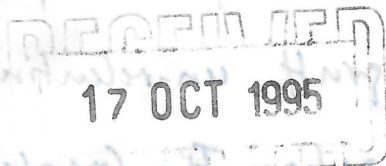


11th October, 1995



Dear Most Generous People!

Already and again it is that time of year when you have flattered and embraced me with both your good wishes and abundant generosity on my birthday. I shrink before you; and it is most noticeable that I need not think myself forgotten in this remote outpost of the known world.

I must also ask you to excuse my sloppy hand-writing, but unless I write this letter now - as I sit in the chair waiting (waiting-waiting-waiting) to put the Master to bed, it shall almost never be written. 'Going to bed' has now become the longest most drawn out part of every day. It starts anytime between 10.30 - 11.00 pm and I cannot remember when we last finished before 2.00 am.

On the other hand, he tends not to rise much, if at all, before noon so we can sleep-in in the mornings. It is a world very cut-off from ordinary life, and one consequently not easy to measure. With all the growing pains that accompany the

hardships of monastic life, and the denial - or at least extreme limitation - of self-expression and freewill, one has to constantly remind oneself that this gruff, un-renting and frail old man is indeed a Great Master (perhaps The Greatest?) ^{and} his worth all the sacrifice that he extracts.

As I say, it is - or at least it most certainly seems - a world in isolation; and were it not for the natural light of night and day the first sensible step to be taken would be to throw all the clocks away. In effect, we run 3-4 hours behind - except for breakfast, lunch and dinner which are crammed into about a six or seven hour period; and more with difficulty.

But of course it is all worth it, and how! It is truly a most unique opportunity, it at times (oft' times) a dull one. It does require the deepest searching of one's heart and mind (the soul stands back) and I feel my finger ends are sore from scraping. But there too lie patience and good humour, (thank goodness) for the test has been a true one. I only hope that when it is all over I have something left to offer to the world.

I am sorry to be this weak, if weak I sound. Perhaps it is just a kind of spiritual shell-shock, but it is as though we live beneath the ground, and the smell and taste of air are but a memory. Yes, I am weak, but the Will and the Hope to break through have never deserted me, and I trust they never shall. The Master - this difficult, unyielding, "fustidious" old man - is FAR, FAR, FAR TOO GREAT to be let go! - No, I am, in truth, in the sun! Most affectionately,
Paul.