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DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION

March 1

Dear Bob:

I am sorry to be so late in answering your letter of January 30, but I have been sick most of the winter for one thing and I had to wait until I could get to New York to talk to Tai San for another thing.

First I am bound to clear up one misconception you are under--namely that I had any advance knowledge whatsoever of Tai San's coming to New York or of the Roshi's change of plans. You say in your letter 'If I had known that you were active in planning for his coming to the East Coast I would have kept you informed in detail about this...' I was neither active in planning for his coming nor was I aware of it in advance. The first wind of it I got was just before Christmas when Mary Reinhart mentioned it to me in a note. When I went to visit the Weisz's on the New Year's week-end, I found Tai San had arrived and was setting up an apartment. It was then I offered to try to get Yasutani Roshi a part-time appointment in my department so he would have some little assured income.

I don't want to accuse anybody of underhandedness, but the whole ~~operation~~ operation was not a conspicuous example of the transparency which is supposed to characterize actions emanating from the Buddha Nature. We were presented with a fait accompli and now are expected to assume financial and other responsibility. Why didn't Tai San and the Roshi negotiate with responsible people like myself, the Weisz's or Lenore Straus in the first place. Were they afraid we wouldn't agree to their coming? They communicated only with a few irresponsibles in New York who kept the whole thing a secret.

I explained to Tai San about your desire to get out from being his sponsor-- Unfortunately there is at the moment no one who is both willing and able to take either him on or the the Roshi on. I am not solvent right now and am separated from my wife who would have to sign the application. We had hopes that the Zen Studies Society which is legally incorporated might take over the sponsorship of both Tai San and Roshi, ~~but~~ but without Mr. Crane that organization is at present without funds. Perhaps Mr. Yandell may be able to engineer something, and we are waiting to hear from him, but he travels a good deal and it may take some time before he writes to us.

Perhaps Tai San will be able to persuade some rich miser to be sponsor for himself and the Roshi. The New York Zen group is not yet a legal entity. It has as yet neither financial nor other real substance. Perhaps in time Tai San and the Roshi will make something of it, but it doesn't yet really exist as an ~~organization~~ responsible organization, and I have next to no connection with it.

Tai San asks me to come up and give 'talshon' to the group, but I don't have the time or the strength. I have done so only once, and promised to do so again the middle of March. He also wanted me to help with the translations. I agreed to do so, but now I am sorry I had agreed because again, I don't have the time or strength. So Iver Fishman is helping him and perhaps I'll go over the final draft.



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As you can see, the whole thing is as much of a problem to some of us as to you. We didn't ask for it and weren't given time to arrange things and be prepared for it. We were presented with the deed and now are expected to provide the backing. But we all have other commitments and responsibilities, and not an inexhaustible supply of time or energy.

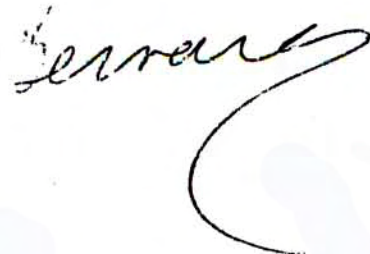
Now that I have gotten the Roshi an appointment I have no assurance he'll get a visa unless we get a sponsor for him. I am also committed to bringing over the Sufi tea her I met last summer, and as he knows no one in this country, I don't know where I'll get a sponsor for him and his interpreter.

Well, life has its problems. I can't tell you what to do with your sponsorship of Tai S n and the Roshi and I certainly understand and respect your desire to be relieved of it. It would make things easier for us if you retained the sponsorship for a while yet--perhaps Mr. Yandell will take over if we can ever get together with him. But ~~it~~ it's nothing we have any right to ask you to do.

I don't know anyone in Thailand--I hope you have a good trip.

With all good wishes,

Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jerrard", with a long, sweeping flourish extending downwards and to the right.