

# Kalyanamitra

Ranking one's friends in order belongs principally to the realm of grade-school girls, but a quick visit there might be allowed, only to note that Philip Whalen had no better friend than Gary Snyder. Whalen's life would have run a vastly different course had a 17-year old Snyder not first seen him from off-stage at Reed College's theatre, directing players in a student production, and been impressed with him. Whalen might have taken much longer to run across zen writings, for example – Snyder brought D.T. Suzuki's books home to their apartment when they were living together in San Francisco. Philip might never have found work in the mountains: sitting in that same Telegraph Hill apartment in the hot summer of 1952, Whalen read one of Gary's regular letters, this one from a Forest Service lookout on Crater Mountain in the North Cascades of Washington state. Provoked by it, and by working – "bad anytime, but especially nasty in summer in the city" – Whalen wrote back to declare, "By God, next summer, I'm going to have a mountain of my own!" This he did; then got another mountain the following year, and spent a third summer as a forest lookout the year after that, making this by far his steadiest, most satisfying job until many years later, when he became a "professional" man of the cloth. Whalen would never have read in the Six Gallery reading had not Snyder put Philip's name and poems literally in front of Allen Ginsberg's face. Philip certainly would have floundered longer with unemployment and flirted more dangerously with out-right homelessness, had Gary not simply taken care of him whenever the two were in the same town at the same time.

They roomed together in San Francisco off and on from 1952-54 in a flat on Montgomery Street, above the city's North Beach district, to which they descended together nearly nightly for beer at Vesuvio and other drinking establishments. Thus Philip and Gary came to know the writers, players, merchants, philosophers, painters, filmmakers, musicians and scholars circling around the Bay Area, in the gestation phase of the San Francisco Renaissance. During this same period Snyder and Whalen began going together to the American Academy of Asian Studies, where they heard and met Alan Watts, and later also D.T. Suzuki. From among the audiences there, they got to know Claude (Ananda) Dahlenberg, who later co-founded the East-West House<sup>i</sup>, and still later became an ordained Zen priest under Shunryu Suzuki Roshi – and they made the acquaintance of an attractive, older, elegant woman called Schändel Parks. Schändel connected them to the roaring lion of the local poetry scene, Kenneth Rexroth, taking first Gary to Rexroth's Friday evening literary gatherings. Other Friday evenings found Whalen and Snyder in Berkeley, for the study group with Rev. and Jane Imamura, at the Buddhist Church of America. Together the Imamuras were descended from the most important old families of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism; they displayed no arrogance, and welcomed the young men, going so far in the subsequent years as to turn their little church publication – the Berkeley Bussei – over to artist Will Petersen for a time. Snyder, Whalen, Ginsberg and Kerouac all published early poems in its pages. The benevolent Imamura family gave both Snyder and Whalen their first contact with people actually practicing Buddhism, instead of purely discussing its philosophies and traditions.

Whalen might have made his way out to Pacific Street, to the Asian Academy, or over to Berkeley for the study group without Snyder's impetus, but Philip was much given, even then, to the sedentary life. As long as he could, he spent hours each day reading, writing, drawing, playing music, doodling, staring into space – wondering from time to time where and how he could find a job that wouldn't drive him crazy. He ventured out when he needed to – for cigarettes or food or for fresh air, but he had nothing like the get-up-and-go Gary had. It is in fact difficult to think of anyone with

the drive and sense of adventure the young Snyder had. These propelled him up mountains, up trees, down the hole of tankers, out into deserts, back into libraries, into universities, into monasteries, across the country, out of the country, across oceans; they armored him against the many outer and inner obstacles an un-moneyed young man might encounter in such travels; they sustained him as he went where he needed to go, saw what he wanted to see, studied what, and with whom, he needed to study, worked as he had to, and cut loose when he could.

Whalen certainly profited directly from Snyder's enormous, disciplined energy. Gary's confident style also worked as a magnet: Kerouac was magnetized, for example, as were a steady stream of young women. Shy, socially awkward Whalen profited from this as well, in the sense that it afforded him much more contact with females and feminine energy than he otherwise would have been able to arrange for himself. Falling in love, wearing out love, having imaginary affairs and occasionally consummating them – these essential emotional territories for a young poet were much more accessible to Philip because of women who were initially attracted to Gary. Signal among such introductions, enduring, and completely transcending any other was the introduction Gary made between Joanne Kyger – his future wife – and Philip in 1958. Not the first night but soon after, Philip fell helplessly in love with Joanne, and stayed that way for his remaining his forty-two years. Gary observed Philip's crush on Joanne, possibly underestimated its profundity, but correctly gauged that it presented no threat to his own relationship with her. Philip though, writhed with guilt, telling Ginsberg, "Joanne and I are still having some sort of felicity, you name it. I didn't see her most of the day today & missed her, wondered how I'll feel when she goes away [to Japan, to be with Gary] & all that jazz, my god. What a mess. Am completely unable to write to Snyder."<sup>ii</sup> Gary saw that Philip was attracted by Joanne's wit, her creativity and a matching style of "bitchiness."<sup>iii</sup> True as all this was, Whalen's sexual energies were also understandably engaged by the beautiful Miss Kyger, evidenced in his going on to tell Ginsberg, "Maybe Chicago & New York balling will fix all this. Good grief." Whether or not there was

any balling in New York, nothing much seems to have helped. Philip remained impractically in love with Joanne; she went off to Japan and eventual marriage with Gary. Philip stayed home, haunted.

Philip's own two sojourns in Japan—so crucial to his writing and his Buddhism—came about through Gary's agency. Knowing Philip to be impoverished in 1965, functionally homeless, unhealthy and depressed, Gary arranged a teaching job for him in Kyoto, instructed him in all he would need to know to negotiate visas and transportation, and gave him a place to live for several months.

By 1971, both men back in California, the obvious outer good turns Gary had given Philip's life ceased to be so necessary, to occur so frequently, or to be so easy to trace. With Philip soon settled in Zen Center housing, and Gary getting phone service in his Sierra Nevada home, their letters to one another tapered off. Such hard evidence as does remain shows no lessening of affection though, no diminishment of respect between them. They were simply absorbed in the demands of their parallel lives: Gary with raising a family, working with a zendo, publishing continuously and teaching at UC Davis; Philip, roughly 150 miles to the west, with learning the routines and population of the San Francisco Zen Center. He spent the days educating himself and students about Zen history, and in working with and for his teacher, Richard Baker Roshi. The poets managed visits to each other during these years. They exchanged seasonal letters and holiday wishes. Gary arranged teaching gigs or readings for Philip—both at UC Davis, and up at Ring of Bone Zendo, the meditation hall near his family homestead. The last big service Gary offered was to help officiate, together with Zen teachers Baker Roshi and Norman Fischer, and poet Michael McClure, Philip's funeral service at Green Gulch Farm in September of 2002.

Relaxing by a hair strict Japanese ceremonial rigor, these four conducted a memorial both traditional and warm. Flashes of humor took place; tears flowed. Gary dressed for the role, looking exactly who he was: an outdoors man wearing with craggy elegance a dark suit, white shirt and tie, his dignity and city clothes conveying deep re-

spect. After Baker-roshi's opening rituals and remarks, Gary spoke. He bowed crisply to the shrine with Philip's ashes upon it, and still facing it, told him, "Hey buddy, I'm going to say some words about you." Snyder then turned to the audience and read slowly from prepared remarks – an essay he'd titled, "Highest and Driest, For Philip Zenshin's Poetic Drama/Dharma." In this trenchant eulogy<sup>iv</sup>, it is possible to see some of the other side of the friendship. This chapter so far has focussed on what Whalen got from Snyder; but for a creative friendship to last more than a half century, surviving contraction and expansion, proximity and distance, for it to remain loving and humorous and bright at whatever remove, both parties have to be getting something. For the friendship to allow a living man to address, with utter naturalness, a box of his dead friend's ashes saying, "Hey, buddy," the path between their hearts has to be a well-traveled, two-way route.

"Being part of Phil's circle [at Reed College] was like being in an additional class – having an extra (intimately friendly) instructor, one with nutty humor and more frankly expressed opinions. He extended us into areas not much handled by the college classes of those days, such as Indian and Chinese philosophy...Philip led the way in making conversation possible, and then making poetry out of the territory of those readings..."<sup>v</sup>

Seven years his senior, Whalen was more accomplished in almost every academic field than Snyder when they met. Through industry and native intelligence, Gary made huge strides in learning, catching and – in Oriental Studies and languages certainly – surpassing his older friend. Still he maintained a deferential tone: "Cher Maître" was not an uncommon opening for a letter from Gary to Phil, even if the respect in it is coated with dollop of fun. What Snyder acknowledges in this passage above is how Whalen both broadened his mind, and pointed it, or confirmed it, in the direction of poetry. That Snyder continued with astonishing energy to broaden and deepen his own mind, and that he developed into a Pulitzer prize-winning poet, can largely be attributed to his own powers. But Snyder thinks historically and systemically (among other

ways) and knows that a slight bump here, a little pivot there, a turn of a couple degrees early in life affects the whole course of that life. Gary had begun to read from Oriental classics, but was a raw beginner in poetry. In Philip he found someone older, familiar, strange and friendly who'd been studying classics of all kinds for much longer than he had, and who was undeniably already a poet. In another short essay<sup>vi</sup> Snyder states this more explicitly. "He first showed me the difference between talking about literature and doing it, and he pointed the way in Asian philosophy and art." Since Gary Snyder spent most of the rest of his life "doing" literature, most of it profoundly affected by Asian philosophy and art, this is no small responsibility to lay at Whalen's feet. If this seems an exaggeration of Whalen's importance, and it does feel bold even to suggest it, then consider that this excerpt comes from the author's introduction to *The Gary Snyder Reader*, a 600-page summary volume assembled after more than 45 years of publishing poetry, prose and translations. The whole big, fat, rich book – the essential texts from a life's writing – is also dedicated to Whalen. "For Philip Zenshin Whalen," it begins, right after the copyright information. Then Snyder adds the opening lines from Confucius's Lun Yü, as an epigraph,

"K'ung said:

To learn and then put it in practice – isn't that a delight?

To have friends come from afar – isn't that a joy?"<sup>vii</sup>

[A good deal of meaning is being teased out of few words. This can be justified with poets. Snyder and Whalen both absorbed many of Ezra Pound's dicta early in their lives, including, "Great literature is simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree."<sup>viii</sup> Beyond this note Snyder's life-long practice of reading, studying and writing Chinese and Japanese characters – these "ideograms" are each a marvel in condensation of meaning. Reading Snyder's deceptively simple poetry or prose *without* allowing for the surface meanings to expand or deepen would amount to disrespect.]

Both in his eulogy for Philip, and his author's note dedicating *The Gary Snyder Reader* to him, Snyder uses Whalen's Buddhist name, calling him Philip Zenshin Whalen. For Gary, as for Philip, names and naming held real significance, (a theme that will reappear later more fully) so that by including Whalen's Zen name, Gary was pointing to more than Philip's literary endeavor. A different man answered to "Zenshin Ryufu" than to "Phil," "Philip," "Philip Glenn Whalen," or "old buddy." Philip felt, as the ceremony insists a postulant should feel, that his priest's ordination cut him away from previous history, and gave him a new start in a life. Together with the new name, ordainees received new robes, new eating bowls, new or renewed vows, and new family ancestors, a lineage. Buddhism is casually associated with re-birth, but the ceremony that left Whalen a priest is called *tokudo* – which translates as "home departure" – emphasizing its disentangling effects. A person emerging from *tokudo* is known as an *unsui*: not monk, not priest, but "cloud-water person," one who should henceforth float, constantly changing like a cloud, and reflect, like clear water. In actual practice, one still drags around a good deal of baggage, and the *unsui*'s new role as "a child of the Buddha" brings with it binding specificity with regard to deportment. It may be an enlightened family he or she has just joined, but an *unsui* is still subject to family dynamics. The path forward consists in balancing the liberating and binding aspects of the new role, and in unpacking, sorting, and using or discarding the contents of the luggage. Snyder knew this well, having gone through *tokudo* himself in 1956 in Japan. When he dedicated his big collection of writing to Philip, it was to the man doing just this work. When he eulogized his old college pal, it was an eulogy for an *unsui*.

Discriminating Snyder's words this way would be unfaithful to their sense if they were not reintegrated in summary meaning. For Gary did not see Philip's buddhism as separate from his work, or his life generally. These were not conflicting parts of Philip; they had been braided together. "Once a priest, it was clear that this was Philip's true vocation. He had the dignity, the learning, the spiritual penetration, and the play-

fulness of an archetypal Man of the Cloth, of any tradition, and yet was not in the least tempted by hierarchy or power. Philip never left his poetry, his wit, or his critical intelligence behind; his way of poetry is a main part of his teaching. His quirks became his pointers, and his frailties his teaching method. Philip was always the purest, the highest, the most dry, and oddly cosmic, of the Dharma poets we've known – we are all greatly karmically lucky to have known him.”<sup>ix</sup>

Gary went to a Japanese monastery years before the idea even occurred to Whalen to do so. He learned the people and places of zen years before Whalen set forth to the old country; Gary developed a meditation habit before Philip did, and he led Philip into zen's literature. Nevertheless, Gary appeared to harbor a feeling about him, as all Whalen's close friends did, that whether or not he had gone through the ceremonies, whether or not he wore the robes, there stood in Philip Whalen a spiritual man. Gary confirmed this one evening at a dinner with some poets and other friends. Overhearing a remark addressed to the Chinese poet Bei Dao about how Whalen was a sort of brother figure, a literary sibling for Snyder, Gary nodded, “Older brother. And also *kalyanamitra*. Philip was my good spiritual friend, my *kalyanamitra*.”<sup>x</sup>

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The first time Gary and Philip lived together was in their college days, from 1949-51. Housemates not roommates, they shared a residence at 1414 Lambert St. – about a mile from the Reed College campus – with as many as 16 other students. Gary as house manager lived in a basement room he'd renovated; Philip was up a couple floors. Economically sensible (and necessary); socially avant; possibly a model and certainly a forerunner for the many urban communes of a decade later; politically left-wing to the point of FBI investigators dropping by and very likely running a tap on the phone; intellectually serious and stimulating, and religiously open, the house and its residents

have been written about to surfeit.<sup>xi</sup> But when people congregate in particular places they may, if the constellation is right, attract certain, inexplicable, temporary “blessings,” so that the group and its members stand out as memorable, influential. Certain string quartets rise this way from among the ranks of string quartets, certain dance troupes, sports teams, cultural salons, military units. Certain places appear to carry this energy for a time as well, places as generalized as San Francisco’s Haight Ashbury, or as specific as New York city’s Cedar Tavern. For no apparent reason – almost as if an angel had come along – people and places click together in a way that lifts all involved for a time. History remarks such pattern highlights, and the Lambert Street house seems to have been such a place. Whalen’s closest life-long poet-pals, Gary Snyder and Lew Welch, lived there with him. Poet William Dickey lived there; novelist and zen student Don Berry lived there. The circle of many other talented friends – professors, musicians, humanists and scientists – that radiated from the house have remained in affectionate contact for more than half a century.

At Lambert St., Philip’s and Gary’s friendship took root. The teenage Snyder climbed up to the room Whalen shared with his Army friend Roy Stilwell for improvising conversation and companionship. Attending Reed on the G.I. bill, these men were considerably older than Gary, and though they got the respect accorded all returning G.I.s, they also suffered the disorientation (or worse) that war-time service had given them. Both knew a lot: Stilwell was an accomplished musician, playing violin with the Portland symphony, and Whalen was already deeply learned, having spent any free time in the Army – and he seems to have had a lot of it – feeding his intense reading habit. Gary endured good-natured, scholarly correction from these and the other ex-GIs in the house, but the intellectual stimulation, and the magnetic life-experience these contacts provided were worth it. Besides, Snyder was tough and resilient, and had also been around quite a bit himself. It must have been here that Gary and Philip began to discover some of what they shared: an upbringing in the low-rent Pacific Northwest, rural and urban, as well as a specific affection for the heritage, characters and vocabu-

lary of those places. This included the strong influence of native American, Chinese and Japanese populations.

For anyone who can see it, the country around Portland – the sheer scale of those landscapes – impresses and broadens the mind. As a child, Philip disliked being forced by relatives to look at this or that view, but he developed nevertheless an allegiance to the huge sloping hills, wide plains, big rivers, dark forests and snow-covered mountains that a child being driven through western Oregon would have seen. Whalen felt it to be “his country.” Snyder was practically born an outdoors-man, an enthusiast of hiking and mountain-climbing from early minority on. Whalen and Snyder both understood that to imbibe the philosophic and literary wisdom they wanted meant they would have to leave that country, and go not only to the “virtuous town” but also to the “wicked city.”<sup>xii</sup> They went willingly, and thirstily. But the wild, the trail, the mountains and the big country were in their bones. Both required regular draughts of mountain air, and long views of stone and forest for emotional health, as well as for their work as writers. A week or two-week back-pack trip, sometimes together, became a seasonal entry on their calendars. Gary ended up living in the foothills of California’s Sierra Nevada mountains, and Whalen spent years at Tassajara, Zen Mountain Center. Both men would grumble though if forced to compare either the Sierra Nevada or Los Padres National Forest to the massive country of their youth.

An example trip together would be one they took in July of 1965, with Gary back from Japan for an extended visit. He and Philip embarked on a trek of about a week, together with writer Drummond Hadley, heading in to California’s mountains above King’s Canyon. Whalen’s journal pokes occasional loving fun at Gary, “The Granite pass appears (of course) to be quite near. I suppose it’s a trip of several hours hard climbing. There’s lots of snow up there. The Dr. Lietswics<sup>xiii</sup> school of snow traveling and Neo-Nomadism...”<sup>xiv</sup>

Whalen also pokes fun at his own bent of mind, and shows how he and Gary pick up conversations and activities from 15 years ago:

“This morning we argue metaphysics & do our laundry. The mosquitoes are many & fierce. The Horse Shoe lakes & basin aren’t quite as beautiful or various as the State Lakes {Why not?}  
... Ice formed on Wolf Tit’s sleeping bag after he came out of it. Although there were clouds & thunder yesterday, there was no more rain. We slept in the open, after consuming 1/2 pint of cognac. Gary & I spent much of yesterday sitting in the high meadow above the lakes. I’ve re-read *Timon, Troilus, & Pericles*. The print is defective in the first two of these.....A few yards from this camp the ground is littered with flakes of obsidian. Sometime or other people sat here trying to make arrowheads. I found an imperfect one... ”<sup>xv</sup>

After graduating together from Reed in the summer of 1951, Gary and Philip went separate ways: Whalen to San Francisco to try his fortunes (where they were found wanting) and Snyder to work at a lumber company on the Warm Springs Indian Reservation in Oregon. At summer’s end they met for dinner in San Francisco before going even further afield. Philip was heading to Los Angeles, where he could enjoy a sunny climate, and stay for free with friends, reading, writing, and pretending to search for employment. Gary planned with mounting reluctance to hitch off East, to a scholarship at Indiana University. Reluctant because he’d already been bitten by the Zen bug, and had resolved that his life’s direction should be West – to Japan, to the monastery – not East to academia.

Spring of 1952 found them living together again, back in San Francisco, in the Telegraph Hill apartment Gary had rented. Gary, provident, held a day job; Philip held a number of them – night watchman, stock-room worker, printer’s assistant – none significant, none memorable, none for very long. “He had such a hard time with employment,” Snyder recalled. “He had a number of different pick-up jobs at different times,

and he hated them all. He would do what they told him to do, but it made him upset. He somehow had a lot of stress and anxiety when he worked." Pressed as to why this might be, Snyder added, with a tender chuckle, "Because Philip was kind of nuts. He never adapted to reality, quite. He never took the idea of making a living by publishing or teaching seriously. Philip did not have patience for things that did not interest him. He couldn't have gotten a law degree, because to do that, you have to read things that aren't interesting... He'd always say 'A real writer or thinker shouldn't have to work anyway!' The zen approach – that naturally you should do whatever work comes to you, and that will become part of your practice – hadn't entered his consciousness." Whalen suffered badly from unemployment and the resultant poverty all his life, and he offered many bitter criticisms of the systems – political, economic, academic and military – that he felt forced him into such straits. The only psychological analysis he made of his own side was the no-doubt accurate, "I suffer a poetical indisposition."

They entertained little in their North Beach flat, though Claude Dahlenberg came by regularly for chess games, and eventually for *go* matches. During the year's cohabitation, Snyder recalls Whalen taking considerable trouble to wrestle a small pump organ up to their flat, the better to continue his hands-on study of Bach, which he also pursued on recorder. Though Gary thought Philip played pretty well, Whalen's own view – which did not vary through the decades – was that he played badly. Profiting from the many bookstores in San Francisco and Berkeley, the two young men built up their libraries, including their Asian and Buddhist collections. Gary already owned D.T. Suzuki's *Essays in Zen Buddhism (Vols. 1 and 2)* as well as R.H. Blythe's *Zen in English Literature* before he left for Indiana, and had packed these with him for the trip out, and, a semester later, the trip back. The Metaphysical Bookshop, where Snyder had found the texts, yielded further D.T. Suzuki writings, as well as the Blythe four-volume *Haiku* series. These early classics, together with translations of the *Diamond Sutra*, and renderings of Chinese poetry by Arthur Whaley, Ezra Pound, Witter Byner, and Lionel Giles

provided the raw material for many a pointed talk between Snyder and Whalen. Gary reported that he and Philip discussed these texts, “Elliptically. Poetically. Unpredictably. We didn’t hold seminars,” adding, though, that the ideas put forth in the books found their way into Philip’s poetry. They can be seen, for example, in his approach to the teaching of emptiness. From a remove of 50 years, Snyder observed what he could not have known at the time: “There are some very key ideas in Buddhist philosophy, that you almost *have* to work with poetically. Either that, or you just repeat, like, ‘Because a sweater is not a sweater, therefore we call it a sweater,’ the basic logic of the *Diamond Sutra*. You can have a lot of fun with that.” It is precisely at this point that logic – at least the Greek version of that science – runs out. This apparent dead-end leaves an interested person wanting to go further one option: trying out mahayana Buddhist philosophy personally, trying it on oneself by doing it. Thus it was at their Montgomery Street flat, that Snyder and Whalen first practiced zazen – sitting meditation – together<sup>xvi</sup>.

By autumn of 1953, Gary had moved over to Berkeley, to study Oriental languages at the university. Philip kept the San Francisco apartment for a couple months before leaving suddenly, with no notice to his still-key-holding friend. Gary registered mild complaint in early November, writing that he’d, “...let myself in to your place on Telegraph Hill and walked in on two fairies in bed. They very kindly told me you were in Los Angeles...”<sup>xvii</sup> Philip indeed had gone to L.A., the charms of which he’d explained in a letter to Gary, “Ah Horace! Quelle Faiblesse! The spell of the South is upon me. It is a languorous warm day & the breeze in the palms whispers softly of dolcefar niente...”<sup>xviii</sup> Gary remained at Berkeley the next several years, studying seriously during the semesters, and using summers to get into the country for look-out work, trail-work or logging. Whalen also spent the three summers from 1953-5 in the mountains, in his case the North Cascades of Washington state, working as a look-out for the Forest Service. The rest of the time Philip migrated between the homes of friends in Los Angeles, Newport, OR, and Seattle. He continued to subsist, as he later put it with Tennes-

see Williams words, “by the kindness of strangers.” He contributed little or nothing to the economy of whichever household held him, beyond help in the kitchen and the charms of his conversation and company. When these were no longer sufficient, when the indulgences wore thin, Philip would feel obliged, or actually be obliged, to pack up and move on, sometimes abruptly. His route generally took him through San Francisco, which meant a visit with Gary. They had some time, but not much, near one another at the Marblemount Fire School in 1953, before their summer lookout stints on different mountains of the Skagit. Their workdays were long and strenuous, and left little energy for philosophy or socializing – enough though, so that their friendship was remarked. According to John Suiter, they were seen of an evening sitting together in a truck, earnestly parsing and debating an Asian text. Word went around that, “Them guys’re Buddhists.” The rumor must have originated with Snyder and Whalen themselves, as it is an unlikely deduction for young men of the Washington state countryside to have made, with no external evidence, in 1953. Private religious beliefs did not seem to count for much in the Forest Service camps. Political beliefs came to play an increasingly heavy role, but what really counted in camp was a man’s attitude toward work and his ability to do it. Snyder tells that everyone there could see how Philip was a little different – always with a book nearby, and writing materials to hand – but that he worked well and without complaint during the weeks of trail clearing and construction the lookouts did before getting packed up to their posts. Whalen’s corporal strength may have been wrapped in a scholar’s flesh, but strength sufficient it was. That, his appreciation for rural eccentricity and for Northwest vocabulary, as well as a hidden talent for telling jokes, made Whalen well-liked in camp. Conversely, the physical exertion in mountain air, the eccentric crew working around him, the immediate prospect of time alone with long views and long books, and the camp cooking in quantity cheered Whalen. Lots of these impressions appeared in his writing, especially in his first breakthrough “big” poem – Sourdough Mountain Lookout, where, in arch complaint he notes:

I always say I won't go back to the mountains  
I am too old and fat there are bugs mean mules  
And pancakes every morning of the world

Mr Edward Wyman (63)

Stems along the trail ahead of us all  
Moaning, "My poor old feet ache, my back  
Is tired and I've got a stiff prick"  
Uprooting alder shoots in the rain<sup>xix</sup>...

After Whalen's third summer in the mountains, he came down to Berkeley – with speed, at Gary's urging – to participate in the Six Gallery reading, landing at Gary's very small "hojo" and bunking there for several weeks. Originally a gardener's shed, Kerouac described the place <sup>xx</sup>as being about 12 feet square, furnished with orange crates for shelves and a low table, and with straw mats as floor cover. Snyder's pack in the corner, with camp cooking utensils tied up on the outside, completed the decor – and the kitchen amenities. Whalen would have had his own pack, as well as a raft of new books, recently purchased in Seattle with his lookout pay. It must have been snug. But when Snyder tells of the places he and Whalen shared, he reserves the description "tight quarters" not for Gary's Hillegasse doghouse, but for the time a decade later when Whalen landed on his doorstep in Kyoto. Gary had invited him. It was planned: Philip would live there until he found his own place. The two went around town. Philip enjoyed being shown the old capital – being taken on hikes in the hills, being shown the old temples and shrines, as well as spots made famous by events in Japanese cultural history (a surprising amount of these known to him from reading). He enjoyed as well Gary's introduction to the eating and drinking establishments in town, as well as to the public baths, where they could go sweat out the inevitable hangovers. Pleasurable as this all was, Philip was aware that something was off. He reported to Allen Ginsberg

that he liked it at Gary's, but he'd be much happier in his own quarters. He felt he "made Gary nervous, living at his place."<sup>xxi</sup> Several years later, Whalen came back to these awkward feelings, sparked into memory of them by waiting in that same house for its new tenants – Richard and Virginia Baker – to be ready to go together with him on an expedition. He told his notebook<sup>xxii</sup>: " I find myself looking at the SW corner of the big room – that spot which Gary had fitted up with a work table & foot warmer for me. This is what I was looking at – that fusuma & corner of shoji – the first few weeks I was in Kyoto, in 1966. There was some sort of failure. And there was the earlier 'failure' of Joanne & Gary's marriage & divorce. All that was clearly {from the outside, looking in} a very minor kind of failure, an extremely common sort among Americans of every class. Yet, on the same level, it was important or significant or harmful to all of us."

Kyoto apartment-hunting was not easy, but within a couple months Whalen found rooms of his own – rooms he kept the rest of his first (20-month) Japanese residence – across town from Snyder's place. This restored their harmony: "Now we are all happy," he told Ginsberg in a letter. Whalen's departure from Japan in mid-November of 1967 marked the last time he and Gary lived with or near one another. By the time Philip returned to Kyoto in 1969 for a second stay, Gary had left it; when Philip got back to the San Francisco in 1971, Gary had been living up in the Sierra Nevada for some time.

When not living together, Philip and Gary still tried to do things together, pretty much whenever possible. Their most famous hike together took place in 1965 – Friday, October 22, to be precise – and included Allen Ginsberg. The three poets spent a day circumambulating Mount Tamalpais: a very pretty mountain ridge rising from the Pacific to a peak dominating Marin County. They walked with ceremonial intention, following a tradition of pilgrimage and circumambulation as old as recorded human history. Because Mt. Tamalpais was already a magical mountain for the local native Americans;

because Gary and Allen and Philip all continued ritual walks around the mountain in subsequent years as their fame grew; because they had connected their initial circumambulation to Buddhism and because Buddhism in the Bay Area continued to grow; because it is a gorgeous way to exert oneself among the varied California ecologies hosted by the mountain—for these and other reasons, the circumambulation has continued to the present day, and has given rise to many poems, articles, essays and at least two full-length books<sup>xxiii</sup>, complete with photographs, drawings, wood-cuts, trail maps, elevations, aerial views, journal entries and poems. (Most useful for this account has been a chapter from a book by David Robertson, an English professor colleague of Snyder's from U.C. Davis, and a Tam hiker himself. In *Real Matter*, Robertson records excerpts from an interview he conducted with Philip and Gary in 1992.)

“It's been of interest to us to construct it very slowly into a magic mountain,” Whalen told a class at Naropa, in 1980, “or to restore its magic by very traditional means – not black magic, but magic magic. We started this process around 1959 by performing circumambulation of it and reciting sutras at various points around it. Actually Locke McCorkle started and then the rest of us continued from time to time.

“There was one time when Ginsberg and Snyder and I actually set up specific altar spots around the mountain. It's funny, that sort of formal trip was done first in maybe 1964 and we all wrote poems on that occasion, at each of those places. It wasn't until much later that the Zen Center was given, at a greatly reduced price, the Green Gulch Farm, which is right at the bottom of Mt. Tamalpais and more or less includes Muir Beach where the wobbly rock is that Lew writes a long poem about. It was a place where we had gone in the early '50s to collect mussels and roast them on the seashore, drink wine, and laugh a lot, before Gary went to Japan the first time in 1956...“If you live outdoors enough, and stay alone enough, and walk around enough, you tune in on landscape and it becomes important to you; and you like places, you like the way things go together.”

Gary and Philip had been walking on, camping on and sometimes living on Mount Tam for as long as they'd been in the Bay Area, but the first mention of a walk all the way around appears in a 1959 letter from Philip to Gary in Japan. "On Friday and Saturday [Apr 17th -18th] Locke and I performed a proper circumambulation of Mt. Tamalpais – overnight camp at Laurel Dell. The whole trip a delightful flowery excursion..."<sup>xxiv</sup> Whalen's calling it "proper" refers to the fact that he and Gary both had been sketching out and hiking sections of a circumambulatory route since much earlier in the decade. Whalen and Snyder told that these early outings were not specifically ceremonial<sup>xxv</sup>, meaning that they were not yet copying any formally established ritual. But whoever chooses to spend time on a mountain, particularly a fabled magical mountain, finds that the boundaries between spiritual and mundane, between a pleasant hike and an extended walking meditation, to be porous boundaries indeed. Which is sort of the point.

Whalen knew the tradition of *parikrama* – circumambulation – and *pradakshina* – circumambulation to the right – from his extensive readings in Indian religious literature. Snyder encountered the contemporary version upon his arrival in Japan, when he began hiking around on Mt. Hiei. Gary learned from Zen friend Walter Nowick of a walking meditation (*gyodo*, or *kaiho gyo*) carried out by Japanese mountain monks of the Tendai school. These walks included stops at certain shrines for prostration and recitation. Soon after that, Snyder connected with what he called "a very old Shinto-Buddhist mountain-walking brotherhood" – the *yamabushi* – and was initiated through a rigorous set of ceremonies into their membership.

Whereas Philip could only read about it, Gary and Allen (with respective partners Joanne Kyger and Peter Orlovsky) actually witnessed circumambulation of stupas and other holy sites in India and Nepal in 1962. They also learned of the more ambitious routes around entire mountains or rivers. Some suggest that these trips went clockwise, or "to the right" because this is (somehow) the sun's path. But to speak mundanely, in India the tradition certainly also had to do with manners: one ate with one's right hand, and used the left hand to clean oneself at the other end. To show re-

spect, one would thus present one's right side to the object or person of veneration, keeping the left side away. Together with prostration, this bodily veneration is mentioned in a number of early Buddhist texts; Whalen and Snyder may have known it from the Diamond Sutra. "Then many monks approached to where the Lord was, saluted his feet with their heads, thrice walked round him to the right, and sat down on one side."<sup>xxvi</sup>

Snyder's and Whalen's poems from that day tell what they chanted, and where. In their brevity, concrete imagery, humor and present tense, the poems exhibit the effects of long rhythmic walking and mantra recitation. Ginsberg's poem seems never to have surfaced. The three poets had no prior plan about where their shrines would be; these they divined on the spot, through sensitivity to elemental powers – the "magical vibrations," they called them. To the recitations, however, they gave thought. Robertson tells how in a lecture about the hike, Snyder listed four basic types of chants, from Hindu as well as Buddhist liturgy. "First of all was a statement of the 'total truth of the universe' as the three of them understood it. They chose the Heart of Perfection of the Great Wisdom Sutra. Second was a magic spell (dharani) that would push disasters away and at the same time 'spread protection and well-being throughout the universe.' They also selected short verses that addressed specific powers: 'rocks, animals, plants, human beings, watersheds, upthrusts, all spiritual beings.' Finally, they recited the 'Four Vows' of Buddhism, in order to 'dedicate their lives to work for the benefit of every other being on earth.'"<sup>xxvii</sup>

They hiked as an act of translation, in the old sense of the word, carrying something religious from one place to another; in this case they carried a walking meditation practice. By 1965, Whalen and Snyder had both engaged Buddhism – Snyder classically by entering a temple and studying with a teacher, Whalen through private, extensive reading and semi-regular meditation practice. Both had also worked with the language of Buddhism – Snyder, again formally, translating liturgies, and also, like Whalen, weaving language and meaning from Buddhist literature into his own composition.

Both understood that certain things would require the lineage stamp of approval before being imported to America, whereas other aspects of the Buddhist culture could be adapted more freely. In 1953, Whalen issued a lusty mock-challenge to Snyder about his interest in Zen: “Why don’t you follow an antient example, viz. that of the Puritans, & simply announce the establishment of the Neo-Orthodox Purified Anabaptist Nonepiscopal Zenshu of Inward Grace (as derived directly from scriptural authority) & I will damn well weed the tomato patch once a day, out back of the zendo.”<sup>xxviii</sup> But Gary knew that actually do that – to establish a teaching line, a temple and temple forms – would require a great deal more than “scriptural authority.” It would require personal, close practice and study with a teacher in situ, until the teacher said it was OK. Whether or not he had importation in mind, by 1965 Snyder had accomplished the steps of heading to the old country and working with a Zen master. In opening the mountain, as they called their hike, the poets had found something more flexible – a practice that yoked ancient Asian traditions to local Californian deities and power, a serious practice roomy enough to accommodate a lot of play, a lot of experimentation, a certain amount of nonsense. It was Buddhist, but bigger than Buddhism, in the way that tantric Buddhism is thought by some to be “beyond Buddhism,” for its inclusion of shamanic elements. The trio of poets that day certainly carried magical shamanic implements along: conch-shell trumpets, long-and short-handled *shakujos* (a staff adorned with three metal rings), claws, beads, bangles. They also later sturdily resisted the notion, proposed by interviewer Robertson, that hikes should be carried out in a formal Buddhist/Hindu manner. “How do you feel when you are there?” Whalen asked his interviewer. When hearing that Robertson felt wonderful on Mount Tam, Whalen advised, “Well then, you say, ‘Here I am at Rock Springs and I feel wonderful. Let’s hop up and down and sing ‘Happy Days are Here Again.’ You don’t have to recite some dharani...” Contrariwise, this sort of happy behavior might have actually fit Whalen’s definition of Buddhism, “Actually Buddhism is very physical,” he went on to tell Robertson. “Not only is Zen physical, Chinese Buddhism in general is something people *do*. It’s a way of living, it’s a

way of looking at the world, it's a way of being. To me, anyway, there is a great deal to it of feeling. About how you feel about things, how you feel about people, and how you feel toward yourself..."<sup>xxix</sup>

How did Whalen feel about the hike? It cheered him up – at least it stopped him, temporarily, from worrying. Whalen was, “worrying about a whole lot of things right then.”<sup>xxx</sup> He was as usual poor, sometimes literally penniless. For complicated reasons of loyalty to friends, he had been “hiding under the bed to avoid the Berkeley Poetry Conference.” He was in the throes of pulling up stakes in San Francisco, to seek employment and improvement in (unknown to him) Japan. He had several manuscripts out to publishers – one of these titled DIFFERENT WAYS OF BEING NERVOUS – and he felt nervous about their treatment. His father had died a month before the walk, and Philip had had to remain in Portland, among relatives, for several weeks. So without parents, without funds, without prospects, leaving one of his stablest residences, ensnared in complex bureaucracy of travel to a new residence, Whalen went walking. “I didn’t have to worry as long as I was busy walking around the mountain. I could feel relatively at ease with myself. I was able to just open up to things and see them and feel comfortable, instead of feeling that I’m no good, or that I’m great. You’re just there, a part of the scene.” For Snyder, the hike must have functioned as a farewell of sorts – to Allen Ginsberg, with whom he’d been hiking earlier that year; to Whalen, with whom he’d been hiking in the Sierra, and to Mt. Tamalpais, the power spot of the San Francisco Bay Area. Two days later, Gary flew back to Japan.

It bears noting that although a great deal of poet hiking took place during Gary’s year and a half in the States, other things happened as well; specifically, Vietnam War protests were in full swing. All three Tam circumambulators had variously taken part in protests. One of the most unusual forms of this was the all-day zazen session Gary organized at the Oakland Army base. Philip told his journal, “On Tuesday 22 June I went with Gary to the Oakland Army Terminal. We sat outside the fence beside the highway,

doing zazen, from 7:20 in the morning until 4 in the evening. There were 25-minute periods & ten minute breaks & an hour for lunch. No formal kinhin.”

Snyder noted later that although there was no walking meditation, they did have work meditation – *samu* – both morning and afternoon, during which time they patrolled the area for garbage and collected it into plastic bags.

Whalen continues, “Richard Baker, Jim Thurber, Robert Gove, Silas Hoadley, a man called Chuck (Reader? Rieder?) sat with us, & in the afternoon a man called Max joined us. Although many people photographed us & a few news-men came around, none of us gave our names. Snyder had thought it best for all of us to remain anonymous Buddhists. While we sat, some of the people who drove past (on the street behind us, or on the street in front of us inside the Terminal) laughed or yelled insults or jokes. No one seemed to know what it was we were doing, except for the Police & Military Authorities who had been informed in advance...”

Three months earlier Whalen, in the same spirit of promoting peace by being peaceful, rather than by shouting about it in masses, had composed a couple broadside manifestos and enlisted Gary’s help for the distribution. The first piece seems not to have been collected into anthologies of Whalen’s work, but he was proud of the idea, if not of the actual composition. In elegant calligraphy, it reads,

Nobody listening to YOU?

Stop yakking.

If we STOP Everyone will know:

We want peace & quiet & liberty for all.

Celebrate GENTLE THURSDAY, March 25 1965

\* Don’t leave home except to attend church.

\* Don’t go to work – don’t open your store, your office

\* Stay home from school

\* Don't buy or sell anything

\* Phone only in case of emergency

\* Don't do ANYTHING until Friday March 26

SPEND THE DAY CALMLY. BE GENTLE. BE KIND.

Send this message to your friends. Mail it to President Johnson, to congressmen and senators."

The other piece, also a broadside printed from Whalen's calligraphy, reads, in all-capital letters:

DEAR MR PRESIDENT,  
LOVE & POETRY  
WIN – FOREVER:  
WAR IS ALWAYS  
A GREAT BIG LOSE.  
I AM A POET AND  
A LOVER AND A WINNER –  
HOW ABOUT YOU?

Respectfully Yours, Philip Whalen 10 : III : 65

With its saucy flair, this piece *has* made it into Whalen's collected works, and is to be found posted on walls and refrigerator to this day in the San Francisco Bay Area, where, with Snyder's help, it achieved its widest distribution. President Johnson's response has not been recorded.

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"Dear John," "Dear Long Pan," "Dear Uncle Bud," "Nanki Poo,"

The letters between Philip and Gary in the early-mid 1950's are frequent; a couple letters a week each way is not unusual.

"Dear 'Siva," "Dear Mogambo," "Ossian," "My Dear Governor Wei," "Dear Nuthatch,"

They often wrote by hand, especially Philip, and have as one of their themes handwriting, both Occidental and Oriental. Whalen studied calligraphy under Lloyd Reynolds at Reed, but his italic handwriting soon departed from the model. It achieved perhaps the more important calligraphic aims of being clear, legible, beautiful, distinctive, and remarkably expressive. Snyder, who never took Lloyd's course but taught himself, wrote classic, fluid Italic – a elegant hand by any measure. Their letters sometimes contain Chinese/Japanese characters, and drawings as well. Gary and Philip come close to having a quarrel in letters over sumi painting, and aesthetics generally.

"Dear Lentil-Head," "Dear Popjoy," "Dear Sze," "Dear Bimbashi Sahib," "Dear Nightingale of the Far West,"

They try to keep track of their Reed friends, including professors. They try to stay up with old lovers – mostly this is Gary, but Philip joins in. They gossip naughtily. They talk about how and when to visit one another and said friends.

They describe what they're reading, and how they feel about it. Very often they're reading Pound, or Rexroth, and not coincidentally their translations, since both Gary (formally, in school) and Philip (generally not in school) are reading in and about Oriental classics. They're both reading many kinds of classics, as many as they can.

"Dear Dismukes," "Dear Chutney," "Dear Dirty-Boy," "Dear Peach-Stone-Boy," "Dear Claude," ...

They talk about jobs, whether or not they have one, and how that feels. One reason, certainly, that Philip writes to Gary so often about his employment status is that he owes Gary money, either money borrowed outright, or shared rent money, unpaid.

When Whalen borrows money from Snyder, he does it charmingly, and writes of paying it back, and does sometimes does manage to pay back some of it. Once, Gary borrows money from Philip.

“Dear Crazy Horse,” “Dear Kabir,” “Dear Gilgamesh,” “Dear Zoroaster,” “Dear Waxwing” “Mon cher maître Balthasar,” “To one in the Southern Province,” “Dear Vishnu,” “Blue-necked One” ...

Partly it seems they’re trying to come to grips with their educations. Both had been recently extruded from the college system into a post-War America, the politics of which neither of them liked. It was mutual. Snyder’s problems with the House Un-American Activity Committee began during his years at Reed, and dogged him, wasting his time right up through getting a passport for travel to Japan in the mid-1950s. Philip’s own brush with the political right came a decade later, in 1964, when his poems caused an outrage in Oregon (see Chapter \_\_\_\_). They write to one another of the trials of just getting along, and they wonder what, if anything, their educations has prepared them for. As early as 1953, Whalen pens a line to Gary he will later use as a title for a poem, “If you’re so smart, why ain’t you rich?”

“Dear Gaygo,” “My Good Kamo Chômei,” “Dear Whipsuade,” “Dear Sebastian Melmoth,” “Dear Hemingway,” “Dear Tiger,” “Dear Appollonius,” “Dear Penhryn,” “Dear Waterchestnut,” “Dear Julius,” “Dear Felix,” “Dear James,” “Dear Terrence,” “Dear Timber-Beast,” “Dear Lemon Head,” “Dear Egmont,” “Dear Sage,” “Dear Pilchard,”  
“Dear Gary,”  
“Dear Philip,”

They continue their educations. It seems clear to both of them that they need to, though Philip wonders in his letters if vast knowledge improves moral character or not. From this, one can see he not only wanted vast knowledge, he was concerned with being a good person. Such dichotomy did not apply to the Confucian and other classic

Chinese texts Gary was studying at Berkeley, and seems not to have exercised him. Whalen toys with idea of going back to school. He announces plans to do so, but never does. He does continue to read and study all the time.

As their circle grew to include other friends and writers, Philip and Gary reported about these as well: Alan Watts and Kenneth Rexroth and the fire lookout guys from Marblemount early in the 1950's; Ginsberg, Kerouac, McClure, Creeley, Ferlinghetti around the mid-decade Six Gallery reading; Cid Corman, Albert Saijo, Leroi Jones, Gregory Corso in the later '50s. Sometimes their letters sound like simple dispatches from the social scene, telling who is doing what to/for/with/against whom, and the various opinions arising from that.

The salutations and signature lines cited here – a random sampling, drawn from both sides – show that play and gentle mockery figure centrally in their letters. These two were dedicated to having at least literary fun with one another, and to provoking, through pun and allusion, an elevated atmosphere of intelligence. Their very bright minds seemed to shine most intensely when they relaxed into humor. The wit does not stop after the greeting, nor pick up again only at closing; their letters are shot through with it – almost as a philosophical stance, almost as if to say that despite poverty, hard employment or unemployment, despite loneliness, or love sickness, or the stresses of school or of homelessness, despite nationally held political, economic and religious attitudes that largely disapproved them, they were going to enjoy themselves anyway. They did not ignore their difficulties, nor any of the darkness they felt in the national climate, but through humor and intelligence and pleasure in writing, they thwarted them.

“...Faithfully yours, Sohi,” “...Malignantly,” “...Indigently,”  
“...Pendulously” “...Faintingly,” “...Snobbishly,” “...Tiddley-poo.”

The running gag with naming was not something they ever discussed. They simply did it. They did it with enormous energy throughout the 1950's, letting it fade away only in the later years of that decade. Whalen had used some pet names with earlier correspondents, but the consistency and variety he and Snyder showed with one another was wholly unmatched. Gary thought perhaps their readings in mahayana Buddhism inspired them to it. In some of those texts, one does find extravagant lists of names for just about everyone – including, as Snyder noted, names for each wind-spirit, and each spirit abiding at the tip of each blade of grass. For his part, Philip often cited Gertrude Stein's blunt dictum: "Names are always interesting." Names fairly obsessed him. He knew the roots and meanings of his early given names and had researched many names in his family tree. He pored over multi-lingual dictionaries to puzzle out the messages coded into names he received in the course of his buddhist ordinations. Later, he was confronted with the challenge of giving out such names himself.

In a 1976 class he taught at Naropa, Philip broke into a 50-minute riff on naming, using another Gertrude Stein pronouncement as point of entry: "A poem calls on the name of something." From here, Whalen went on to consider the vision quests that some American Indians and other tribal peoples undertook. He explained that in the best cases, a sacred helper would arrive, and in addition to bestowing protection and power on the supplicant through ritual song and dance, the helper would grant a name, or possibly two names: a secret name, as well as a name that could be openly used. He then sketched out the series of names a young Chinese gentleman of classical times might have had – from being called at the beginning something like "son number 4," up through a chosen name, a school name, a civil service name, artistic names for whichever disciplines the gentleman practiced, honorific names, and possibly a posthumous name. He dwelt at some length on the tradition of names being secret sources of power, much as one finds in the Rumpelstiltskin tale (though Whalen doesn't specifically mention that one). "With lots of people, if you can find out what their name is, and call them by it, they have to give up. At that point, they either have to submit to having you kill

them, or do whatever it is you say you want them to do. Because names are secret – a person’s name is a sacred possession, a secret he doesn’t tell everybody.” Having thus expatiated on the tradition of secret names, and a corollary of this, false names, Whalen proceeded contrariwise to tell the class all about his own names, including how he received a secret, totemic name from an encounter with an animal in the middle of a full-moon night, in the middle of a lake, in the middle of the mountains.<sup>xxxii</sup> He didn’t tell them the name, but explained that it was secret insofar as it was only written out in Chinese. He’d had a seal made from it, which he used to identify his books and prints.

“...Remember me to the animals & trees. Phrenetically,...” “...Feverishly,” “...Tropically,” “...Illiterately,” “Si monumnetum requeris...Snowball”<sup>xxxiii</sup> “...Desperate measures are called for,” “...Hoping our product pleases you,” “...With many happy singing uguisu-birds, cher Bête, La votre,” “...In short, I am sliding across the edge of a larger Blank than usual, with little hope of emerging ever again. Forgive me, Sylvestre Bonnard”

“...Write me, S. T Coleridge” “...I retire now, with germ. Septically, ... sick sick sick” “...Selah!” “...Amor omnia vincit”<sup>xxxiii</sup> “Prophetically...”

What to make of this years-long name-game they played? The act of using so many false and funny names seems at minimum to be a rousing of intelligence; but following Miss Stein’s near-identification of poetry and naming – going the other way with it – it is possible to see the game as a veiled calling on poetry herself. Mixed in among the nick-names and nonsense names are many literary allusions, some obvious, some hidden. Even discounting literary reference, the delight and seduction of the game is a clear attempt to channel the stream of language their way, toward them. That Snyder and Whalen did this intensely together, and pretty much only with one another, points to a perceptual agreement, or an aesthetic fraternity – something Snyder groped to explain in a 1955 letter to Philip, “I feel the sensibilities you and I have – in somewhat different ways – been employing in our poems, there is something really very new his-

torically, and [they] mark a new beginning.”<sup>xxxiv</sup> Pop-quizzed about this letter some 50 years later, Snyder was understandably cautious. Using the half-century’s perspective, and thinking of other poets<sup>xxxv</sup> as well, he finally said, “Apart from the characteristics of the content, in Philip’s and my work there’s an attempt to use elegant, spoken language – without being excessively colloquial, but still very down to earth – reflecting usages here in the western United States. And trying, thereby, to find ways to say complex things with the most straightforward and physical vocabulary.” He reflected a while, then added, “There’s probably a lot more to it, when you start thinking about it.”<sup>xxxvi</sup>

One other possible way to think about it here might hark back to the old Buddhist bugaboo, emptiness. The shocking notion Buddha put forth early in his career, that the self is empty – that no singular, enduring, unchanging “self” can be found, but rather only a shifty collection of feelings, concepts, impressions all housed in impermanent flesh – has sometimes been taken in a nihilistic sense, leading to a depressing view of Buddhism. Closer to the original intention of the emptiness teaching is a view that does not deny an *experience* of self, but does not limit it to a static thing. Seen positively, emptiness can mean that human life is more multiple and varied than the usual notion of a “self” would allow.<sup>xxxvii</sup> With this more relaxed, spacious view, a person could try on – like costumes – the attributes and attitudes of people throughout history since, as Whitman also told, one contained multitudes. If one young poet addresses a letter to To-no-Chujo, for example, he might indeed be so completely involved in the world of Lady Murasaki’s *Tale of Genji* as to want to write from that place, especially to another young poet who knew that place and could go there. If Philip signed a letter “Sebastian Melmoth” – code for a feeling of humiliation and rootlessness – who could argue that the author was separate from the state Oscar Wilde found himself in when he took that name upon his release from prison? If one wrote in formal, calligraphic book-hand at the bottom of a letter, “Exit, pursued by a bear,” is the comedic impulse of that moment so different from Shakespeare’s, when he penned the same? Presuming that a feeling

for emptiness did underpin Snyder's and Whalen's use of so many names and personalities, it was never intended to be solemn or monumental. Confrontation with emptiness does not lead only to dreary negation. An equally classic response, reported in the lives of Buddhist worthies throughout the centuries, is a feeling of liberation, spontaneity and humor.

In the strange, beautiful essay he contributed to a 1991 festschrift for Gary, Philip tells of their language games. The piece in fact seems to be wholly about language, about getting a word or phrase stuck in your head, following it into English until you get satisfaction, or not, and all that happens along the way. Whalen shows the reader a playful obsession with language, as well as obsessive play. He mentions Snyder's name just once, as member of the Adelaide Crapsey-Oswald Spengler Memorial Society at Reed, an ad hoc group who jostled at writing 5-line poems using five strange, or difficult, or unknown words, freshly drawn from the dictionary or other book. After conducting a tour of reference works, Whalen tacks on a sobering coda about Buddhism's paradoxical view of language. "The study and practice of Buddhism tends to clarify the boundaries of speech, what can and cannot be said. But even Buddhism sets up a paradox: Silence is best; contrariwise we must use words to teach Buddhism and to communicate with people in the 'real world.' Zen people, who are very polite and very refined – at least as much so as the *OED* and *The Riverside Shakespeare* – simply say, 'Sit down and shut up!' and so I do."

The piece doesn't seem to be about Gary at all.<sup>xxxviii</sup> He's hardly there, though Whalen composed it specifically for a book called *Gary Snyder, Dimensions of a Life*.<sup>xxxix</sup> But here, instead of telling about Gary, Philip demonstrates. He takes the reader's hand and in effect says, "Come along. Here's how Gary and I have worked at being writers: we've read, we've made notes, we've memorized, we've found the books and cracked them open and looked things up; we've gone down the trails the words pointed out; we've loved (and used) the bawdy jokes, the slang, the songs, and anything else we've

needed from Anglo-American. Now, after more than 40 years of exerting ourselves in this joy, we've joined the ranks of the caretakers of this language." One of the phrases Whalen has stuck in his head is from Shakespeare. He uses it, to title the piece "Liberal Shepherds."

When Snyder went to Japan in 1956, a shift took place in their letters. For one thing, the materials changed: they began to write on 10-cent aerogrammes, and in order to fit as many words as possible onto the blue sheet and the two side flaps, they typed. Philip moaned about this. He cited his lack of skill as a typist, the cost of the air-letter, and the distinct likelihood that what he wrote would be so worthless as to end up costing him a dime when he tore up the paper. Still, except during periods when he really didn't have the dime, Philip kept up his end of the correspondence. ( He did, however, interrupt an otherwise pleasantly discursive letter to Gary with the blast, "FUCK ALL TYPEWRITERS!")

Snyder had much exotica to report: about Japan, about the particulars of temple life, about his teacher and about his patron, the notoriously challenging Ruth Fuller Sasaki. They played the name game for a while, but this gradually gave way to a more serious tone and more factual accounts. The letters continue to be absorbing and beautifully written, but more earnest, in respect perhaps of the several thousand miles of cold water that now separated them, and the stark cultural differences.

For some unknown reason, Whalen answered Snyder's first round of letters from Japan — letters to himself, to Kerouac and to Locke McCorkle — with a scolding corrective, telling Gary, "You sound dangerously near to indulging in a great maudlin fit of sentimentality and nostalgia, coupled with even unhealthier broodings of a masochistic nature...Have your mental faculties decayed in that incense-laden air?"<sup>x1</sup> The rest of the letter continues with a typical Whalen mixture of bright, grumpy observation, strong literary opinion, and social reportage. Announcing that he must go "think about committing some new literary extravagance," Whalen abruptly ends, "Try to be a better

bonze. Quit trying to stop. Mordantly, Philip” It is difficult to understand how Philip, sitting on his broad rear end in the comfort of his Berkeley home, working an easy part-time job, with time to write, and food to eat and even, unusually, getting laid regularly (thanks to an introduction from Gary) could write such things to Snyder, who was on the other hand certainly undergoing some sort of culture shock, and enduring the always-challenging, often brutal life of a junior student at a Japanese training temple. To his credit, Snyder sorted the matter quickly, admitting he may have “shot the wrong language at you by mistake,” and thanking Philip for “the presence of mind & integrity enough to protest, “ adding that this was “not by way of compliment, but simply recognition of the indispensable astringency you have always been kind enough to show me.” Whalen’s imperious tone, he gently dismissed as “Johnsonian.”<sup>xli</sup> Gary learned early on in their friendship to ignore Philip’s tantrums – the red-faced, foot-stomping, kind, as well as their written equivalents, seeing them simply as heightened emotions, without much substance. “They didn’t even mean we were having a real argument. We *might* have been having a debate, and sometimes he’d build a little soap-opera around it.”<sup>xlii</sup>

Just as he did for Ginsberg in the eastern direction, Philip kept track of manuscripts, and forwarded mail westward to Gary. They also sent fresh work to one another, Snyder particularly seeming to need it, “Man, send me your poems – please – they may help keep me sane in this crazy scene.”<sup>xliii</sup> After waiting to be asked one more time, Philip sent rather a lot of material, and Gary’s praise by return mail “quite overwhelmed” him. Gary’s remarks back then have stood up through the decades. Snyder saw the essential virtues of Philip’s poetry as clearly as anyone ever has. “Well man, I read THE SLOP BARREL last night having just received it & was simply stoned. I mean I can’t say too much – that little bundle of poems is elegant, spontaneous, balanced, everything they mean by classical & without no stink of the lamp. You’re miles ahead of me or Ginsberg, simply because of that balance and style...Pivotal poetry brings a fresh mind to the reader & he is neither partisanly delighted, nor offended and annoyed, but

minorly awakened. This is what this complex of your stuff seems to work like for me. The balance between discipline & spontaneity is almost perfect, & the exciting inner tension of the intellect which the academics wheeze about is solidly, but discreetly there."<sup>xliv</sup>

This sort of praise ran both ways. Consoling Gary about Barney Rossett's rejection of *Myths & Texts*, Philip wrote, "It is my opinion that Mssrs. Grove Press have fucked themselves by not accepting it for book publication. Nobody else's first book of poems is such a complete & unified composition, presents such a total effect, has so much finish, so much definite point."<sup>xlv</sup>

They could also be critical, Whalen especially. "I must now commence beating you about the head and ears," he wrote, after reading a 92-page letter from Gary to his sister, telling of Snyder's and company's adventures in India and the Himalayan foothills. "I never suspected that you was an undercover agent of HOLIDAY magazine. I never seen such longeurs in prose anywheres else. Good Grief... but I am enormously disappointed...I really am unfair...I apologise, but drat it, I hope that after while you will have time to write more sharply & exactly about whatever... That letter is just exactly 45 pages too long. TOO MANY WORDS. AAAAAAAAAGH!"<sup>xlvi</sup>

With Snyder of course, Philip only meant to encourage; he understood his friend's tremendous talent and potential. "From you or any other writer I want to hear what he is, what is his world is, clearly or complicatedly, however he can do it, preferably, (in the case of contemporaries) simply. I want you to sound like Gary; sometimes in this piece you sound like yourself singing through your nose, not your usual bel canto..."<sup>xlvi</sup>

Following hard on such criticism – either the exaggerated kind, or the more considered take, Whalen would spend a paragraph apologizing, and confessing his own literary shortcomings. Philip's critiques were never personal arrogance; they were literary strictness, and he held himself to at least the same high standards. "For my part, I like to imagine that I'm not so much interested in my opinions, stands, stances, any

more, but the questions: “What do I really know? What do I really feel? Who’s knowing &/or feeling? etc. ending up with Rabbit horns. Oh well. In other words I get sillier every minute I’m alive...” Gary’s criticisms of Philip’s work took a gentle form, very possibly in consideration of Whalen’s self-critical nature, and his emotional lability. The most he would say was that this or that piece didn’t seem to him to work as well as the others, or that he couldn’t quite get (or dig) what Philip was driving at.

They wrote about weather. Both were influenced by it: Snyder because of Japanese temple architecture and building materials, and his habit of hiking; Whalen too because of hiking and because of his pronounced mood swings tied to whether the day was bright or dark, hot or cold, dry or damp.

They sent things back and forth: vital papers stashed at old apartments, books — lots of books, Gary sent robes and bells and ritual implements, including eating bowls, from Japan. Philip sent magazines and records and bicycle clips (presumably for keeping wide pants fast around the ankle) from the U.S. to Japan.

They reported about sex, and beyond this, Gary theorized about its place, or lack of place, in the Zen Buddhist path. In one letter he observed with approval the Japanese way: his Zen master was married, and was not alone in this. Philip seized the occasion to deliver a lecture, similar though shorter than the one he’d sent to Ginsberg. “[Ginsberg] has, like you, been worried in mind about religion vs sexual continence &c. Now goddamit, two of you on my hands with this damned Manichee twaddle is too much.” With the goal of making clear that they all carried around unconscious acculturation, Philip laid out three possible world views, and urged Gary to choose. The choices were either: 1. a Judeo-Christian-Platonist view “of the split man: the bright spirit in dull gross filthy clay routine...” 2. a Buddhist view of a person’s nature as “the product of his own karma and of his own mind, with the possibility of busting into something else (namely zen, in your case,)...” or 3. “man [as] the semi-automaton of the biological

scene." Philip opined in pretty bawdy talk that "old golden face" – Lord Buddha – probably wouldn't mind if Gary had sex. Unable to resist clucking at his younger, though vastly more experienced friend, Philip went on: "You gave me the impression that if you are going to really work at zen, you do not expect to be practicing the finer points of bull fighting at the same time, not because bull fighting is a sin or is forbidden, but because you are simply occupied otherwise..."<sup>xlviii</sup>

If he came off sounding boorish, Whalen knew it, later telling Gary, "'I wish you were nearby so I'd have somebody to pick on: I guess I shall have to find some way of becoming enormously rich so I can fly to Nippon & pester you there some weekend.'"<sup>xlix</sup>

They wrote about meditation. Gary had undertaken in Japan the practice and lifestyle of meditation about as seriously as it is possible to do and remain within a social context. Philip kept a little meditation habit going as well, but with nothing like the depth, in nothing like the environment, and without the constant instruction that Gary had. So Philip used his friend as a source. "As I understand it, there is a secret method for doing zazen. I don't know, from reading (D.T.) Suzuki exactly what zazen is, in the first place & now Watts says, in his book, there is a patented surefire secret of success which is to be learned only from a Mahster. I am not asking you to divulge the secrets of the Lodge..."<sup>1</sup>

Gary's reply – oblique, tactful, clothed in anthropological terms, left enough threads trailing for Whalen to grasp. After making the useful distinction between meditation traditions with form and those without form, Gary wrote on the side flaps of an aerogram, "Zen meditation is 'formless,' i.e. it has no definable subject, & the mind is not actually 'concentrated' on anything, but rather gently removed from hanging up on logic-chopping & reasoning; useless imagining (which includes unconscious thought associating, memory associating, etc. surrealist & Jungian shots); & all forms of discriminating, not a process of squelching the surface play of associating & conceptualizing, because it can't be actually stopped, but ceasing to hang up on it & follow it. The koan,

as a subject of concentration, is just a device to keep you from taking thoughts as they turn up as though they mattered. Advanced koans handle aspects of dealing with things after you once break into the cool; but first koan is just 'a brick to knock on the door with.'

"Formless or form, with or without koan, just sitting still & watching the mind is a real illuminating process. Very obvious & simple, & also for Occidentals I guess fantastically hard. I have all kinds of blocks against zazen, even though I know it's a Good Thing. If one sits properly & manages to breathe fairly evenly, at least for the first year or so it doesn't matter what he tries to do or think about. Just watching & realizing the general inconsequentiality of what he sees (the precious "personality", ho ho) & getting the physical intuitive sense of his own body & the breakdown of the sense of difference between mind & body – is enough..."<sup>li</sup>

Whalen thanked Snyder for his "account of non-objective contemplation, zazen etc" and added a few distracted, scholarly remarks, such that Gary saw fit to write back, "...The point is, in a sort of self-sanzen process, to be hardpan sincere with yourself & tolerate no cleverness or verbal trickery, like every moment was the last. & at the same time not getting hung on that process always – a very common state among Zen monks who have progressed a bit – a state of constant inner discipline & tension that gives the sense of POWER but is basically nowhere because it can't include undiscipline, messiness, late-sleeping & spilled beer, etc in its insight."

Snyder's intimate, clear writing about meditation in jargon-less English – a very difficult thing to do and probably no one has done it better than Snyder – seems to have encouraged Whalen. In any event, he kept on with meditation, and a few years later confessed to Gary, "...I try to do right, knowing my idea of 'I' and 'right' are IDEAS but continue to try doing the right thing & am ashamed when I goof. ... I can see no earthly use in my sitting, I have no guru, no initiation, don't know nothing about meditation or koans but I feel like it has to be done, so I sit anyway. Probably wrong, probably perversely, probably swindling myself & the world, but do sit. There."<sup>lii</sup>

These remarks to Gary bespeak a refined spiritual friendship – the kalyanamitra that Snyder mentioned. Beginning adepts are generally taught to regard their teacher as an elder – someone wiser for being further along the path – a spiritual aunt or uncle. As the relationship develops, the teacher figure shifts from elder to friend, the signal difference being that with an aunt or uncle, one might be tempted to inflate one’s report of progress on the path. This can’t even be tried with a real friend. The way it is sometimes (crudely) put, you might be able to fool an elder, but you can’t bullshit a friend. Because Whalen and Snyder spent their lives in Buddhist-dosed literature, philosophy, anthropology and art, because these fields were thoroughly swirled together, and because they each had at times more wisdom than the other in various of them, they took turns in the teacher role. While both could show stubborn, even territorial sides, they did little of this with one another. Throughout the years of their friendship, they seemed willing to cede a position or a point, though not sometimes without pointed defense.

They lamented how Beat seekers overran North Beach in the late 1950’s. Both thought that the loving, poetic, breakthrough good times they’d shared with friends for a while in 1955 and ’56 had been blown out of proportion by media attention, and that whatever scene might have been there, had departed. They also recognized that with the 1958 publication of Kerouac’s *The Dharma Bums*, things would get stranger. “KATY BAR THE DOOR!” Philip (in Oregon) wrote to Gary about it, adding, “Book is beautiful, but god only knows how the young of the Bay Area (or elsewhere) will understand it & how they’ll react (not to mention the Luce organization.) Be brave.”<sup>liii</sup> Snyder, actually in the Bay Area, wrote back a few days later, less impressed than Philip with the literary merits of Jack’s book, but equally aware that their scene had been exposed. “I hope we won’t all be arrested.”<sup>liv</sup>

In the years following publication of *The Dharma Bums*, Snyder appeared to distance himself somewhat from Kerouac, and declined to attend Jack’s funeral in 1969. One can imagine reasons: shyness at having been portrayed in a novel; sadness at Jack’s

physical and emotional decline; distaste for political views attributed to Kerouac. But Gary maintained respect for the work Jack had accomplished, and was deeply saddened by his death. None of this was lost on Philip. About half way between the appearance of *Dharma Bums* and Kerouac's death a decade later, Philip passed along intelligence of Jack to Gary, and proposed, only half-humorously, a way forward. "...he's begun to write a new book & is feeling much better but still wonders WHAT MUST GARY THINK OF ME? Apparently you don't write to him very often. For some reason or other he wants your approval, sympathy, etc.... I don't mean that your approval & sympathy are not delightful to hear & to receive. I mean it is hard for me to see why J-LK DEPENDS so upon it some moments. Why not, on the other hand. I hope (quite confidentially) that when you get your INKA as a roshi, you will immediately finally & totally save, illuminate, transform & horrify Mr. K the moment you see him in person (although I wish it could be done by mail or telegram,) because he is really terribly unhappy & bugged by himself so much of time, and he will, (I fear) demand nothing less from you on that day. There's a koan for you, with my apologies & love..."<sup>lv</sup> Gary replied that he'd written to Jack, "and told him I thought highly of him, but no response yet."<sup>lvi</sup>

The other JK they kept in view was Joanne Elizabeth Kyger; they distinguished her as "JEK", while Kerouac remained "JLK."<sup>lvii</sup> Of Joanne Kyger they wrote carefully, owing on Whalen's side to his intense, enduring, but ungrounded love for her, and on Snyder's, to several years of somewhat strained marriage with her. Both men esteemed her native intelligence, her sense of daring, and her skill as a poet; neither was insensible of her considerable beauty. Philip knew, in keeping a separate, parallel correspondence going with Joanne, that Gary would likely read the letters. Similarly, he used letters to Gary to send messages to Joanne. They all played with this. Responding to Joanne's having written "lies lies lies" at the end of one of Gary's letters, Philip instructed, "Say to her that I expect a full accounting from her personally of the true state of her health &

language studies instantly; otherwise I must accept your version as it stands." In Joanne Kyger's own account of the time — *Strange Big Moon, The Japan and India Journals, 1960–1964* — her first entry mentions Philip being at a party, a month before she departed for Japan and Gary. The last entry, four years after the first, finds her arriving by boat back at San Francisco, the marriage with Gary effectively over. The book concludes, "Only Philip Whalen was waiting when I disembarked."

So they went on through the years, writing to one another — less frequently as they aged and had steady access to telephone, but sending regular (oft) hand-written letters anyway. All the big moves Philip made occasioned reports to Gary: Whalen's landing in America after leaving Japan in November 1967, his various, unsatisfying California residences, his return to Kyoto in early 1969 (Gary had left town by then, and soon thereafter the country) with faithful accounts of the festivals, theatre, landscapes, weather, temples, and company they'd enjoyed together. Philip sent congratulations on the births of Gary's children, as well as birthday greetings to Gary himself every year, though Philip remained uncertain of the date. Whalen reported to Gary his whereabouts when he came back from Japan a second time, and when in early 1972, he took up tentative residence at the San Francisco Zen Center, and when again few months after that, he decamped to the monastery at Tassajara. Snyder naturally received an invitation — several, in fact, as the date kept sliding — for Philip's ordination, which in the end Gary could not attend. Poetry continued to go back and forth as it always had, as well as invitations to readings and performances, but now instead of manuscripts, they sent finished books and fine prints. They praised one another's work as they always had, but included now kudos for the awards and honors their writing attracted: Whalen's nomination for the National Book Award, Snyder's receiving the Pulitzer Prize.

From the mountain valley monastery at Tassajara, where telephone connection was sketchy at best, and discouraged in any case, Whalen wrote, plotting visits to Snyder-

er's Sierra homestead; and he called on Gary's multi-lingual command of Zen literature, when his own memory of a story failed, or when research materials were lacking.

Philip's adventures in 1981/2 in running his own zendo in the Noe Valley of San Francisco, the closing of that zendo, his abrupt relocations following those of his teacher Richard Baker in the wake of Zen Center's 1983 schism<sup>lviii</sup> – all these he related to Snyder in a language calmer and more objective than he could usually muster in everyday speech. This is possibly so because after 30 years of a rich, varied life, the correspondence had power of its own. It absorbed outer shifts and inner turmoil of the Zen Center scandal rather than dissolving into them. It was swollen, to be sure, like some reptile gorged on another creature entire – but there remained room for plans, gossip, appreciation of landscape and flora, book reports, and dispatches from the inner spiritual journey. Whalen removed with his teacher Richard Baker first to a Potrero Hill zendo, and then, in a much more significant displacement, to Santa Fe: away from the ocean and (painfully for Philip) away from fresh seafood and Chinese cuisine.

Although the New Mexico winters tried both his patience and his health, life in Santa Fe gave Whalen a great deal more study time with his teacher than he'd had since the formation of that relationship. The crew who'd moved to New Mexico along with Richard Baker lived more or less on one property, and convened for regular classes in Zen's specific literature, the *koan* collections. They did not study koans in the classic one-to-one-Dharma-combat-with-the-master style, but given the material, struggle was inevitable; it was in fact inherent. Because he knew both the koans and Richard Baker, Snyder made the perfect listener for Philip. They'd been writing to one another about koan study for three decades, and understood that there is very little one person can do for another engaged with a koan. Still, writing about the whole process seemed to support Philip. He praised Baker's handling of koans as "really remarkable, considering he makes no claim for having studied them in the systematic way,"<sup>lix</sup> but describes his own

work as “fretting & fiddling...I go at it like a monkey playing with a looking glass. Turn it over to see where did he go, can’t reach him, etc.”<sup>lx</sup>

Baker Roshi’s removal from the Zen Center left him, and his loyal students, thoroughly unmoored. As Baker considered what kind of group or institution to put together – or IF to put one together at all – every aspect of the training, and much of Zen’s received wisdom was put under examination. In open discussion, they all considered what sort of role an ordained person could really play, especially in the United States. What did the term *unsui* mean for modern practitioners? Musings about this to Gary prompted an unequivocal series of responses: he declared himself against “priestly and monastic Japanese-type orders in the U.S.”<sup>lxi</sup> Gary pointed to the difficulties such a system would make for women and children, among other things. Snyder had naturally been thinking about this cluster of issues for a long time, both as it affected his personal path, and with a larger, structural perspective. He and Philip had knocked it around in letters as early as 1953, with the you-run-the-zendo-I’ll-weed-the-tomatoes drawing from Whalen. The citation above comes as part of Gary’s criticism – mixed in with congratulations – for Philip’s completion of the transmission process, empowering him to be a lineage holder, and a teacher in his own right. Gary continued to make his views known, even as Philip took up residence at Issanji, a zen temple in San Francisco’s Castro district, and rose to the position of Abbot. On the surface, it seemed a role reversal: Philip was running the zendo; Gary, 150 miles out back, was weeding tomatoes.

At some respectful time in the future, the letters in both directions between Philip Whalen and Gary Snyder should be published. That thick book will serve as a memorial to the time when writers wrote letters. It will instruct in the art of opening oneself in writing to another person, and in demanding and getting openness in return. It will provide a clear picture – or slide-show – of the nourishment an infant Western Buddhism got from English and American literature; it will of course also show how American litera-

ture was enriched by access to the spiritual poetry and other writings of Asian Buddhism. It could be a somewhat scandalous book, if it gets past lawyers. It will be frequently hilarious. It will almost never bore.

If it is produced properly, this book will look beautiful, since it will reproduce pages and pages of original handwriting by two of America's earliest and most ardent calligraphic revivalists. Looking at the writing – just looking at it – will give the sensitive reader direct emotional information about the correspondents, before the agency of words and concepts. Thus the reader may be moved, as this one was, to watch Whalen's hand descend into unsteadiness, and finally, abruptly, to stop. Coming to the end of this long future book, the reader may be moved to see how Whalen, blind and sick, was forced after nearly 50 years of handwritten pages, to dictate to an amanuensis his last letter to Gary – and how, and the end of a full page of close type he insisted on signing, but was only able to scratch out, with a ball point pen, a very shaky, blue "P." The reader may be moved to tears.

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The author's introduction to *The Gary Snyder Reader*, cited briefly earlier, concludes: "And finally nine bows to Philip Zenshin Whalen, retired Abbott of the Hartford Street Zen Center in San Francisco. Phil has been a friend and mentor since undergraduate days. He first showed me the difference between talking about literature and doing it, and pointed the way into Asian philosophy and art. Later we both came to zen meditation. Over the years we've shared bare-floor flats in Portland, Berkeley and San Francisco, tight quarters in Kyoto, plus some huge and funny spaces of the mind." <sup>lxii</sup>

Proceeding as Snyder does from physical spaces shared to mental ones, this section considers those "huge and funny spaces of the mind." Conjecture necessarily plays a role, since mind is famously ungraspable. Not being solid, it still leaves traces, some subtle, some obvious, the way a moraine makes obvious the departed glacier.

Philip and Gary shared Zen mind, meditation mind. This is not a personal possession, and such a space of mind belongs to everyone, consciously or unconsciously. Whalen and Snyder actually meditated together, sitting next to one another; they shared the basic method of accessing Zen mind. They shared as well an influential respect for the lineage that had delivered to the present day this method and others, the lineage that pointed out Zen mind and trained it. This is to say that they shared the practice of Zen which, to most all of its disciples, does not feel like the complete realization of Buddha-mind, but which—according to not a few enlightened teachers—is exactly identical with it. Thus they shared Buddha-mind. They knew this.

Oddly, given their very different styles—Snyder energetic, peripatetic, strict; Whalen still, slow, indulgent—they shared a taste for discipline and repetition. For many decades both men simply rolled over the resistance to getting out of bed in the early dark for meditation. They trampled as well on the pesky resistance to going back into the meditation hall of, for example, a sultry afternoon, during extended practice sessions. Quite apart from the semi-magical (but true) explanation that one's ego is threatened by meditation and therefore puts up resistance to doing it, there is the feeling, known to all who try it, that one does not meditate very well. The actual experience of it does not compare well to one's imagination of what meditation is supposed to be, nor to descriptions—meant to be supportive—that one might read in a book. One feels a failure at it, and who needs more failure? But to continue for years to practice, and to glean the undeniable benefits of meditation—among them mindfulness, empathy, self-knowledge, insight, flexibility, and humility, as well as the occasional entrance into refined, illuminating absorptions—one needs to come to terms with the feeling of failing. In Japan on New Year's Day of 1967, Philip got most of a poem out of the insight that the feeling of failing simply belongs to the life of a practitioner (of any serious discipline) and that whatever one did to avoid it was simply delay or detour. He develops the insight in typically cuckoo fashion:

## FAILING

The practice of piety. The practice of music. The practice of calligraphy. These are exemplary pastimes. The practice of rereading the novels of Jane Austen. The practice of cookery. The practice of drinking coffee. The habit of worrying and of having other strong feelings about money. All these are vices. We must try not to write nonsense, our eyes will fall out.

In answer to all this my head falls off and rolls all messy and smeary across the floor KEEP TALKING squelch slop ooze.

Philip and Gary shared, obviously, “poetry-mind”: they shared a mind that clearly records and artfully arranges sense perception mixed with insight. In service of poetry they also shared something it might be better to call “musical” or “rapturous” or “ecstatic” mind – a possession, a positive madness, a creative craziness – part of what worried Plato about the art of poetry in the first place. Snyder often described entrance to and departure from these states with a language of shamanism. Some consistent portion of his works have from the beginning portrayed shamanic ritual and trans-species journey. They have done this from the outside – how it looked – as well as from the first person – how it felt. A number of his poems are explicitly shamanic in affect: they use repetition, chanting rhythms, and generous helpings of Sanskrit, Tibetan and other mantric speech to literally entrance the reader. Snyder wears all this lightly. It’s the sky to his poetry’s earthiness. But any even casual reader discovers in his poems that the author is a traveler at home in many realms, including invisible ones.

Whalen tended toward more mundane, identifiably Western vocabulary in describing his heightened spaces of composition. A “take” he would say, “a great taking.” He might even say “tripped out.” In teaching, he usually cited Gertrude Stein’s “I am not I, when I write.” His poems record numerous appeals to gods and goddesses for

their presence, and especially the Muse, for him so undeniably a living force that he sometimes used a domestic tone with her, “You’re late today.”<sup>lxiii</sup> Abrupt shifts in perspective, discontinuities in meaning and in perception, disembodiments, invasions, flights, possessions – these occur so often in Whalen’s oeuvre as to be the fact of it, rather than something unusual. Far from being shy about this side of their work, both poets fronted it. At their first performance – the Six Gallery in 1955 – they tipped their hands, Whalen reading *Plus Ça Change* in which humans morph into speaking birds, and Snyder reading *The Berry Feast*, telling of Bear and Coyote and Magpie and bipeds and their various inter-matings, productive of wisdom.

One classical entrance to exalted states of mind is ritual use of hallucinogenic drugs. Inexpensive, not illegal, available, and traditional with American Indians, peyote presented itself in the mid-1950’s as an ideal psychoactive. In a series of remarkable letters from the first half of 1955, Gary and Philip shared with one another their experiences with the drug – their visions as well as their hesitations. Gary went first, tripping on New Year’s Day, to “an entire world, which is left-handed, baroque, dripping with jewels, & where I for one met Baudelaire, Rimbaud, William Beckford, Morris Graves, Edith Sitwell, Aleister Crowley, Frederick Prokosh & hosts of others, to whom Peyote (almost a distinct personality) introduced me, as a sort of initiation...I’ll send you some, if you’d like to try it.”<sup>lxiv</sup>

Citing instability, Philip declined, “Don’t need no more hallucinations than I got already. All you addicts can go right on debauching yourselves.”<sup>lxv</sup> Besides the jewels and the introductions, Gary mentioned that his first trip was “almost terrifying,” and this can not have bolstered Philip’s desire for peyote. His living situation *was* unstable – he would be ejected from it without warning about eight weeks later – and his psychological health posed a bigger problem. Months after, having finally ingested peyote, Whalen wrote, “I had been apprehensive about taking the stuff: as I’ve told you before on various occasions, I consider myself dotty enough without doping myself – I was

afraid of seeing only horrors...” Describing physical aspects of his trips, Whalen compared them to what he’d read about insulin shock therapy (also known as insulin coma therapy). He matched up the physical responses in two separate letters, written months apart, indicating that he had been at least researching treatment options for schizophrenia and depression. And horrors he did see – at least conventional horrors – when, having eaten three fresh peyote buds in the company of friends, having waited, having given up and gone out for pepperoni and beer, having tired of the conversation and gone home alone to his basement rooms, he began to come on. As he wrote, he was “rapt away. In the early stages, I was in the midst of various ceremonial rites – there were drums & chanting & processions. Sometimes I was a pillar of the temple, sometimes one of the priests, sometimes the idol of the god before whom the ceremony took place.

“A couple times I was the bound & mutilated fertility god high on the oak while the priest circled round, wailing and doing the limping dance – the measure /- // – // – // - etc. Then I was born several times...”<sup>lxvi</sup> Here Whalen’s journey entered even more mythical and religious realms, rather than literary ones.

“I was the giant Vishnu on the waters, while in my belly there was a cold, brilliant sun.

“I was a giant tortoise, then I was Ganesha.

“The prevailing, or recurrent image was that of identification with the giant Vishnu, enormously powerful but divinely, consciously resting.

“Sometimes I was Shakyamuni under the Bo tree being tempted by Maya [sic] but resisting effortlessly – impossibly easy because, like Shakyamuni, I knew Maya had mistaken me for someone else, while knowing at the same time we were both relatively unreal...

“sometimes the vision was simply confused light & color & music -{not really “vision” – again, identification} – all very fast & bright, with sudden jolting stops –

brilliant silence – & start again. Sometimes, being music & motion, I was the dancing Siva – and correctly dancing asleep but aware.

“Alternations of life & death of the rival brother gods, rivals for the Goddess.  
[She was the only thing I never identified with completely]

“Visions of people as mechanical creatures, pointless, deceived, supposing they had free will, &c – but who were actually automatons. It was this *saha* world, the only ugly vision. I hated that one, but accepted it.

“About 4 AM, Abe kitty woke me. I got up & fed him & watched him and kitty Ogelthorpe smile & scintillate &c., saw the walls with holes opening & things crawling in & out, but not particularly bad or good, just there.”

To the astonishment of his friends from the party the night before, Philip had accomplished this staring down of horrors, and indeed the whole trip, completely alone. Gary told him, “Peyote is pure magic. But what it does for you, I’m convinced, depends, just like the Indians say, on how pure your heart is. [You must have a very pure heart. I never doubted it.]”<sup>lxvii</sup> But Philip’s heart was not just pure: it also was oriented to cosmic scale and spiritual creation. In a follow-up letter to Gary, Phil framed peyote in a spiritual context but argued against making too much of it. He acknowledged feeling, “a lot better having tried it; discrimination sharpened, a few more insights...” but went on to point out, “as the old original rice bag<sup>lxviii</sup> said, ‘Meditate. Smarten up.’ and so we must. Peyotl is another finger pointing someplace.”<sup>lxix</sup> A scant two months later though, Philip was ready to be pointed again. This time, in addition to the shock-therapy-like symptoms, he admitted he’d been, “fearfully sick and barfed most grievously, consequently spoiling, I believe, the intensity & duration of the effects.” Even so, the cosmic aspect remained: “Lots of jewels, & a mandala or so. Great fun reaching (from a position in deep space) to touch various suns & receive great charges.” But Whalen placed this trip squarely in the context of his work as a writer, both negative – “I am busy trying to write my story, & having this whee has put me off my schedule,” and positive – “When I am sober now I feel that I can sort out the realities and unreali-

ties of this particular world more distinctly than I ever have before. I am more conscious of being conscious – that sounds literary, but take it literally – more aware that here I am with a lot to do. Best of all I find that I can work on things now & that I am working.” He also felt sick enough from the cacti – “loathing at the thought” – to not want more of it any time soon.

In Japan 12 years later, Philip had the chance to sample psychotropic drugs again – LSD, psilocybin, mescaline – and kept a notebook devoted to recording what he could of his trips. Being unable to write during the central ecstatic section, Philip’s entries describe any ceremonial preparations he’d made beforehand. The writing then fades out, and picks back up only as comes down far enough to write again. It emerges that he had some trouble judging when to attempt human contact, or adventure in the outside world after a trip. The notebook tells in amusing detail of missteps, chagrins and swift retreats. One of these involved Gary, if only in absentia. “Took a trolley & bus safely to GSS his house, but he wasn’t in – also wondered if I had the right number of heads, arms & legs showing...”<sup>1xx</sup>

Philip and Gary knew pretty early on that being poets meant an active engagement with poetical elders. They understood the power and function of lineage from the Zen context; and even if one wrote one’s poems alone, they saw with increasing clarity that poetry too had lineages. In the spring of 1955 as they corresponded about peyote, Philip and Gary were absorbing what they could from these poetical lineages, but at the same time were trying to find ways to distinguish themselves from them. Particularly they wanted a way out from under the heavy influences of their immediate forbears, including Pound, H.D., Eliot, Stein, Joyce, Williams, Jeffers, and Stevens. “You felt everything had already been said. It had all been done,” Whalen told a Naropa class about the poetry scene of the time, adding that this scene had also come under the fairly tight control of university academics.

In D.T. Suzuki's martial language describing Zen training, they'd read of "dharma combat" – spiritual life-and-death style encounters with the master – and they understood that this kind of differentiation from the previous generation can only take place in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Forms to ensure this respect are built into Zen ritual. Not so in the poetry world. The tricky balance of gratitude and arrogance and irritation and pride one felt toward one's lineage needed to be worked out for oneself. With one of the giants, however, this was straightforward. William Carlos Williams had shown Snyder and Whalen only kindness during his 1950 visit to Reed College. He'd spent social time with them, read and critiqued their work and pushed them onwards as poets. Thus when Dr. Williams – weakened by two serious strokes and a hospital stay for depression – came west in 1955 for a reading tour, they made sure to see him. Philip approached the great poet after his reading at the University of Seattle on 16 May, and reported to Gary that Williams had been "most friendly and gracious."<sup>lxxi</sup> That Philip regarded Williams as a father, and that he'd been secretly thrilled when the old man had remembered him, Philip only admitted in a poem eight years later, upon the occasion of Williams's death.<sup>lxxii</sup> In the letter to Snyder, Philip merely said that while Williams seemed "much enfeebled" Philip still found him mentally and poetically sound.

Gary too thought Williams "did well"<sup>lxxiii</sup> when he read some weeks later, despite technical ineptitude on the part of the University of California at Berkeley sound department, which Gary described as, "the fucking school tried to ruin his talk." In fact the clownish behavior of the aides so irked Snyder that he devoted a long paragraph to it in a letter to Philip, concluding, "Jesus I was mad, I practically got up and beat the shit out of those English department snots that did it to him." Philip sent wishes by return mail that Gary might see Dr. Williams under "some less irritating conditions."<sup>lxxiv</sup> He added that Williams had received strange treatment up in Seattle as well. "He was introduced here by Roethke with a rather florid gesture – 'one who teaches us that a

poet must be a man' – and here was a MAN – not a long speech but rather fancy – yet delivered with great passion &c. Rather embarrassing. One expected W in a cod-piece."

Although the labels comprise dauntingly wide spectrums of meaning, it must be possible to say something like "Buddha mind" and "poetry mind." It is possible to say these things to people who try to practice either one of them. Meditators and poets talk like this all the time, and only rarely force precision on one another, probably because the open meanings make conversation possible and fruitful and amusing, and because once definition starts, it takes over. People who try to practice Buddha mind and also to write poetry talk like this because there is a rub between these two minds.

#### RIDICULING LITERATURE

Humans are endowed with the stupidity of horses and cattle.

Poetry was originally a work out of hell.

Self-pride, false pride, suffering from the passions –

We must sigh for those taking this path

to intimacy with demons.

That's Zen master Ikkyu, himself a fine and famous poet, writing in 15th century Japan. That's also Gary Snyder, using Ikkyu's poem (and later giving a commentary on it) at a conference he organized with Zen Abbot and poet Norman Fischer in 1987, to discuss "The Poetics of Emptiness."<sup>lxxv</sup> Whalen allowed himself to be corralled into attending, though he told the audience on the opening night, "I'm here under false pretenses on about four levels. You're going to have to deal with that however you can. I'm quite willing to talk to people and explain things if they have a question or a problem. Or sit doltishly looking out the window. So if you want something from me, you're going to have to try to get it. Because I'm not going to offer anything. I don't *have* anything to offer. I'm sorry. That's the emptiness part."

The record includes preliminary written statements, circulated before the conference, followed by transcripts of at least three panel sessions, during which the main poets<sup>lxxvi</sup> presented further material. The conference meditated together; it ate together and heard Zen talks together. Discussion groups formal and informal took place. Philip wrote in his statement that he had developed both a writing habit – explicitly comparing it to a drug habit – as well as a meditation habit. “In my experience, these two habits are at once mutually destructive and yet very similar in kind. I write for the excitement of doing it. I don’t think of an audience; I think of the words that I’m using, trying to select the right ones. In zazen I sit to satisfy my meditation habit. It does no more than that. But while sitting I don’t grab onto ideas of memories or verbal phrases. I simply ‘watch’ them all go by. They don’t get written.”

Snyder wrote, “When I practice zazen, poetry never occurs to me, I just do zazen. Yet one cannot deny the connection.”

Whalen said, “I became a poet by accident. I never intended to be a poet. I still don’t know what it’s all about...”

“As far as meditation’s concerned, I’m a professional. I have to sell you on this idea that it’s a good idea to sit. That’s where poetry maybe comes into all this, that it has to be an articulation of my practice, and an encouragement to you to enter into Buddhist practice.”

Snyder said, “I have to confess that like Phil, I don’t have the faintest idea what my purpose is or what’s going on, and I never have. I became comfortable with that mystery a long time ago – that I would never know how any of these things fit together in any explicit way.” In subsequent panels however, Snyder offered several brilliant, if somewhat contradictory theories of “how these things fit together.” Whalen kept to his word and didn’t say much more on the topic. He declined to even attend the final panel.

In the undefined, sometimes uncomfortable edges between the meditator's mind and the poet's mind, both Snyder and Whalen availed themselves of classical solutions. One of these, brought forward at the conference both by Anne Waldman and Andrew Schelling, is devotional verse: praise and offering to higher powers – to wisdom itself, to ethereal as well as earthly embodiments of wisdom, to the lineage of wisdom and to protectors of that lineage. Whalen and Snyder both wrote oblatory poems to the goddess Tara, national protector of Tibet, and one of the rare female figures seen as holding the rank of a Buddha. Snyder went so far as to call his monumental poem *Mountains and Rivers without End* an offering to Tara. Both wrote poems in praise of Zen teachers: Snyder's breakthrough translations of Han Shan, and Whalen's famous *Hymnus ad Patrem Sinensus* are ready examples; there are more. In these works they imported as well the playful, teasing, or even mocking style of Zen. Whalen portrayed his heroes – "ancient Chinamen" – as "...conked out among the busted spring rain cherryblossom winejars, / happy to have saved us all."

Beyond this, both hewed (Snyder explicitly, Whalen intuitively, especially as time went on) to a Chinese preference for expressing sublime truth through mundane subject matter and plain vocabulary. It was lost on neither Snyder nor Whalen that China's greatest poets had either been Zen monks themselves, or friends with Zen monks, belonging to an elegant circle of spiritual, literary and calligraphic geniuses. Indeed the existence of T'ang dynasty poets like Wang Wei, Du Fu, Li Po or (from the Song dynasty) Su Shih – as well as the subsequent Japanese writer/practitioners like Sesshu and Basho – had made Zen immediately attractive as a spiritual path to Whalen and Snyder at the outset. When they began, both had been looking for ways to talk about insights, emotional disturbances, concept-melting encounters with landscape, love, literature, and art; and both had been looking for spirituality, Whalen very forthrightly so, to fill the gap left in him by abandoning his mother's Christian Science. In the Chinese and Japanese Zen style poets, they found perfect models. By the time of the 1987 conference, they'd achieved, in different ways, a level of mastery as poet-meditators, and they rec-

ognized this in one another. Snyder told the participants how moved he was to hear Philip – his original model for how to be a poet – talk about teaching meditation. A few years earlier at Naropa University, Whalen and Ginsberg fielded a question from a class they'd lectured – did they have favorite Asian poets? Ginsberg recited from memory some Indian and Arabic verse, and names were batted about, but in the end both admitted that one of their favorite Asian poets was the Zen man Gary Snyder.

Whalen and Snyder shared calligraphy mind; it's not possible to say only "brush mind" because Philip favored the chisel-edged tool, and Snyder used it extensively too. Being calligraphers, they shared the mind that exists in the hand. Calligraphic mind leads and follows black ink around on white paper; it understands how black marks, even simple ones, as well as the white spaces described by them, convey meaning in a way that precedes and interrupts discursive mind. This is true for the writer as well as the viewer. Calligraphy has long been another of the mediators between the spacious, formless, pregnant Zen Buddha mind, and the manifest, explicit, communicative poetry mind. The Chinese and Japanese masters cited above produced works admired as much for the way they were hand-written as for their meaning. Strictly speaking, it's impossible to separate these. Whalen complained bitterly how "dead" he felt his poems looked set in type and crowded on book pages. Many of his books do reproduce at least one or two hand-written poems, and *HIGHGRADE* collects a great many of his doodles: playful, hand-written & drawn works that exist on the edge of meaning. Two short books published by Irving Rosenthal in the late 1960's – one a children's story, one a pornography – both rowdy and funny, both containing only pages of handwriting or drawings or both – would today very likely qualify as short "graphic novels."

Even though hand-made letters seem to work differently on the mind of both writer and reader than their typed counterparts, they remain in their place as letters, for the most part incomplete in themselves and needing company to make a word, a lot of

company to complete a line of poetry. More effective than Roman letters in creating a complex visual field on the page, and a series of haunting, non-linear meanings in the mind, were Chinese and Japanese characters. Whalen and Snyder both knew the Ezra Pound edition of E. Fenollosa's essay, "The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry." Beyond that, they worked personally at learning characters. Snyder, typically, went at it early, organized and disciplined. Whalen, typically, engaged the characters much later in life, and haphazardly, really only knuckling down to serious study when forced to it by living in Japan, and then later by needing to understand Zen texts in the original. Asked once by eager students what they would need in order to learn Tibetan, the great meditation teacher and scholar Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche replied, "A new mind." Not unconnected to calligraphy, Snyder and Whalen applied themselves to obtaining and sharing the "new mind" that could function in Japanese. About the study of Japanese, Whalen remarked to his journal that he found it, "entertaining to try, & [it] keeps my head from gluing itself totally shut and senile."

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<sup>i</sup>2273 California St. San Francisco; spiritual issue of the American Academy of Asian Studies, the East-West house was communal residence where East—especially Japan—and West could meet. Many writers lived there for shorter or longer periods, including Kerouac, Whalen, Kyger, Welch, Saijo, Kandel. See Morgan, *Bill The Beat Generation in San Francisco, A Literary Tour*, City Lights Books, 2003

<sup>ii</sup> “Joanne and I “...Whalen to Ginsberg, 5 Oct 1959

<sup>iii</sup> “bitchiness”—interview with Gary Snyder, 2006

<sup>iv</sup> published as part of *Continuous Flame, A Tribute to Philip Whalen*, Fish Drum Inc, 2004 p. 31

<sup>v</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>vi</sup> *The Gary Snyder Reader, Prose, Poetry and Translations 1952—1998*, Counterpoint, New York, 1999

<sup>vii</sup> the Chinese sense of “friends coming from afar” includes the idea of sharing learning

<sup>viii</sup> Pound, Ezra, *The ABC of Reading*, New Directions 1960

<sup>ix</sup> *Continuous Flame, A Tribute to Philip Whalen*, Fish Drum Inc, 2004

<sup>x</sup> private conversation with author, January, 2006, Davis, California

<sup>xi</sup> The Reed College alumni magazine has received letters begging it not to publish any more articles about “the Beats at Reed” nor about one of their mentors, Prof. Lloyd Reynolds!

<sup>xii</sup> “Far from the wicked city/Far from the virtuous town...” from *Metaphysical Insomnia Jazz*, Mumonkan XXIX, *The Collected Poems of Philip Whalen*, Rothenberg, ed. Wesleyan University Press, 2007

<sup>xiii</sup> Leitswics = light-switch, a mock-vision-quest name from Snyder’s Reed days

<sup>xiv</sup> Whalen, *The Hiking Notebook*, from unpublished papers of Philip Whalen

<sup>xv</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>xvi</sup> author interview with Snyder, January, 2006, Davis, California

<sup>xvii</sup> Snyder to Whalen, Nov 3, 1953, Philip Whalen papers, Reed College

<sup>xviii</sup> Whalen to Snyder, 24 March 1952, Gary Snyder archive, U.C. Davis

<sup>xix</sup> *The Collected Poems of Philip Whalen*, Wesleyan, 2007

<sup>xx</sup> *The Dharma Bums*, p. 18 Penguin 1976

<sup>xxi</sup> PW to Allen Ginsberg 16 V 66

<sup>xxii</sup> Whalen papers, journal 26:IV: 69

<sup>xxiii</sup> Davis & Scott, *Opening the Mountain*, Shoemaker and Hoard, and Snyder & Killion, *Tamalpais Walking*, Heyday

<sup>xxiv</sup> Whalen to Snyder, April 1959, Gary Snyder Archive, U.C. Davis

<sup>xxv</sup> Robertson, *Real Matter*, University of Utah Press, 1997

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<sup>xxvi</sup> Conze, *Buddhist Wisdom Books*

<sup>xxvii</sup> Robertson, p.127

<sup>xxviii</sup> Whalen to Snyder, 1953 The drawing included in the letter shows a Buddha sitting beautifully in a temple, and very wide-buttled fellow bent over among plants in a garden

<sup>xxix</sup> Robertson, *ibid*

<sup>xxx</sup> personal correspondence, Whalen to Diane di Prima, 1965

<sup>xxxi</sup> beyond telling the class, Whalen wrote about it in *The Diamond Noodle*

<sup>xxxii</sup> “*If you seek his monument*”

<sup>xxxiii</sup> *Love conquers all*

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Snyder to Whalen 1955

<sup>xxxv</sup> Lew Welch and Joanne Kyger were names that came up

<sup>xxxvi</sup> Interview with GSS, 5 Jan 07

<sup>xxxvii</sup> It is one of the great paradoxes of Buddhist philosophy that the absence of a self does not excuse one from karmic retribution.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> Whalen is quite capable of writing a summary view of his relations with Snyder. In a 1968 letter to Stanworth Beckler, Philip tells: “I first met Gary Snyder at Reed. He has been writing better & better ever since, & he has taught me an enormous amount about mountains and anthropology & Buddhism & girls & *savoir vivre*...He & Allen & Jack & Rexroth have been my chief GURUS. But then so have the spirits of Aeschylus, Su T’ung Po, Lady Muraskai, Cezanne, Sesshu, Schönberg, Rachmaninoff...the series of debts is unlimited.”

<sup>xxxix</sup> Halper, Jon, ed. *Gary Snyder, Dimensions of a Life* Sierra Club Books, 1991, p.207

<sup>xl</sup> Whalen to Snyder, 7 June 56

<sup>xli</sup> Snyder to Whalen 11 June 56

<sup>xlii</sup> author interview with GSS 5 Jan 07,

<sup>xliii</sup> Snyder to Whalen 25 V 56

<sup>xliv</sup> Snyder to Whalen 30 Sept 56

<sup>xlv</sup> Whalen to Snyder 18 June 57

<sup>xlvi</sup> Whalen to Snyder 1 Nov 62

<sup>xlvii</sup> Whalen to Snyder 21 June 1960

<sup>xlviii</sup> Whalen to Snyder 4 July 56

<sup>xliv</sup> Whalen to Snyder 23 June 61

<sup>l</sup> Whalen to Snyder 22 May 1957

<sup>li</sup> Snyder to Whalen 14 June 1957

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- lii Whalen to Snyder 15 Dec 1960
- liii Whalen to Snyder 1 Oct 58
- liv Snyder to Whalen, 9 Oct 58 *The Gary Snyder Reader*, p. 155
- lv Whalen to Snyder 8 III 63
- lvi Snyder to Whalen, 2 May 63
- lvii yet another JK who played an important role in Whalen's life was the poet, and Whalen's publisher, Jim Koller.
- lviii see chapter \_\_\_\_
- lix PW to GSS, 7 Jan '84
- lx PW to GSS 16 Sept '84
- lxi GSS to PW 16 Sept 87
- lxii *The Gary Snyder Reader*, Counterpoint, New York, 1999 p. xxii
- lxiii TO THE MUSE *The Collected Poems of Philip Whalen*, p.316 Rothenberg, ed. Wesleyan, CT
- lxiv Snyder to Whalen, 2 Jan 55, Reed
- lxv PW to GSS, 25 Jan 55, Davis
- lxvi PW to GSS, 24 April 55 Davis
- lxvii GSS to PW 16 June 55 from Reed
- lxviii "old original rice bag" is a fond Zen-style epithet for Lord Buddha
- lxix Philip Whalen to Gary Snyder, 2 April 55, UC Davis
- lxx LSD Notebook, Whalen, UC Berkeley
- lxxi PW to GSS 18 V 55 UC Davis for this and following references to Williams
- lxxii *The Collected Poems of Philip Whalen*, Rothenberg, ed. Wesleyan, p. 304 ff
- lxxiii GSS to PW 9 June 55, Reed College for this and subsequent references to the Williams reading
- lxxiv PW to GSS 13 Jun 55 UC Davis
- lxxv Green Gulch Farm Zen Center, 10-12 April 1987 Transcripts of this conference were published in a magazine called Jimmy & Lucy's House of "K", #9, Jan 1989
- lxxvi These included—beyond Snyder and Whalen—Gail Sher, Norman Fischer, Steve Benson, Anne Waldman, Andrew Schelling, and Will Staple, with papers submitted to the conference by several more distinguished poets and artists.