: wet, soft, dark "yin" with associations of fluid - but - strong, seeking (and carving) the lowest, soulful, life-giving, shape-shifting .... In common usage the compound "mountains and waters" - *shan-shui* in Chinese - is the straightforward term for landscape. Landscape painting is "mountains and waters" pictures .... One does not need

> to be a specialist to observe that landforms are a play of stream-cutting and ridge-resistance and that waters and hills interpenetrate in endlessly branching rhythms. (*POW* 101-102)

The structural pattern of Yin and Yang underlying a Chinese landscape painting can also be seen in "Work To Do Toward Town." In the first two lines Yang is represented as heaven -- "Venus glows in the east, / mars hangs in the twins" -- while Yin is signified in the third and fourth lines as earth -- "the logs and bare ground / free of house or tree." Likewise, "the mountains" in line five and "the sun" in line seven, signifying high or Yang, are put in contrast with "the rooftops" in line six and "the houses" in line eight, signifying low or Yin. Again, "the Kamo river" in line ten, representing Yin, is contrasted with "the distant Uji hills" in line eleven, representing Yang.[22]

In addition to his use of the structural pattern of Yin and Yang, Snyder also follows Taoist-Zenist artists to present in his poem what Lao-tzu called Chi, or the "blending breath" of Yin and Yang which harmonize the two relative powers. In *Tao Te Ching* Lao Tzu said: "The ten thousand things carry yin and embrace yang, / Whose blending breaths make them harmonize."[23] This concept of Chi is also held by the Confucian. According to Mencius, Chi not only fills up heaven and earth but also circulates through the human body. By

nourshing it correctly one can penetrate to the making of things. In "Experience" Emerson mentioned Mencius's Chi.

> The Chinese Mencius has not been the least successful in his generalization. "I understand language," he said, "and nourish well my vast-flowing vigor [Chi]." "I beg to ask what you call vast-flowing vigor?" said his companion. "The explanation," replied Mencius, "is difficult. This vigor is supremely great, and in the highest degree unbending. Nourish it correctly and do it no injury, and it will fill up the vacancy between heaven and earth. This vigor accords with and assists justice and reason, and leaves no hunger." In our more correct writing we give to this generalization the name of Being, and thereby confess that we have arrived as far as we can go .... Our life seems not present so much as prospective; not for the affairs on which it is wasted, but as a hint of this vast-flowing vigor.[24]

In "The Poet" Emerson gave his own version of Chi and seemed to liken it to his concept of the Over-Soul:

> It is a secret which every intellectual

> man quickly learns, that beyond the energy of his possessed and conscious intellect he is capable of a new energy ... by abandonment to the nature of things; that beside his privacy of power as an individual man, there is a great public power on which he can draw, by unlocking, at all risks, his human doors, and suffering the ethereal tides to roll and circulate through him; then he is caught up into the life of the Universe, his speech is thunder, his thought is law, and his words are universally intelligible as the plants and animals."[25]

As a Zen adept, Snyder is well acquainted with the concept of Chi. He read Lao-tzu and Mencius during his study in Reed College. Later he had direct contact with Chinese classical painting, in which Chi is often delineated as the expanse of the mist or cloud which melts natural objects into the Void. When commenting on Sung painting, Snyder refers to "air-mist-breath" as one of its major component elements: "with the Sung they opened out to great space: with the rock formations, plants and trees, seasons, ways of appearance and disappearance ... visionary timeless lands of mountain rocks and *air-mist-breath* [italics added] and far calm vistas; in

which people are small, but lovingly rendered, doing righteous tasks, or reclining and enjoying their world." Again in his remark on the post-Yuan painters, Snyder mentions their use of "the fog" to represent "the blending breath" of cosmic forces: "Still, Wang Hui's 'Landscape in the Style of Chu-jan and Yen Wen-kuei' (1715) does one more turn, it draws out to sea at the end, where the sea-fog is twisting into scrolls that take us back to the very beginning."[26] As Chi often appears in the traditional Zen-oriented scroll in the form of air, fog, or mist, it is presented in "Work To Do Toward Town" as "frost," "haze," "smoke," or "mist." The Chi blurs the line between relative natural forces and gives the first three-fourths of the poem a sort of floating quality. Bob Steuding, while making no mention of Snyder's presentation of Chi, notes this floating quality: "The reader cannot help but note the insubstantial, other-world quality of the first three-fourths of the poem; for everything seems to float, to drift, as in the works of the ancient Oriental painters."[27]

The Chi, the "blending breath" of Yin and Yang, is also presented in Snyder's poem as female force - "farmwomen." As female or Yin, farmwomen represent not only the "blending breath" in the universe but also the "blending breath" running through the human body. In "No Matter, Never Mind" Snyder describes "the Wife/Mother" as "Waves," the life-giving force contained in the Void. In *Regarding Wave* he describes women as a sort of Chi-like substance, "veiled" and "vague,"

"vibrating" and "pulsing" within the human body:

wave wife

woman---wyfman---

"veiled; vibrating; vague"

sawtooth ranges pulsing;

veins on the back of the hand. (*RW* 3)

Snyder's tendency to depict women as the embodiment of the universal Chi is more Taoistic than Confucian. In *The Old Ways* (1977) he mentions the Taoist appreciation of the female principle: "It's in Taoism, and within the emphasis on the female ... the valley, the yin" (*OW* 38). Such an appreciation of the Yin reminds the reader of something tender or even feminine about Thoreau who described Nature as female, whose "globule from her veins steals up into our own."[20] As the Chi breaks the line between heaven and earth, mountains and rivers, farmwomen with their carts "loaded with long white radish" bring the life-giving force of the countryside to town and take what belongs to civilization back to Nature. The poet's use of "Chi" to blend cosmic forces reflects his vision of the universe as organism, his belief in the world of non-distinction. Facing the interaction of cosmic forces, his manner is completely detached. Instead of opening "books," symbolizing man's conscious effort to conceptualize and classify things, he packs them on the bike. For him the indivisible phenomenal-noumenal world needs to be retained not

explained. He stands there doing nothing but nourishing the Chi and engaging in its blending process.

In the final analysis, Snyder's poetic presentation of the Ts'ao Tung Dark-Light concept is a revaluation of things in which the categories of light and dark, action and inaction, sound and silence, Yin and Yang, no longer apply. It topples the dualistic way of thinking which conceptualizes and divides things, and which interposes its classifications between subject and object. This vision of non-distinction presented through concrete images is the source of Snyder's richest poetry. As John R. Carpenter observes, "It is the fidelity to a sense of the world which makes this poetry so valuable. It is profoundly unsolipsistic. The separation which we often allow to creep into our lives (inner world / outer world; rational / irrational; subjective / objective; ego / id) are absent."[29] However, it remains unclear how Snyder achieves his absolute vision and where it would lead him. To know how Snyder attains his holistic vision, a further study of his poems using the Ts'ao Tung theory of the Five Ranks, representing five stages of spiritual growth, is a must.

CHAPTER IV

FIVE STAGES OF SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

In "Chan on Turtle Island," an interview conducted in 1987, Snyder explains how one may become ecologically aware by going through different levels of understanding of "nature." His explanation corresponds to the Ts'ao Tung theory of the Five Ranks. The Five Ranks all express the same thing, namely, the fundamental identity of the phenomenal and the noumenal, which can be viewed in the various stages of development. Representing five stages of spiritual growth, the Five Ranks, as formulated by Tung-shan, are (1) remaining in the phenomenal, (2) the phenomenal pointing to the noumenal, (3) entering the noumenal, (4) coming back to the phenomenal, (5) arriving at the unity of the two.

The first level of understanding of "nature," as explained by Snyder in "Chan on Turtle Island," is as follows.

> There are many ways to be in nature, and it's fascinating to me to see how many levels there are. The most common way that people approach it is to become to some degree "nature literate," which is to say, to become amateur naturalist ....

> But so far we are all still on the level of an assumed distinction between the see-er and the seen. We have some understanding, but nature is still being seen as an object.

Snyder's first level resembles Tung-shan's first rank, in which man still remains in the realm of phenomena. This initial stage may also be explained in Thoreau's words: "This world has many rings ... and we live now on the outmost of them all."[1] In this stage, man's actions are still dictated by the conscious self, and he sees nature as distinct from his "self." He may come upon the essential Self at some specific moments, but does not recognize it. But by becoming "nature literate" he has taken an important step toward enlightenment. As John C. H. Wu remarks on this initial stage, "as in reality the noumenal and the phenomenal form a continuous whole ... even a one-sided attention to the phenomenal and a serious study of its laws and interrelations may turn out to be a useful preparation for soaring into the heights and diving into the depths."[2] This Zen belief in the noumenal and the phenomenal as a continuous whole is what makes all ancient masters become nature lovers and live in harmony with it. The Zen masters' attitude toward nature correponds to that of the Transcendentalists. In "Nature" Emerson viewed the phenomenal as that which was originated in the Spirit, and faithfully reflected it. "The world proceeds from the same spirit as the

body of man. It is a remoter and inferior incarnation of God, a projection of God in the unconscious. But it differs from the body in one important respect. It is not, like that, now subjected to the human will. Its serene order is inviolable by us. It is, therefore, to us, the present expositor of the divine mind." Thoreau also believed that a careful study of nature would eventually turn the naturalist's observation into a sort of contemplation. He said: "the fruit of the naturalist's observation is not in new genera or species, but in new contemplations still."[3] It is because of his Zen view of nature as related to the universal, essential Self that Snyder suggests that we take our study of nature as the first step toward enlightenment.

In "Chan on Turtle Island" Snyder continues to explain the second level of understanding of "nature":

> I think the next layer of feeling for me at some point was when it just hit me that I really was an animal and that all things that we call "human" are simply part of that, including our spiritual capacities ... and that sense of connection can spread into broader and broader appreciations of cellular life, all the energies that are at work.

This level of sudden realization of "humans" as part of nature equates Tung-shan's second stage of spiritual growth, which is

marked by the crucial experience of enlightenment or satori. Generally speaking, one can not reach this second level until after a long period of Zen practice. When he does reach it, he reaches it often through some momentous event. For instance, after many years of study under a number of famous Zen masters, Tung-shan still remained unenlightened until one day when he crossed a river and suddenly saw his own shadow reflected in the water.

> Earnestly avoid seeking without,
> Lest it recede far from you.
> Today I am walking alone,
> Yet everywhere I meet him.
> He is now no other than myself,
> But I am not now him.
> It must be understood this way
> In order to merge with Suchness.

Lin-yun after having spent thirty years trying to obtain satori was suddenly awakened by the sight of the blooming of the peach blossoms.

> Some thirty years I sought an expert swordsman.
> How many times leaves fell, how many times branches burst into bud!
> But from the instant I saw the peach flowers blooming,
> From that moment to this I have had no doubts.[4]

Tung-shan and Lin-yun's experiences of sudden awakening are

not much different from Emerson's mystical experience which authenticates his doctrine of universal identity. Emerson wrote in "Nature": "Standing on the bare ground - my head bathed by the blithe air and uplifted into infinite space - all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or parcel of God."[5] Such an extraordinary moment which occurs unexpectedly is exactly what Snyder refers to when he says, "it just hit me that I really was an animal and that all things that we call humans are simply part of that." This experience of sudden awakening has become an important subject for many of Snyder's poems, which will be discussed in due course.

The third level of ecological awareness, as explained by Snyder in the same interview, is the internalization of one's perception of the Unity: "And all of what I said is theoretically comprehendible by a biology class, but internalizing it, feeling it as your reality, is another step." This "another step" taken to internalize one's perception of the oneness of all life forms is identical with Tung-shan's third rank. At this level the student must avoid analyzing his experience of enlightenment lest his analysis result in a superficial conception of his experience and hence distort it. Rather he must internalize it, which, in the words of Zen students, is to "nurse the holy embryo."

The first three levels of ecological awareness, which

echo the first three stages of spiritual development in Zen philosophy, may be compared to Emerson's "degrees in idealism" and to Thoreau's "unaccountable transition." In "Circles" Emerson said:

> There are degrees in idealism. We learn first to play with it academically, as the magnet was once a toy. Then we see in the heyday of youth and poetry that it may be true, that it is true in gleams and fragments. Then its countenance waxes stern and grand, and we see that it must be true. It now shows itself ethical and practical. We learn that God is; that he is in me; that all things are shadows of him.

Reinforcing Emerson's "degrees in idealism," Thoreau stated in *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*:

> There are perturbations in our orbits produced by the influences of outlying spheres, and no astronomer has ever yet calculated the elements of that undiscovered world which produces them. I perceive in the common train of my thoughts a natural and uninterrupted sequence, each implying the next, or, if interruption occurs, it is occasioned by

> a new object being presented to my *senses*. But a steep, and sudden, and by these means unaccountable transition is that from a comparatively narrow and partial, what is called common-sense view of things, to an infinitely expanded and liberating one, from seeing things as men describe them, to seeing them as men cannot describe them. This implies a sense which is not common, but rare in the wisest man's experience.[6]

If Emerson's "degrees in idealism" and Thoreau's "unaccountable transition" resemble Snyder's first three steps of understanding of nature, their commitment and action, their deep involvement with society over issues such as slavery come close to Snyder's fourth level of ecological awareness.

The fourth level of Snyder's ecological awareness goes beyond a mere internalization of one's vision of the inner and outer nature as a whole. It involves others and supports the idea of responsibilty and commitment. As Snyder says in "Chan on Turtle Island," "The large scale view of things that often comes with Buddhist practice doesn't take us off the hook from the responsibility to respond to events. To use that larger perspective as an excuse for not being concerned in the moment is cheating. That would be the exercise of wisdom without compassion."[7] This level of awareness is identical with Tung-

shan's fourth rank, in which the student comes back with his secured vision to the phenomenal world and act in it. According to Ts'ao Tung Zen, a complete identification with nature means an understanding of only one aspect of noumenon - its emptiness or voidness. Since the noumenal always functions through the phenomenal, to identify one's self with it is not to sit like a piece of dead wood but to actively participate in the world.

Although in "Chan on Turtle Island" he makes no mention of the fifth level of ecological awareness, Snyder in his poems repeatedly echoes Tung-shan's fifth rank, in which the student is exempt from fear of death, and sees it as the final step toward the unity of Buddhahood. Life and death, from a Ts'ao Tung standpoint, are always tied to each other; a moment of life is a moment of death. Death is not an end but a beginning which leads to the Nirvana, the ever-lasting state of emancipation from the chain of cause and effect. As a Zen student, Snyder knows well the dialectic synthesis of life and death. In "For Jack Spicer" in *Regarding Wave*, he describes death as a spiritual breakthrough:

> You leave us free to follow:
> banks and windings
> forward:
> and we needn't want to die. but on, and
> through.
> through. (*RW* 63)

And in "Night Herons" in *Turtle Island*, he sees death as the way to the eternal joy in being one with the essential Self:

> The joy of all the beings
> is in being
> older and tougher and eaten up.
> in the tubes and lanes of things
> in the sewers of bliss and judgment,
> in the glorious cleansing
> treatment
> plants. (*TI* 36)

Snyder's echo of the Ts'ao Tung theory of the Five Ranks can be seen throughout his poetry, which reveals the full range of his spiritual life. His poems best presenting the Ts'ao Tung idea of the first rank are "For Will Petersen the Time We Climbed Mt. Hiei Cross Country in the Sonow," "Pine Tree Tops," and "The Uses of Light." "For Will Petersen" is collected in *Regarding Wave*.

> No trail
> can't be followed:
> wild boar tracks slash
> sidehill through bamboo
> thicket.
> Where are we the hill
> Goes up. (*RW* 72)

The "trail" or "track" is a symbol for the Tao or the Way. In Snyder's translations of Han-shan poems, the "trail" leading

to the Cold Mountain is consistently used to represent the Way to Han-shan's enlightened Mind. "In a tangle of cliffs I chose a place - / Bird-paths, but no trails for men"; "Men ask the way to Cold Mountain / Cold Mountain: there's no through trail" (*RCMP* 38; 42). In these examples, the physical "trails" to the "mountains" are totally denied. Since there is no "trail" to the "mountains," the only way to get there, according to Han-shan, is to follow the "bird-path," a spiritual route actually, by purifying one's conscious self. Han-shan wrote, and Snyder translates: "How did I make it? / My heart's not the same as yours. / If your heart was like mine / You'd get it and be right here" (*RCMP* 42). Thus it becomes clear that the narrator and his fellow hunters's failure to follow the wild boar tracks is a failure to find the "way" to the noumenal. The fact that they follow the physical trail suggests that they are still attached to the phenomenal, or in Snyder's words, they are "still on the level of an assumed distinction between the see-er and the seen." Because they see the wild boar or nature as an object, they cannot see their original Mind reflected in it. "Where are we" can mean that they are ignorant of their place in nature, of their relations to it. Since nature is still regarded as distinct from the mind, "the hill goes up" does not involve a spiritual elevation. Yet from another perspective, the two concluding lines can also mean that the hunters have already had some insight. Like Han-shan who said, "Clambering up the

Cold Mountain path, / The Cold Mountain trail goes on and on" (*RPCM* 44), the hunters have found it futile to follow the physical trail in reaching the traceless, essential Self. They quit tracking the wild baor and watch quietly "the hill" go up.

The other two poems that clearly express the first stage of Snyder's spiritual development are "Pine Tree Tops" and "The Uses of Light." Both poems appear in the Pulitzer-Prize-winning *Turtle Island* (1974). The former is generally considered to be one of Snyder's best poems.

> in the blue night
> frost haze, the sky glows
> with the moon
> pine tree tops
> bend snow-blue, fade
> into sky, frost, starlight
> the creak of boots.
> rabbit track, deer tracks,
> what do we know. (*TI* 33)

In the first six lines, Snyder uses the Ts'ao Tung Dark-Light images and allows them to speak as much as possible for themselves. In these lines the Dark is signified as "the night" while the Light is represented as "the moon" and "starlight." On the surface, the pine tree tops that look "snow-blue" have their source of light in the moon and stars. But as Snyder explains in "Know" in *Left Out in the Rain,*" all

lives, including the trees, have their final source in the Dark.

> The trees know
> stars to be sources
>
> Like the sun,
> of their life;
>
> But many and tiny
> sprinkled through the dark (*LOIR* 174)

From this vision of Dark and Light as an inseparable identity comes Snyder's description of "the night" as "blue," "the sky" as "glow[ing] with the moon," and the "pine tree tops" which, though "snow-blue," "fade into sky." The view of the phenomenal and the noumenal as a piece is further suggested by such images as "frost haze" in line two and "frost" in line six, which blend heaven and earth, Dark and Light, whose meeting point is the "pine tree tops."

Although he uses the Dark-Light images to suggest the Buddhist reality, yet, to express the first stage of his spiritual development, Snyder lets his persona remain ignorant of that ultimate reality. The last three lines of "Pine Tree Tops" present an ironic situation in which the narrator and his friends, though existing in the phenomenal-noumenal world, see only the phenomenal. They hear the sound - "the creak of boots" - but do not hear the silence of "the blue night" that

makes the sound audible. They follow "rabbit tracks, deer tracks" that would lead to the rabbit and deer only, but do not follow the spiritual "tracks" that would take them to the awareness that all things, including the rabbit and deer, are the manifestations of the noumenal. The last line "what do we know" suggests that not only the narrator and his friends but all of us are fundamentally ignorant; as Thoreau said in *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*,

> We are comparatively deaf, and dumb and blind, and without smell or taste or feeling. Every generation makes the discovery that its divine vigor has been dissipated, and each sense and faculty misapplied and debauched.[8]

But the question itself also suggests that the narrator has begun pondering on what we do not know.

The other Snyder poem presenting the first stage of his spiritual growth is "The Uses of Light":

> It warms my bones
> Say the stones
> I take it into me and grow
> Say the trees
>
> Leaves above
> Roots below

A vast vague white
Draws me out of the night
Says the moth in his flight-

Some things I smell
Some things I hear
And I see things move
Says the deer

A high tower
On a wide plain.
If you climb up
One floor
You'll see a thousand miles more. (*TI* 39)

The poem recalls an interesting Zen poem composed by Tung-shan, which concerns the sermon of inanimate things: "How amazing, how amazing! / Hard to comprehend that nonsentient beings expound the Dharma. / It simply cannot be heard with the ear, / But when sound is heard with the eye, then it is understood."[9] Like Tung-shan, Snyder lets the stones, the trees, the moth, and the deer expound the uses of the Light (the phenomenal), which is one of the two sides of the Dharma. Yet by letting them reveal their knowledge of the uses of the Light only, Snyder suggests that these stones and plants and animals are still remaining in the realm of phenomena. They know that the light can warm their bones, make them grow, draw

them out of the night, and make them see things move, but do not know that the uses of the Light are actually the uses of the Dark. They are like unenlightened persons incapable of perceiving the noumenal through the phenomenal. Hence the poet's advice: Climb up one floor to see a thousand miles more. The final stanza is translated from the second couplet of a four-line Chinese poem titled "Ascend the Heron Tower" by the famous T'ang poet Wang Chih-huan.

White sun ends with the mountains.
Yellow river flows on into the sea.
To widen the ken of a thousand miles,
Up, up another flight of stairs.[10]

The couplet has long been raided for Zen quotations, aimed at pushing those who have some vague understanding of the truth of universal identity deeper. By putting the lines at the end of his poem, Snyder encourages those who understand only the uses of the Light to have an insight into the uses of the Dark.

After a certain period of practice, a Zen student is able to keep his mind pure and clean and ready to perceive the essential Self. Since man can hear sounds and see objects very easily, the most convenient way of perceiving the essential Self, which functions through every object in nature, is through the sense of hearing or seeing. This way of discovering one's original nature is both easy and difficult; as Thoreau said, "It is easier to discover another

such a new world as Columbus did, than to go within one fold of this which we appear to know so well .... But there is only necessary a moment's sanity and sound senses, to teach us that there is a nature behind the ordinary, in which we have only some vague preemption right and western reserve as yet."[11] This "method" has long been "used" by Zen students, who at their most serene moments hear or see the essential Self through external sounds or objects with no previously prepared intention of seeing or hearing it. For instance, Po-chang was suddenly awakened to the Buddhist reality when he saw the wild ducks fly away. Hsiang-yen became enlightened when he heard a piece of tile strike against a bamboo pole. Such a "method" of seeing or hearing the noumenal with one's innermost self was also "adopted" by Thoreau. In his journal for February, 1842, Thoreau wrote: "I was always conscious of sounds in nature which my ears could never hear, - that I caught but the prelude to a strain. She always retreats as I advance. Away behind is she and her meaning. Will not this faith and expectation make to itself ears at length? I never saw to the end, nor heard to the end, but the best part was unseen and unheard."[12]

As a Zen practitioner, Snyder is always sensitive to the outside phenomena through which the noumenal ceaselessly functions. Many of his poems express his experience of sudden awakening to the essential Self through the sense of seeing or hearing. For instance:

THE FLICKERS

sharp clear call

THIS!

THIS!

THIS!

in the cool pine breeze (AH 57)

In this short poem what draws our attention most is the call of the flickers - "THIS! THIS! THIS!" The pronoun "this" is an important word for the Zen student. Since Zen appeared in China, the masters have found it hard to use a certain word or phrase to represent the noumenal without letting its wholeness be dissected into separate entities by the literal aspect of that word or phrase. Hence the pronoun "this," which can suggest anything, was adopted and has been widely used in the Zen community. Snyder's intentional use of "this," an onomatopoeic imitation of the call of the flickers, to pun on the noumenal can be confirmed by his statement comparing Hinduism and Buddhism in the "Road Apple Interview":

> There is a tendency in Hinduism to go out there to a mind-breaking absolute point of seeing only that side of all things being impermanent, all things being illusory, and all things ultimately returning into Shiva, or the all devouring mouth of Krishna, which can be an excuse for having no responsibility to

> anything on your own planet. The Mahayana Buddhists think one step beyond that, that is to say, beyond the ultimate void is *this*. (*TRW* 20-21)

What Snyder means by "this" in his statement is exactly what he means by "THIS" in the poem, which refers to the phenomenal-noumenal world. By emphasizing "THIS," the call of the flickers, the poet deftly suggests that he has reached Tung-shan's second rank and has been able to hear the call of the noumenal through the sound of the phenomenal.

Another poem that more clearly expresses Snyder's enlightened experience through the sense of hearing is "Regarding Wave."

> The voice of the Dharma
> the voice
> now
>
> A shimmering bell
> through all. (*RW* 35)

The implicit joy and ecstacy of Snyder's poem is illuminated when one considers this satori poem written by Master Te-ching of Ming China: "Sitting in meditation alone after midnight / Stirring cold ashes, nothing burning. / Suddenly a shimmering bell from the tower / A clear voice in the freezing sky."[13] Compared with Te-ching, Snyder is more direct in identifying the sound of the bell as the voice of the Dharma. Although he

does not describe his situation, Snyder must have been like Te-ching trying hard to seek the Dharma but unable to find it. Opportunely the bell struck and awakened him to the absolute silence which was suddenly broken. Again like Te-ching, Snyder must have heard the sound of the bell many times before and failed to perceive the essential Self functioning behind it. But this time, when the sound was reflected upon the mirror of his essential Self through his purified consciousness, he was instantaneously guided to the intersection of the phenomenal and the noumenal.

Snyder's mystical experience of sudden awakening by the sound of the bell should not sound foreign to those who have read Thoreau's *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, in which he wrote about a similar experience. It is when Thoreau and his friends were half awake and half asleep on the bank of the Merrimack that he "heard some tyro beating a drum incessantly, in preparation for a country muster." On hearing that, Thoreau underwent an experience similar to Snyder's, which, as Thoreau expressed it, "is beyond time, beyond the range of sound, and the verge of sight." It comes from Thoreau's own perception of being allied to the "everlasting Something." He said: "I see, smell, taste, hear, feel, that everlasting Something to which we are allied, at once our maker, our abode, our destiny, our very Selves." The result is his realization of how the foundations of the world are laid: "I have found how the foundations of the world are laid,

and I have the least doubt that it will stand a good while."[14]

While the two preceding poems express the poet's experiences of sudden awakening through the sense of hearing, "Once Only" in *The Back Country* presents his recognition of the real Self through the sense of seeing.

almost at the equator
almost at the equinox
exactly at midnight
from a ship
the full

moon

in the center of the sky. (*BC* 27)

On the surface, Snyder simply describes his experience of seeing the full moon from a ship. Yet it should be noted that "the moon" is a common Zen symbol for the noumenal while the sky or the water that reflects it is a symbol for the phenomenal. In the "Song of Enlightenment" Yung Chia wrote: "One moon appears in all waters / Wherein all moons from the One Moon derive."[15] At the end of *Cold Mountain Poems*, Snyder makes a short remark: "the full moon .... Symbol of the Buddha nature inherent in all beings" (*RCMP* 61). Thus, what Snyder sees from the ship is not the moon but the Tao reflected in the phenomenal. His description of the moon as

"full," as appearing "in the center of the sky," "almost at the equator / almost at the equinox / exactly at midnight" reflects his Zen belief that one can recognize his own Buddha-nature only at the right moment, that is, only when one is in a self-oblivious state of consciousness. As the Zen saying goes: "In the ripeness of time / Dharma / shows."[16]

Another example of Snyder's expression of his enlightened experience through the sense of seeing is "Archaic Round and Keyhole Tombs":

> One child rides a bike
> Her blue dress flutters
> about her gliding
> white-clad hips
> The second runs behind
> Black hair pulsing
> to the ease of her lope
> bares her pale nape
>
> They pass by a pond of water-lily
> and lotuses, a pond with a legend,
>
> Coast out of sight. (*RW* 20)

In the first two stanzas Snyder depicts two children playing in a self-oblivious manner. The first one rides a bike without noticing that her blue dress is fluttering "about her gliding / white-clad hips." The second runs behind without

knowing that her black hair is pulsing and her pale nape is bare. Both of them act spontaneously with no thought of the fruit of their action. The children's playful immediacy and spontaneity, which we have long lost, is what the Chinese Taoists urge us to recover. Lao-tzu said: "In developing the vital senses, / Can you be like an infant child?" And Chuang-tzu: "You want the first elements? / The infant has them. / Free from care, unaware of self, / He acts without reflection"; and "This enables you to unlearn / So that you can be led by Tao, / Be a child of Tao."[17] Echoing the Taoists, the American Transcendentalists insist that wisdom is only obtained by becoming once again like a child. Emerson wrote in "Nature": "To speak truly, few adult persons can see nature. Most persons do not see the sun. At least they have a very superficial seeing. The sun illuminates only the eye of the man, but shines into the eye and the heart of the child. The lover of nature is he whose inward and outward senses are still truly adjusted to each other; who has retained the spirit of infancy even into the era of manhood." Thoreau also said: "Is the baby young? When I behold it, it seems more venerable than the oldest man; it is more ancient than Nestor or the Sibyls, and bears the wrinkles of father Saturn himself."[18] Like the Taoists and Transcendentalists, Snyder views the two children playing for the sake of playing as children of Tao. They are not in bondage to ego, not torn apart by alienation and anxiety. They live in a world which

is prior to the distinction between self and other, good and evil.

However, Snyder's persona is unable to see the Tao in the two children until he sees them "pass by a pond of water-lily / and lotuses, a pond with a legend." "A pond with a legend" probably refers to the legend about the Buddha's use of the pond to represent the phenomenal and of lotus flowers to signify the eternal truth. According to the legend, the Buddha believed that all beings could be divided into three classes. The first class who possessed the truth from the edge of a pond saw lotus flowers that had not emerged from the water. The second who lived in uncertainty was on a level with the surface. The third who was in error and would so remain stood up out of the water.[19] The three classes of beings, as divided by the Buddha, may be compared to the three periods of human life - childhood, manhood, and old age. By describing the two children passing by a pond of water-lily and lotuses, the poet suggests that it is the pond with a legend that helps to awaken him to the Tao which appears in the form of children. The word "coast" may be a reference to the Buddhist term "the other shore," representing the realm of noumenon. "Coast out of sight" thus signifies the sparkling moment when the narrator watches the two children of Tao disappear.

Aside from the convenient way of perceiving the Tao through his purified senses, Snyder also adopts the Lin-chi

(Rinzai) method of koan (Kung-an in Chinese), which helps to understand his spiritual development in the second stage. The word koan means a public case from Zen tradition which is open to be understood or determined. It is also called Hua-tou, meaning the end or purpose of a Zen saying. Some of Snyder's finest poems result from his struggles with such problems for meditation. For instance, in the sixth poem of the "Burning" section in *Myths & Texts*, he writes:

> March wind
> blows the bright dawn
> apricot blossoms down.
> salty bacon smoking on the stove
> (sitting on Chao-chou's *wu*
> my feet sleep) (*MT* 42)

In the passage, Snyder describes himself meditating on Chao-chou's Wu, which is the first koan compiled in Mumon-kan: "A monk once asked Master Joshu [Chao-chou in Chinese] 'Has a dog the Buddha nature or not?' Joshu said, 'Mu [Wu in Chinese]!'"[20] The Chinese word Wu can mean No; that is, a dog has no Buddha nature. It can also mean Nothingness or the Void; in this sense, Chao-chou's answer is positive -- a dog has the Buddha nature called Wu or Nothingness. A koan as such is often used by a master to make the student realize that he must intuitively perceive the Buddha nature or Wu in things, instead of pondering intellectually on the yes/no question.

In the passage cited above, Snyder describes himself pondering on Chao-chou's Wu without commenting on it. In "Walking Through Myoshin-ji" collected in *Axe Handles*, he directly responds to the koan.

> Straight stone walks
> up lanes between mud walls
> ... the sailors who handled the ships
> from Korea and China,
> the carpenters, chisels like razors,
>
> young monks working on *mu*,
> and the pine trees
> that surrounded this city.
> the Ancient Ones, each one
> anonymous.
> green needles,
> lumber,
> ash. (*AH* 34)

In the poem the poet's vision embraces the panorama with all its particular details. Outside the Myoshin temple, on the "straight stone walks," there are "sailors who handled the ships / from Korea and China," "carpenters" with their chisels sharpened like razors, and the poet among them. In the temple, the Japanese young monks meditate on Chao-chou's Mu/Wu. Surrounding the city, there are the pine trees, "The Ancient Ones, each one / anonymous." All these unrelated

particulars are lumped together without logical linking. But these discursive details find their proper places and gain significance when connected at last to the closely subordinated images, "green needles / lumber / ash," which suggest the process of all phenomena returning to Wu or Nothingness. While the young monks are still working on Wu, the poet has already perceived it through its counterpart Yu, the vanishing world.

Another Snyder poem expressing his experience of satori through koan study is the sixteenth poem of the "Hunting" section in *Myths & Texts*:

> How rare to be born a human being!
> Wash him off with cidar-bark and milkweed
> send the damned doctors home.
> Baby, baby, noble baby
> Noble-hearted baby
>
> One hand up, one hand down
> "I alone am the honored one"
> Birth of the buddha.
> And the whole world system trembled.
> "If that baby really said that,
> I'd cut him up and throw him to the dogs!"
> said Chao-chou the Zen master. But
> Chipmunks, gray squirrels, and
> Golden-mantled ground squirrels, all

brought him each a nut
Truth being the sweetest of flavors.
Girls would have in their arms
A wild gazelle or wild wolf-cubs
Any give them their white milk,
those who had new-born infants home
Breasts still full.
Wearing a spotted fawnskin
sleeping under trees
bacchantes, drunk
On wine or truth, what you will,
Meaning: compassion.
Agents: man and beast, beasts
Got the buddha-nature
All but
Coyote. (*MT* 33-34)

In the poem Snyder responds directly to a koan compiled in *Meeting the Source of the Five Lamps*. "When Buddha was newly born, with one hand up, one hand down, he walked seven steps and looked around and said, 'In the whole universe I alone am the honored one.' 'If I heard that baby say that, I'd strike him to death with my stick and throw him to the dogs so that the world may have peace,' said Master Yun-men Wen-yen."[21] Yun-men's seemingly profane comment is a re-definition of the Buddha's words. To him the "I" does not refer exclusively to the Buddha as a baby but to every baby with inborn Buddhahood

still intact and every adult with the innocence and simplicity of a baby. Yun-men's re-definition of the Buddha's "I" is parallel with Emerson's re-interpretation of Jesus Christ's "I." In "Address" Emerson wrote:

> He saw that God incarnates himself in man, and evermore goes forth anew to take possession of his World. He said, in his jubilee of sublime emotion, "I am divine. Through me God acts; through me, speaks. Would you see God, see me; or see thee, when thou also thinkest as I now think." But what a distortion did his doctrine and memory suffer in the same, in the next, and the following ages! ... The idioms of his language and the figures of his rhetoric have usurped the place of his truth; and churches are not built on his principles, but on his tropes.[22]

Just as Emerson viewed Jesus' "I" as divinity equally discoverable in every man and woman, Yu-men regarded the Buddha's "I" as the essential Self inherent in all things. The essential Self, the "I alone am the world honored one," is the state of egolessness, of non-discrimination. One day, a monk asked Chao-chou: "You said that the way to the ultiminate Tao is not so difficult: only avoid discriminating against things. But what does no discriminating against things mean?"

Chao-chou answered: "In the whole universe I alone am the honored one."[23]

Snyder understands that state of illumination suggested by the master's seemingly profane comment. Like the master, he discovers the Buddha nature, "the world honored one" in every new-born baby, human or non-human. In his eyes, a baby, with its heart full of inborn Buddhahood, is absolutely pure, and lives in a world of non-discrimination. It needs no treatment from doctors. It is itself healing. As Thoreau once said, "Heal yourselves, doctors; by God I live."[24]

Illuminated by the koan, Snyder is able to see the baby's purity and non-discrimination as that which generates compassion. "Chipmunks, gray squirrels, and / Golden-mantled ground squirrels" bring the human baby each a nut. On the other hand, "Girls would have in their arms / A wild gazelle or wild wolf-cubs / And give them their white milk, / those who had new-born infants home / Breasts still full." To him the compassion found in all humans and non-humans flows from the purest "I" with no discriminating consciousness. In his vision, the adult's compassion is no other than the baby's purity and non-discrimination. This compassion alone is the world honored one, which is as sweet as the wine on which bacchantes are drunk. The last sentence -- "Agents: man and beasts, beasts / Got the buddha-nature / All but / Coyote" -- is a variation of Chao-chou's "Wu." It has nothing to do with positive or negative. It demands a real experience of

recognizing the three aspects of Buddhahood - purity, non-discrimination, and compassion - in all things, including the coyote.

Among Snyder poems, composed in response to koans, which indicate his arrival at the second stage of spiritual development, "One Should Not Talk To A Skilled hunter About What Is Forbidden By the Buddha" is closest in form to a traditional Zen poem of this kind, in which the major part of a koan is cited before the poem or used as its title.

> A gary fox, female, nine pounds three ounces.
> 39 5/8" long with tail.
> peeling skin back (Kai
> reminded us to chant *Shingyo* first)
> cold pelt, wrinkle; and musky smell
> mixed with dead-body odor starting.
>
> Stomach content: a whole ground squirrel well chewed
> plus one lizard foot
> and somewhere from inside the ground squirrel
> a bit of aluminum foil.
>
> The deep secret,
> and the secret hidden deep in that. (*TI* 66)

The koan used as the poem's title is recorded in *The Transmission of the Lamp*: "A monk requested, 'Please say something beyond the four alternatives and the hundredfold

negation.' The master [Hsiang-yen] answered, 'One should not talk to the skilled hunter about what is forbidden by the Buddha.'"[25] "The four alternatives" refer to the four different views of life - life is permanent; life is impermanent; life is either permanent or impermanent; life is neither permanent nor impermanent. "The hundredfold negation" refers to all theories of nature of the universe, which negate each other - the universe is monistic; the universe is non-monistic; the universe is either monistic or non-monistic; the universe is neither monistic nor non-monistic, ect. There are various views of life and various theories of the nature of the universe. But none of them is Zen. Zen is beyond all things, and can not be conceptualized. One must go "beyond the four alternatives and the hundredfold negation" to encounter with the Buddhist reality. Therefore, "One should not talk to the skilled hunter about what is forbidden by Buddha" means that one need not give a lecture on Buddhahood to those who do not conceptualize the universe but identify themselves with it.

Corresponding to the koan, Snyder's poem moves from an affirmation of the life to a negation of it, and finally transcends both. In the first stanza, the poet describes with details the color of the fox, its gender, weight, length, pelt, and smell. This is the poet's affirmation of the life form. This affirmation is not a fixed idea of form but a starting point to penetrate to its empty nature. In the

second stanza, the poet describes what he finds in the stomach of the fox, which gives the reader a glimpse into the secret network of nature where all things are interrelated. He discovers in the the fox's stomach "a whole ground squirrel well chewed / plus one lizard foot." And "somewhere from inside the ground squirrel" he finds a bit of aluminum foil," a human invention, indicating man's place in the network of nature. This discovery denies the general assumption of the life form. Before peeling the fox's skin, the poet is reminded by his son Kai to chant the *Shingyo* (*Heart Sutra*), which is about the interconnectedness of form and emptiness. According to the *Shingyo,* in the absolute state of emptiness, all things, including the six senses, the objects of the six senses, the chain of cause and effect - the source of all sufferings - are annihilated. This ultimate state of emptiness is beyond all affirmation and negation, in which "form is no other than emtinesss, and emptiness is no other than form.[26] This is the secret hidden deep in the poem. The poet's vision that one is all and all is one is pre-conditioned by his transcendence of the "four alternatives and the hundredfold negation." He has already arrived at the stage of illumination, and need not be admonished about what is forbidden by the Buddha.

After recognizing the secret nature of all life forms through koan study and through the purified senses, Snyder, like all other enlightened Zen students, must consolidate his

vision by internalizing it. This internalization of his experience of satori, according to the Ts'ao Tung Zen, puts him in the third rank of spiritual development. The third rank, the middle one, is the transition point at which Snyder begins to turn his awakening into a constant attitude of mind and prepare himself for partaking the world affairs. His "Source" in *Turtle Island*, which deals with his identification with the land, is a direct presentation of his entry into the third rank. It concludes:

> Clears up, and all the stars
>
> the tree leaves catch
>
> some extra tiny source
>
> all the wide night
>
> up here
>
> outback
>
> drink deep
>
> that black light. (*TI* 26)

In the first of the two stanzas, Snyder uses the Light images - "all the stars" and "the tree leaves" which catch the starlight - to signify the phenomenal, and the Dark image "all the wide night" to represent the noumenal. Omitting the line "all the wide night," the reader may simply interpret the first three lines as suggesting that the light which the tree leaves catch has its source from the stars. But since "all the wide night" is super-imposed with "some extra tiny

source," the reader is forced to view the Dark as the source of the Light. In the final stanza, Snyder directly expresses his view of Dark and Light as a whole and his effort to internalize this absolute vision. The lines "up here / outback" suggest that the poet is standing or sitting on top of the mountain, which symbolizes his achievement of a holistic vision. Snyder's use of the mountain top image to represent the highest Zen achievement is habitual. It can be traced back to his 1958 translations of twenty four Han-shan poems, in which the mountain top image is always used for the same purpose. The concluding lines "drink deep / that black light" hint at the poet's attempt to internalize his vision of the phenomenal and the noumenal as a whole.

While in "Source" Snyder directly describes his attempt to internalize his absolute vision, in "Thin Ice" in *Riprap* he metaphorically suggests the importance of securing one's enlightened mind.

Walking in February
A warm day after a long freeze
On an old logging road
Below Sumas Mountain

Cut a walking stick of alder,
Looked down through clouds
On wet fields of the Nooksack -
And stepped on the ice

Of a frozen pool across the road.
It creaked
The white air under
Sprang away, long cracks
Shot out in the black,
My cleated mountain boots
Slipped on the hard slick -
like thin ice - the sudden
Feel of an old phrase made real -
Instant frozen leaf,
Ice water, and staff in hand.
"Like walking on thin ice-"
I yelled back to a friend,
It broke and I dropped
Eight inches in (*RCMP* 14)

"Like walking on thin ice" is a Chinese phrase first appearing in *The Book of Songs*. It becomes a popular phrase to the Chinese partly because it is quoted in *The Analects of Confucius* and partly because it is widely used in the Zen circle. In *The Analects of Confucius* Tseng-seng, a disciple of Confucius, quotes it to express the idea that one must carefully retain the mind he has developed in order to come to know his nature.[27] In Zen literature the masters use it to suggest that one maintain with great caution his purified consciousness through which he perceives the self-nature. In the poem Snyder echoes the masters by giving a detailed

description of his experience of "walking on thin ice." The message he sends may be decoded by the dialogue between a monk and Ts'ao-shan (840-901), co-founder of the Ts'ao Tung Zen. "A monk asked, 'How can I maintain what I have achieved in my meditation during the twelve periods of a day?' The Master: 'It is just as when one passes through an infected country. One should not even touch one drop of water.'"[28]

The first stanza can mean that after a long period of Zen training the poet finally comes to himself - "In February / A warm day after a long freeze." After his spiritual awakening, the poet does not dive into world affairs immediately but tries to secure his vision of the unity of Buddhahood. His cautiousness in maintaining his Zen achievement is suggested by the way he walks on an old logging road below Sumas Mountain - "Cut a walking stick of alder, / Looked down through clouds / On wet fields of the Nooksack." However, to consolidate the universal Mind he has achieved is no easy job. It is like "passsing through an infected country," like "walking on thin ice." But he does not realize it until he "stepped on the ice / Of a frozen pool across the road." "It creaked / The white air under / Sprang away, long cracks / Shot out in the black." At this moment of crisis, the poet suddenly thinks of the old Zen phrase: "Like walking on thin ice." But it is a little bit too late. The fact that he drops eight inches in suggests that he is not careful enough in maintaining his enlightened mind, and almost loses

what he has achieved. His yelling back to a friend is actually a warning to all Zen practitioners that after seeing into their own Mind, they must maintain their vision with great caution as if they were "walking on thin ice."

Another example of Snyder's echo of the Ts'ao Tung third rank is "Mid-August at Sourdough Mountain Lookout," which dramatizes his silence, his concentration on "nursing his holy embryo." In Zen tradition there is the exemplary wall-facing meditation of its first patriarch Bodhidharma. Snyder's attempt to internalize his experience of enlightenment, suggested in the poem by his act of "drinking cold-snow water from a tin cup," is the American version of Bodhidharma's wall-facing meditation.

> Down valley a smoke haze
> Three days heat, after five days rain
> Pitch glows on the fir-cones
> Across rocks and meadows
> Swarms of new flies
>
> I cannot remember things I once read
> A few friends, but they are in cities.
> drinking cold snow-water from a tin cup
> Looking down for miles
> Through high still air. (*RCMP* 1)

"Valley," as Sherman Paul points out, "belongs to a culture of values, the unassertive and 'female' yin, associated with

Tao."[29] Paul's interpretation may be confirmed by Snyder own words: "it's in Taoism, and within the emphasis on the female, the feminine, *the spirit of the valley*, the *yin*" (*OW* 38). While "valley" represents Yin or the invisible noumenon, the more visible images, such as the glowing pitch, fir-cones, rocks, meadows, and swarms of new flies, stand for Yang or the phenomenal. In between Yin and Yang, there are "smoke haze," "heat," and "rain," signifying Chi, that harmonize the two relative powers.

In the second stanza Snyder re-shapes traditional Zen phrases and uses them to hint at his inexplicable experience of satori and his attempt to internalize it. "I cannot remember things I once read," as Paul notes, recalls Han-shan's "I've even forgotten the way by which I came."[30] In this self-oblivious state, which is prior to knowledge, all the abstractions of the educated mind that prevent the poet from intuitively perceiving the existence of the noumenal have been completely forgotten. The next line, "A few friends, but they are in cities," reminds the reader of Han-shan's reply to those who ask the "way" to the Cold Mountain: "My heart's not the same as yours. / If your heart was like mine / You'd get it and be right here" (*RCMP* 42). Like Han-shan, Snyder does not explain his experience, which is, in fact, beyond his power of explanation. All he does is "drink cold snow-water from a tin cup," which is his refurbishing of this popular Zen phrase: "like a drinker of water who alone knows whether it is

cold or warm." The phrase was first used by Chen Hui-ming to suggest the inexpressibility of his Zen experience after being awakened to the essential Self by his colleague Hui-neng.[31] The act of drinking and the feeling of cold suggest the drinker's attempt to feel the unity of Buddhahood as a real presence in his mind. The "high still air," as Paul remarks, is "an equivalent perhaps of an empty mind." "Looking down for miles / Through high still air" indicates that after reaching the third stage of spiritual growth, after "nursing the holy embryo," the poet is ready to move toward a higher level of spiritual growth by returning to the phenomenal world and acting in it.

In "The East West Interview" Snyder makes a statement echoing the Ts'ao Tung theory that entering the noumenal and keeping a complete identification with the universe is a mere stepping-stone to the fourth stage of spiritual growth, to the Bodhisattva ideal of saving the world from the misery of sin:

> I was trying to say that, to be true to Mahayana, you have to act in the world. To act responsibly in the world doesn't mean that you always stand back and let things happen: you play an active part, which means making choices, running risks, and karmically dirtying your hands to some extent. That's what the Bodhisattva ideal is all about." (*TRW*

106-7)

According to Buddhism, due to our self consciousness, we crave for things and ignore their empty nature. Our act of craving, which is called Karma, will produce in the future a chain of cause and effect, which is the source of all sufferings. From the general Buddhist perspective, all practices are attempts to avoid Karma and enter the Nirvana. In this view, "making choices, running risks, karmically dirtying your hands" would only tie us to the chain of cause and effect. But from a Zen standpoint, to attain Nirvana is to assume that Nirvana is to be craved for and grasped, which is at odds with the Mahayana principle of "not grasping" and "not craving for." Therefore, a Zen student does not try to attain Nirvana. Rather he is willing to save the world at the cost of karmically dirtying his hands and being born again and again into this suffering world until all other beings have attained Nirvana. By not trying to enter the absolute state of freedom he thus has a hope to enter it. That is what the Ts'ao Tung dialectic of enlightenment is all about, which reminds us of what Thoreau said: "Here or nowhere is our heaven .... We have need to be earth-born as well as heaven-born."[32]

Snyder's presentation of his spiritual development in the fourth stage can be seen widely in his poetry. In "Night Herons" he writes: "How could the / night herons ever come back? / to this noisy place on the bay / like me" (*TI* 35-36). By comparing the herons's return to the noisy, polluted bay to

his own return to it, the poet suggests that after becoming enlightened he is not leaving the world but diving into the thicket of its mundane concerns. Snyder's finest poem presenting his spiritual state in this stage appears in *Mountains and Rivers Without End*, which, like "Night Herons," echoes this famous Zen saying: "The accomplished hermit / hides in the town; / the immature hermit / hides in the mountain."[33]

> High up in a yellow-gold
> dry range of mountains -
> brushy, rocky, cactussy hills
> slowly hiking down-finally can see below,
> a sea of clouds.
>
> Lower down, always moving slowly over the
> dry ground descending, can see through breaks
> in the clouds: flat lands.
> damp green level ricefields, farm houses,
> at last to feel the heat and damp.
>
> Descending to this humid, clouded, level world:
> now I have come to the LOWLANDS. (*MRWE* 35-36)

In the first three lines Snyder describes himself sitting or standing alone on top of the mountains, an image consistently used by the poet to suggest an enlightened state of mind. High up in the mountains, he is accompanied by the brush, the

rock, the cactus, representing an unapproachable situation that he is in, or his unconscious, non-egocentric state of mind. From the fourth line on to the end of the poem, the poet describes himself moving slowly but unhesitatingly down to the "LOWLANDS." "The lowlands," as Snyder explains in *The Practice of the Wild*, "with their villages, markets, cities, palaces, and wineshops, are thought of as the place of greed, lust, competition, commerce, and intoxication - the 'dusty world'" (*POW* 100). However, as an acomplished Zen student, Snyder knows that he must function as part of the self-nature while keeping his mind still and attached to nothing. In the same prose work he says: "One should not dwell in the specialness of the extraordinary experience nor hope to leave the political quagg behind to enter a perpetual state of heightened insight. The best purpose of such studies and hikes is to be able to come back to lowlands and see all the lands about us, agricultural, suburban, urban, as part of the same territory - never totally ruined, never completely unnatural" (*POW* 94). The line, "Damp green ricefields, farm houses," suggests the world of humans, which is "humid," "clouded," and "level," symbolizing the sick, confusing, and shallow. Despite "the heat and damp," representing the spiritually uninhabitable condition of the lowlands, the poet shows no regret. On the contrary, he seems to feel satisfied. The last sentence gives us the feeling that the poet is more than happy to return to the "LOWLANDS" at the risk of

karmically dirtying his hands and thus being unable to go back to the mountain top again.

In fact, what concerns the poet is not whether he can go back to the mountain top again but whether he can help people in the lowlands attain a larger wisdom. If he cannot help people out of the chain of cause and effect, then his personal attainment of Buddhahood will become meaningless. Such an idea is explicitly expressed in "Amitabha's vow."

> "If, after obtaining Buddhahood, anyone in my land
> gets tossed in jail on a vagrancy rap, may I
> not attain highest perfect enlightenment."
>
> wild geese in the orchard
> frost on the new grass
>
> "If, after obtaining Buddhahood, anyone in my land
> loses a finger coupling boxcars, may I
> not attain highest perfect enlightenment."
>
> mare's eye flutters
> jerked by the lead-rope
> stone-bright shoes flick back
> ankles trembling: down steep rock
>
> "If, after obtaining Buddhahood, anyone in my land
> can't get a ride hitch-hiking all directions, may

I not attain highest perfect enlightenment."

wet rocks buzzing
rain and thunder southwest
hair, beard, tingle
wind whips bare legs
we should go back
we don't (*MT* 45-45)

The very title of the poem refers to the vow of the Buddha of Boundless Life (A-mi-tou Buddha in Chinese) of the Pure Land Buddhism, situated in a world to the west of this one. In one of the three major sutras of the Chinese Pure Land Buddhism, the *Wu Liang Shou Ching*, there is a famous story about A-mi-tou Buddha vowing in forty-eight vows that he would rather not obtain Buddhahood unless he had created a pure land in which he could transfer the merit he had acquired through his practices to other beings so that they could all obtain Buddhahood.[34] The spirit of the Pure Land Amitabha Buddha is not at odds with that of the Zen Buddhist. In most of the Zen temples, Amitabha Buddha, Shakyamuni Buddha, and Kuan-yin Bodhisattva are worshipped together because their principle of "not grasping" and "not craving for" and their willingness to conduct all beings to the Buddha land correspond to the spirit of Zen Buddhism.

The three vows in Snyder's poem are spiritually equivalent to Amitabha's vows. Like Amitabha, the poet vows

that he would rather not obtain Buddhahood unless he has created a pure land, which in his other poem concerning his thinking on Amitabha is described as the "western paradise" where "impurities flow out away, to west" (*MRWE* 43). And like Amitabha's Pure Land where all things enjoy absolute freedom, Snyder's pure land - "my land" - permits people to wander freely like "wild geese in the orchard," or like "frost on the new grass," without "get[ting] tossed in jail on a vagrancy rap." In his "land" people will not lose "a finger coupling boxcars," and can "get a ride hitch-hiking all directions."

The fourth and sixth stanzas inserted between his vows present a situation in which the poet leads a pack horse apparently trying to find his way to the pure land, a land not for himself but for all other beings to dwell in. He walks down wet, steep rocks with the mare's ankles trembling, the rain and thunder tingling his hair and beard, and the wind whipping his bare legs. This difficult situation suggests the poet's determination to follow Amitabha in making a spiritual trail to the Buddha land. He "should go back," but he will never retreat.

Except for the preceding two poems, Snyder's social and eco-politico poems can also be read in the context of the Ts'ao Tung fourth rank. As his attitude of mind changes from concern with the self to concern with the world, his subject matter develops from private meditation to social reform. The theme of social reform his poems take up in the fourth stage

is often treated in the manner of Confucianism, which is one of the three major component elements of Zen. Like Pound, Snyder is in favor of Confucianism for social living. In an interview conducted in 1967 Snyder said: "Confucius said, as well as Plato, that as soon as you change the mode of music you change the government, that politics and music are related." When the interviewer pointed out that "Plato was for kicking all musicians out," Snyder responded, "Confucius was all for bringing poets into government and letting them run it. He said that poetry teaches you the names of flowers and trees and animals, then it gives you a proper sense of decorum, and thirdly it trains your character, so that people who know poetry can be good governors."[35] In *Axe Handles* Snyder has a poem titled "Talking Late with the Governor About the Budget" presenting his exercise of his Confucian responsibilities as a poet in society.

Entering the midnight
Halls of the capitol,
Iron carts full of printed bills
Filling life with ruels.

At the end of many chambers
Alone in a large tan room
The Governor sits, without dinner,
Scanning the hills of laws - budget -
codes -

In this land of twenty million
From desert to ocean.

Till the oil runs out
There's no end in sight.
Outside, his car waits with driver
Alone, idling.
The great pines on the Capitol grounds
are less than a century old.

We walk to the street
Tired of the effort
Of thinking about "the people."
The half moon travels west
In the elegant company
Of Jupiter and Aldebaran.

And east, over the Sierra,
Far flashes of lightning -
Is it raining tonight at home? (*AH* 81-82)

As Dan McLeod remarks, the poem "very consciously echoes the treament of such Confucian themes in Chinese poetry as home-thoughts while away on official business and the poet as the 'reminder' to the government."[36] Snyder's work toward a Confucian type of society while missing his Taoist life at home indicates his ability to integrate Confucianism and

Taoism in his Buddha Dharma. In a symposium on "Chinese Poetry and the American Imagination" in *Ironwood* 17 (1981), he describes Confucianism and Taoism as the twin poles of Chinese poetry.

> We have no real models in Occidental poetry of poets who either were staunch, quiet, solid civil-servants involved in responsible positions in society for a whole lifetime as a regular type of poet, nor do we have on the other hand a real tradition of hermit's poetry in the Occident. So it's all the more interesting to see that these two types of roles of poetry were both in China coming from the same individuals, often at different stages within one lifetime, or in some cases, it was just a matter of literally changing hats - Confucian hat to Taoist hat while on a trip to the country.[37]

"These two types of roles of poetry" are both found not only in the same Chinese poet but in Gary Snyder at different stages of his spiritual development. In the first three stages, Snyder is more like Han-shan speaking from the hermit's habitat. In the fourth stage, he is more like the T'ang poet Han-yu, a lifetime civil servant and social

reformer. Like the Chinese poet, Snyder changes hats from Taoist to Confucian while on a trip to the city.

In *Nature in American Literature*, Norman Foerster divides humanitarianism into three kinds. One is Emerson and Thoreau's doctrine, which is the love for man from the viewpoint of his spiritual need. Another is the economic and practical one, such as the Quaker Whittier's Christian humanitarianism. The other is the instinctive one, such as Whitman and the European romanticists' emotional humanitarianism.[38] Snyder's Zen humanitarianism, if it can be so called, is the love not only for humans from the viewpoint of their spiritual as well as material need but also for animals, plants, rocks, and air. This Zen humanitarianism is grounded on the conception of the Buddha Dharma which starts from the recognition of all things sharing the same spiritual essence and finally arrives at the true community of all beings. In "Revolution in the Revolution in the Revolution," Snyder declares the religious ground of his political vision:

> The country surrounds the city
> The back country surrounds the country
>
> "From the masses to the masses" the most
> Revolutionary consciousness is to be found
> Among the most ruthlessly exploited classes:
> Animals, trees, water, air, grasses

We must pass through the stage of the
"Dictatorship of the Unconscious" before we can
Hope for the withering-away of the states
And finally arrive at true Communionism. (*RW 39*)

In his essay, "Buddhism and the Coming Revolution," Snyder refers to ignorance "which projects into fear and needless craving" as that which causes the ruthless exploitation of the earth (*EHH* 90). In "Breasts" in *Axe Handles* he uses "poison" to represent ignorance and suggests that it be replaced with "milk," a symbol for wisdom, so that all things may live peacefully together on this planet.

That which makes milk can't
help but concentrate
Out of the food of the world,
Right up to the point
where we suck it,
Poison, too

But the breast is a filter-
The poison stays there, in the flesh.
Heavy metals in traces
deadly molecules hooked up in strings
that men dreamed of;
Never found in the world til today.
(in your bosom

petrochemical complex

astray)

So we celebrate breasts
We all love to kiss them
- they're like philosophers!
Who hold back the bitter in mind
To let the more tasty
Wisdom slip through
for the little ones.
who can't take the poison so young.

The work that comes later
After child-raising
For the real self to be,
Is to then burn the poison away.
Flat breasts, tired bodies,
That will snap like old leather,
tough enough
for a few more good days,

And the glittering eyes,
Old mother,
Old father,
are gay. (*AH* 103)

"Poison" and "milk" are traditional Zen images. In his *Altar*

Sutra, Hui Neng uses "three poisons" to stand for "desire, hate, and stupidity," which are responsible for all human tragedies. In "Song of Enlightenment," Yung-chia uses "milk and butter" to represent the Buddha wisdom: "Milk in the snow mountains is pure and nourishing, / It makes the refined butter that I enjoyed."" In *Mountains and Rivers Without End*, Snyder uses "buttermilk" to signify wisdom: "An old man came up the lane alongside a mud wall - he shouted a little scolding at some Zen monks .... He came over and chatted with us, a grizzled face - neither eastern nor western; or both. He had a glass of buttermilk in his hand. I asked him 'Where'd you get that buttermilk?' I'd been looking all over for buttermilk.' He said" (*MRWE* 41). While "poison" and "milk" represent ignorance and wisdom respectively, "the breasts" that sift out "poison" and make "milk" signify the mind. According to Buddhism, because of our attachment to things in the past life, we were born with fundamental ignorance in the present life. However, like all other things, we have the Buddha nature existing in our mind, which produces wisdom, which in turn enables us to see into our original nature. Although we have the fundamental ignorance and Buddha wisdom co-existing in us, our mind functions as a filter that sifts out ignorance and prevents it from poisoning us.

In analyzing the "poison," or ignorance, Snyder uses "Heavy metals," "deadly molecules," and "petrochemical

complex" to represent its elements. His use of the polluting images to represent the elements of the "poison" indicates that he looks at the environmental crisis from a Zen perspective and attributes it to our fundamental ignorance. In his view, we have no chance to solve the environmental problem unless we understand that all things, sharing the same Buddha-nature, are equally divine. The lines -- "So we celebrate breasts / We all love to kiss them / - they're like philosophers" -- suggest that in solving the environmental problem, which is actually a "mental" problem, we have nothing but our own mind to resort to. We must "hold back the bitter in mind / To let the more tasty / Wisdom slip through." We need to burn the "poison" away and replace it with "milk" so that the world can last "for a few more good days," and "the glittering eyes" of the Old Mother and Old Father will look happy and gay.

While in the fourth stage of spiritual growth an accomplished Zen student must return to the mundane world, in the final stage he must go back and sit in preparation for death, which is his final attempt to arrive at the unity of Buddhahood. From the Tso'ao Tung point of view, a student may be empirically awakened to his original nature. However, as long as he still lives, he can not completely get rid of his self-consciousness. The remnant of his discriminating mind will continue to cause a relative comprehension of the world, which prevents him from entering the absolute state of

Nirvana. To eliminate the remnant of the conscious self, death becomes the final means. This view of death as that which releases us from the yoke of the conscious self has been held by the ancient Zen masters, particularly of the Ts'ao Tung sect. For example, Dogen, founder of the Japanese Soto/Ts'ao Tung Zen, saw death as a dynamic force that pushed him forward to the final communion. In his death poem he sang: "Four and fifty years / I've hung the sky with stars. / Now I leap through - / What shattering."[40] Viewing death in such an excited manner, Dogen is not far from Emerson who wrote: "There prevailed anciently the opinion that the human mind was a portion of the Divinity, separated for a time from the infinite mind, and when life was closed, reabsorbed into the Soul of the world; or, as it was represented by a lively image, Death was but the breaking of a vial of water in the ocean."[41] In fact, one does not need to be as transcendental as Dogen and Emerson to hold a view as such. Here is Emily Dickinson's vision of death.

> A death blow is a Life blow to some
> Who till they died, did not alive become -
> Who had they lived, had died but when
> They died, Vitality begun.[42]

Although Snyder may agree with Emerson and Dickinson on the question of death, his attitude is more Dogenisque. Instead of waiting to be broken like a vial of water, or to be striken by a death/life blow, he wishes to "dive in" or "leap through"

in a more active manner. This wish is presented vividly in poems such as "Old Pond."

Blue mountain white snow gleam
through pine bulk and slender needle sprays;
   little hemlock half in shade,
   ragged rocky skyline,

single clear flat nuthatch call:
   down from treetrunks
   up through time.

At Five Lakes Basin's
biggest little lake
   after all day scrambling on the peaks,
   a naked bug
with a white body and brown hair
dives in the water,

Splash! (*AH* 70)

From the first line on to the seventh, Snyder uses the call of the bird to suggest the summon of the Tao, which has existed ever since the beginning of time. As the Tao is hidden under the phenomenal, the nuthatch hides itself in the depths of the blue mountain, calling through the pine tree - "down from treetrunks / up through time." Generally the Zen poetic presentation of the summon of the Tao is aimed at calling on

those who are ignorant of its existence to see or hear the Tao through natural phenomena. But here Snyder's presentation - the "single clear flat nuthatch call" - is aimed at summoning those who have become enlightened and acted in the world, represented as the bug "all day scrambling on the peaks," to the final union with the essential Self.

Although from line eight on the poem reminds us of Basho's "A Spring Day" describing a frog breaking the silence of an old pond, it is more comparable to the Dogen death poem I just cited. While Basho simply presents his perception of the sound of silence, Snyder, like Dogen, attempts to fulfill his wish to reach the final stage of spiritual growth by symbolically describing a bug diving in the water. The bug with "a white body and brown hair," signifying the poet himself, is depicted as "naked," representing the poet's simple and unaffected mind. Before diving in the water, the bug/poet has been "all day scrambling on the peaks," suggesting that he is like Dogen who had acted for years in the mundane world after obtaining Buddhahood: "Four and fifty years / I've hung the sky with stars." Snyder's final depiction of the bug's dive in the water presents the same view as Dogen's: "Now I leap through - / what shattering!" Like Dogen, Snyder sees death not as stillness but as "shattering," as "Splash." This view of death recalls that of Eliot presented in *Four Quartets*:

We must be still and still moving

Into another intensity
For a further union, a deeper communion
Through the dark cold and the empty desolation,
The wave cry, the wind cry, the vast waters
Of the petrel and the porpoise. In my end is my
Beginning.[43]

In the previous poem Snyder tries to fulfill his wish to arrive at the unity of Buddhahood through the symbol of a bug diving in the water. In "Journey IX" in *Mountains & Rivers Without End*, he tries to fulfill the same wish by presenting a dream-like situation in which he and his companion Ko journey through death to the Nirvana, represented as "the back country."

We were following a long river into the mountains.
finally we rounded a ridge and could see deeper in -
the farther peaks stony and barren, a few alpine
trees.
Ko-san and I stood on a point by a cliff, over a
rock-walled canyon. Ko said, "Now we have come to
where we die." I asked him, what's that up there,
then - meaning the further mountains.
"That's the world after death." I thought it looked
just like the land we'd been travelling, and
couldn't see why we should have to die.
Ko grabbed me and pulled me over the cliff -
both of us falling. I hit and I was dead. I saw

> my body for a while, then it was gone. Ko was there too. We were at the bottom of the gorge. We started drifting up the canyon, "This is the way to the back country." (*MRWE* 37)

Although he does not interpret the poem from a Ts'ao Tung standpoint, Steuding is able to say: "to reach the 'back country,' the place of total freedom, man must die. Of course, this concept seems preposterous; for to die is to be nonexistent. Logically, no one goes anywhere after death. But in Zen terms, man must, in a sense, surrender life - must lose his ego and become selfless to find freedom."[44] Indeed, the narrator and his companion Ko are on a journey through death to the Nirvana, "the back country." They follow "a long river into the mountains" and round a ridge and stand "on a point by a cliff," which suggests that they have gone through the third and fourth stages of spiritual growth, and are now coming to a new point of departure. They both wish to see deeper and farther, to be united with the self-nature. But their wish cannot be fulfilled by a mere knowledge of "what's up there" in "the world after death." They must die.

The narrator wonders why they have to die to enter the Nirvana after having known that it looks just like the land they had been travelling through. His doubt reflects the essential dilemma of a "sravaka," meaning the hearer of the Dharma, whom Snyder describes in *Earth House Hold* as "disciplined in Tao, enlightened, but on the wrong path" (*EHH*

8). As the sravaka is satisfied with a theoretical understanding of the Dharma, the narrator after having known what "the world after death" looks like assumes that he has attained Nirvana. Since he equates his knowledge of the Nirvana to the attainment of it, he cannot see why he needs to die to enter it. But unlike the narrator, Ko knows that the Nirvana is nothing but a state of mind in which any attempt to understand or grasp it has completely ceased. Therefore, instead of explaining to the narrator that to attain the Nirvana one must not try to understand it but personally testify to it, he grabs him and pulls him over the cliff. By so doing, he forces the narrator to realize that their falling to the bottom of the gorge is not falling but "drifting up," that death is not death but the way to "the back country," the final stage of spiritual growth.

In summary, Snyder's poems, as discussed above in the context of the Ts'ao Tung theory of the Five Ranks, display the range and depth of his spiritual life. These poems, showing the poet's movement from the private insights achieved by meditation to the constant search for the reintegration of man and nature, should not be treated with logical trickery. Rather they should be viewed as re-presentations of the poet's spiritual quest. The process of the poet's spiritual quest does not order these poems, for Snyder does not necessarily express himself in a linear order of his experiences. In fact, any astute reader can recognize in any of Snyder's books

of poetry this spiritual-quest process represented without orderly classification. In the fourth chapter of *Gary Snyder*, Steuding analyzes Snyder's *Myths & Texts* from a mythological standpoint and compares the poet to Joseph Campbell's "mythological hero." In *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, Joseph Campbell develops the thesis that the quest motif, or "monomyth," which involves three stages of inward journey - separation, initiation, and return, is the key to all effective mythology. Campbell writes, and Steuding quotes:

> The passage of the mythological hero may be overground incidentally: fundamentally it is inward - into depths "where obscure resistences are overcome, and long lost, forgotten powers are revivified, to be available for the transfiguration of the world" .... A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.

Yet, as Steuding remarks, "Snyder's adaptation of Campbell's 'monomythic' structure is sketchy, and it does not order the poem. There is little linear movement in *Myths & Texts*. However, what most evidently is the unifying force of the poem

is the poet as 'creative hero' - his personality, wit and wisdom."[45] Steuding's treatment of Snyder's spiritual quest in *Myths & Texts* can be expanded into a broader one with a Zen method as adopted in this chapter. His observation of Snyder's sketchy adaptation of Campbell's monomythic structure explains the necessity to re-order the poems presenting the five ranks of Snyder's spiritual growth.

Like Campbell's "creative hero," Snyder journeys into the innermost of his own mind and finds in there the purest emptiness that relates man and physical environment. Like a mythological hero's quest, Snyder's journey is not just a matter of learning from a great Zen master, not just a matter of perceiving the oneness of the universe. It leads to an existential awakening which seeks to transfigure the world by changing our consciousness and value system. It opens our mind to the nonhuman beings which inhabit this planet. As William Blake wrote,

> The wild deer, wand'ring here & there
> Keeps the Human Soul from Care.[46]

And as Snyder, echoing Blake, sings in the eighth poem of the "Hunting" section in *Myths & Texts*,

> Picasso's fawn, Issa's fawn,
> Deer on the autumn mountain ...
> Stiff springy jumps down the snowfields ....
> Keeping the human soul from care. (*MT* 27)

But Snyder would not stop even at what Campbell calls the

stage of "return," the stage of fruition with the world. He continues to soar like an eagle till he can soar no more. As he writes in "The Blue Sky" in *Mountains and Rivers Without End*:

> The Blue Sky
> The Blue Sky
>
> The Blue Sky
> is the land of
> OLD MAN MEDICINE BUDDHA
> where the Eagle
> that Flies out of Sight
>
> flies (*MRWE* 43-44)

CHAPTER V

TRANSFORMING VISIONS

Snyder's poetry not only reveals the range and depth of his spiritual life but also deals with his transforming visions of the fundamental identity of the phenomenal and the noumenal, which come with his Buddhist enlightenment. From a Zen standpoint, when a person has experienced the unity of Buddhahood, his attitude of mind becomes constant. Every word he says and every gesture he makes, however senseless they may be, can signify the Buddhist reality. Snyder's poems dealing with his transforming visions are usually formed by such words and gestures. They are often too plain to be noticed. As he tells Burr Snider in an interview conducted in 1989, "It is true that in some of my poetry I've worked in the aesthetic of plainness, which I really learned from the Chinese, and have taken that right up to the line, where it's so plain that people might not even notice it."[1] Although such poems are simple and rarely beyond understanding, they always contain unique Zen qualities, suggesting Snyder's visions which require explanation. The most significant Zen quality contained in Snyder's poems is Zen Ki, which, as Lucien Stryk explains, is "a spontaneous activity outside established

forms, as if flowing from formless self."[2] The Zen Ki which comes out of the poet's identification with the formless, essential Self is often presented through his daily activities, or his simple, leisurely life.

As Zen is true meditation applied to ordinary, everyday life, Snyder's poetry is inconceivable apart from his daily activities. As his poetry shows, Snyder is always interested in describing the details of his everyday life: grinding tools, fixing the motorcycle, sweeping the floor, paving a trail, chopping wood, sitting, hiking, drinking, and even passing water. These daily activities are not to be taken as mere fragments of his life, but rather as part of his Zen practice. As Snyder says in *The Real Work*, "All over the world there are people who are doing their sitting while they fix the machinery, while they plant the grain, or while they tend the horses. And they know it; it's not unconscious. Everybody is equally smart and equally alive" (*TRW* 137). Such an equation of labor and meditation is grounded on the traditional Zen Buddhist view of labor as an inseparable part of meditation and a useful way of suggesting the laborer's spiritual achievement. The classic instance is the dialogue between Lin-chi and Huang-po:

> One day during the group work, Lin-chi was going along behind the others. Huang-po looked around, and, seeing that Lin-chi was empty-handed, asked: "Where

> is your mattock?" "Somebody took it away from me," said Lin-chi. "Come here," said Huang-po. "I want to talk the matter over with you." Lin-chi stepped forward. Huang-po lifted up his mattock and said: "Just *this* people on the earth can not hold up." Lin-chi snatched the mattock from Huang-po's grasp and held it high. "Then why is *this* in my hand now?" he asked. "Today there's a man who really is working," said Huang-po, and returned to the temple.[3]

Like Lin-chi, Snyder always knows that he is doing his meditation while he "beat[s] asphalt into highway potholes," while he "cut[s] branches for a day," or while he "walk[s] the tight-rope / high over the streets / with a hoe and two buckets / of manure" (*BC* 10; 14; 45). Such a Zen practice through work is to bring about the oneness of body and mind, subject and object, to see through the illusive nature of "time" and reach the eternity of the essential Self. The method is to concentrate in a relaxed manner on the present activities, excluding any thought of the past or of the future.

Time, according to Buddhism, cannot be perceived without thought. When a thought rises in the mind, another thought will immediately follow. Between the two thoughts, time is

perceived. Therefore, a thought may represent a unit of time. Since thought, no matter if it is the memory of the past or the expectation of the future, is the activity of the conscious self, time is the product of human conception. When a person eliminates his thought by focusing on the present activities, he immediately sees that a period of time is not a period of time but a period of silence, which is infinitely extended. He immediately arrives at what Eliot calls "the intersection of timeless moment."[4] Such a Zen view of time is comparable to that of Emerson who noted in his journal for October 1836: "A moment is a concentrated eternity: All that ever was is now."[5]

Among Snyder poems presenting the spontaneous Zen Ki through his concentration on the present activities, "Sixth-Month Song in the Foothills" in *The Back Country* is the best.

In the cold shed sharpening saw.
    a swallow's nest hangs by the door
setting rakers in sunlight
falling from meadow through doorframe
    swallows flit under the eaves.

Grinding the falling axe
sharp for the summer
    a swallow shooting out over
over the river, snow on low hills
sharpening wedges for splitting.

Beyond the low hills, white mountains
and now snow is melting, sharpening tools;
pack horses grazing new grass
bright axes-and swallows
fly in to my shed. (*BC* 9)

The poem is about sharpening tools in the cold shed while thinking about sharpening tools in the shed. "Sharpening tools" is actually a practice of sharpening the mind. In the "Craft Interview" conducted in 1973, Snyder said: "I like to sharpen my chain saw. I like to keep all my knives sharp .... Creativity and maintenance go hand in hand" (*TRW* 41). Throughout the poem, the poet concentrates on "sharpening saws," "setting rakers in sunlight," "grinding the falling axe / sharp for the summer," and "sharpening wedges for splitting." What he does is what he thinks. There is no other thought rising in the mind.

The poet's attention paid to the immediate tasks at hand is not de-focused but rather intensified by the daily works of the swallows and the horses. The swallows' act of flitting under the eaves, of flying in and out probably for feeding the young in the nest hung by the door, and the horses' act of "grazing new grass" indicate their attentiveness in the immediacy of the present moment. Their attentiveness, which is made possible by their lack of the conscious self, enables them to act as naturally as the change of the season - the melting of the snow. Theirs is a world not conditioned by the

thought of the past or of the future. It is a world of timelessness. Like the natural objects, the poet insists on the present moment being lived for its own sake, on sharpening tools for the sake of sharpening tools. His focus on the preparation for the wood-cutting tools is the spontaneous Zen Ki, flowing from his original mind, which is totally empty.

In *The Back Country* there is another example of Snyder's presentation of the spontaneous Zen Ki in the form of his attentiveness in menial work. It is titled "Six Years: February."

water taps running, the sun part out
cleaning house sweeping floor
knocking cobwebs off the shoji pap pap
wiping the wood and the mats with a wet rag
hands and knees on the veranda
cat-prints-make them a footwiper
                of newspaper
wash the motorcycle. fold clothes
start a new fire under the kama.
fill Mrs. Hosaka's kerosene stove tank,
get the cat hairs
out of the kotatsu.
take the sheets in from the bamboo poles
where they are drying
put away the poles
stand them up below the eaves

and tie them with strings.
scrub out the floor of the bath and move the
mirror
and towel rack
sweep out the genkan footprints
oil the clutch cable of the motorcycle
through the oil nipple under the handle grip
- take off sweater now because it's
too hot
put back on the denim jacket work
Nansen mews angrily because he feels so sick
all the different animals are persons
what will I do about *Liberation*.
6:30 bath
charcoal. black. the fire part red
the ash pure white (*BC* 55)

The stylistic device of the poem is apparently a catalogue of the little chores the poet does around the house. This catalogue technique is similar to that of Whitman who in many of his poems tried to present his transcendental view of the Soul, the cosmic "I," as immanent in all things by cataloguing all the particular details of the universe. George R. Carpenter has remarked on Whitman's use of the catalogue technique in expressing his transcendental vision and mystic experience.

In this state of rapt contemplation the

> mind, rather out of itself than concentrated within itself, dwelt in rapid succession upon a multitude of outward objects, until under this swift and dionysiac sequence of parallel, unrelated percepts, there followed the mystic experience, the illusion or the verity, of knowledge of the Whole. The most marked characteristic of Whitman's poetic method, that by which he catalogues or inventories objects, without close subordination or orderly classification, is perhaps but the same process on a small scale. The reader's attention reels under the weight of unrelated particulars until, just as the mind refuses to go further in the hopeless task of coordination, it is suddenly suffused, as it were, with a glow of comprehension, and there is born an impression of totality.[6]

While Whitman's purpose in employing the catalogue technique is to express his vision embracing panoramic dimensions, Snyder's goal is to present his view of body and mind as one. In an interview in *The Real Work*, Snyder talks about his belief in the oneness of body and mind and his poetic

presentation of it:

> One of my poems is about doing a lot of little chores around the house. It is very close to what I am thinking of, in a very obvious way, of the act and the thought being together. And, in that sense, there is a body-mind dualism if I am sweeping the floor and thinking about Hegel. But if I am sweeping the floor and thinking about sweeping the floor, I am all one. And that is not trivial, nor is the sensation of it trivial. Sweeping the floor becomes, then, the most important thing in the world. Which it is." (*TRW* 7)

In listing a multitude of menial works he does around the house, the poet does so not without hinting at the importance of doing those little chores. The acts of "cleaning," "sweeping," "wiping," and "washing" all suggest the theme of the purification of the contents of the conscious self. The "house," a common Zen symbol for the Void, the "mirror," a symbol for the pure, essential Self, and the cat named after the Zen master Nan-chuan (Nansen in Japanese) are all strong hints at the poet's absolute vision. However, these symbols and hints do not prevent the seemingly unrelated particulars from boring the reader until a striking sentence appears in

the beginning of the concluding lines: "what will I do about *Liberation*." After the word "*Liberation*" appears, the reader's attention, to use Carpenter's words, "is suddenly suffused, with a glow of comprehension." This "*Liberation*" is gained by the poet through his focus on the menial works at hand, which leads to his transcendence of the dualism of body and mind. The attentiveness suggested by the swift sequence of the poet's acts, which are the only objects of his thought, is the spontaneous Zen Ki, the Bodhisattva's act revealed. In *The Real Work* Snyder equates attentiveness with the Bodhisattva's act: "At any time when the attention is there fully, then all of the Bodhisattva's acts are being done" (*TRW* 134).

Snyder's use of the catalogue technique to present the spontaneous Zen Ki, or what he calls "the unconditioned mind-in-the-moment" (*POW* 70) is also seen in "A Walk" from *The Back Country*. As its title suggests, the poem is not about the poet's working Zen but about his walking-in-mediation.

> Sunday the only day we don't work:
> Mules farting around the meadow,
> Murphy fishing,
> The tent flaps in the warm
> Early sun: I've eaten breakfast and I'll
> take a walk
> To Benson Lake. Packed a lunch,
> Goodbye. Hopping on creekbed boulders

Up the rock throat three miles
Piute Creek-
In steep gorge glacier-slick rattlesnake country
Jump, land by a pool, trout skitter,
The clear sky. Deer tracks.
Bad place by a falls, boulders big as houses,
Lunch tied to belt,
I stemmed up a crack and almost fell
But rolled out safe on a ledge
and ambled on.
Quail chicks freeze underfoot, color of stone
Then run cheep! away, hen quail fussing.
Craggy west end of Benson Lake-after edging
Past dark creek pools on a long white slope-
Lookt down in the ice-black lake
lined with cliff
From far above: deep shimmering trout.
A long duck in a gunsightpass
steep side hill
Through slide aspen and talus, to the east end,
Down to grass, wading a wide smooth stream
Into camp. At last.
By the rusty three-year-
Ago left-behind cookstove
Of the old trail crew,
Stoppt and swam and ate my lunch. (*BC* 11)

"A walk" to the Zen student is not just a hike for pleasure. It is one of "the four austere acts," the other three being "abiding," "sitting," and "lying," through which his achievement of the Tao, the way of bringing his body and mind in one, is shown. In *The Practice of the Wild* Snyder explains how "walking" can be a useful practice of the mind:

> There's all sorts of walking .... Descending rocky ridges and talus slopes is a specialty in itself. It is an irregular dancing - always shifting - step of walk on slabs and scree. The breath and eye are always following this uneven rhythm. It is never paced or clocklike, but flexing - little jumps - sidesteps - going for the well seen place to put a foot on a rock, hit flat, move on - zigzagging along and all deliberate. The alert eye looking ahead, picking the footholds to come, while never missing the step of the moment. The body-mind is so at one with this rough world that it makes these moves effortlessly once it has had a bit of practice. (*POW* 113)

The practice of walking Zen, as explained by Snyder, is well presented in "A Walk." Throughout the poem, the poet catalogues his acts of walking: "Hopping on creekbed

boulders"; "Up the rock throat three miles"; "Jump, land by a pool"; "I stemmed up a crack and almost fell"; "But rolled out safe on a ledge"; "and ambled on"; "edging / Past dark creek pools on a long white slope"; "Through slide-aspen and talus, to the east end"; "Down to grass, wading a wide smooth stream." The poet's acts of walking are more related to each other than his acts of doing house chores as inventoried in "Six Years: February." This suggests that "walking" is even more useful in bringing about the oneness of body and mind than "working." It also explains why "walking" is traditionally regarded by the Zen student as one of "the four austere acts."

Parallel with the poet's catalogue of his acts of walking is his inventory of the acts of natural objects: "Mules farting around the meadow"; "trout skitter"; "The clear sky"; "Deer tracks"; "Quail chicks freeze underfoot"; "Then run cheep! away, hen quail fussing"; "deep shimmering trout"; "a lone duck in a gunsightpass." The various acts of natural objects, as they are unconscious, should not be taken as that which distracts the poet's mind but rather as that which reflects his spontaneous activity, his "unconditioned mind-in-the-moment." From this "unconditioned mind-in-the-moment," which is in harmony with outside nature, comes the poet's unawareness of self and his carefree behavior of swimming and eating.

While in the three poems discussed above the Zen Ki is

shown through the poet's attentiveness in working or walking, in the following poem, under the title "Hitch Haiku" from *The Back Country*, it is suggested by his concentration on drinking sake and toasting fish.

Drinking hot sake
    toasting fish on coals
the motocycle
out parked in the rain. (*BC* 26)

In *Gary Snyder*, Bob Steuding remarks that the poem, "full of concrete, commonplace details, reminds the reader in this respect of William Carlos Williams' poem about the red wheelbarrow."[7] In fact, the poem reminds the reader of "The Red Wheelbarrow" not simply because it is "full of concrete, commonplace details" but because it presents the poet's total absorption in "things." "Drinking hot sake" and "toasting fish on coals" are the activities in which the poet is now engaged. From the viewpoint of time, they both refer to the present moment. Whereas the motocycle, which was ridden probably just hours ago and will be ridden again perhaps in a few hours, refers to the past and the future. The fact that it is "out parked in the rain" suggests that the past and the future are excluded from the present moment. Focusing on the present activities, the poet is now arriving at the state of "no thought." Giving no continuity to thought, he is emptying the conscious self, the storehouse in which memories and expectations are kept. Without being conditioned by any

thought of the past or of the future, the present moment he enjoys becomes a "concentrated eternity," which is not of time but of the infinite, essential Self itself. By expressing the state of total absorption in "things," the poet not only links himself to Williams but echoes Thoreau who expressed the same state by referring to the artist of the city of Kouroo in *Walden:* "His singleness of purpose and resolution, and his elevated piety, endowed him, without his knowledge, with perennial youth. As he made no compromise with Time, Time kept out of his way, and only sighed at a distance because he could not overcome him."[8]

In the previous poems, the spontaneous Zen activity is shown through the poet's concentration on the immediate tasks at hand. In other poems of this kind, it is presented through his simple, leisurely life, which suggests his *wu-shih* or *nothing special* state of mind. Such a *wu-shih* mind-set, as Lin-chi suggested, has the nature of satori: "He who has nothing to do is the noble man. Simply don't strive - just be ordinary." It also has the sense of simplicity and unaffectedness. As Alan Watts explains in *The Way of Zen,* "The expression *wu-shih* also has the sense of the perfectly natural and unaffected, in which there is no 'fuss' or 'business.'" Echoing the Zenists, Thoreau stated in *Walden* that *nothing special* meant that all things were congenial to the simple and unaffected mind.

This is a delicious evening, when the

> whole body is one sense, and imbibes delight through every pore. I go and come with a strange liberty in Nature, a part of herself. As I walk along the shore of the pond in my shirtsleeves, though it is cool as well as cloudy and windy, and I see *nothing special* [italics added] to attract me, all elements are unusually congenial to me.'

Snyder's presentation of the spontaneous Zen Ki flowing from the *wu-shih* state of mind is seen clearly in the following poem collected in *Axe Handles*:

> One boy barefoot
> swinging madly
> in the driving rain
> I stand by the pond
> the hiss
> Of rain into itself (*AH* 55)

As the poem shows, the poet has *nothing special* to do but stands by the pond listening to the rain. The image of the rain is the key to the poem. In the final section of "The Waste Land," "What the Thunder Said," Eliot uses the rain image to represent what is opposite to sterility and wasteness. "Here is no water but only rock / ... dry sterile thunder without rain." Likewise, Snyder uses "rain" to suggest hope and regeneration in the seventeenth poem of the

"Burning" section in *Myths & Texts*:

> Toward morning it rained
> We slept in mud and ashes,
> Woke at dawn, the fire was out,
> The sky was clear .... (*MT* 47)

In fact, the rain is a traditional Zen image. In the Zen text, *Meeting the Source of the Five Lamps*, there is a poem written by one of Gui-sheng's disciples after being suddenly awakened by the sound of the rain. "Eavesdrops / I clearly heard now, / When I broke through the universe / And became peaceful-minded." In the chapter titled "The Sound of Rain" in *In My Own Way* Alan Watts writes about the significance of "listening to the rain":

> If you just listen, relating yourself to the world entirely through the sense of hearing, you will find yourself in a universe where reality - pure sound - comes immediately out of silence and emptiness, echoing away as memory in the labyrinths of the brain. In this universe everything flows backward from the present and vanishes, like the wake of a ship; the present comes out of nothing, and you cannot hear any self that is listening. This can be done with all the senses, but most easily with the

ears. Simply listen, then, to the rain."[10]

"Simply listen, then, to the rain" is exactly what Snyder does in the poem. "The hiss / Of rain into itself" is, perhaps, inspired by the eighteenth-century Japanese haiku poet Gyoda's "the rain / beats on the rain."[11] It suggests the poet's concentration on and identification with the rain. In this state of absorption, the field of his consciousness is not occupied by any extraneous concepts. The poet's focus on the rain is reinforced by that of the barefooted boy, who relates himself entirely to the rain by "swinging madly / in the driving rain."

Another example that presents the poet's spontaneous Zen Ki coming out of his *wu-shih* nature of satori is this haiku taken from *Earth House Hold*:

sitting in the sun in the doorway
picking my teeth with a broomstraw
listening to the buzz of the flies. (*EHH* 8)

The Zen Ki presented in this poem is the poet's practice of doing *nothing special*. In *The Real Work* Snyder explains how he first had his insight into the satori nature of *wu-shih*:

During the first year or two that I was at Daitoku-ji Sodo, out back working in the garden, helping put in a little firewood, or firing up the bath, I noticed a number of times little

> improvements that could be made. Ultimately I ventured to suggest to the head monks some labor-and-time-saving techniques. They were tolerant of me for a while. Finally, one day one of them took me aside and said, "We don't want to do things any better or any faster, because that's not point - the point is that you live the whole life. If we speed up the work in the garden, you'll have to spend that much more time sitting in the Zendo, and your legs will hurt more." It's all one meditation. The importance is in the right balance, and not how to save time in one place or another. I've turned that insight over and over ever since. (*TRW* 109)

That insight Snyder turned over and over ever since has been applied to his everyday life and presented in poems such as the one cited above. The depth of his *wu-shih* state of mind is suggested by his leisurely acts: "sitting in the sun in the doorway / picking my teeth with broomstraw." Such leisurely acts are the acts mindful not of the acts themselves but of their ultimate content, which is "wu" or "emptiness." "Listening to the buzz of the flies" is an act more attentive than leisurely. It stops the mind from generating the thought

of the past or of the future and takes it to what Eliot calls "the intersection of timeless moment." Snyder's mindfulness pervading his leisurely acts reminds the reader of Thoreau's wise passiveness: "What, after all, does the practicalness of life amount to? The things immediate to be done are very trivial. I could postpone them all to hear this locust sing. The most glorious fact in my experience is not anything that I have done or may hope to do, but a transient thought, or vision, or dream, which I have had."[12]

In *Earth House Hold* another Zen Ki poem shows the poet's insistence on the miracle of the moment in the form of his leisurely and spontaneous activities.

Leaning in the doorway whistling
a chipmunk popped out
listening (*EHH* 7)

"Leaning in the doorway whistling" is, in fact, a variation of sitting-in-meditation. As mentioned before, sitting-in-meditation is simply a proper way to sit. The practitioner, knowing that Buddhahood is not graspable, has no intention to grasp it. He sits simply because there is *nothing special* to do. As Lin-chi taught us, satori mandated a *wu-shih* state of mind, a simple, unaffected life style, which excluded any thought of the Dharma: "Followers of the Way, as to Buddha-dharma no effort is necessary. You have only to be ordinary with nothing to do - defecating, urinating, putting on clothes, eating food, and lying down when tired."[13] As a

follower of the Tao, Snyder knows how to practice *wu-shih* by remaining ordinary with nothing to do. He leans in the doorway whistling, unconscious of his leaning in the doorway whistling. Such unconscious acts, magically drawing the chipmunk out listening, suggest the oneness of his empty mind and the physical world. Snyder's ability to practice *wu-shih* until the chipmunk pops out listening resembles Thoreau's capability to sit immovable until the animals came and watched him. Emerson in his memorial essay on Thoreau noted his friend's Yogi-like habit: "He knew how to sit immovable, a part of the rock he rested on, until the bird, the reptile, the fish, which had retired from him, should come back and resume its habits, nay, moved by curiosity, should come back to him and watch him." In *Walden* Thoreau admitted:

> Sometimes, in a summer morning, having taken my accustomed bath, I sat in my sunny doorway from sunrise till noon, rapt in reverie amidst the pines and hickories and sumachs, in undisturbed solitude and stillness .... I grew in those seasons like corn in the night, and they were far better than any work of the hands would have been. They were not time subtracted from my life, but so much over and above my usual allowance. I realized what the Orientals mean by

> contemplation and the forsaking of works.[14]

In the 1973 "Craft Interview," Snyder was asked by the *New York Quarterly* if he agreed with Eugene Herrigel, author of *Zen in the Art of Archery*, who said that through a kind of "disciplined inattention" the archer and the target became one; the artist and the creation became one. He answered: "I never try to use meditation deliberately - for the reason that, as anyone who has done much meditation knows, what you aim at is never what you hit. What you consciously aim at is never what you get. Your conscious mind can't do it for you. So you do have to practice a kind of detached and careful but really relaxed inattention, which lets the unconscious do its own thing of rising and manifesting itself" (*TRW* 33-34). Herrigel's "disciplined inattention," or Snyder's "careful but really relaxed inattention," is attentiveness in its highest sense. It is the ordinary mind, which, according to Nan-chuan, is Tao itself.[15] By letting his ordinary mind operate freely Snyder makes himself as much an artist of life as Thoreau, who, as Sherman Paul observes, went to Walden to "affirm the open prospects of the eternal present." By insisting on living every moment for its own sake Snyder proves himself to be the true follower of Wu-men who said: "Day after day / a very good day," just as Thoreau is the genuine realizer of Emerson who said: "One well spent hour is the proper seed of heaven and eternity."[16] And by writing

poetry of this kind, which stops the immediate moment and lifts it out of time into timelessness, Snyder turns his own life into a work of art and makes us look at it with wonder and admiration.

While Snyder's poems of Zen Ki, detailing his daily activities, are apt to be unnoticed, his poems with the quality of Zen humor are easy to identify. Zen is unique partly because of its unusual sense of the comic. As Conrad Hyers points out, "Humor in the movement of Zen Buddhism from India to China and Japan comes to be most fully developed and self-consciously employed as an integral part of both a pedagogical method and an enlightened outlook."[17] Seeing that humor through upside down statements can effect a reversal of dualities and oppositions, many Zen masters and artists have played the role of buffoons. For instance, Han-shan often carried a blank sutra scroll. Tan-hsia (738-824) was caught burning a Buddha image for firewood. When the horrified chief monk blamed him for profaning the Buddha, he explained that he was burning it to obtain the pearl-like substance believed to reside in the ashes. When the monk declared that a wooden Buddha had no substance like that, Tan-hsia immediately took two more Buddhas images and burned them. And Sengai (1750-1837), a Japanese Zen painter, was responsible for the sketch of a Zen monk leaning over to relieve himself of intestinal gas, with the title, "One Hundred Days Teaching of the Dharma."[18] Like those ancient

Zen buffoons, Snyder is full of spontaneous sense of fun. In 1962 Robert Bly, in an extremely sympathetic essay, identified Snyder's "humorous awareness" and his ability to mock at himself. One year earlier Alan Watts met Snyder in Kyoto, Japan, and noted his comic outlook and character:

> Unburdened by a Christian upbringing, Gary Snyder has the humorous attitude to religion so characteristic of Zen. We found him in a Japanese-style cottage, close to the Daitokuji monastery in Kyoto, where he was making a twelve-year study of the Zen way of life. He is like a wiry Chinese sage with high cheekbones, twinkling eyes, and a thin beard, and the recipe for his character requires a mixture of Oregon woodsman, seaman, Ameriindian shaman, Oriental scholar, San Francisco hippie, and swinging monk, who takes tough discipline with a light heart. He seems to be gently keen about almost everything, and needs no affectation to make himself interesting.[19]

Watts's depiction of Snyder as an American Zen lunatic living in a Japanese Zen monastery is similar to Snyder's portrait of Han-shan: "He is a mountain madman in an old

Chinese line of ragged hermits .... He and his sidekick Shih-te (Jittoku in Japanese) became great favorites with Zen painters of later days - the scroll, the broom, the wild hair and laughter. They became immortals and you sometimes run onto them today in the skidrows, orchards, hobo jungles, and logging camps of America" (*RCMP* 33). Snyder resembles Han-shan so much not only because he Americanizes and personalizes his hero, but also because he has a comic spirit similar to that of Han-shan. His apparent madness, like that of his hero, symbolizes not libertinism but freedom in its highest sense. It is a disguised form of the sage who transcends ordinary canons of reason and behaviour. Behind his madness there is the serious truth which is unutterable. Snyder's disguise as a Zen fool, his use of nonsense to point to the beyond of common sense, can be seen in "The Old Man" in *Regarding Wave*.

> His face is the color of the wall
> His robe is the same as his cushion
> He speaks of frog and ox
> He laughs up a hill (*RW* 77)

The old man depicted here is a Han-shan figure, or Snyder himself in his comic disguise. In *Cold Mountain Poems*, which is translated as if written by Snyder himself, Han-shan is portrayed as a crazy vagabond "going for a walk with his shirt and pants askew," "not much to look at / Dressed in rags and hides" (*RCMP* 51; 60). Likewise, the old man is described here

as a tramp who has the demeanour of madman: "His face is the color of the wall / His robe is the same as his cushion." And as Han-shan always expresses his insight through nonsense, insults, and laughter, and yet always comlpains -- "They don't get what I say / & I don't talk their language" --, the old man makes his point in a most eccentric manner: "He speaks of frog and ox / He laughs up a hill."

Because of its constant sitting posture, the frog has long been used by Zen artists as a symbol for the Buddha. Toba-sojo (1053-1140), a Japanese monk painter, in one of his animal scroll scenes portrayed the frog as a Buddha figure seated on a lotus throne made of cabbage leaves, and worshipped in an open-air service by other animals all dressed like monks and laymen. Ryokan (1758-1831), the most famous Japanese Soto Zen fool, was always interested in listening to the frog: "What a happy thing it is / To listen to the frogs / In the mountain fields. / Stretched at full length / In my thatched hut!" In *The Dharma Bums* Kerouac shows the same interest in the croaking of the frog: "I had frogs in the little brook that kept croaking at the oddest times, interrupting my meditations as if by design, once at high noon a frog croaked three times and was silent the rest of the day, as though expounding me the Triple Vehicle."[20] While the frog is a symbol for the Buddha, the ox signifies the Mind. The tending of the ox is the tending of the mind. Nan-chuan was famous for his ox-tending koan: "When I was a child I had

to tend an ox. When I put it out to the pasture on the east bank of the stream, I was afraid that it would eat the grass owned by the state. And when I led it to the pasture on the west bank, I was also afraid that it would eat the grass owned by the state. Finally I decided not to tend it but to let it feed on grass spontaneously."[21] Since Nan-chuan's koan appeared, tending or seeing the ox has become a favorite subject for Zen poets and painters. Of all Zen paintings, the most famous is, perhaps, "The Ten Ox-tending Scroll Scenes." The ten stages of ox-tending represent ten steps of the practice of one's mind essence. Snyder used to own a copy of the Scroll Scenes and once showed it to Kerouac. In *The Dharma Bums* Kerouac restates Snyder's comment on it.

> Look at this picture, by the way. This is the famous Bulls. It was an ancient Chinese cartoon showing first a young boy going out into the wilderness with a small staff and pack ... and in later panels he discovers an ox, tries to tame, tries to ride it, finally does tame it and ride it but then abandons the ox and just sits in the moonlight meditating. Finally you see him coming down from the mountain of enlightenment and then suddenly the next panel shows absolutely nothing at all, followed by a panel

> showing blossoms in a tree, then the last picture you see the young boy is a big fat old laughing wizard with a huge bag on his back and he's going into the city to get drunk with the butchers, enlightened, and another new young boy is going up to the mountain with a little pack and staff.[22]

In addition to his comment on the "Ten Ox-tending Scroll Scenes," Snyder also writes a poem titled "Seeing the Ox," which is about his observation of the simple, unaffected mind of the ox:

> Brown ox
> Nose snubbed up
> Locking his big head high
> against telephone pole
> right by Daitoku temple-
> Slobbering, watching kids play
> with rolling eye,
>
> Fresh dung pile under his
> own hind hooves. (*LOIR* 89)

As the old man's talk of the frog and ox is his talk of the beyond of rational sense, his seemingly foolish laughter is his exhilarated reception of the moment of insight into the truth. His laughter as a way of making his point is not

ideosyncratic at all. It is in the line of the smiling Kasyapa.

> Long ago when the World-Honored One was at Mount Grdhrakuta [Vulture Peak] to give a talk, he held a flower before the assemblage. At this all remained silent. The venerable Kasho [Kasyapa] alone broke into a smile. The World-Honored One said, "I have the all-pervading True Dharma, incomparable Nirvana, exquisite teaching of formless form. It does not rely on letters and is transmitted outside scriptures. I now hand it to Maha Kasho'"

Kasyapa's smile, as Conrad Hyers puts it, is a "smile of understanding, a smile that is carried through in the subtlest to the most raucous forms throughout the later developments of Zen."[23] In short, Snyder's "old man" is one of those enlightened Zen monks or hermits who would climb straight to the top of a hill, laughing crazily at the moon or clouds. His crazy outlook and foolish talk is no vulgar hilarity. It symbolizes his liberation from senseless cravings and his achievement of a larger wisdom. Through him we see Snyder's comic spirit and perspective, his emancipation from the bondage to ego, desire and attachment.

Snyder's use of humor as a sign of sanity and a method

of Zen teaching is not confined to "The Old Man." It is seen widely in his haiku poems. Snyder's haiku presenting his sense of humor is often abrupt, precipitating laughter as well as awakening. Following the line of Basho, Snyder's is a haiku insisting on the use of the common to point at the sublime, of the paradoxical to collapse the conceptual, which brings about a relief from tensions. The following haiku poem taken from Snyder's travel journal offers a good example:

> You be Bosatsu
> I'll be the taxi-driver
> Driving you home. (*EHH* 10)

Here Snyder's comic-iconoclastic tendency is shown clearly in his use of paradox to reduce Bosatsu (the Bodhisattva) to the ridiculous and give credit to the profaning taxi-driver. By describing Bosatsu as one who needs to be "driven home" by the taxi-driver, Snyder annuls the dualities such as, lofty and lowly, sacred and profane. In *The Practice of the Wild* he reiterates the importance of toppling the classification between high and low, great and small, powerful and weak.

> For those who would see directly into essential nature, the idea of the sacred is a delusion and an obstruction: it diverts us from seeing what is before our eyes: plain thusness. Roots, stems, and branches are all equally scratchy. No hierarchy, no equality. No occult and

exoteric, no gifted kids and slow achievers" (*POW* 103).

In subjecting Bosatsu to profanation, Snyder resembles Lin-chi who taught that anything categorized as the sacred could become a new source of attachment, instead of a vehicle for emancipation from bondage to ego: "Whatever you encounter, either within or without, slay it at once: on meeting the buddha slay the buddha, on meeting a patriarch slay the patriarch."[24]

In the previous poem Snyder's humorous attitude toward religion is suggested by his humbling of the exalted and exalting of the humble. In the following haiku collected in *Axe Handles* his sense of Zen humor is presented through his mockery at himself with glee.

Setting sugar water
feeder jars for bees out
hum of mosquitoes at dusk (*AH* 72)

The poet's comic spirit presented in the poem is in tune with seriousness. By putting out the feeder jars with sugar water in them, he aims at attracting bees, which symbolizes his deliberate effort to achieve a larger wisdom. Yet as he says in the 1973 "Craft Interview" that "what you consciously aim at is never what you get," the result of his conscious effort is of course the compelling mockery of the hum of mosquitoes. In terms of its tone and style, the poem resembles the Zen saying: "Scything the grass: / a snake's head drops."[25] But

thematically the poem is a reverse of the saying. While the Zen saying emphasizes the purposelessness of "scything the grass," the poem emphasizes the aim at attracting "the bees." Although the poem exposes the inadequacy of the poet's conscious mind while the Zen saying suggests the power of the unconscious, it produces humor and hints at truth just the same as the Zen saying.

In addition to his comic iconoclasm and self-mockery, Snyder also dramatizes and exposes through comic exaggeration the folly of those who seek the Dharma while remaining attached to material things.

Skirt blown against her hips, thighs, knees
hair over her ears
climbing the steep hill in high-heeled shoes (*EHH* 21)

In this haiku, the Zen humor is presented through the poet's mockery at the absurdity of a Dharma seeker going against the principle of non-attachment. To ridicule those who seek spiritual awakening while clinging to material things, Snyder sarcastically describes a female mountain climber who fails to see her skirt and high-heeled shoes as potential stumblingblocks to the mountain climbing. As a life-long "mountaineer," Snyder has always pursued the ideal of a voluntary, joyous poverty, typical of the Zen Buddhist. His manner of life was properly described by Alan Watts as "a quietly individualist deviation from everything expected of a 'good comsumer.'"[26] In sharp contrast with Snyder, who would

dress himself in such a way so that the mountain climbing may become easier, the woman climbs "the steep hill in high-heeled shoes" with "hair over her ears" and "skirt blown against her hips, thighs, knees." As a "mountaineer," the woman contradicts not only Snyder's principle but Thoreau's tenet: "Most of the luxuries, and many of the so-called comforts, of life are not only not indispensible, but positive hindrances to the elevation of mankind."[27]

In the preceding three poems the Zen humor is presented in the form of sardonic laughter and bitter irony; in "Hiking in the Totsugawa Gorge" in *Regarding Wave* it is presented through a child-like playfulness.

pissing

watching

a waterfall (*RW* 74)

The poem can be interpreted on two different levels, each rewarding. It can be read as the poet urinating while watching a waterfall. It can also be read as the poet viewing the urine as a cataract pouring down from the mountains. Both interpretations touch on the poet's child-like playfulness. However, one must bear in mind that Snyder is a Zen adept and his sense of humor is that of the child of Tao. To read the poem simply as "pissing while watching a waterfall" is to ignore the poet's deliberate connection of the urine to the

waterfall, of the trifling particular to the sublime.

Snyder's view of the urine as a waterfall reflects his child-like freedom from care, his unawareness of self. His is a vision that we had as a child but lost as we grew up. His playfulness and spontaneity is typical of an enlightened person whom Hui-neng defined as someone to whom "Everything and anything is good ... sitting, or lying, or standing. He enjoys perfect freedom of spirit, he moves along as he feels, and yet he does nothing wrong. He is always acting in accord with his Self-Nature. His work is play."[28] Snyder's playful immediacy and freedom of spirit is based on his vision that all things are equally pervaded by the invisible Buddha-nature. Such a vision is a democratization of things in which the distance between beauty and ugliness, magnificence and plainness, truth and error is reduced to nothing. It enables him to create an amusing as well as amazing connection between urine and the waterfall.

In another haiku poem in *Axe Handles*, Snyder creates out of the same child-like mindset an equally stunning connection between blossoms and a radiator.

Ceanothus blossoms
and the radiator boiling
smells of spring (*AH* 72)

In putting "ceanothus blossoms" and "the radiator boiling" together as a piece, the poem resembles the following haiku by Ryokan, the most famous Japanese Soto Zen lunatic.

The sound of the scouring
Of the saucepan blends
With the tree-frogs' voice.[29]

In his haiku Ryokan suggests that what decides the sound of the spring is not human emotions but that which really happens in the spring. Similarly, Snyder accepts the smell of ceanothus blossoms and that of the radiator boiling as "smells of spring." By treating things in this manner, Snyder effects a reversal of our discriminations, enabling us to see even the dullest of things as having its own significance and value. His perspective though at the heart of the comic spirit is a religious and sobering one. He says in *The Practice of the Wild:* "Not only plum blossoms and clouds, or Lecturers and Roshis, but chisels, bent nails, wheelbarrows, and squeaky doors are all teaching the truth the way things are" (*POW* 105).

In the haiku poems discussed above, Snyder uses a wide variety of comic devices to present things and trace in them the cardinal principles of Zen. In "Cats Thinking About What Birds Eat" in *Regarding Wave*, he uses no techniques but simply allows the cat to present its own amusing quality which suggests the truth. As a Zen artist, Snyder believes that all things in the universe, including even the insentient, speak of the Dharma. To express his belief, Snyder follows Zen tradition to sing not of the lofty but of the lowly, not of a dragon but of a dragonfly, not of a tiger but of a house cat:

the kitten

sniffs deep

old droppings (*RW* 79)

In depicting his cat, Snyder insists on its being completely "artless." Snyder's "artlessness" correponds to the important principle of Zen aesthetics, expressed particularly in *haiga* and *zenga*, the most extreme forms of sumi painting by Zen monks. According to Alan Watts, *haiga* and *zenga* are "spontaneous, artless, and rough, replete with all those 'controlled accidents' of the brush in which they exemplify the marvelous meaninglessness of nature itself."[30] This principle of "artlessness" was highly respected by Thoreau, who said: "What is produced by a free stroke charms us, like the forms of lichens and leaves. There is a certain perfection in accident which we never consciously attain."[31]

Snyder's depiction of the kitten's amusing act of sniffing old droppings is a depiction of the cat's natural, unaffected mind. Such a unique presentation of things comes directly from the poet's insight into the unconscious, which is unfathomable in its profundity. It is a stratagem for showing us Nature's way, which will reveal to us all its secrets and even help us understand our "self." It is also a method of expounding the Dharma, which is similar to that adopted by Master Hsuan-sha (835-908):

One day, he was scheduled to discourse to

his assembly. But as he arrived at the

> platform, he heard the twittering of a swallow outside the hall. Thereupon he remarked, "what a profound discourse on Reality and a clear exposition of the Dharma!" And he retired from the platform as though signifying that his sermon was done.[32]

Snyder's poems in their highest Zen form of lightness and playfulness reflect not only his witticism and comic spirit but also his religious attitude and philosophical perspective, which involve a very special way of perceiving reality and presenting its ultra-seriousness. In expressing his awe and wonder at the sublimity of the Buddhist reality, Snyder uses no overpowering and sublime images. Rather, he puts on his poems the garment of nonsense and foolishness. By so doing, he successfully points toward the very absurdity and meaninglessness of categories and discriminations. His old man and taxi-driver, his mountaineer and kitten, all defy attempts at fitting them into the framework of the conscious mind, at forcing them into conformity with the categories of rationality.

Except for Zen Ki and Zen humor, there are several traditionally recognized moods, which, though not directly related to Zen, are responsible for producing the unique Zen flavors in Snyder's poetry. They are Sabi, Wabi, Aware, and Yugen in particular. Generally the four dominant Zen moods,

which have become part of the atmosphere of Snyder's poetry, are not consciously created. They are felt as the poet expresses his feeling of aloneness, of longing, of the fleetingness of things. Sabi literally means loneliness or silence. The mood is associated with the Zen monastic training, aiming at cultivating a strong detachment with which one sees all things as coming from the same source of Emptiness. In the early stage of the training, a feeling of loneliness and sadness is inevitable. But when the sense of detachment is achieved, sadness is mixed with peace and satisfaction, and isolation becomes the expression of absolute freedom. In *The Way of Zen,* Alan Watts defines Sabi properly as "loneliness in the sense of Buddhist detachment, of seeing all things as happening 'by themselves' in miraculous spontaneity."[33] In the mood of Sabi, one does not have much to offer except his detached manner, his insight into the emptiness of all things. Snyder says in *Earth House Hold:* "Sabi: One does not have a great deal to give. That which one does give has been polished and perfected into a spontaneous emptiness; sterility made creative, it has no pretentions, and encompasses everything" (*EHH* 11). The following haiku taken from *Earth House Hold* offers a good example of Snyder's poetic presentation of Sabi:

a butterfly
    scared up from its flower
caught by the wind and swept over the cliffs

SCREE (*EHH* 8)

In "The Poetry of Gary Snyder" Thomas Parkinson says that Snyder "has a gift for quiet, untroubled, accurate observation with occational leaps to genuine eloquence."[34] In the poem Snyder observes the passive and silent nature of the butterfly, which reflects his own propensity to follow Nature's way. From his "quiet, untroubled, accurate observation" of the butterfly's receptive character comes a tremendous sense of detachment, which alternates with an intense sense of wonder and astonishment. The geological term *scree* does not literally mean a rock sliding off mountains. As Steuding points out, Snyder "has utilized a geological term in an interestingly new sense. 'Scree' is rock which slides off mountains. In the poem Snyder has employed its meaning metaphorically suggesting that the butterfly is like a falling rock. He has also utilized the sense of the sound of the term, for to say 'scree' is to sound like one is screaming."[35] The fact that the butterfly is as light and soft as a feather does not prevent it from entering the Void, the source of all things. It pierces into the vast space and becomes one with it, leaving the poet in the state of awakened loneliness.

In the above poem, by super-imposing a small butterfly upon the vast space, Snyder presents a situation which objectifies his sense of eternal loneliness to evoke that sense in the reader, a technique similar to Eliot's "objective

correlative." In the following haiku, by describing "a few elderly mosquitoes" humming in the great mountains, the poet produces a poetic pressure in which the permanent and the impermanent become one, Nature and its lonely observer become one.

> September mountains,
> ripe huckleberries
> a few elderly mosquitoes with
> chilly wings. (*EHH* 98)

In the poem, the "ki" or season, a basic component element in a haiku, is the early autumn, which is suggested by "September" in the first line and "chilly" in the final line. The "ki" of the early autumn not only defines the images of the poem but gives the reader a sense of loneliness. In explaining why a Zen poet, particularly a haiku poet, is always interested in setting his poem against the background of the early autumn in order to present the mood of Sabi or what he calls the "Eternal Loneliness," D. T. Suzuki says:

> In the beginning of autumn, when it begins to rain occasionally, nature is the embodiment of Eternal Loneliness. The trees become bare, the mountain begins to assume an austere appearance, the streams are more transparent, and in the evening, when the birds, weary of the day's work, wend their homeward way, a

> lone traveller grows pensive over the destiny of human life. His mood moves with that of nature.[36]

In the early autumn, the mountain, as Suzuki puts it, "begins to assume an astere appearance," and a sense of Eternal Loneliness is present in nature. With his mood moving with that of nature, the poet begins to feel the fleetingness of things and awe at the eternity of nature. He quietly watches the transient, represented as "ripe huckleberries" and "a few elderly mosquitoes," intercept the eternal, represented as "September mountains." This feeling of permanence interacting with impermanence is not a projection of the poet's melancholy on nature but rather a strong detachment with which he perceives nature's emptiness and silence.

While Snyder's poems of Sabi give the reader a sense of loneliness and quietude, his poems of Wabi produce the atmosphere of a great delight in reality recognized in the most ordinary things. The word "Wabi," according to D. T. Suzuki, "means 'poverty,' or negatively, 'not to be in the fashionable society of the time.'' To be poor, that is, 'not to be dependent on things worldly ... and yet to feel inwardly the presence of something of the highest value, above time and social position." The process of feeling inwardly the presence of reality, according to Alan Watts, is depression followed by joy in a sudden perception of the truth in the most trifling particulars. "When the artist is feeling

depressed and sad, and in this peculiar emptiness of feeling catches a glimpse of something rather ordinary and unpretentious in its incredible 'suchness,' the mood is called wabi."[37] Watts' and Suzuki's definitions of Wabi remind the reader of the Transcendentalists' emphasis on the need to find Reality in the commonest event. In "Nature" Emerson said: "The invariable mark of wisdom is to see the miraculous in the common." Thoreau also stated in his journal for March, 1856: "I wish so to live ever as to derive my satisfactions and inspirations from the commonest events, everyday phenomena, so that what my senses hourly perceive, my daily walk, the conversation of my neighbors, may inspire me, and I may dream of no heaven but that which lives about me."[38]

Wabi, with its wonderment and delight coming from the perception of the truth in the most unnoticed event, is best presented in the following poem from *Regarding Wave:*

ranges of hazy hills
make the heart ache -
tiny flowers in the underbrush,
winds from Siberia
in the spring. (*RW* 72)

In the poem Snyder gives the reader a sense of the inexpressible, which is present at the juncture in nature where the wintry desolation meets with the life power of the spring. By superimposing the "tiny flowers" upon the "ranges of hazy hills" the poet creates in us an unconscious tension

that quickens our perception of the unexpressed. His final discovery of the indication of the spring is his achievement of an insight into the very nature of things, which now appears as "tiny flowers." The process of his search for an indication of life can be viewed as the process of his Zen practice, which is a painful but useful preparation for the state of illumination. Yet, of course, this process, this preparation does not guarantee an achievement of that state of illumination. As the poem shows, in the early stage of his search, the poet is depressed by the "ranges of hazy hills," which "make the heart ache." However, it is in this peculiar mood of depression and sadness that he finally sees "the spring" shoot out from "the underbrush." His sudden recognition of the incredible "suchness" of "tiny flowers" changes his mood from frustration to delight.

In *Regarding Wave*, there is another example of Snyder's poetic presentation of Wabi, which gives the reader glimpses of his insight without describing the insight itself.

scattered leaves
sheets of running
water.
unbound hair. loose
planks on shed roofs.
stumbling down wood stairs
  shirts undone.
children pissing in the roadside grass (*RW* 51)

The very title of the poem "The Way Is Not a Way" recalls Basho's haiku titled "The Way of Zen": "Well then, let's go - / to the place where we tumble down / looking at the snow.[39] As Basho stumbled down the place where he looked at the snow, Snyder stumbles down wood stairs with his shirts undone. By dramatizing their acts of stumbling down, both poets create a sense of frustration. This sense of frustration which helps to conquer ego and pride is later turned into an unexpressed ecstasy as both poets suddenly "see" the Way in the commonest event. Basho was awakened by the snow which he had looked at before but failed to have an insight into its "suchness." Likewise, Snyder discovers the very nature of things in children who have their hair unbound pissing in the roadside grass.

Thematically Basho and Snyder both express the Zen idea supported particularly by the Ts'ao Tung sect that the way to illumination is not a way but a sudden recognition of every event in nature as a correspondence within ourselves. As Conrad Hyers points out,

> Soto Zen ... argues that if one's original nature is "Buddha," then one is already within enlightenment, and there can therefore be no path *to* enlightenment at all. This would be like Po-chang's "riding the ox in search of the ox." The way of Zen is therefore *no* way, if by

> this one means a journey to some foreign destination. It is a way only in the sense of working out, or manifesting, or expressing, the fundamental character of one's being.[40]

In the two poems discussed above, Snyder presents Wabi through the images of "tiny flowers" and "children pissing in the roadside grass," which lift his mood out of depression and sadness into delight and inspiration. In the following haiku he presents the same mood through the images of watching and fixing the roof leak, which turn the deep sense of frustration into great delight.

> After weeks of watching the roof leak
>
> I fixed it tonight
>
> by moving a single board (*BC* 30)

The poem exhibits a mixed feeling of aloneness and wonderment. The first line defines both an image and an emotion. "The roof leak" not only symbolizes a rainy season but also suggests the inconvenience and frustration of the weeks-long dripping. "After weeks of watching the roof leak" suggests the peculiar quality of the poet's mind - a receptive nature full of wise passiveness -, which resembles Thoreau's personality: "All good abides with him who waiteth *wisely*; we shall sooner overtake the dawn by remaining here than by hurrying over the hills of the west."[41] The moving of a single board, which is done in the quickest possible time and

unhampered by any extraneous distractions, is Snyder's application of Zen practice to his daily life. In Zen practice, a student can not obtain enlightenment step by step. He either obtains it or does not obtain it at all for Buddhahood cannot be divided into pieces and achieved little by little. The student's practice, however hard it may be, is a mere preparation for sudden awakening which is like jumping over a deep chasm with no immediate step between its two sides. Likewise, in fixing the roof leak, Snyder insists on finishing the job instantaneously with no immediate step between moving a single board and fixing the leak. As Zen practice does not guarantee an obtainment of Buddhahood, Snyder's weeks-long watching, his preparatory work does not guarantee a success in fixing the leak. During his watching, it can be imagined that Snyder would sink at times into depression, just as a Zen practitioner would sometimes feel his ambitiousness being checked. But when the single board is moved, his depression is immediately turned into a great delight in something that is real and immutable.

Another underlying mood in Snyder's poetry is Aware, which is sadness coming with the perception of the fleetingness of things. It is, as Watts explaines, "not quite grief, and not quite nostalgia in the usual sense of longing for the return of a beloved past." Rather, it is "the moment of crisis between seeing the transience of the world with sorrow and regret, and seeing it as the very form of the Great

Void."[42] In other words, it is a religious/philosophical elevation of the pathos, a transcendence of the nostalgia for the lost youth, love, or time. Such a spiritual elevation enables poets to present their holistic vision while lamenting over the brevity of life. In one of his haiku poems, Issa wrote on the death of his child:

This dewdrop world -
It may be a dewdrop,
And yet - and yet.

Like Issa, Emerson was passionate when facing the death of his dear son Waldo. Yet like Issa again, Emerson was aloof enough to regard sorrow as superficial, dwelling in a low region, and describe his son as "a beautiful estate-no more."[43] This sadness coming with the realization that the beauty of things is in their impermanence is the source of poetry. In a poem titled "These," William Carlos Williams thus sang:

The source of poetry that
seeing the clock stopped, says
the clock has stopped

that ticked yesterday so well?
and hears the sound of lakewater
splashing - that is now stone.[44]

Snyder's poetic presentation of Aware can be seen in poems such as, "August on Sourdough" in *The Back Country* and the sixth and tenth poems of "Atthis" in *Left Out in the Rain*.

Yet nowhere is this mood more painfully shown than in "Four Poems for Robin" in *The Back Country*. In the first of the four poems, the feeling of impermanence is embodied in the juxtaposition of the fallen rhododendren blossoms with the poet's memory of his first wife, Alison, whose nickname is Robin.

> I slept under rhododendren
> All night blossoms fell
> Shivering on a sheet of cardboard
> Feet stuck in my pack
> Hands deep in my pockets
> Barely able to sleep.
> I remembered when we were in school
> Sleeping together in a big warm bed
> We were the youngest lovers
> When we broke up we were just nineteen.
> Now our friends are married
> You teach school back east
> I don't mind living this way
> Green hills the long blue beach .... (*BC* 47)

The poet's reminiscence, which both gives a haunting sense of the past and casts an afterglow over the present, comes not quite from a nostalgia for what has vanished but from an insight into the emptiness of worldly love. Love or passion, from a Zen standpont, is transient and empty. Because it is transient, the sense of its fleetingness automatically

transmutes itself into an intense, sentimental feeling. Yet because it is essentially empty, it is paradoxically viewed by Zen students as inseparable from Buddhahood. In *The Transmission of the Lamp* Chao Chou said: "Buddhahood is passion, and passion is Buddhahood." After hearing Chao Chou say that, a monk asked him. "In whom does Buddha cause passion?" "Buddha causes passion in all of us." "How do we get rid of it" "Why should we get rid of it."[45] As a Zen student, Snyder realizes the empty nature of worldly love. Owing to this realization, he makes no effort to shun the inextinguishable pain and passion. On the contrary, he constantly recalls his lost love and faces it, hoping to integrate its emptiness in the very essence of all things.

Although he is able to come to terms with his passion by seeing through its empty nature, the poet can not help feeling sad and regretful when he thinks back on his lost young love. His view of worldly love as an intergral part of the Void is always tinted with a melancholy quality. As Charles Molesworth remarks on the "Four Poems," "Clearly he wants to achieve a Zen-like sense of calm and acceptance in regard to ineradicable but unalterable experience, but the demons of self-doubt and ego are not easily denied."[46]

Last night watching the Pleiades,
Breath smoking in the moonlight,
Bitter memory like vomit
Choked my throat.

I unrolled a sleeping bag
On mats on the porch
Under thick autumn stars.
In dream you appeared
(Three times in nine years)
Wild, cold, and accusing. (*BC* 48)

The phrases "watching the Pleiades," "under thick autumn stars," and "in dream" not only intimate Emptiness but underscore the complex feeling of the poet - a mixture of dependence and independence, ambivalence and resolution, ego and egolessness. The poet's feeling, though full of sorrow and regret, involves a negation of the will, an acceptance of what has vanished, and a personal decision to subordinate worldly love to the pursuit of the Dharma. As he sings in the last of the "Four Poems,"

After college I saw you
One time. You were strange.
And I was obsessed with a plan.

Now ten years and more have
Gone by: I've always known
    where you were -
I might have gone to you
Hoping to win your love back.
You still are single.

I didn't

I thought I must make it alone. I

Have done that. (*BC* 49)

While Snyder's poems, giving the moods of Sabi, Wabi, and Aware, are rarely beyond understanding, his poems, with the quality of Yugen, which literally means depth and mystery, are baffling. In *The Way of Zen,* Alan Watts defines the mood as a mysterious vision: "When the vision is the sudden perception of something mysterious and strange, hinting at an unknown never to be discovered, the mood is called yugen." Lucien Stryk in *Encounter with Zen* more clearly defines Yugen as the sense of a mysterious depth in nature: "Yugen, most difficult of the dominant moods to describe, is the sense of a mysterious depth in all that makes up nature."[47] Like the other three Zen moods, Yugen is identified by Zen students as an essential precondition of awakening, of penetrating to the Void by which all things are engendered. When a student stays in this mood, nothing seems impossible to him. For instance, he may see a swallow dart into the lightning or an earthen ox roar in the stream.

Snyder is not the first American poet to write Yugen poems. In *Gaudier Brzeska: A Memoire,* Pound admitted that his "In a Station of the Metro" was inspired by a "Yugen-in-reverse" haiku written by the Japanese poet Moritake (1472-1549), which used a more "realistic" vision to deny the preceding deep, mysterious vision:

The fallen blossom flies back to its branch:

A butterfly.[48]

However, in composing his "Metro" poem, Pound did not imitate the mood in Moritake's poem literally. Rather, he made his poem a standard Yugen by balancing the mood of mystery and depth in both lines so that the mood in each line reinforces the mood in the other.[49] Like Pound, Snyder is able to write poems full of the mood of Yugen, which appear only as vague impressions open to many interpretations. "At Kitano Shrine for the Fair" in *Regarding Wave* offers a good example of Snyder's descending into the mysterious depth in nature.

In the washroom I looked in a mirror

And saw the roots of a huge tree. (*RW* 76)

In the poem there is an awareness of the never-to-be-known, a longing for the unattainable, which reminds the reader of these Whitman lines in "Song of Myself."

I hear and behold God in every object, yet understand God not in the least,

Nor do I understand who there can be more wonderful than myself.

Why should I wish to see God better than this day?

I see something of God each hour of the twenty-four, and each moment then,

In the faces of men and women I see, and in my own face in the glass.[50]

Whitman's mystical experience -- "I see something of God ...

in my own face in the glass" -- comes out of his vision that the phenomenal world is the mirror of the Soul. Similarly, Snyder's sudden perception of a mysterious depth in nature comes from his vision that the invisible Void, "the root" of all things, is reflected in the visible creation. Snyder's ability to see "the roots of a huge tree" in a mirror in the washroom, from a Zen standpoint, is his ability to see things with his "Dharma eye," referring to an intuitive power of perceiving the existence of the essential Self. For those who are capable of "seeing" things with the "Dharma eye," nature is inseparable from the mysterious Void, and, therefore, has its aura of mystery. The Zen master Chia-shan (805-881) once said mysteriously: "Pick me out in the hundred grasses." Yun-men (862-949), pointing to a pillar, shouted: "Chia-shan has turned into a pillar, look! look!"[51] Like Chia-shan and Yun-men, Snyder recognizes that nature, being connected to the Void, is itself mysterious and remote. As his poem shows, he sees the world through rays of the Void and makes its familiar scenes suddenly become unfamiliar.

The atmosphere of Yugen in Snyder's poetry is produced not only by his sudden perception of the existence of the "root" of all things but also by his complete identification with nature. Steuding has noted Snyder's mystical expressions in "Without," "Source," "For Nothing," and "By Frazier Creek Falls" in *Turtle Island*, which come as the consequence of his oneness with this earth.[52] In the conclusion of "By Frazier

Creek Falls" Snyder writes:

> This living flowing land
> is all there is, forever
>
> We are it
> It sings through us -
>
> We could live on this Earth
> without clothes or tools! (*TI* 41)

In *Walden* Thoreau has a poem that might show how the mood of Yugen is produced by a strong communion with nature.

> It is no dream of mine,
> To ornament a line;
> I cannot come nearer to God and Heaven
> Than I live to Walden even.
> I am its stony shore,
> And the breeze that pass o'er;
> In the hollow of my hand
> Are its water and its sand,
> And its deepest resort
> Lies high in my thought.[53]

Thoreau's identification with Walden is an identification with nature's beauty and reality. So is Snyder's communion with the mountain:

> Don't be a mountaineer, be a mountain.
> And shrug off a few with avalanches. (*EHH* 21)

As the sense of a mysterious depth perceived in Thoreau's poem comes out of his complete identification with nature, the mood of Yugen felt in Snyder's haiku comes from his sense of unity of subject and object. In *The Practice of the Wild,* Snyder makes it clear that he looks on life as a whole and as a mystery, which can not be grasped with logical explanations of the ways things are. He quotes Dogen: "If you doubt mountains walking you do not know your own walking"; "Now when dragons and fish see water as a palace, it is just like human beings seeing a palace. They do not think it flows. If an outsider tells them, 'What you see as a palace is running water,' the dragons and fish will be astonished, just as we are when we hear the words, 'Mountains flow'" (*POW* 102; 108-109). In Snyder's vision, a mountain is not just a mountain. It is all of existence - beings and non-beings, humans and non-humans. As he comments on Dogen's view of mountains and waters, "His mountains and streams are the processes of this earth, all of existence, process, essence, action, absence; they roll being and nonbeing together. They are what we are, we are what they are" (*POW* 103). Just as dragons and fish see water as a palace, Snyder views himself as a mountain. If some one suddenly tells him that he is not the mountain, he will be astonished. With its Zen spirit of oneness with nature, Snyder's poem is essentially mystical. In the first line, Snyder produces an atmosphere of mystery by giving an unfathomable suggestion which reflects his ability to

internalize his feelings about the mountain: "Don't be a mountaneer, be a mountain." In the second line, he deepens the sense of mystery by suggesting that one "shrug off a few with avalanches." The season word "avalanches" not only personifies winter but also suggests the vanishing of the world. To "shrug off a few with avalanches" is to let go, or to accept "the going." The white color of the avalanches takes on the quality of Yugen with its sensation of purity, when used in direct contrast with the sense of a mysterious depth/darkness in nature.

Like the poems of Zen Ki and Zen humor, Snyder's poems expressing the four dominant Zen moods have their religious significance and manifest his transforming visions that come with his Buddhist enlightenment. Yet, again like the poems pervaded by Zen Ki and Zen humor, his poems giving the unique Zen moods are free of dogmatism. Full of beauty, elegance, and tranquility, they are purely aesthetic. These moods not only mark Snyder's supreme accomplishment in Zen but also make his poetry unique and distinguished. As Thoreau said, "A true poem is distinguished not so much by a felicitous expression, or any thought it suggests, as by the atmosphere which surrounds it."[54] Because Snyder's poetry conveys such unconsciously created Zen moods, which imply emotions as well as thoughts, it may be called an intuitive art, which offhandedly attempts to express the inexpressible.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Snyder's poetry, which presents his Buddhist view of the identity of the phenomenal and the noumenal, the various stages of his spiritual development, and the transformations of his enlightened vision, not only makes himself unique and distinguished as a poet but also expands the range and depth of American literature. In its fundamental assumptions, Snyder's poetry radically dissents from the dominant literary traditions of America. No poet in American literature has ever tried, as he has, to achieve from the old Zen tradition a vision that is fully informed about its relation to both human society and the non-human world, and use it as a major source of his poetry. Although it has been linked by Snyder to other cultural wisdoms such as Amerindian lore, it remains the central vision of his poetry. By demonstrating the ultimate truth that relies on witnessing nature at close range by our senses, Snyder's vision echoes a few, relatively isolated geniuses in American literature such as, Emerson and Thoreau, who called for an integration of humankind into nature. By democratizing all things, by elevating contemplation over action, it reinforces the ecology movement

which rejects the traditional man-over-nature mind set, the resource-management mentality that manages nature not for the fruition of the eco-system as a whole but for the short-term benefit of the managers themselves.

Since 1955, the year he participated the poetry reading at the Six Gallery in San Francisco, Snyder has insisted on writing the kind of poetry that moves from tranquility and contemplation to the exercise of social wisdom and back again to tranquility and contemplation. This kind of poetry is valuable in that it has both "in-time" and "out-of-time" functions; that is, it deals with the worldly and the unworldly at the same time. In *The Real Work* Snyder formulates the function of poetry, which fits his own poetry so well.

> The value and function of poetry can be said in very few words. One side of it is in-time, the other side is out-of-time. The in-time side of it is to tune us in to *mother* nature and *human* nature so that we live *in time*, in our societies in a way and on a path in which all things can come to fruition equally, and together in harmony. A path of beauty. And the out-of-time function of poetry is to return us to our own true original nature at this instant forever. And

> those two things happen, sometimes together, sometimes not, here and there and all over the world, and always have. (*TRW* 73)

The in-time or worldly function is curative, focusing on the social and historical dimension of our existence. The out-of-time or unworldly function is more contemplative or aesthetic, attempting to return us to "our own true original nature at this instant forever." In *Enlarging the Temple,* Charles Altieri suggests that Snyder has stepped outside Western literary traditions to make these claims, and his use of Buddhist material can be seen as either a critique or a radical reimagining of those traditions.[1] In fact, Snyder uses Buddhist material not just to criticize or reimagine Western literary traditions but to present a vision that affirms what we really *are,* opens our eyes to the mysterious oneness of all things, and attempts to create in the reader a change of consciousness.

Jack Kerouac once referred to the vision of the word Beat as "being to mean beatific."[2] Snyder's poetic vision is indeed "beatific" enough to rule in the possibility of poetry playing an important role in warning against all ties and possessions and saving human beings from misery and self-destruction. As Bob Steuding observes, "one of the factors that creates Snyder's influence is the fact that the conception of poetry and the role of the poet has changed

since the 1950's, especially in the minds of the young. The new concern is to relate to poetry more personally and to get something specifically from it. This refreshing pragmatism, if one wishes to see it as such, stresses in poetry its opportunities for learning and for self-awareness. In this respect, Snyder's life and poetry offer the reader a glowing example."[3] Snyder's poetry, from a pragmatic standpoint, does show the reader how the ineffable Tao can be turned into a way of life, into a "power vision" that offers an important preserve of value and truth.

As a Zen practitioner, though, Snyder must, like all poets, be judged as an artist. In the 1960's Snyder received the first flush of criticism from such important poet-critics as Kenneth Rexroth and Robert Bly. In the last two decades at least three full-length studies of Snyder's mind and art have been published. More recently, a great number of articles have been written explicating his esoteric allusions to Oriental thought. Almost all these critical books and essays are sympatheic and serious, affirming his role as an important poet. Of the many things which might be said about the criticism of Snyder's poetry, one is worth mentioning here. That is, all of these critics discuss Snyder's poetry in conjunction with his personality and life style. The critics' interest in Snyder's career reminds the reader of the emphasis of his role as a culture-hero by the 1960's and 1970's reviews in the popular culture newspapers and magazines, which were

written more or less in response to such biographical works as Jack Kerouac's *The Dharma Bums* (1958) and Alan Watts' *Beat Zen Square Zen and Zen* (1959). This tendency to emphasize Snyder's life experiences suggests that his life plays an important role in the formation of his art. Indeed, Snyder's work is inconceivable apart from his life. His art, to use Thoreau's words, is "what he has become through his work." While Thoreau admitted -- "My life has been the poem I would have writ,/ But I could not both live and utter it" --, Snyder succeeds in doing so.[4]

At its best, Snyder's work is a reflection of himself living in and outside the world at once, finding eternity in every moment, and aware of the deep significance of his affinity with the most ordinary things in nature. From the pure meditation of *Riprap* & Cold Mountain Poems, on to *The Back Country*, a concern with the unconscious, and through to the political and poetic syntheses of *Earth House Hold* and *Turtle Island*, and then back to *Left Out in the Rain* and *The Practice of the Wild*, recurrences of his contemplation, the cycle of Snyder's life and art has been from meditation to wisdom and morality and back again to meditation. Such a course of development has been deepened by his attempt to make new out of the old, to integrate his tone, and to make his rhetoric relevant to human experience,

In some literary circles, Snyder has been dismissed as a relic of the Beats. But compared with the poetry of his

generation, his is free of howling, itchiness, and the lack of self-discipline. As Robert Bly remarks in an insightful article, Snyder can no longer be lumped with the Beats because his poetry "reveals the grave mind of a man who is highly civilized."[5] In his 1960-61 review of *Myths & Texts*, Thomas Parkinson finds that there is a "terrible sanity" about Snyder's work.[6] In his review of Snyder's *Earth House Hold*, Timothy Baland notes the depth and lasting effect of Snyder's poetry, which is "like a stone skipping water, touching lightly ... then sinking deep."[7] In the final analysis, Snyder's poetry, with its directness and simplicity, its clarity and brilliance, and its spontaneity and startling originality, is a poetry of power and beauty. His insights presented through sensuous images represent the true spirit of his generation, and will probably stand the test of time.

With the availability of the numerous anthologies of Zen writings and of the critical materials explicating his Buddhist allusions, Snyder's Zen, which is integral to his works, is no longer esoteric. The figure of Gary Snyder as a poet is no longer overshadowed by that of Snyder as a culture-hero. His poetic reputation no longer rests merely on *Myths & Texts*, on a few excellent poems from *Riprap*, *Turtle Island*, and *Mountains and Rivers Without End*. Although it is hard to predict how he will be received by a future, different era, his place as a pioneer who has taken a new direction in American literature seems to have been secure. More than as

follower of Pound, Snyder has created a new kind of poetry, which turns his Zen vision of an integrated and unified world into a consciousness that is social, political, cultural, as well as poetic.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

NOTES

Chapter I

1. Dan McLeod, "Some Images of China in the Works of Gary Snyder," *Tamkang Review*, 10: 3 & 4 (Spring & Summer 1980), 372.

2. Bob Steuding, *Gary Snyder* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1976), the preface.

3. Bert Almon, "Buddhism and Energy in the Recent Poetry of Gary Snyder," *Mosaic*, 2.1 (1977), 117.

4. Frederic Ives Carpenter, *Emerson and Asia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1930), 15.

5. Arthur Christy, *The Orient in American Transcendentalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), 61-183.

6. Ibid., 185-233.

7. Quoted in Christy, 202.

8. Sherman Paul, *The Shores of America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1958), 69-75.

9. Quoted in Beongcheon Yu, *The Great Circle: American Writers and the Orient* (Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1983), 55. For Thoreau's comment on Whitman's Orientalism, see *The Writings of Henry David Thoreau: Familiar Letters*, ed. F. B. Sanborn (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1906), 296.

10. V. K. Chari, *Whitman in the Light of Vedentic Mysticism* (Lincoln: Nebraska University Press, 1964), 106.

11. Summarized in Gay Wilson Allen, *The New Walt Whitman Handbook* (New York: New York University Press, 1975), 263-64.

12. Yu, 62-63.

13. For a further understanding of the similarity and difference between Hinduism and Buddhism, see Alan Watts, *The Way of Zen* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1966), 29-56.

14. Donald D. Eulert, "Matter and Mathod: Emerson and the Way of Zen," *East-West Review*, vol. 3 (Winter 1966-67): 48-65.

15. Robert Detweiler, "Emerson and Zen," *American Quarterly*, vol. 14 (Fall 1962): 422-38.

16. Van Meter Ames, *Zen and American Thought* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1962), 65-94.

17. D. T. Suzuki, *Zen and Japanese Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), 342-44.

18. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Transcendentalist," *The Selected Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Brooks Atkinson (New York: Modern Library, 1950), 91-92.

19. Herbert Fackler, "Three English Versions of Han-Shan's Cold Mountain Poems," *Literature East and West*, 15.2 (1971), 274.

20. Charles Molesworth, *Gary Snyder's Vision* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1983), 65.

21. T. S. Eliot, *After Strange God* (London: Faber & Faber, 1934), 44.

22. Stephen Spender, "Remembering Eliot," in *T. S. Eliot: The Man and His Work*, ed. Allen Tate (New York: Delacorte Press, 1966), 40.

23. Russell T. Fowler, "Krishna and the 'Still Point': A Study of The *Bhagavad-Gita's* influence in Eliot's *Four Quartets*," *Sewanee Review*, 79.3 (July-September, 1971), 408.

24. Harold E. McCarthy, "T. S. Eliot and Buddhism," *Philosophy East and West, vol.* 2 (April 1952), 39.

25. T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets* (New York: A Harvest, 1943), 41-42.

26. My discussion of the Orientalism of Eliot and the Transcendentalists is indebted to Yu's *The Great Circle, especially to its* first three and its nineth chapters.

27. Steuding, 70-74.

28. Quoted and commented in McLeod, 377.

29. L. S. Dembo, *Conception of Reality in Modern American Poetry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 4; 3. Schopenhauer's "objectivist logic" is summarized in Dembo's introduction.

30. Quoted in Hyatt H. Waggoner, *American Poets* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968), 392.

31. Steuding, 43-45.

32. Quoted in David Kherdian, *Six San Francisco Poets* (Fresno, California: Giligia Press, 1969), 22.

33. McLeod, 374.

34. Summarized in Yu, *The Great Circle*, 209. See Alan Watts, *Beat Zen Square Zen and Zen* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1959), 3-9.

35. Jack Kerouac, *The Dharma Bums* (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), 18.

36. Kerouac, 13.

37. See "Chan on Turtle Island," *Inquiring Mind* 4.2 (Winter 1988), 6.

38. Snyder has a poem about the "mind refreshers," which he calls "dot the heart." See *Left Out in the Rain* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1986), 94.

39. Zu-chi Chu ed., *Chi Yueh Lu* (*Record of Pointing to the Moon*), 2 vols (Taipei: Lao Ku, 1985), I, 717-18.

40. Chung-yuan Chang, trans., *Original Teachings of Ch'an Buddhism: Selected from the Transmission of the Lamp* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1969), 175.

41. See "The Sage of the Sierra," *Image* (September 17, 1989), 11.

42. *Ibid.*, 15.

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1. Zenkei Shibayama, *Zen Comments on the Mumonkan* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 29.

2. Emerson, *"The Over-Soul," Selected Writings,* 263.

3. Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 178.

4. See *Uncollected Poetry and Prose of Walt Whitman,* 2 vols., ed. Emory Holloway (London: William Heinemann, 1922), II, 66.

5. Charles Luk, ed., *Ch'an and Zen Teaching,* 3 vols., (London: Rider, 1962), III, 25; 30-31.

6. Alan Watts, *In My Own Way* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 440-41.

7. Emerson, "The Over-Soul," *Selected Writings,* 262; 277.

8. *Emerson, "Self-Reliance," Selected Writings,* 155.

9. Luk, III, 136.

10. Walt Whitman, "This Day, O Soul," *Leaves of Grass, ed. Emory Holloway* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1954), 485.

11. D. T. Suzuki, *The Essence of Buddhism* (London: Buddhist Society, 1947), 9.

12. Emerson, "The Over-Soul," *Selected Writings,* 275.

13. Thoreau, *Walden,* 427.

14. Soiku Shigematsu, trans., *A Zen Forest: Sayings of the Masters* (New York: Weatherhill, 1981), 39.

15. Emerson, "Nature," *Selected Writings,* 14.

16. Clifton Joseph Furness, *Walt Whitman's Workshop* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928), 185-86.

17. Thoreau, *A Week on the Concord and Merrick Rivers* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), 350.

18. R. H. Blyth, *Zen in English Literature and Oriental Classics* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1960), 31. My discussion of the two selves in man in the context of Zen and American

Transcendentalism, and of the relationship between Zen and poetry relies partly on the first and third chapters of Shoei Ando's *Zen and American Transcendentalism: An Investigation of One's Self* (Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1970), 1-52; 136-67.

19. Shigematsu, ix.

20. Thomas Parkinson, "The Poetry of Gary Snyder," *The Southern Review*, vol. 4 (1968), 620.

21. Eliot's statement was included in an unpublished lecture on "English Letter Writers" - primarily on Keats and Lawrence - which was delivered in New Haven, Conn., in 1933. It is quoted in F. O. Matthiessen, *The Achievement of T. S. Eliot: An Essay on the Nature of Poetry (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1935)*, 89-90.

22. Shigematsu, ix

23. Quoted in Lucien Stryk, *Encounter with Zen* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1981), 14.

24. Whitman, "A Song of the Rolling Earth," *Leaves of Grass*, 189.

25. Quoted in David Kherdian, *A Biographical Sketch and Descriptive Checklist of Gary Snyder* (Berkeley, California: Oyez, 1965), 13.

26. Robert Kern, "Clearing the Ground: Gary Snyder and the Modernist Imperative," *Criticism*, 19.2 (Spring 1977), 166.

27. Entry of Oct. 28, 1835, *The Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 18 vols., ed. Edward Waldo Emerson and Waldo Emerson Forbes (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1909-14), V, 103.

28. Whitman, "When The Full-Grown Poet Came," *Leaves of Grass*, 452-53.

29. Jody Norton, "The Importance of Nothing: Absence and Its Origins in the Poetry of Gary Snyder," *Contemporary Literature*, 28.1 (1987), 43.

30. Kern, 166.

31. Waggoner, *American Poets*, 615-17.

32. Paris Leary and Robert Kelly eds., *A Controversy of Poets* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1965), 566-67.

33. Stryk, 44.

34. Luk, III, 46-47.

35. Shigematsu, 316.

36. Molesworth, *Gary Snyder's Vision*, 14.

37. Emerson, "The Over-Soul, *Selected Writings*, 262.

38. Ezra Pound, *Lustra of Ezra Pound with Ealier Poems* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1917), 50.

39. *Ibid.*, 90.

40. Ezra Pound, *The Cantos of Ezra Pound* (New York: New Directions, 1973), 244; 245. My discussion of Chinese ellipsism and its influence on Pound relies largely on Wai-lim Yip's first chapter of *Ezra Pound's Cathay* (Princeton: Priceton University Press, 1969), 8-33.

41. Yip, *Ezra Pound's Cathay*, 33.

42. Thomas Lyon, "Gary Snyder: a Western Poet," *Western American Literature*, vol. 3 (Fall 1968), 210.

43. Norton, 46.

44. Charles Olson, "Projective Verse," *The Selected Writings of Charles Olson*, ed. Robert Creeley (New York: New Directions, 1966), 24.

45. Waggoner, 616.

Chapter III

1. William F. Powell, trans., *The Record of Tung-shan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), 63-64.

2. *Ibid.*, 46.

3. Emerson, "Nature," *Selected Writings*, 19.

4. Luk, *Ch'an and Zen Teaching*, III, 90.

5. Entry of 1851, *The Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, VIII, 211.

6. Emerson, "Brahma," *Selected Writings*, 809.

7. Jonathan Bishop, *Emerson on the Soul* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), passim.

8. Shigematsu, *A Zen Forest*, 61; 102; 114; 53.

9. Whitman, "Song of Myself," *Leaves of Grass*, 27.

10. Snyder is well acquainted with the Japanese stone garden. In "A Stone Garden" in *Riprap*, he describes Japan as a great stone garden in the sea. In "Sand" in *Regarding Wave*, he mentions the "white river" sand raked out at Ryoan-ji, a Zen temple in Japan famous for its stone garden.

11. Harold G, Henderson, *An Introduction to Haiku* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1958), 19.

12. Quoted in McLeod, 382, n. 3.

13. Eliot, *Four Quartets*, 15.

14. W. T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1960), 173.

15. Quoted in Blyth, *Zen in English Literature and Oriental Classics*, 339.

16. Thoreau, *A Week*, 418.

17. Snyder is especially interested in the teaching of Nan-chuan (Nansen in Japanese). He uses the master's name "Nansen" as the title of a poem collected in *The Back Country*. In *Regarding Wave*, he uses the master's famous koan "Killing a Cat" to conclude the poem titled "In the House of the Rising Sun."

18. I-kung Tsang-tsu ed., *Ku Ch'an Shih Yu Lu* (*Recorded Sayings of Ancient Zen Masters*), 2 vols., (Taipei: Kwung-wen, 1981), I, chuan 13.

19. Quoted in Yu-lan Fung, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, ed. Derk Bodde (New York: Macmillan, 1984), 246-47.

20. McLeod, 379.

21. Steuding, *Gary Snyder*, 63.

22. In using the structural pattern of Yin and Yang to analyze Snyder's poem, I am inspired by Lin Wen-yueh who in a Chinese article points out the same structural pattern

commonly found in the landscape poems of Hsieh Ling-yun and his contemporaries. See Wai-lim Yip's "Aesthetic Consciousness of Landscape in Chinese and Anglo-American Poetry," *Conparative Literature Studies*, 15.2 (June 1978), 226-27.

23. Herrymon Maurer, trans., *The Way of Ways: Lao Tzu/Tao Te Ching* (New York: Schochen Books, 1985), 63.

24. Emerson, "Experience," *Selected Writings*, 357-58.

25. *Ibid.*, 332.

26. Quoted in McLeod, 379.

27. Steuding, 64.

28. Thoreau, *A Week*, 404.

29. John R. Carpenter, "Comment," *Poetry*, vol. 120 (June 1972), 169.

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1. Thoreau, *A Week*, 411.

2. John C. H. Wu, *The Golden Age of Zen* (Taipei: National War College, 1967), 178.

3. Emerson, "Nature,' *Selected Writings*, 36; Thoreau, *A Week*, 23.

4. Powell, *The Record of Tung-shan*, 27-28; Isshu Miura and Ruth Fuller Sasaki, *Zen Dust:The History of the Koan and Koan Study in Rinzai (Lin-chi) Zen* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966), 292.

5. Emerson, "Nature," *Selected Writings*, 6.

6. Emerson, "Circles," *Selected Writings*, 283-84; Thoreau, *A Week*, 412-13.

7. For Snyder's statements cited above, see "Chan on Turtle Island," 4-5.

8. Thoreau, *A Week*, 408.

9. Powell, 26.

10. Wai-lim Yip, trans., *Chinese Poetry: Major Modes and Genres* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 318.

11. Thoreau, *A Week*, 409.

12. Entry of February 21, 1842, *The Writings of Henry David Thoreau: Journal*, 20 vols., ed. Bradford Torrey (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968), I, 321.

13. Quoted in Sung Tse-lai, *Ch'an Yu Wen Hsieh Ti Yen* (*Zen and Literary Experiences*) (Taipei: Chien-wei, 1982), 290-91.

14. Thoreau, *A Week*, 180-82.

15. Luk, III, 132.

16. *Ibid.*, 70.

17. Herrymon Maurer trans., *The Ways of Ways, Lao Tzu/Tao Te Ching*, 48; Thomas Merton, *The Way of Chuang-tzu* (New York: New Directions, 1965), xxiii; 7.

18. Emerson, "Nature," *Selected Writings*, 6; Thoreau, *A Week*, 160.

19. J. Barthelemy Saint-Hilaire, *Life and Legend of Buddha*, translated from the French by Laura Ensor (Calcutta: Susil Gupta, 1957), 20.

20. Shibayama, *Zen Comments on Mumon-kan*, 19.

21. Pu-chi Shi, *Wu Teng Hui Yuan* (*Meeting the Source of the Five Lamps*), 3 vols (Taipei: Wen-ching, 1986), III, 924.

22. Emerson, "An Address," *Selected Writings*, 72.

23. Pu-chi Shi, I, 203.

24. Thoreau, *A Week*, 181.

25. Chung-yuan Chang, *Original Teaching of Ch'an Buddhism*, 223.

26. D. T, Suzuki, *Manual of Zen Buddhism* (New York: Grove Press, 1960), 26-27.

27. Hung-ming Ku trans., *The Discourses and Sayings of Confucius* (Taipei: Prophet Press, 1976), 59-60.

28. Chung-yuan Chang, p. 75. In ancient China a day was divided into twelve two-hour periods.

29. Sherman Paul, *In Search of the Primitive: Rereading David Antin, Jerome Rotherberg, and Gary Snyder* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1986), 197.

30. *Ibid.*, 196.

31. Luk, III, 27.

32. Thoreau, *A Week*, 405-6.

33. Shigematsu, 87.

34. Miura and Sasaki, *Zen Dust*, 172-73.

35. Quoted in McLeod, 372-73.

36. *McLeod*, 373.

37. Quoted in Molesworth, *Gary Snyder's Vision*, 3.

38. Norman Foerster, *Nature in American Literature: Studies in the Modern View of Nature* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1958), 137-38.

39. Luk, III, 32; 132.

40. Quoted in Stryk, *Encounter with Zen*, 55.

41. Entry of 1827, *Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, II, 217.

42. Emily Dickinson, *Final Harvest: Emily Dickinson's Poems*, ed. Thomas H. Johnson (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1961), 203.

43. Eliot, *Four Quartets*, 32.

44. Steuding, 54.

45. See Steuding, 68-69;

46. William Blake, "Auguries of Innocence," *Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (London: Nonesuch Library, 1956), 118.

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1. Snider, "The Sage of Sierra," 15.

2. Stryk, *Encounter with Zen*, 62.

3. Ruth Fuller Sasaki trans., *The Recorded Sayings of Ch'an Master Lin-chi (Kyoto: Institute for Zen Study, 1975)*, 54.

4. Eliot, *Four Quartets*, 51.

5. Entry of October 13, 1836, *The Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, IV, 115-17.

6. George R. Carpenter, *Walt Whitman* (New York: Macmillan, 1909), 55.

7. Steuding, 62.

8. Thoreau, *Walden*, 431.

9. Sasaki, 10; Watts, *The Way of Zen*, 126; Thoreau, *Walden*, 170.

10. Quoted in Ando, *Zen and American Transcendentalism*, 16; Watts, *In My Own Way*, 450.

11. Henderson, *An Introduction to Haiku*, 118.

12. Thoreau, *A Week*, 145.

13. Sasaki, 11-12.

14. Emerson, "Thoreau," *Selected Writings*, 905; Thoreau, *Walden*, 146-47.

19. Shibayama, *Zen Comments on Mumonkan*, 140.

16. Paul, *The Shores of America, 352*; Shigematsu, 98; entry of January, 1825, *The Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, II, 41-42.

17. Conrad Hyers, *Zen and the Comic Spirit* (Philadelphia: Westminister Press, 1973), 33.

18. Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, 3 series (London: Rider, 1949-53), III, 145; I, 330; Conrad Hyers, *Zen and the Comic Spirit*, 106.

19. Robert Bly, "The Work of Gary Snyder," *The Sixties*, No. 6 (Spring 1962), 27-28; Watts, *In My Own Way*, 439-40.

20. See Hyers, 59, plate 5; Blyth, *Zen and Zen Classics* (New York: Vintage Book, 1978), 147; Kerouac, *The Dharma Bums*, 143.

21. Pu-chi Shi, *Wu Teng Hui Yuan* (*Meeting the Source of the Five Lamps*), 3 vols., (Taipei: Wen-ching, 1986), I, 137.

22. Kerouac, *The Dharma Bums*, 174-75.

23. Shibayama, 58; Hyers, 25.

24. Sasaki, 25.

25. Shigematsu, 66.

26. Watts, *Beat Zen Square Zen and Zen*, 17.

27. Thoreau, *Walden*, 16.

28. Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, I, 217.

29. Quoted in Watts, *The Way of Zen*, 189.

30. Watts, *The Way of Zen*, 182.

31. Thoreau, *A Week*, 351.

32. Wu, *The Golden Age of Zen*, 230.

33. Watts, *The Way of Zen*, 186.

34. Parkinson, "The Poetry of Gary Snyder," 630.

35. Steuding, 59.

36. Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, III, 330.

37. Suzuki, "Zen and the Art of Painting," *The World of Zen*, ed. Noncy Wilson Ross (New York: Random House, 1960), 92; Watts, *The Way of Zen*, 181.

38. Emerson, "Nature," *Selected Writings*, 41; entry of March 11, 1856, *The Writings of Henry David Thoreau: Journal*, VIII, 204.

39. Quoted in Henderson, 36.

40. Hyers, 130.

41. Thoreau, *A Week*, 133.

42. Watts, *The Way of Zen*, 186-87.

43. Quoted in Watts, *The Way of Zen*, 187; entry of February 13, 1831, *The Journals of Raph Waldo Emerson*, II, 356.

44. William Carlos Williams, "These," *The Collected Earlier Poems of William Carlos Williams* (New York: New Directions, 1951), 433-34.

45. Chung-yuan Chang, *Original Teachings of Ch'an Buddhism*, 166.

46. Molesworth, 56.

47. Watts, *The Way of Zen*, 181-82; Stryk, *Encounter with Zen*, 60.

48. I borrow the term "Yugen-in-reverse-haiku" from Watts; see *The Way of Zen*, 188. For Moritake's poem and its influence on Pound's Metro poem, see Pound's *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoire* (New York: New Directions, 1960), 86-89.

49. For further understanding of Pound's adaptation of the Zen mood in Moritake's haiku, see my "Pound's 'In a Station of the Metro' as a Yugen Haiku," *Paideuma*, 21.1 & 2 (Spring & Fall 1992), 175-84.

50. Whitman, "Song of Myself," *Leaves of Grass*, 74.

51. Thomas and J. C. Cleary trans., *The Blue Cliff Record* (Boulder, Colorado: Shambhala, 1977), 236.

52. Steuding, 166.

53. Thoreau, *Walden*, 257.

54. Thoreau, *A Week*, 400.

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2. Kerouac, "The Origins of the Beat Generation," *A Case Book on the Beat*, ed. Thomas Parkinson (New York: Crowell, 1961), 75.

3. Steuding, *Gary Snyder*, 160.

4. Thoreau, *A Week*, 365.

5. Robert Bly, "The Work of Gary Snyder," 36.

6. Parkinson, "Two Poets," *Prairie Schooner*, vol. 34 (Winter 1960-61), 384.

7. Timothy Baland, "A Skipping Stone," *New Republic* (April 4 & 11, 1970), 32.

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