



**the counterculture
looks east**

**beat writers
and asian religion**

carl jackson

It has become customary to date the birth of the so-called "Beat Generation" to an evening in March 1955, marked by an unforgettable poetry reading at the Six Gallery in San Francisco. The postcard announcement of the watershed event proclaimed:

Six poets at the Six Gallery, Kenneth Rexroth, M.C. Remarkable collection of angels all gathered at once in the same spot. Wine, music, dancing girls, serious poetry, free satori. Small collection for wine and postcards. Charming event.¹

The promise of an experience marked by inspired poetry, uninhibited pleasure, and easy enlightenment would become identifying marks of the new generation. Though the emphasis on "free satori" would alarm serious students of Zen Buddhism, the reference may be seen as an early indication of one of the Beat Generation's major preoccupations. Asian thought was an essential element in the Beat view of the world.²

FIGURE ONE (above): Elephant mandala used during an LSD experience, described in Ginsberg's poem "Lysergic Acid." Reproduced from *Evergreen Review*, May-June, 1961.

Like many other such designations, the term "Beat Generation" has been badly misused. Rather than a generation, it might be better applied to a small group of poets and writers active in the late 1940s and 1950s in New York and San Francisco, whose countercultural lifestyles and denunciations of American culture caught the eye of the media. The names include Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Gary Snyder, Philip Lamantia, Gregory Corso, Philip Whalen, Brother Antonius (William Everson), Peter Orlovsky and Michael McClure—to mention only the best known. The movement was surprisingly brief: intruding into the public's consciousness in the later 1950s as the result of the national sensation created by Kerouac's *On the Road* and the publicity surrounding the obscenity suit brought against Ginsberg's *Howl*, the movement had already dispersed by the early 1960s. Writing in 1963, Seymour Krim would lament that the group had "splintered and broken up" with its writers in jail, in India, or in Paris. "I never dreamed it would come and go so quickly. . . ," he sighed.³

Obviously, the Beat movement may be approached from a number of perspectives—most narrowly, as a literary rebellion which championed "spontaneous prose," a neo-Romantic spirit and a rejection of academic literature. From a broader outlook, it may be seen as the beginning of a generational revolt, marking the emergence of a post-World War II generation which would repudiate both the old-style radicalism of the 1930s and the new-style conservatism of the 1950s. Still again, the Beats may be considered the vanguard in a significant shift in post-World War II American religious consciousness, marked by rejection of institutional religion, a questioning of Christian values, and an affirmation of the possibility of new religious meaning to be found through mystical experience, hallucinogenic drugs and Asian religions. The last perspective, and in particular the attraction to Eastern spirituality, will dominate the succeeding remarks.⁴

First emerging in the nineteenth century, American interest in the Asian religions has grown spectacularly since World War II and today affects the lives of large numbers of Americans. Some have dismissed the phenomenon as a fad, while others hail (or denounce) the growth of interest in Eastern spirituality as the beginning stages of a shift in religious consciousness that will profoundly alter the religious view of future Americans. There is not sufficient space here to analyze the reasons for the appeal of Asian religion, but it does seem evident that interest represents both rejection and attraction. Rejecting the standardized, lowest-common-denominator religion presented in many of today's churches, increasing numbers of Americans seem to be attracted to the novel teachings and emphasis on direct religious experience offered by the Asian traditions. In fact, restless twentieth-century Americans are not only turning to Eastern spirituality, but also to new forms of Christianity. The particular choice seems to depend in part upon level of education and social class. Where the less well-educated seem to embrace charismatic and fundamentalist Christianity, increasing numbers of the more educated seem to prefer some form of Hinduism, Buddhism, or Zen Buddhism. At one level, the Beat writers may be seen as early leaders in the post-World War II "turn to the East," whose attitudes and

use of Asian religious thought provide important insight into the impact of the East on modern American religious beliefs.

But Beat interest in the Asian religions should also be considered from a cultural perspective. Traditionally, American writers and intellectuals have looked to Europe for their inspiration and sense of identity. In view of America's parent-child relationship, such an identification with European civilization was inevitable. Throughout most of its history American writers and thinkers concerned with creating a distinctive national culture have juxtaposed their views to those inherited from Europe. Positively as well as negatively, European ideas were central to America's search for identity. Obviously, the situation has changed as Asia has increasingly impinged upon the consciousness of Americans. The growing number of significant American writers and thinkers who are now looking to Asian thought represent a major shift in cultural attitude. Going back to the 1890s, the names include Ernest Fenollosa, Lafcadio Hearn, Irving Babbitt, Paul Elmer More, Ezra Pound, Kenneth Rexroth, Thomas Merton—to mention only a few of the best-known cases. If Europe remains central, increasing numbers of Americans now look to the East as well as the West for inspiration. In the post-World War II period, Beat writers did more than any other literary group to shift America's cultural focus toward the East. The ways in which the Beats utilized and distorted Asian conceptions reveal both the rewards and dangers of turning to non-European sources.

The nearly simultaneous publication in 1958 of a special Zen number of the *Chicago Review* and of Jack Kerouac's novel, *The Dharma Bums*, first alerted the public to Beat interest in Asian thought. In addition to pieces from such respected Zen Buddhists as D. T. Suzuki and Nyogen Senzaki, the special issue featured Kerouac's "Meditation in the Woods," a selection from *The Dharma Bums*; Philip Whalen's Zen poem "Excerpt: Sourdough Mountain Lookout"; and Gary Snyder's description of meditation in a Japanese monastery, "Spring Sesshin at Shokoku-ji." Well-known Zen popularizer Alan Watts introduced the issue with a provocative essay on "Beat Zen, Square Zen, and Zen," in which he sought to define the differences between traditional Zen and the newer "Beat Zen."⁵ (Most commentators have overlooked Watts' critical reservations concerning the Beats' view of Zen, as well as his preference for the original Zen of Chinese masters.) Meanwhile, the appearance of Kerouac's *The Dharma Bums* celebrated a new American Zen hero, Japhy Ryder, whose actions suggested that Buddhism need not be dull. Commenting on these unusual developments, *Time* magazine observed, "Zen Buddhism is growing more chic by the minute."⁶

In succeeding months a flurry of articles denounced, dismissed, and, occasionally, even tried to understand the Beat attraction to Zen. Looking back several decades later, it is clear that commentators exaggerated the American appeal of Zen, which never touched more than a few thousands.⁷ One of the legacies of media coverage is the myth that, insofar as they looked toward the East, the Beats restricted themselves to Zen Buddhism. In fact, Zen was only one and, indeed, with the exception of Gary Snyder and Philip Whalen, a passing concern of most Beat writers. The assumption that the Beats were

CHICAGO REVIEW

SUMMER 1958 • VOLUME 12 • NUMBER 2

ON ZEN

3	<i>Beat Zen, Square Zen, and Zen</i>	ALAN W. WATTS
12	<i>Rinzai on Zen</i>	DAISETZ T. SUZUKI
17	<i>Meditation in the Woods</i>	JACK KEROUAC
23	<i>Zen and the Various Acts</i>	SHINICHI HISAMATSU (HOSEKI)
29	<i>Excerpt: Sourdough Mountain Lookout</i>	PHILIP WHALEN
33	<i>Chia-shan Receives the Transmission</i>	RUTH FULLER SASAKI
37	<i>Mentergarten Dialogue</i>	NYOGEN SENZAKI
41	<i>Spring Sesshin at Shokoku-ji</i>	GARY SNYDER
50	<i>The Natural and Unnatural in Suzuki's Zen</i>	HAROLD E. MCCARTHY
57	<i>Zen in Psychotherapy: The Virtue of Sitting</i>	AKIHISA KONDO
67	<i>Zen and the Work of Wittgenstein</i>	PAUL WIENPAHL

ART-WORK

	<i>Cover Drawing: Fire on the Mountain-top</i>	TOKO SHINODA
31	<i>Two Drawings</i>	TOKO SHINODA
65	<i>Drawing</i>	TOKO SHINODA
66	<i>Lithograph: Night</i>	TAKASHI SIMIMI
73	<i>Drawing</i>	FRANZ KLINE

FICTION

75	<i>Esprit de Corpse</i>	WALTER TOMAN
82	<i>Excerpt: The Unnamable</i>	SAMUEL BECKETT
87	<i>Stratis the Mariner Among the Agapanthi</i>	GEORGE SEFERIS

BOOK REVIEWS

89	<i>A Dead Bird Never Leaves the Cage</i>	C. F. MACINTYRE
98	<i>Equal, That Is, to the Real Itself</i>	CHARLES OLSON
105	<i>Brief Notices</i>	

FIGURE TWO: Table of contents of special Zen issue of *Chicago Review*, Summer, 1958.

writers as Walt Whitman and Ezra Pound and such movements as Romanticism and Existentialism.

Third, examination of the Beat interest in Asian thought will be restricted to Kerouac, Ginsberg and Snyder, and will be extended well beyond the 1950s to their later careers. The decision to concentrate on three writers is due to limitations of space; the choice of these three arises from the prominence of Asia in their thought. In following the three men's subsequent development, one may more fully evaluate the influence of Asian interests taken up during the Beat years. Though there were admittedly important changes after 1960, the three remained Beat writers long after the Beat movement had dispersed.

i

Much of the violent condemnation and unfortunate distortion that has been focused on Beat writers may be traced to the tortured personality of Jack

fascinated by Zen has obscured recognition of a much wider and more profound interest in Asian thought.

Several qualifications may be noted before proceeding. First, not all Beat writers responded to the attraction of Asian thought. If Kerouac, Ginsberg, Snyder and Whalen expressed strong positive reactions, Ferlinghetti seems to have felt only passing interest, Burroughs preferred Scientology (for a time) to Asian spirituality and Brother Antonius opted for Catholic Christianity.

Second, one must remember that Eastern conceptions were always only one influence among many that nurtured Beat thought. Though critics, led by Norman Podhoretz, have dismissed the Beats as "Know-Nothing Bohemians,"⁸ in fact most were college-educated and well-read. Ferlinghetti held a Ph.D. from the Sorbonne; Snyder did graduate work at Indiana and Berkeley; Burroughs completed a B.A. with Honors at Harvard; and Ginsberg and Kerouac attended Columbia. (Though Kerouac dropped out, Ginsberg eventually graduated in 1948.) Other important influences on the Beats besides Asian thought include such

Kerouac. On the surface his was a Horatio Alger success story: the talented son of obscure French Canadian parents who grew up in the industrial town of Lowell, Massachusetts, he won a football scholarship to Columbia University and went on to achieve international fame as a celebrated author. In reality, however, his career was punctuated by repeated traumas and personal tragedies that pursued him throughout his life. These included the childhood loss of his beloved brother Gerard; uncertainty about his own sexuality, which led to a series of broken marriages and homosexual encounters; addiction to alcohol and other drugs; and psychological dependence on his mother Gabrielle, which eventually led him to break with all his old associates. The messy disorder of his life has made it easy for unsympathetic critics not only to ignore his obvious talent, but also to dismiss the Beats generally.

In flight from deep personal and psychological problems, it is clear that much of Kerouac's adult life was spent in the search for a religious answer to slay his private demons. Following the enormous success of his novel *On the Road*, the Beat writer became a media attraction. Asked by a television interviewer: "This beat generation has been described as a 'seeking' generation. What are you looking for?" Kerouac responded without hesitation: "God. I want God to show me His face." Raised in a traditional Roman Catholic home, he regularly attended mass and went to confession. He quit attending mass in high school, and in later years drifted further and further away from the church's moral teachings. His subsequent interest in Asian spirituality surely arose in part as a response to the need to fill the religious void in his life.

Kerouac's first hazy awareness of Asian thought probably dawned in 1943, as a result of the suggestion of Professor Raymond Weaver, who taught literature at Columbia. Sought out by Kerouac, Weaver recommended a reading list, including the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, Jacob Boehme, and, in all probability, the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* and several Zen classics. However, it would be at least a decade before Kerouac followed up on Weaver's suggestions. In 1953 Ginsberg stumbled upon Zen Buddhism at the New York Public Library, and seems to have transmitted his enthusiasm to his friend. By the end of the year Kerouac was proclaiming himself



FIGURE THREE: Grove Press provided this photograph of the pre-beat Kerouac in 1942, from *Memory Babe: A Critical Biography*, by Gerald Nicosia. Reprinted by permission.

a “big Buddhist” and spending much of his time reading the sacred writings of that tradition.¹⁰

Kerouac began to read Buddhism in earnest in January 1954, after moving in with Neal and Carolyn Cassady, who were then living in Oakland, California. Neal, the model for the legendary Dean Moriarty, hero of *On the Road*, had recently become a follower of Edgar Cayce, the American mystic and occultist. Confronted in nightly discussions by Cassady’s enthusiastic advocacy of Cayce’s ideas, Kerouac counter-attacked with arguments from Buddhism. In order to defend his position, he began to spend every afternoon in the San Jose Public Library boning up on Buddhism. During February he read the *Diamond Sutra*, skimmed other Buddhist scriptures, and moved on to Lao-Tzu, the *Vedas*, Confucius, and Patanjali’s *Yoga Precepts*—comprising what Ann Charters has described as a “mammoth dose of Eastern Studies.”¹¹

Inspired by his reading in the San Jose library, Kerouac characteristically launched not one but a series of works on Buddhism. As he read, he scribbled notes and rephrased the texts in his own words; the eventual result was a manuscript of several hundred pages of extracts, reflections, aphorisms, and *haiku* which he entitled “Some of the Dharma.” In the same period he also began a life of the Buddha, “Wake Up,” and compiled a collection of Tibetan Buddhist texts to be entitled “Buddha Tells Us,” an English translation of the French translation of the original Tibetan.¹² It may be fortunate that none of the projects were ever completed.

The Beat position seemed to demand action; it was axiomatic that while the middle-class “square” conformed, the Beat rebelled. In the case of Kerouac’s Buddhism, it is apparent that he not only studied the teachings, but also sought to practice them. He made repeated efforts to meditate—a serious problem because knee injuries incurred as a football player made it impossible for him to assume the lotus position. Refusing to be discouraged, he wrote his friend Allen Ginsberg that he was on his way to becoming a *bodhisattva* and that when they next met he would instruct him in Buddhist teachings. For a time he read the *Diamond Sutra* every day.¹³

Forced at first to rely solely on his reading for knowledge of Asian thought, in 1955 Kerouac met Gary Snyder, who immediately became a model and Buddhist hero to the aspiring Beat *bodhisattva*. Snyder did all the things that Kerouac dreamed of doing: he read Chinese and Japanese, meditated regularly, and, most exciting, planned to sail to Japan to enter a Zen monastery. They became fast friends, with Snyder encouraging Kerouac’s Asian interests and introducing him to wilderness hiking.

A full analysis of Kerouac’s intellectual and religious interests would require perusal of all his published works. Though presented in novelistic form (with names changed), practically every character and event described in his works represents a fragment of the author’s personal experience. His interest in Asian religion was mainly concentrated in the years 1954-56 and may be followed in four works: *Mexico City Blues*, *The Dharma Bums*, *The Scripture of the Golden Eternity*, and *Desolation Angels*. Each will be briefly described.

Mexico City Blues (1959), written in a three-week burst in Mexico City during the summer of 1955, documents Kerouac’s active interest in Buddhism

already before his critical meeting with Gary Snyder in November of the same year. Seeking to put Buddhist doctrine into Beat language, the volume includes a sizeable number of offbeat, humorous Buddhist stanzas in its 242 choruses; among these, the 2nd, 6th, 15th, 66th, 111th, 113th, 132nd, and 190th Choruses reveal clear indebtedness to Buddhism. Drawing on his recent reading of the *Diamond Sutra*, he playfully recast the teaching:

Dharma law
Say
All things is made
of the same thing
which is nothing

All nothings are the same
as somethings
the somethings
are no-nothings
equally blank¹⁴

The lines focus on the Buddhist concept of *Sunyata*, or Nothingness, conceived as Ultimate Reality. The paradoxical note he associated with Buddhism is struck again and again.

The Dharma Bums (1958) offers a thinly disguised account of Kerouac's Buddhist adventures following his departure from Mexico and his critical meeting with Gary Snyder. Assuming a Buddhist persona, Kerouac describes himself at the beginning of the novel as an "oldtime bhikku in modern clothes," and he proclaims his intention to turn the "wheel of the True Meaning, or Dharma" to "gain merit for myself as a future Buddha. . . ."¹⁵ Though narrated by Ray Smith (Kerouac), the book's hero is Japhy Ryder (Gary Snyder). In the course of the work Japhy introduces Ray to "yabyum," a Tibetan Buddhist practice involving sexual yoga; and, in the climactic final section, the two friends undertake a difficult mountain climb, culminating in a mystical experience in which Smith comes to understand that the "mountains were indeed Buddhas and our friends. . . ."¹⁶ Though there is a good deal of reference to Zen in the novel, it is evident that Kerouac mistakenly equated it with spontaneity and non-conformist behavior. The need for rigorous discipline, regular instruction by a spiritual master and long hours of meditation, characteristic of authentic Zen Buddhism, are notable by their absence. *The Dharma Bums* provides the most overt, most detailed record of Kerouac's involvement with Asian religion.

The Scripture of the Golden Eternity, a philosophic poem written in 1956 but not published until 1960, was Kerouac's attempt to synthesize his Buddhist reading with other religious traditions to form a modern scripture. Gary Snyder's remark, "All right, Kerouac, it's about time for you to write a sutra," apparently aroused his desire to undertake the project.¹⁷ Unlike *Mexico City Blues* and *The Dharma Bums* which were dashed off at breakneck speed with little attempt at revision, Kerouac composed *The Scripture of the Golden Eter-*

nity quite deliberately: "In pencil, carefully revised and everything, because it was a scripture." "I had no right to be spontaneous,"¹⁸ he explained, a telling comment from the inventor of "spontaneous prose." Although meant to present a universal view, the *Scripture* is strongly Buddhist in tone. Thus, the deity is portrayed as an impersonal, undifferentiated reality, while the world is envisioned as nothing but mind—conceptions that strongly hinted his recent reading of the *Lankavatara Sutra*.¹⁹



FIGURE FOUR: Gary Snyder. Reproduced from *Ohio Review*, Volume 18, Fall, 1977, courtesy of Gary Snyder.

Desolation Angels, published in 1965, records Kerouac's often confused thoughts and lonely experiences during two fateful months in 1956 when he sought to live a life of solitude and Buddhist commitment as a fire-spotter in the Cascades. Appearing in the novel as Jack Duluoz, he confessed as he set out for the top of Desolation Peak that he expected to "come face to face with God or Tathagata" and to "find out once and for all" the meaning of existence.²⁰ He discovered instead that he was not suited for the religious life. Though he experienced moments of intense sweetness, fantasizing a coming Buddhist "rucksack revolution" in which "millions of Dharma Bums" would abandon society for the hills, much of the time he found himself longing for the very sensual distractions that he had fled. "I'd rather undo the back straps of red-heads dear God and roam the redbrick walls of perfidious samsara than this rash rugged ridge full of bugs . . .," he sadly confessed. His disenchantment with nature's solitude seems also to have diminished his enthusiasm for Buddhism.

Soon after descending to the fleshpots of San Francisco, the Beat poet would lament: "O I'm not a Buddhist anymore--I'm not anything anymore!"²¹

After 1960 Kerouac's attention to Buddhism declined precipitously. In the nine remaining years of his life, he rediscovered and exulted in his Lowell roots, French Canadian ancestry, American patriotism and Catholic upbringing, while increasingly repudiating his former Beat associates, countercultural values and intellectual enthusiasms. Near the end of *Big Sur* (1962), Jack Duluoz is lying exhausted in bed, wracked by days of excessive drinking, poor eating and fitful sleep. Suddenly, the image of the cross breaks in upon his feverish dreams, and he awakens mumbling, "I'm with you, Jesus, for always, thank you." Dazed, he wonders "what's come over me"; years of Buddhist studies and of meditation on emptiness had seemingly had no effect.²² By the time he undertook a pilgrimage to Brittany in 1965 to search out the records of his French ancestors, Kerouac was proclaiming: "But I'm not a Buddhist, I'm a Catholic revisiting the ancestral land. . . ."²³

What may one conclude concerning Kerouac's interest in Eastern thought? One important point is that he was primarily attracted not to Zen, but to a broad, non-sectarian Buddhism. Though he reveals some indebtedness to Zen—to haiku and to such poets as Han Shan, for example—the Beat writer is surprisingly critical toward that religion. In *The Dharma Bums* Ray Smith complains that Zen "didn't concentrate on kindness so much as on confusing the intellect. . . ."²⁴ Clearly, Kerouac regarded Zen as too intellectual—despite the fact that, more than other religions, it rejected intellectual inquiry as the path to enlightenment. Asked the year before his death about the influence of Zen on his work, he replied: "What's really influenced my work is the Mahayana Buddhism, the original Buddhism of Gotama Sakyamuni, the Buddha himself. . . ." While recognizing some indebtedness to Zen Buddhism, he claimed that "my serious Buddhism" traced back to India, embracing such teachings as compassion, brotherhood, charity, "don't step on the bug" and the "sweet sorrowful face of the Buddha."²⁵

Buddhism's obvious attraction was its special emphasis on human suffering, which Kerouac knew so well. In addition to his personal sorrows and disappointments, he was chronically plagued by the pain of old football injuries and attacks of phlebitis. He surely spoke from the heart when Ray Smith declares that his sole interest in Buddhism is in the first of Buddha's four noble truths, "*All life is suffering*," and to a lesser extent the third, "*The suppression of suffering can be achieved*. . . ."²⁶ The superiority of Buddhism over other religions was its very simple yet precise explanation of the cause and cure of pain. The elimination of ego, cessation of conflict and achievement of detachment offered by Buddhism promised the inner peace that Kerouac so yearned for.

It is intriguing that during the period he looked to Buddha, Kerouac did not repudiate Jesus. He repeatedly emphasized the point in the years before his death. Asked in an interview in 1968 why he had written about Buddha, but never Jesus, he responded incredulously, "I've never written about Jesus? . . . All I *write about* is Jesus." Questioned further, "What's the difference between Jesus and Buddha?" he responded, "There is no difference."²⁷ Raised a Roman

Catholic, he never entirely turned his back on Christianity, even in his most Buddhist phase.

Philip Whalen, a friend and fellow Beat writer who knew a good deal about Asian religion, questioned whether the author of *The Dharma Bums* ever really understood Buddhism. Kerouac, he suggested, was more drawn to Buddhism's "extravagant language" and "cosmic ideas" than its deeper message.²⁸ A close acquaintance of Kerouac's, he should have known. Most scholars have concurred with the judgment. While such a conclusion is valid enough, in a sense it misses the point, since Kerouac's ultimate significance as a student of Buddhism is likely to be not the depth of his knowledge, but his influence in stimulating interest in Asian religion. Whatever his ultimate literary reputation—and his standing seems again to be rising—his books were extremely popular and he was a cult hero to many young people. It may well be that *The Dharma Bums* did more to spark American interest in Zen Buddhism in the late 1950s than all the excellent Zen studies authored in the years before 1958 by the great Japanese Zen scholar, D. T. Suzuki.

ii

Unlike his close friend who dropped Buddhism after only a few years, Allen Ginsberg has become more and more deeply committed to Asian religion with the passage of time. The exact moment at which the Beat poet discovered Asian thought may be documented with unusual specificity. Writing to Neal Cassady on May 14, 1953, he described a "new kick" which he had just taken up two weeks earlier. Browsing in the fine arts room of the New York Public Library, he had accidentally stumbled across a series of volumes on Chinese painting. Remarking that he had only the "faintest" idea that China possessed so rich a cultural heritage, he confessed that since the discovery he had spent all his free time "leafing through immense albums of asiatic imagery."²⁹ Interest in Chinese art soon carried over to Asian religion, with exploratory reading on Zen Buddhism. Putting his discoveries to good use, he repeated several Zen anecdotes and explained *satori*, based on D. T. Suzuki's *Introduction to Zen Buddhism*; he ended by urging Cassady to look eastward as well. Though his interest soon diverted to other fascinations, including drugs and Hinduism, he never attacked Zen Buddhism as did his friend Kerouac. In 1971 he would remark that although he had done some formal Zen meditation, "I'm not a specialist in Zen. . . ."³⁰ The Japanese religion's impact on Ginsberg was that it led him to a more serious investigation of other forms of Asian religion.

Ginsberg's subsequent explorations in Asian spirituality unquestionably owed much to a profound 1948 mystical experience awakened by reading the great English poet William Blake, which he henceforth dated as the turning point in his life. The unforgettable moment had come upon him without warning: in his bedroom with Blake's *The Sunflower* open before him, he had suddenly undergone an incredibly intense experience, climaxed by a "deep earthen grave voice," which he immediately recognized as the English poet's. The result was a profound awakening, which he described as a "sense of cosmic consciousness."³¹ Though the resulting euphoria soon dissipated, he became obsessed

with again achieving such a state of higher consciousness; he has subsequently referred to Blake as his guru.³²

In 1962, accompanied by Peter Orlovsky, Ginsberg traveled to India to seek Eastern spirituality at its source. He arrived in low spirits, depressed by a feeling of personal drift. "What's to be done with my life which has lost its idea?" he confided to his journal. "I don't even have a good theory of vegetarianism."³³ Random and unsystematic, the poet's earlier readings in Eastern philosophy as well as occasional encounters with Asian teachers encouraged, but failed to satisfy, his desire to know more about Asia's religious teachings. He would later describe the Indian journey as rescuing him from the "corner I painted myself in with drugs."³⁴



FIGURE FIVE: Allen Ginsberg. Reproduced from *Towards a New American Poetics: Essays & Interviews*, edited by E. Faas (Santa Barbara: Black Sparrow Press, 1978). Courtesy of Gerard Malaga.

In many instances Western travelers have come to India filled with romantic illusions about the country and its people, only to react with dismay and even flight when confronted by its swarming streets, alien customs and Third World economic conditions. It is evident that while Ginsberg approached India with great expectation ("I'm deliriously happy, it's my promised land," he would remark in anticipation of the journey),³⁵ he did not shun contact with its darker realities. Indeed, his *Indian Journals* record frequent interaction with Hindus of all types; he also spent a good deal of time visiting burning ghats where corpses were being cremated.

Though he did not achieve the rebirth he sought ("I wanted to be a saint," he confided in his journal),³⁶ he did pursue the possibilities of spiritual growth as never before. Meditation proved surprisingly difficult. "There is no direction I can willingly go into without strain—nearest being lotus posture & quiet mornings, vegetarian breathing before the dawn," he wrote in his journal; "I may never be able to do that with devotion." Joanne Kyger, who accompanied Ginsberg and Orlovsky for part of the journey, complained: "Allen keeps talking about Meditating [*sic*] while he is on drugs. That is the only time, he says that he can sit still long enough to 'meditate.'"³⁷ The restless American poet sought out a number of India's holy men for advice, with some success. Swami Sivananda, founder of the Divine Life Society in Rishikesh and exponent of a broad Yoga-Vedanta message, proved especially helpful, advising him, "Your own heart is your guru." Several holy men urged the need to come to terms with his body, or, in Ginsberg's words, "getting *in* the body" rather than "getting out of the human form." The Beat poet supplemented his travels with wide reading on Asia's history and religions.³⁸

The climax to his Asian pilgrimage came suddenly in 1963, when, speeding by train in Japan, he underwent a second deep mystical experience that marked a new turning point in his life. Describing the epiphany in his highly charged poem, "The Change: Kyoto-Tokyo Express," dated July 18, 1963, he wrote: "Tears alright, and laughter/alright/I am that I am—"³⁹ Apparently, he had finally come to terms with himself. After this seering event, his dependence on drugs sharply diminished, and he abandoned his former obsession with escaping his body. The result was the end of a long cycle and the realization that he must put the past behind him:

My energies of the last . . . oh, 1948 to 1963, all completely washed up. On the train in Kyoto having renounced Blake, renounced visions. . . . There was a cycle that began with the Blake vision which ended on the train in Kyoto when I realized that to attain the depth of consciousness that I was seeking . . . I had to cut myself off from the Blake vision and renounce it. Otherwise I'd be hung up on a memory of an experience. Which is not the actual awareness of now, now.⁴⁰

Though the Beat movement had largely disintegrated by the early 1960s, opening the way for the subsequent Hippies and Flower Children, Ginsberg continued to be a leading actor and, in many ways, *the* countercultural hero of the 1960s.

Meanwhile, the poet's interest in Asian religion has continued to deepen, while evolving in new directions. He had begun the chanting exercises of Mantra Yoga in India under the direction of Swami Sivananda; and he continued to receive spiritual instruction after returning home from Swamis Bhaktivedanta and Satchitananda of New York and from Roshi Suzuki (no relation to D. T. Suzuki), Zen master of the San Francisco Zen Temple.

Between 1963 and 1968 Ginsberg revealed particular interest in Hindu mantra chanting, a traditional method of concentrating the mind through repetition of sacred syllables. He experimented with a variety of chants, including

the familiar Hare Krishna mantra. He often accompanied the chants with finger cymbals or the harmonium. In addition to mantra chanting, following his Indian pilgrimage, Ginsberg also concentrated more seriously on meditation. He had tried "sitting" on a number of occasions, but without much success. A turning point was 1963, when he visited Gary Snyder in Kyoto, Japan and participated in a four-day *sesshin* at the Zen temple. Apparently, he has meditated on a regular basis since that time; in an interview in 1974 he remarked that he spends an hour every morning "sitting cross legged, eyes closed, back straight, observing my consciousness. . . ."41 The result has been a significant change in outlook. Daily meditation persuaded him that regular sitting rather than a sudden mystical breakthrough was the true path to spiritual growth.⁴²

Where Kerouac had pursued wisdom on his own and eventually created his own canon (*The Scripture of the Golden Eternity*), Ginsberg accepted the need for outside help and traveled to India to find a guru. His long search seemed to end in 1971 when he encountered Chogyam Trungpa, a Tibetan teacher, who now became his spiritual advisor. Fleeing his native country after the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1959, Trungpa eventually had settled in Boulder, Colorado in the 1970s, where his Naropa Institute has been a dynamic center of Tibetan Buddhism ever since. In a number of ways, the charismatic lama must have seemed the Tibetan incarnation of the "Zen lunatic" originally celebrated by Kerouac and Ginsberg years before. Contemptuous of conventions, the Tibetan teacher ate what he wanted, drank alcohol freely and smoked; in addition, he was a poet. Under Trungpa's direction, Ginsberg began advanced meditation (*vipasyana*) and in 1973 undertook a grueling three-month, ten-hour-per-day meditational retreat at the movement seminary in Wyoming.⁴³ With his Tibetan master's encouragement, in 1974 Ginsberg and Anne Waldman founded the wonderfully named "Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics," which offers classes each summer at the Naropa Institute. Attracted to Zen Buddhism in the 1950s and Hinduism in the 1960s, the American poet finally found his refuge in Tibetan Buddhism in the 1970s.

In sum, it is clear that Asian religion has influenced Ginsberg much more profoundly than his friend Kerouac. Nearly all his published volumes reveal deep immersion in Asian thought. To be sure, the early collections of poems such as *Empty Mirror* (1961) and *Howl* (1956) make no reference to the East, but they already indicate a religious concern which led to Asian spirituality. Beginning with explicit references to Buddhism in *Kaddish* (1971), the evidence of Asian influence may be encountered everywhere in subsequent publications, including *Planet News* (1968), *Ankor Wat* (1968), *The Fall of America* (1972), and, of course, most pervasively, in *Indian Journals* (1970).

Asian thought has also exerted a powerful influence on Ginsberg's literary career. Indeed, his very conception of poetry reveals the indebtedness. In 1971, he spoke of the "function of poetry" as "a catalyst to visionary states of being"; he further remarked that he looked upon writing "as a form of meditation or introspective yoga. . . ."44 At its best, he believed that a poem, like hallucinogenic drugs or Asian spiritual methods, could be the means of reaching ultimate truth. *Haiku* was one important Asian influence, which may be seen in the poet's emphasis on spontaneity and highly compressed, juxtaposed im-

ages, in such works as *Mind Breaths*. His use of ellipses, the gap between two images which leads to a flash of awareness (*sunyata*), also suggests the impact of *haiku*.⁴⁵

If *haiku* and Zen Buddhism were early literary influences, his later writing reveals the impact of Hindu mantra-chanting. An emphasis on oral delivery had, of course, been an identifying characteristic of Beat poetry from the beginning; thus, his discovery of chanting merely confirmed and strengthened earlier preferences. A growing emphasis on the importance of breath in his poetry also reflected Hindu influence, an impact that may be seen in such works as *First Blues* (1975). Asked whether his experiments with mantra-chanting had influenced his poetry, Ginsberg replied: "Yeah a lot, *now*."⁴⁶ Hindu chanting supplied a tradition and body of practices to justify prior preferences.

iii

Much less well-known in the 1950s than Kerouac or Ginsberg, Beat poet Gary Snyder has increasingly come to be viewed by many as the movement's most accomplished writer. While other Beats were savagely attacked and contemptuously dismissed, he won the approbation both of his fellow poets and of academic critics. Raised in the Pacific Northwest, Snyder's original interest in Asia had been kindled as a child of eleven or twelve when he discovered the Chinese landscape paintings at the Seattle art museum. Following graduation from Reed College, he had attended Indiana University for a year before shifting to the University of California to study Chinese and Japanese. By the time he reached Berkeley he had already read Ezra Pound's and Arthur Waley's translations of Chinese poetry, the *Tao Te Ching*, Confucius, the *Upanishads*, *Bhagavad-Gita*, and "most of the classics of Chinese and Buddhist literature."⁴⁷

The entries in his "Lookout's Journal," originally jotted down during stints as a fire lookout in the Cascades during the summers of 1952 and 1953, document his developing Asian preoccupation. On July 9th, 1952 one finds the entry: "Reading the sutra of Hui Neng"; on August 3rd "—study Chinese until eleven"; and on August 10th, "First wrote a haiku and painted a haiga for it; then repaired the Om Mani Padme Hum prayer flag. . . ." The most tantalizing entry is dated August 15, 1952: "Almost had it last night: *no identity*. One thinks, 'I emerged from some general, non-differentiated thing, I return to it.' One has in reality never left it. . . ."⁴⁸ Although he has subsequently denied ever undergoing a mystical experience, he seemed that summer day to teeter on the edge of such an illumination.

Just as the Beat movement was beginning to attract national attention, Snyder left the country to commence Zen Buddhist studies in Japan, a commitment that would stretch over the next seven years (1956-57 and 1959-65), interrupted by periodic returns to the United States. D. T. Suzuki's works had made him aware of Zen's attractions and the possibility of studying its disciplines in Japan.⁴⁹ Supported by a scholarship from the First Zen Institute of America, founded by fellow American Ruth Fuller Sasaki, Snyder began formal Zen study in Kyoto under the direction of Miura Isshu. After a year, he trans-

ferred allegiance to Roshi Oda Sesso, head abbot of the Zen temple at Daitokuki, who remained his spiritual teacher until the abbot's death in 1965.⁵⁰

The decision to undertake formal instruction in a Zen temple was a radical step in the 1950s. (Indeed, it would still be regarded as unusual today.) It seems clear that one major reason for Snyder's decision was his cool, even hostile, view of Christianity. In no area did he and Kerouac differ more sharply. In a revealing conversation with Dom Aelred Graham, prior of the Benedictine order's house at Portsmouth, Rhode Island, Snyder confessed that he had felt alienated from his native religion almost from the first. "I was never able to accept Christianity as a child," he recalled, explaining that on the two or three occasions when he had attended Sunday school he had "raised the question about the future of animals" only to be informed that "animals didn't have souls." "I wasn't able to accept that. . .," he explained.⁵¹ When an interviewer suggested in 1977 that some of his poems seemed to negate Christianity, he rejoined: "I was never a Christian, so I never negated it."⁵² In later years the American poet has repeatedly criticized Christianity for its puritanical view of sex and anti-ecological emphasis on man's domination of nature.

Thanks to his Japanese training, Snyder could claim to be a real Zen Buddhist. The training was quite demanding, particularly during *sesshins*, times of round-the-clock meditation scheduled for eight days twice each year. As Snyder reported in "Spring Sesshin in Shokoku-ji," the day began at 3 a.m. and extended to 11 p.m. The Zen novice devoted most of his time to sutra-chanting and meditation under the vigilant eyes of a head monk, who might smack and even knock a student off his meditation cushion for nodding. Carefully regulated spaces for food, work, clean-up, lectures and *sanzen* (face-to-face interviews with the roshi) completed the long days.⁵³

During the first year Snyder attempted to live the life of a Zen monk completely, but in subsequent years, he adopted the life of a lay disciple, dividing his time between the temple and working outside the monastery.⁵⁴ Though he spent many hours on the outside, he still saw his roshi almost daily. Janwillem van de Wetering, a Dutchman who entered the temple in 1958, was greatly impressed by Snyder's dedication: "His self-discipline was beyond reproach: even if he was running a temperature he would arrive in the morning, or at night, park his motorcycle near the gate and visit the master, trembling with physical misery."⁵⁵

If attracted by Zen's strict discipline and precise methods of meditation, Snyder was critical of its hierarchy and institutional rigidities. (Indeed, he brought such objections against all organized religions.) With some exceptions, he was unimpressed by Zen priests, complaining that "Too many are just duds at present." He exempted his master Roshi Oda Sesso from such criticisms, impressed by his spiritual director's subtle teaching and gentle manner.⁵⁶ Looking back on his Japanese experience almost twenty years later, he had obviously forgotten all doubts:

I spent a few years, some time back, in and around a training place. It was a school for monks of the Rinzai branch of Zen Buddhism, in Japan. The whole aim of the community was personal and universal

liberation. In this quest for spiritual freedom every man marched strictly to the same drum in matters of hours of work and meditation. . . . The training was traditional and had been handed down for centuries—but the insights are forever fresh and new. The beauty, refinement and truly civilized quality of that life has no match in modern America.⁵⁷

While aware of its limitations, Snyder clearly believed that Zen still had much to offer the West.

Where his friend Kerouac tried to meditate on several occasions and, unable to assume the lotus position, soon gave up the effort, Snyder took up “sitting” almost effortlessly. He originally taught himself to meditate from books, remarking to Father Aelred Graham that, “You get the posture and breathing without too much difficulty just by experimentation.” In a recent interview he disclosed that he has continued to meditate for more than twenty years.⁵⁸ His approach has always been practical: denying ever undergoing “any great enlightenment experiences,” he has insisted that meditation is as normal as walking or breathing. At the same time that he has sought to eliminate its mystery and exoticism, he has emphasized that meditation is crucial. “The point of it is to sit cross-legged and do meditation. That’s all I can say, ZAZEN, that’s what Buddhism’s about. . . .”⁵⁹ For Snyder Buddhism *is* meditation.

Examination of Snyder’s published works makes it clear that years of residence in Japan as well as decades of reading in Eastern literature have profoundly molded his thought and writing. Indeed, he has become so familiar with Buddhism, Chinese poetry, and *haiku* that he has increasingly dropped references to these traditions in later works, internalizing the Buddhist and Zen Buddhist perspective.

Like other Western writers including Ezra Pound, Amy Lowell, and Kenneth Rexroth, Snyder approached Asian thought through translation, as seen in his first work, *Riprap* (1965). In addition to a selection of his own poems, *Riprap* presented translations of twenty-four of poet Han Shan’s “Cold Mountain Poems.” Translation made it possible to explore the riches of Chinese literature while still improving his language skills. The choice of Han Shan, a seventh-century A. D. T’ang dynasty poet whom Snyder described as a “mountain madman in an old Chinese line of ragged hermits,” could hardly have been accidental.⁶⁰ Han Shan’s love of wild nature and solitude as well as his Buddhism and Taoism corresponded very closely to Snyder’s preferences.

Upon closer examination, Snyder’s translations suggest that his personal identification with the legendary Chinese poet may have been too close. In a fascinating analysis based on a line-by-line comparison with the original Chinese texts, scholar Ling Ching has recently concluded that the American “imbued the poems” with “his own experience of the wilderness in Northern America.”⁶¹ Of some three hundred surviving poems, the twenty-four the American poet chose to present avoid those poems dealing with mundane life and Buddhist doctrine in favor of those describing his experience on Cold Mountain. Citing the ninth poem as an example, Ling Ching argues that the American has interpolated words throughout, conveying roughness or adversity and in which man is pitted against nature, in place of the original more tranquil mood conveyed in the

original text. Snyder's difficulties were hardly unique; every Westerner who has ventured to translate Chinese poetry has found it necessary to sacrifice literal transcription in the search for greater clarity and artistic effect.

Snyder's subsequent publications point to both a widening acquaintance and deepening commitment to Asian religious concepts. *The Back Country*, published in 1968, presents poems grouped into four sections: "Far West," "Far East," "Kali," and "Back." The "Far East" poems present Snyder's impressions of Japan, while "Kali" includes poems based on travels in India in 1962. (Unlike Ginsberg's very confessional poetry, Snyder's poems are descriptive and largely bare of personal comment, making them difficult to analyze.) The volume concludes with a translation of eighteen free-verse poems by Japanese poet Kenji Miyazawa (1896-1933), whose focus on nature and Buddhism obviously attracted Snyder.⁶² Sub-titled "Technical Notes & Queries to Fellow Dharma Revolutionaries," *Earth House Hold* (1969) is surely Snyder's most revealing work. In addition to an assortment of book reviews, journal selections, translations and essays, it includes journal entries from the 1956-57 residence in Japan, a detailed description of Zen meditation and an account of a visit to Swami Sivananda's ashram in India. Three of the volume's essays, "Buddhism and the Coming Revolution," "Passage to More Than India" and "Poetry and the Primitive," are particularly significant, presenting his most systematic statements on Asian religion.⁶³ Among publications since the 1960s, mention may be made of *Turtle Island* (1974) and *The Old Ways* (1977), both emphasizing his later tendency of merging his interests in Asian thought, the American Indian and ecology.

Though he has maintained strong ties to the Far East, and to Japan particularly, marrying a Japanese woman in 1967, Snyder has clearly chosen to live out his life and write his books in America. (He has insisted that he never had any other intention.) In an earlier generation Lafcadio Hearn, who also spent years in Japan and married a Japanese woman, became so completely immersed in his new life that he never returned. By contrast, Snyder's years in the East seem, in some ways at least, to have reawakened his identification with his native land. In 1971 he began construction of a home in the Sierras of northern California, where he has since resided.

He has also come home intellectually, as revealed by the increasing prominence of American Indian and wilderness values in his thought. However, he has not repudiated earlier loyalties. Rather than rejecting Eastern spirituality, he has increasingly championed both Asian and American Indian values; he contends that the two traditions embody a single, primordial teaching. Queried about their connection in 1977, he observed, "Oh, it's all one teaching. There is an ancient teaching, which we have American Indian expressions of, and Chinese, Tibetan, Japanese, Indian, Buddhist expressions of."⁶⁴ At the same time, he believes that each tradition might contribute an element missing in the other. The modern need is to combine the profound philosophic insights of the Asian religions with the nature-connected lifestyles of the Indian.

Though a champion of Asian thought, Snyder has not been its uncritical apologist. This may be best seen, perhaps, in his "Buddhism and the Coming Revolution." Hailing Buddhism's profound understanding of human nature and

of the roots of human unhappiness, at the same time he laments its insensitivity to historical and social conditions. "Historically," he declares, "Buddhist philosophers have failed to analyze out the degree to which ignorance and suffering are caused or encouraged by social factors. . . ."65 He particularly castigates "institutional Buddhism" for its willingness to ignore or make its peace with oppressive political systems. Aware of the danger of stagnation, Snyder has also insisted on the need for adaptation in the movement of Asian religion to the West; Zen Buddhism in America must be different from Zen Buddhism in Japan. He once defined the goal as "Making contact with local spirits. . . ."66

iv

Responding in 1972 to inquiries concerning his personal beliefs, William Burroughs remarked that he had "always drawn very much of a blank" on yoga. He continued: "It's questionable in my mind whether these Eastern disciplines do have very much to offer. I mean, after all these thousands of years, where is India?"67 Obviously, not all writers associated with the Beat movement looked upon Asian thought as favorably as Kerouac, Ginsberg and Snyder. Nevertheless, the role of Asian religion must be considered in any full analysis of the Beats. Their rebellion against middle-class values extended to middle-class religious preferences. Rejecting acceptance of the ethic of success, they championed the "hip" lifestyle of black people; rejecting the conventional Christianity of traditional believers, they frequently proclaimed the superiority of the Asian religions. This is to say that the Beat conception of Eastern religion was countercultural. Eastern ideas and techniques were seen as instruments for breaking through normal consciousness to higher consciousness.

Interest in Asian thought at the beginning of the twentieth-century had been largely confined to well-educated representatives of the upper-middle class such as William Sturgis Bigelow, Percival Lowell and Henry Adams, who had the time, education and income needed for such cosmopolitan explorations. If unorthodox in intellectual taste, such men were for the most part conventional in lifestyles and values, and would have been horrified by the excesses of the Beat generation. Representatives of a "genteel" tradition, they tended to approach the Asian religions as the expressions of ancient, highly refined civilizations needed to balance the modern excesses of a Western civilization increasingly dominated by technology. For Percival Lowell, as for other representatives of genteel culture, Asia held out the hope of balancing a "masculine" West by the "feminine" East.⁶⁸ By contrast, the Beat writers viewed the Asian religions as a means of transcending Western civilization's institutional and psychological barriers to achieve higher consciousness. For the Beats, Asian spirituality provided a path to ecstasy and liberation rather than to order and harmony. Their discovery and championing of Eastern religion obviously influenced the Hippies and many other Americans in the decades since the 1950s.

University of Texas at El Paso

notes

1. Reprinted in Bruce Cook, *The Beat Generation* (New York, 1971), 63.
2. Too obvious to ignore, the influence of Asian thought is mentioned in nearly all scholarly studies; however, few accounts offer more than a superficial description. An exception is James Whitlark, "The Beats and their Tantric Goddesses: A Study in Erotic Epistemology," *Literature East and West*, 21 (January-December, 1977), 148-60, which emphasizes the impact of Tantric Buddhism.
3. Seymour Krim, ed., *The Beats* (Greenwich, Connecticut, 1963), 12.
4. See Charles Y. Glock and Robert N. Bellah, eds., *The New Religious Consciousness* (Berkeley, 1976); Robert Wuthnow, *Experimentation in American Religions: The New Mysticism and their Implications for the Churches* (Berkeley, 1978); and Jacob Needleman, *The New Religions* (New York, 1972).
5. See *Chicago Review*, 12 (Summer 1958), 3-11.
6. "Zen, Beat and Square," *Time*, 72 (July 21, 1948), 49.
7. Ned Polsky, "The Village Beat Scene: Summer 1960," *Dissent*, 8 (Summer, 1961), 353.
8. Norman Podhoretz, "The Know-Nothing Bohemians," *Partisan Review*, 25 (Spring, 1958), 305-11, 313-16, 318.
9. Quoted in Krim, *The Beats*, 14.
10. Gerald Nicosia, *Memory Babe: A Critical Biography of Jack Kerouac* (New York, 1983), 451. See William Blackburn, "Han Shan Gets Drunk with the Butchers: Kerouac's Buddhism in *On the Road, The Dharma Bums*, and *Desolation Angels*," *Literature East and West*, 21 (January-December, 1977), 9-22.
11. Ann Charters, *Kerouac* (New York, 1974), 192.
12. *Ibid.*, 195, 220-21.
13. *Ibid.*, 218.
14. Kerouac, *Mexico City Blues* (New York, 1959), 66.
15. Kerouac, *The Dharma Bums* (New York, 1958), 6.
16. *Ibid.*, 57.
17. Quoted in Ann Charters, *A Bibliography of Works by Jack Kerouac* (Rev. ed.; New York, 1975), 34.
18. *Ibid.*, 35.
19. Kerouac, *The Scripture of the Golden Eternity* (2nd ed.; New York, 1970).
20. Kerouac, *Desolation Angels* (New York, 1965), 4.
21. *Ibid.*, 62, 63, 187.
22. Kerouac, *Big Sur* (New York, 1962), 205.
23. Kerouac, *Satori in Paris* (New York, 1966), 69.
24. Kerouac, *Dharma Bums*, 13.
25. Ted Berrigan, ed., "The Art of Fiction XLI: Jack Kerouac," *Paris Review*, 43 (Summer, 1968), 84, 85.
26. Kerouac, *Dharma Bums*, 12.
27. *Paris Review*, 43 (Summer, 1968), 85, 86.
28. Donald Allen, ed., *Off the Wall. Interviews with Philip Whalen* (Bolinias, California, 1978), 55-56.
29. Barry Gifford, ed., *As Ever. The Collected Correspondence of Allen Ginsberg and Neal Cassady* (Berkeley, California, 1977), 140.
30. Ginsberg, *Allen Verbatim. Lectures on Poetry, Politics, Consciousness*, Gordon Ball, ed. (New York, 1974), 9.
31. Thomas Clark, "The Art of Poetry VIII: Allen Ginsberg. An Interview," *Paris Review*, 10 (Spring 1966), 36, 38.
32. Alison Colbert, "A Talk with Allen Ginsberg," *Partisan Review*, 38, 3 (1971), 292.
33. Ginsberg, *Indian Journals. March 1962-May 1963. Notebooks, Diary, Blank Pages, Writings* (San Francisco, 1970), 11.
34. Clark, "Allen Ginsberg," *Paris Review*, 47.
35. Ginsberg, *Indian Journals*, 5.
36. *Ibid.*, 11.
37. *Ibid.*, 10. Joanne Kyger, *The Japan and India Journals 1960-1964* (Bolinias, California, 1981), 190. She was then married to Gary Snyder.
38. Clark, "Allen Ginsberg," *Paris Review*, 48, 49. For a list of works read, see Ginsberg, *Indian Journals*, 71-72.
39. Ginsberg, *Planet News. 1961-1967* (San Francisco, 1968), 55.
40. Clark, "Allen Ginsberg," *Paris Review*, 50-51.
41. James McKenzie, "An Interview with Allen Ginsberg," *The Beat Journey (The Unspeakable Visions of the Individual)*, 8 (1978), 5; "Craft Interview with Allen Ginsberg" in William Packard, ed., *The Craft of Poetry: Interviews from the New York Quarterly* (New York, 1974), 61.
42. See Ginsberg's remarks in Ekbert Faas, ed., *Towards a New American Poetics: Essays and Interviews* (Santa Barbara, California, 1978), 274-76.

43. For Ginsberg's most detailed discussion of his involvement with Tibetan Buddhism, see "An Interview with Allen Ginsberg," reprinted in Paul Portuges, *The Visionary Poetics of Allen Ginsberg* (Santa Barbara, California, 1978), 134-63.
44. "Craft Interview with Ginsberg," *New York Quarterly*, 6 (Spring, 1971), 31, 19.
45. Clark, "Allen Ginsberg," *Paris Review*, 29-30 and Faas, *Towards a New American Poetics*, 270.
46. Ginsberg, *Composed on the Tongue*, Donald Allen, ed. (Bollinas, California, 1980), 36.
47. Peter B. Chowka, "The East West Interview," reprinted in Gary Snyder, *The Real Work: Interviews & Talks, 1964-1979*, William S. McLean, ed. (New York, 1980), 93-95.
48. Snyder, *Earth House Hold. Technical Notes & Queries to Fellow Dharma Revolutionaries* (New York, 1969), 2, 6, 8, 10.
49. Graham, *Conversations: Christian and Buddhist. Encounters in Japan* (New York, 1968), 59. Visiting Japhy Ryder's shack in 1955, Ray Smith noted that Ryder's Oriental library included Suzuki's complete works. See Kerouac, *Dharma Bums*, 17.
50. See David Kherdian, *A Biographical Sketch and Descriptive Checklist of Gary Snyder* (Berkeley, California, 1965), 11-12.
51. Graham, *Conversations*, 59.
52. Rebecca A. Pickett, "Interview with Gary Snyder," in Pickett, "Gary Snyder and the Mythological Present," Ph.D. Diss., University of Nebraska, 1981, Appendix I, 1.
53. Snyder, "Spring Sesshin at Shokoku-ji," *Chicago Review*, 12 (Summer, 1958), 41-49.
54. "Interview: Gary Snyder" in Faas, *Towards a New American Poetics*, 114.
55. Janwillem van de Wetering, *The Empty Mirror. Experiences in a Japanese Zen Monastery* (Boston, 1974), 58. Snyder is identified only as "Gerald."
56. Donald Allen, ed., *I Remain. The Letters of Lew Welch & the Correspondence of his Friends. Volume One: 1949-1960* (Bollinas, California, 1980), 113; Snyder, *The Real Work*, 97-98.
57. Snyder, *Turtle Island* (New York, 1974), 104.
58. Graham, *Conversations*, 59; Faas, *Towards a New American Poetics*, 115.
59. "An Interview with Gary Snyder," *Road Apple Review*, 1 and 2 (Winter 1969/Spring 1970), 51-52; Kherdian, *A Biographical Sketch*, 13.
60. Snyder, *Riprap & Cold Mountain Poems* (San Francisco, 1965), 33. Italicized in the original.
61. Ling Ching, "Whose Mountain Is This?—Gary Snyder's Translation of Han Shan," *Renditions*, 7 (Spring, 1977), 93, a very important article.
62. Snyder, *The Back Country* (New York, 1968), 113-28.
63. For the three essays, see Snyder, *Earth House Hold*, 90-93, 103-12, and 117-30.
64. Paul Geneson, "An Interview with Gary Snyder," *Ohio Review*, 18 (Fall, 1977), 84-85.
65. Snyder, "Buddhism and the Coming Revolution," *Earth House Hold*, 90.
66. Nathaniel Tarn, "From Anthropologist to Informant: A Field Record of Gary Snyder," *Alcheringa*, 4 (Autumn, 1972), 113.
67. Robert Palmer, "The Rolling Stone Interview: William Burroughs," *The Rolling Stone* 108 (May 11, 1972), 53.
68. See the author's *The Oriental Religions and American Thought: Nineteenth-Century Explorations* (Westport, Connecticut, 1981), 201-21.