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Dharma Drums: The Political Beat of Buddhism: The Writers of the Beat Generation and the Compassionate Political Alternatives of Buddhism

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Abstract

When violence, hate, and capitalism seemed to dominate the world, the Beat Generation sought after love, hope, and oneness. In the mid-twentieth century, their quest landed them on the path of engaged Buddhism as a political ideology of compassion and their writings became informed by Buddhist doctrines such as karma and metta, forever changing the creed of American counterculture. This paper explores how the writers of the Beat Generation sought out and employed Zen Buddhist traditions to create a political alternative for the strict and conservative American society they inhabited during the early years of the Cold War. This paper also examines how the writers of the Beat Generation's use of Buddhism in creating a compassionate political alternative during the fifties sustained their Buddhist informed social influence into the 1960s. While previous scholars have recognized Buddhism as a political alternative, the Beat Generation's use of Zen Buddhism is unique in the way they incorporated and presented Buddhist lessons in their writings, as this paper finds by examining their Buddhist informed work and how they challenged the mainstream American society to consider more earthly and humanistic alternatives to the destructive and violent America they knew during the Cold War. Moreover, this paper aims to highlight the impact made by the Beats' utilization of Buddhism and assesses the success of their goal to shift American focus on materialism, mass media, and fear of the "other" towards kindness, oneness, and understanding of a higher Truth by surveying their continued influence on politics and society today.

1. Introduction

Where the Beat Generation writers saw hateful conformity, materialism, a hierarchy of education and intellectual thought, and a violent government in American society, they also saw areas of opportunity to present an alternative culture based on loving-kindness and authentic community influenced by lessons in Buddhism. Known as the "father" of the Beatniks, writer Jack Kerouac described this new literary movement as "a revolution of the soul,"[1] and the renowned Beatnik biographer Ann Charters claims that these "writers expressing the 'new consciousness' had found a way…'to produce out of the society we have to live in, a vision of the society we want to live in.'"[2] Fear of communism dominated many Americans' minds as the rise of the Cold War created a deep feeling of insecurity for Western, democratic nations. The Cold War had multiple fronts that caused stress on American society, including, for example, the implications of decolonization and the developments of nuclear weapons. Varying opinions on these topics soon created divides within political and intellectual thought in the United States. Meanwhile, in the height of America's era of conformity, dissenting with the mainstream views on the Cold War and its various aspects was a bold and dangerous move. Holding, and especially voicing, such differing opinions could result in one's isolation and alienation from the community. Nevertheless, many Americans did hold "radical" opinions towards these topics as

they were dissatisfied with what they viewed as the American government's selfishness, greed, and inclination towards violence. Many of these political dissenters used writing and public speaking as their platform to voice their concerns. These writers, known as the Beat Generation, used their literature to not only condemn the mainstream American society they knew, but also present an alternative way of life, according to Charters, by "trying to look at the world in a new light, trying to look at the world in a way that gave it some meaning."[3]

The writers that characterized the Beat Generation of the 1950s were extremely influential to the political and social counterculture that would emerge in the 1960s. Some viewed their work as unsavory and perverse; that they, as articulated by humanities scholar P.J. Johnston in their article "Dharma Bums: The Beat Generation and the Making of Countercultural Pilgrimage," "were at war with 'Mom, Dad, Politics, Marriage, the Savings Bank, Organized Religion, Literary Elegance, Law, the Ivy League Suit and Higher Education,'" granting them their "reputation as rebellious and antinomian."[4] However, by digging a little deeper into their work and their political views, it is apparent that the Beats saw themselves as seekers of beauty, oneness, and a higher Truth in a world that promoted division, submission, and violence. Their exploratory lifestyles were nature-oriented, their spirituality grounded in the relations between humans and the earth. Thus, many Beat writers naturally developed an interest in Buddhism and incorporated such spiritual views into their work, using Buddhist doctrine and dogma to present alternatives to the political climate from which they dissented. According to historian William L O'Neill, they were viewed as "true cultural subversives, and the seeds they scattered would, before very long, bear peculiar fruit."[5] In other words, the dissatisfaction with mainstream America held by the Beat Generation would cultivate the political and social counterculture movement of the 1960s through a lens of the spirituality they employed: Buddhism. The Beats were particularly drawn to Zen Buddhism, a school of Mahayana Buddhism that focused on meditation and oneness, a practice of mindfulness that was a perfect prescription to the ailments they faced in their society.

2. Buddhism in Beat Literature

Bearing in mind the state of world affairs in the 1950s that shaped American life, the Beats' search for an alternative lifestyle was not unwarranted. Their foundation in engaged Buddhism was laid by Kenneth Rexroth, a preceding writer who paved the way for poets such as Gary Snyder, Allen Ginsberg, Lew Welch, and Philip Whalen to find their own Buddhist paths. Rexroth was born in 1905 in Indiana and was a left-leaning writer who promoted anarchy, or the rejection of government, to his peers. As Charters notes, he led a life as "an anarchist poet, critic, translator, and playwright" whose "interest in Asian literature and philosophy contributed to the Beat writers' study of what Ginsberg later called 'Buddha consciousness.'"[6] Scholar James Brown argues in his work, *The Zen of Anarchy*, "Rexroth's left libertarian or anarchist approach to cultural and interpersonal exchange—an approach he held that was passed on to the Beats though [sic] the anarchist and libertarian circles in San Francisco—derived partially from his encounter with Martin Buber's *I and Thou*."[7] Buber (1878-1965), a well-known Jewish philosopher, discussed his theory concerning the individual's orientation with the world, which he categorized as being either objectifying (I-It) or dialogical (I-Thou). According to Brown's understanding of Buber, which connects the dialogical relationship with Buddhism, adopting an I-Thou orientation "was both personal and political," an outlook that created "a space for genuine meeting between individuals," the opposite of objectification of the "other." This notion of obligation to the other as an extension of oneself struck a chord with Rexroth.[8] He was heavily drawn towards Buber's claim that "genuine I-Thou dialogue, practiced on a broad social scale, rendered government unnecessary" as a community participating in genuine dialogue could "mediate social relations directly, comprehending others in their whole humanness."[9] Rexroth shared this view of wholesome community and authentic communication with his Beat colleagues, planting the seed in their minds that a more community-oriented societal alternative was possible to the Cold War American culture they were witnessing at the time.

Consequently, Beat writers' search for a greater and deeper relationship with the universe, a higher Truth, a genuine community with morals and ethics that were sacredly held, landed them on the path to Buddhism. Direct contact with Buddhism all started with a little metaphysical bookshop in San Francisco's Chinatown where Philip Whalen and Gary Snyder bought numerous Buddhist texts, including works by D. T. Suzuki.[10] Snyder, a native San Franciscan poet born in 1930, delved into Suzuki's writings and quickly became engrossed in Zen Buddhism. The more Suzuki he read, the more he came to the conclusion that Buddhism could and should be used to heal the broken and destroyed American society from which he and his peers dissented. Snyder then spread his newfound spirituality amongst his poet peers as he "transmuted a Japanese exceptionalist [sic] critique of American rationality and materialism explicit in the work of Japanese Zen writers…into a radical, anarchist critique of American Cold War culture."[11] Snyder's connection with the San Francisco Poetry Renaissance, born from Ginsberg's Six Gallery reading of "Howl" in 1955—which included writers such as Rexroth, Whalen, Welch, Michael McClure, Philip Lamantia, and Lawrence

Ferlenghetti[12]—placed him on a platform of influence where he was empowered to spread his Buddhist views and persuade his audience and peers of using what would become known as "engaged" Buddhism as a political alternative.

The ultimate question to be discussed here is what made Snyder and his Beatnik following choose Buddhism as their alternative political and social path. Thus far, the Beats' dissent with Cold War American consumerist, conforming, and materialistic culture serves as a starting point for explaining their perceived need for an alternative structure of society and politics. Moreover, the Beats' quest for community centered around nature and a higher Truth pointed them in the direction of Buddhism. Certainly Snyder's decision to buy a Suzuki book that night in Chinatown pushed him even more towards Buddhism, but had he picked up a Hindu or Islamic text instead, this whole story could be very different. Likewise, some scholars claim that the Beats were more attracted to Neo-Paganism[13] or Existentialism[14] rather than Buddhism. This raises the question of whether the Beats' use of Buddhism as their catalyst for political and social counterculture was coincidental, perhaps even accidental, or if it was purposeful and deliberate.

In some ways, the Beats' adoption of Buddhism was a "seizing of opportunity." Buddhism offered the writers more autonomy than mainstream Christianity and was more effective in visibility and accessibility to their audience than Neo-Paganism or Existentialism.[15] Moreover, as sociologist Barış Büyükokutan concludes in their article "Toward a Theory of Cultural Appropriation: Buddhism, the Vietnam War, and the Field of U.S. Poetry," it makes sense that "U.S. dissidents took an interest in the religion of the country against which their government was waging war," making the Beats' choice in Japanese Zen Buddhism an overt dig at the American government's military involvement in Vietnam.[16] Nevertheless, the Beats' passion for Buddhism was much more than a political play or lucky chance. They could justify their attraction to Buddhism through morals traditionally viewed as American values, "such as self-realization, freedom, transforming relationships…living more fully in the moment or in the world, healing, and so forth."[17] Buddhist doctrine had very real, very tangible teachings for political and social reconstruction that were revered and preached by the counterculture movement of the mid-twentieth century. Thus, the Beats' adoption of Buddhism in their writings was no coincidence, but rather a very conscious, intentional decision.

3. Buddhism as a Political Alternative

There are a number of Buddhist teachings that directly correlated with the communal and nature-based society the Beats were seeking to create, and, as noted previously, the Beats were not the first thinkers to recognize the political alternative Buddhism had to offer. As scholar Akira Ichikawa articulates in their article "Compassionate Politics: Buddhist Concepts as Political Guide," Buddhism has multiple principles and social ethics that can be prescribed as political alternatives. For the Beats, some of these principles included karma, metta, Bodhisattva, and Sigalovada Suttanta.[18] The basic definitions of these principles are evident in Beatnik literature. For example, simply put, the concept of karma preaches that there are consequences for actions, or "what goes around comes around." If one is violent towards another group of people, karmic restraints will bring some sort of repercussion for such actions back to the initiators. On the other hand, if the people of one country are generous to another nation, generosity in another form will be bestowed upon them in return. Thus, karmic thought can be a motivator towards political action by pushing citizens to stand up for social welfare for all. A prime example of karmic perspective being integrated in Beat poetry is Jack Kerouac's "2nd Chorus" from *Mexico City Blues*:

> Man is not worried in the middle
> Man in the Middle
> Is not Worried
> He knows his Karma
> Is not buried
>
> But his Karma,
> Unknown to him,
> May end -
>
> Which is Nirvana
>
> Wild Men
> Who Kill
> Have Karmas
> Of ill

Good Men
Who Love
Have Karmas
Of dove

Snakes are Poor Denizens of Hell
Have come surreptitioning
Through the tall grass
To face the pool of clear frogs[19]

In this piece, Kerouac is explicitly referencing the karmic idea of consequences with regards to violence and love. According to Kerouac's interpretation of this Buddhist dogma, those who inflict pain on others will have "karma of ill," while those who address others with compassion will have "karma of dove." In other words, Kerouac's words in his "2nd Chorus" call for his readers to consider the possible consequences in their actions and to be aware of their karma while denouncing violence.

Meanwhile, according to Ichikawa, the Buddhist social ethic of metta advances the use of loving-kindness in relations between all; "the spirit of metta is an 'active benevolence' incorporating 'the virtues of unselfishness, charity, and active loving care for others.'" (citation) This teaching of universal love stems from the Buddha's disdain for "behavior that constantly demanded a prior loyalty to immediate associations rather than larger groupings, e.g., family before neighbors."[20] In other words, the teaching of metta rejects otherness, the "us vs. them" mentality of the Cold War, as it understands that the world is one. An example of the principle of metta in Beat literature is Allen Ginsberg's poem "Sunflower Sutra." In this piece, Ginsberg exclaims to a dirty, soot-covered sunflower that it is truly beautiful and loved:

> …and the gray Sunflower poised against the sunset, crackly bleak and dusty with the smut and smog and smoke of olden locomotives in its eye…Unholy battered old thing you were, my sunflower O my soul, I loved you then!...So I grabbed up the skeleton thick sunflower and stuck it at my side…and deliver my sermon to my soul…We're not our skin of grime, we're not our dread bleak dusty imageless locomotive, we're all beautiful golden sunflowers inside, we're blessed by our own seed & golden hairy naked accomplishment-bodies growing into mad black formal sunflowers in the sunset…[21]

Ginsberg's poetry often attempts to convince the readers of their own holiness, as he does here in "Sunflower Sutra." He emulates active loving care, as preached by the concept of metta, towards his audience through his raw, compassionate words.

More complex Buddhist principles that were employed by the Beats as political alternatives include the positions of a Bodhisattva and the teaching of Sigalovada Suttanta. In Mahayana Buddhism, the branch of Buddhism from which Zen Buddhism is derived, a Bodhisattva is a title or recognition given to someone who has taken a vow to reach the final stage in the process of attaining Enlightenment, a stage that "may be seen as a personification of the principle that life is seamless, that the relatedness of things demands more than the glorification of the individual."[22] In other words, a Bodhisattva teaches compassionate politics through leading by example. Through the concept of a Bodhisattva, a political framework appears that promotes sustainable thinking and an understanding that every nation is bound together in a chain, and that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Thus, as the Beats perceived, the political climate of the Cold War that fostered a desire for tearing down communist countries ought to be viewed through the lens that hurting one nation results in hurting all nations. According to this Buddhist teaching, in the eyes of the Beats, the United States should lead by example in creating a world where the well-being of all is nurtured and the glorification of a few is scorned. This principle appears as an underlying theme in many of Diane di Prima's poems, particularly in her collection *Revolutionary Letters*. For example, in "Revolutionary Letter #7," di Prima asserts:

…But don't get uptight: the guns
will not win this one, they are
an incidental part of the action
which we better damn well be good at

what will win
is mantras, the sustenance we give each other,
the energy we plug into
(the fact that we touch
share food)
the buddha nature of
everyone, friend and foe, like a million earthworms
tunneling under this structure
till it falls.[23]

Here, di Prima clearly argues that supporting one another will win over violence, that finding "the buddha nature of everyone" is the answer to overcoming differences. Her words directly correlate with the leadership of a Bodhisattva, who works to promote coexistence through understanding the interdependence of nations and people.

Another teaching that fed into the Beats' development of compassionate politics through engaged Buddhism is Sigalovada Suttanta, a Buddhist social ethic derived from the Digha Nikaya, one the earliest sources on the Buddha's teachings. The tale of Sigalovada Suttanta lays out moral instruction that promotes "virtues of generosity, courtesy, benevolence, honesty, cooperation, and service."[24] To the Beats, this virtuous code was an attractive alternative to the cold, materialistic, conformist society they knew. Moreover, Sigalovada Suttanta created for the Beats an emphasis on equality in its consideration of social welfare. Beat writers often used their words to expose the lack of virtues taught in Sigalovada Suttanta in mainstream America, as can be seen in Kenneth Rexroth's "Thou Shalt Not Kill:"

You,
The hyena with polished face and bow tie,
In the office of a billion dollar
Corporation devoted to service;
The vulture dripping with carrion,
Carefully and carelessly robed in imported tweeds,
Lecturing on the Age of Abundance;
The Jackal in double-breasted gabardines,
Barking by remote control,
In the United Nations;
The vampire bat seated at the couch head,
Notebook in hand, toying with his decerebrator;
The autonomous, ambulatory cancer,
The Superego in a thousand uniforms;
You,
The finger man of behemoth,
The murderer of the young men.[25]

Rexroth makes no attempt to veil his disdain for greed and violence, which, as seen in this poem, he equates with businessmen who stand for capitalism and politics. The way Rexroth choses to describe the character in this poem underscores his value of kindness, generosity, and benevolence as he attempts to show their absence in the businessman, values which are found in the tale of Sigalovada Suttanta.

Combined, these four Buddhist teachings result in "an earthbound belief system heavily committed to sociopolitical affairs."[26] Moreover, these lessons in Buddhism were attractive to the Beats, as religious studies scholar Harvey Cox argues in his book *Turning East: Why Americans Look to the Orient for Spirituality—and What that Search Can Mean to the West*, because, "To the Western mind Zen seems to exemplify the mirror opposite of everything Western civilization affirms," that "our liberation lies not just in altering our perception, as Zen would have it, but in opening ourselves to a cosmic energy which is overcoming desolation and pain."[27] Hence, the Beats' choice in using engaged Buddhism to shape their political and social stances was no accident at all. The Buddhist teachings they revered

directly reflected their qualms with their contemporary political state and their search for an alternative lifestyle that welcomed oneness.

4. Beatnik use of Buddhism in the Counterculture Movement

The writers of the Beat Generation honed their analysis of Buddhism as a political alternative into the 1960s, continuing to employ it in their writing and public appearances with more activist fervor. As the counterculture of the 1960s began to develop in the latter half of the decade, many older Beat writers remained at the forefront of the social movement, influential as ever, preaching their Buddhist interpretations to a new group of young dissidents. Instances of the Beats continued involvement with politicizing Buddhism include publishing poetry and public appearances at protests, on television and the radio. One example is Gary Snyder's poem "Smokey the Bear Sutra," written in 1969 and distributed at a Sierra Club Wilderness Conference in San Francisco, a gathering which takes a stance against destruction of the environment. The poem compares Smokey the Bear to Buddha as a figure who "flings damp sand on the fires of greed and war" and "trampling underfoot wasteful freeways and needless suburbs; smashing the worms of capitalism and totalitarianism," essentially describing a leader who fights for the wellbeing of the environment.[28] Another example of the Beats' continued political and social influence, this time in dissent to the Vietnam War, is Philip Whalen and Snyder's meditation in protest outside the Army Induction Center in Oakland in 1965. Similarly, Snyder and Ginsberg's led a sutra chant at the San Francisco Human Be-In in 1967 and Ginsberg chanted meditations at the Democratic National Convention in 1968.[29] Ginsberg remained particularly politically fervent during the 1960s, publishing a plethora of Buddhist-informed literature, including his 1966 poem in response to being kicked out of Prague for leading a Buddhist-like chant at the May Day celebration that earned him the title of May Day King, "Wichita Vortex Sutra." Another example of his continued Buddhist work is his 1965 article published in the *Berkley Barb*, "Demonstration or Spectacle As Example, As Communication, or How to Make a March/Spectacle." This article offered ideas for peaceful yet notable forms of protest through his writing. In this piece, he made suggestions like having "small floats or replicas in front [of] Buddha in meditation (invite Zen people to come march and meditate on floats)" and having "More interesting Zen/Spectacle SIGNS" like "As in Oakland so in Vietnam" and "Everybody's Made Of Meat."[30] As seen in his earlier work, Ginsberg's leadership in protests and activist articles in the 1960s were derived from the Buddhist teachings, perhaps here in the essence of a Bodhisattva as he leads by example in an understanding of universal oneness.

Ultimately, the 1960s saw Ginsberg, along with other prominent Beat writers, shift from "representing the visionary to engaging with the world at large,"[31] using their Zen Buddhist-informed language to show the world a new approach to the most pressing issue at hand, namely the Vietnam War. The result was a transfer of Beatnik sentiment to a new generation of dissidents, a transference of the Beats' Buddhist-informed political action to the counterculture of the 1960s. The Beat Generation's influence on the counterculture movement shaped the lifestyle and protest style of what would become one of the most important decades of the twentieth century, a decade that continues to influence social and political movements today. Thus, the importance of the Beat Generation's employment of Zen Buddhist dogma as political alternatives to Cold War politics in the 1950s and their continued public presence that so inspired the counterculture of the 1960s cannot be overstated. Beatnik poet-activists, like Ginsberg, Snyder, and Di Prima, were quintessential components of mid-century social movements that directly shaped the impact and collective memory of the 1950s and 1960s.

5. Examination of Beatnik use of Buddhism

Despite the Beats' successful use of Zen Buddhism to frame political and social alternatives to Cold War American culture, the Beats' use of and approach to Buddhism warrants careful examination. Some scholars question how the Beats came to employ Zen Buddhism and how they may have altered its teachings through their Western perspectives. In some ways, as Büyükokutan argues, the Beats' "interest in Buddhism was just a manifestation of their romanticism," a product of their fascination with Orientalism, "a fad that merely coincided with the war," and thus an appropriation of Japanese culture.[32] However, the Beats were not the first American literary intellectuals to show an interest in Buddhism and the alternative societal ethics it offered. Their predecessors include attendees of the World Parliament of Religions in 1893, and Transcendentalist thinkers and writers like Ralph Waldo Emmerson and Henry David Thoreau. Moreover, it would be an error to claim that their curiosity with Buddhism coincided with the war because "the poets who started and led the Vietnam-era politicization of Buddhism were studying Buddhism long

before that date," specifically Kenneth Rexroth and Gary Snyder, who began their journey with Buddhism in the thirties and forties, respectively.[33]

Another speculation of the Buddhist Beats' authenticity lies in their Americanization of Buddhism. As these writers made Buddhist thought more popular in the United States, "American" Buddhism began to form, developing in a larger context that included mass communication, technology, and consumerism.[34] In other words, the Beat Generation's use of Buddhism in its political language Americanized and Westernized the ancient religion and philosophy by taking it out of its original context and placing it in a very different political and social structure. As Harvey Cox states, "The importance of Zen is that it cannot be accommodated to Western ways of thought and living. No matter how it is sliced or packaged, its singularity cannot be hidden."[35] While it is possible this reshaping of Buddhism could have distorted some of its original teachings, the point the Beats were trying to make by adopting Buddhist thinking still stands: "their concern is not so much with being Buddhist per se as it is in using Buddhist practices and ideas as a means of realizing goals whose 'truth' is not necessarily seen to reside in their being Buddhist."[36] Regardless of how authentic the Buddhism adopted and taught by the Beats may have been, their attempt at using Buddhist teachings to better American society was unquestionably legitimate.

Another critique of the Beats' literary revolution and their politicization of Zen Buddhism was their lack of diversity. The majority of Beat writers were white, upper-middle class males. Save for Amiri Baraka, there were no major Beatnik writers of color. Likewise, few women contributed to the Beat Generation literature. While Lenore Kandel, Diane Di Prima, and Joyce Johnson created beautiful works during the second half of the twentieth century, they were overshadowed by their male counterparts. The Beat Generation's lack of diversity was not uncommon for its time, as the majority of American history has been dominated by middle to upper class white males. However, their demographics remain noteworthy because their social status shaped their audience. By being white males with privileged education and wealth, they were able to attract the attention of a larger audience than if they had been, say, women of color, a minority group whom the general American public would not have cared to recognize. In other words, the Beat writers' race, gender, and socio-economic status must be considered as pivotal tools for their popularity and recognition, even though they consequently excluded important voices of minority groups.

It is also necessary to address that, while a great deal of Beatnik writing was influenced by Zen Buddhism and laden with Buddhist vocabulary and dogma, not all the writers that employed Buddhism as a political alternative also observed Zen Buddhism as a religious path. For example, Jack Kerouac, though heavily influenced by Zen Buddhist teachings in his works like *Wake Up* and *Dharma Bums*, maintained a dedication to his Catholic upbringing throughout his adult life. Additionally, Allen Ginsberg was equally influenced by Buddhism as he was by his Jewish roots. Ginsberg also wrote poetry with explicit links to Judaism, such as "Kaddish." On the other hand, not all Buddhist-influenced leaders of the time were part of the Beat Generation, such as Aldous Huxley and Timothy Leary. This is evident in Leary's famous book *The Psychedelic Experience* which was written based on *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* but was no in way politically charged. Nevertheless, the correlation between the two groups is strong. Whether they considered themselves Beatnik, Buddhist, both, or neither, the majority of educated youth in the forties, fifties, and sixties disdained the political climate of the United States during the Cold and Vietnam Wars and many members of this dissenting generation either personally turned to Zen Buddhist-informed ideology or revered the counterculture's leaders that espoused such ideology as an alternative.

6. Conclusion

Through careful examination of the writers of the Beat Generation's employment of Zen Buddhism as a political alternative to Cold War American politics, their legitimacy as countercultural leaders continues to stand. Despite the errors they may have made in their western interpretation of Zen Buddhism, poet-activists like Allen Ginsberg and Gary Snyder remain some of the most influential characters of the twentieth century. Their Zen-Buddhist informed literature and public action laid the foundation for the platforms of the mid-century's political and social movements. Moreover, the Beat Generation's reaction against America's Cold War politics was a natural one: they wanted to live in a world that cared for humanity, that recognized humanness, and that saw and created beauty rather than destruction. Kenneth Rexroth, Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, Philip Whalen, Diane Di Prima, Lew Welch, Michael McClure, Philip Lamantia, Lawrence Ferlenghetti and Gary Snyder's use Zen Buddhist ideology in their literature created a ripple effect of intellectual change that was felt throughout the rest the twentieth century, giving hope to dissenting generations in a time of despair and paranoia.

7. Endnotes

1 Ann Charters, *The Portable Beat Reader* (New York: Penguin Group, 1992), xx.
2 Charters, *The Portable Beat Reader*, xxxiii.
3 Charters, *The Portable Beat Reader,* xviii.
4 P.J. Johnston, "Dharma Bums: The Beat Generation and the Making of Countercultural Pilgrimage," *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 33 (2013), 166.
5 William L. O'Neill, *American High: The Years of Confidence, 1945-1960* (New York: The Free Press, 1986), 243.
6 Charters, *The Portable Beat Reader*, 232.
7 James Brown, "The Zen of Anarchy: Japanese Exceptionalism and the Anarchist Roots of the San Francisco Poetry Renaissance," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 19, no. 2 (Summer 2009): 209.
8 Brown, "The Zen of Anarchy," 209. Brown also notes, "Although contemporary religionists often overlook Buber's contribution to American interreligious thought, he was among the most influential thinkers of the 1950s, directly shaping the core ideas of…the civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr." 209.
9 Brown, "The Zen of Anarchy," 209-210.
10 John Suiter, *Poets on the Peaks: Gary Snyder, Philip Whalen, and Jack Kerouac in the North Cascades* (New York: Counterpoint, 2002), 18.
11 Brown, "The Zen of Anarchy," 207.
12 Charters, *The Portable Beat Reader*, 228.
13 Stephen D. Edington, *The Beat Face of God: The Beat Generation Writers as Spirit Guides* (Victoria: Trafford Publishing, 2005), 62.
14 Barış Büyükokutan, "Toward a Theory of Cultural Appropriation: Buddhism, the Vietnam War, and the Field of U.S. Poetry," *American Sociological Review* 76, no. 4 (August 2011): 627.
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19 Jack Kerouac, *Mexico City Blues* (New York: Grove Press, 1959), 2.
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21 Allen Ginsberg, *Howl and Other Poems* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1956).
22 Ichikawa, "Compassionate Politics," 252.
23 Diane Di Prima, *Revolutionary Letters* (San Francisco: Last Gap, 1971).
24 Ichikawa, "Compassionate Politics," 263.
25 Kenneth Rexroth, *Thou Shalt Not Kill: A Memorial for Dylan Thomas* (Mill Valley: Goad Press, 1955).
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28 Ann Charters, *The Portable Sixties Reader* (New York: Penguin Group, 2003), 562-564.
29 Büyükokutan, "Toward a Theory," 625.
30 Charters, *The Portable Sixites Reader*, 210-211.
31 Ryan Murphy, "Allen Ginsberg's Poetics of a Buddhist Resistance" (presentation, South Western Pop/American Culture Association Annual Conference, Albuquerque, NM, February 23, 2019).
32 Büyükokutan, "Toward a Theory," 628.
33 Büyükokutan, "Toward a Theory," 628.
34 Gregory, "Describing the Elephant," 249.
35 Cox, *Turning East,* 29.
36 Gregory, "Describing the Elephant," 250.