

THE TRANSFORMATION OF A CLUMSY PERSON INTO
A BRILLIANT BLINDING CLUMSY PERSON GATE

In 1960 I was living in Manhattan's Chinatown. I hung out in a store of fine Chinese art books, brushes, inks, and papers. I would pour over collections of Chinese calligraphy. I especially loved the facsimile scroll of the autobiography of Huai Tsu, the inventor of Running Grass Style. The story was that he wasn't crazy, he just got drunker and drunker as he wrote. It seemed a little bit more like it was a now record of being present to an in the body, totally real, no imagination experiencing of human scale ecstasy to me. It started off in sort of small normal retentive characters a few to a page and ended up in one to a page huge scrawled characters as wild as the entirety of life itself. An aged Chinese man, Professor Wu, owned the store. A fine calligrapher, Professor Wu was very jolly, and had a circle of people who wrote Chinese in the store day and night. Midnight was dinner time in Chinatown. We all carried ink and brush and paper with us for we never knew when we would learn. Professor Wu had taught philosophy at Peking University and at Plinceton. He left Plinceton because of too much plototics. Plinceton and plototics were the only English words he pronounced in this quaint British accent. One day Professor Wu handed me a note in Chinese that read: THIS BOY IS CRAZY TO WRITE WORDS IN PICTURES LIKE YOU TEACH HIM TO WRITE PHOENIX DRAGON WRITING Professor Wu asked me to take it to Gim Fong Moy the man who owned the store across the street. Walking across the street and into the store, counting in my head from one to fifty and back, sensing my right foot in an effort to clear my mind while sensing a certain substance in the mirror between the heart of my mind and the heart of my mind to forget my Self according to my teacher's instruction, I saw the Kleenex[®] azures and Jell-O[®] pinks of an archetypal tourist-trap Chinatown junk jewelry store of the 50's. No one was in it. Then I looked up. The high walls were covered to the ceiling with large bamboo papers covered with profuse, fantastic, inconceivable calligraphy: Chinese characters written in perfect night black flying ink carved brush strokes of birds, dragons, fruits, leaves ants, corn stalks, lightning, dogs, cats, trees, grass, brooms, rivers, stars, and everything else above, below, inside, outside, and in between the sun.

A thin Chinese man in black mandarin robe and cap floated into the store from the eternal back room, took my note and read it. He pointed to the counter. He pointed to a calligraphy on the wall. He pointed to my hand. He pointed to me. He said: "WRITE." It was very difficult for me to write and to maintain a connection with counting in my head and sensing my right foot. I opened my briefcase, placed my paper on the counter, ground my ink, and poured all the attention I could collect into trying to get my brush to copy his writing of birds and dragons. I was very clumsy. I was trying to do things from my real Self like my teacher whatever and sacrificed other abilities I had to this work. I was very ignorant and clumsy save that I loved to face the unknown. In a few moments which seemed a very large nervous painted cloud, Gim Fong Moy placed his chin on my paper facing me. Suns on legs, his eyes were 2 inches from my slow moving inept brush tip. He started to breathe in and out like a fire breathing dragon. He yelled, "CLUMSY. SO CLUMSY B RILLIANT BLINDING!" He closed his eyes. He stopped breathing. My writing changed. It dragged slow and sure over the paper as if I had done it forever. He said, "ENOUGH," took my brush, and stood up. On a new piece of paper, as if he was carving stone, he dead hand dragged some birds that looked like feet holding up a dragon whose body formed an empty circle. He handed me the calligraphy when he stopped. "YOU KNOW WHAT THAT SAY?" He bellowed. "No," I said. "IT SAY, REMEMBER FOOT? STOP AIR. KILL FINGERS. KILL HAND. KILL WRIST. KILL ELBOW. KILL ARM. KILL SHOULDER. KILL BACK. KILL HEART. KILL HEAD. WRITE FROM WHAT REMAINS: BETTER TO REMEMBER THAN FOOT!"

DESPERATE
 INK BIRDS
 LIKE FOOT
 BEARING
 EMPTY
 CIRCLE
 DRAGON:

LOOK UP:
 REAL SELF:
 NO BREATH:
 NO MIND:
 COMPEL
 BRUSH
 DRAG ON:

Stars shine bright on shatter light. Look up and down and all around. All ways. Look back. If you lucky no breath no mind birds dragons catch you. Thee. The. That's seek understanding as far away as China, folks.