FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Body, Mind & Spirit

Still the Mind: An Introduction to Meditation
Alan Watts
Alan Watts, narrator
New World Library
Unknown $16.00 (127pp)
978-1-57731-117-1
(May 2000)

"All so-called civilized peoples have increasingly become crazy and self-destructive because through excessive thinking they have lost touch with reality. We are so tied up in our minds we have lost our senses." Watts' mellow, mature yet playful interpretations give the impression of a gentle comprehension of existence: a personal philosophy coming from a lifetime of serious study and meditation. This epistle, entrusted to generations upon Watts' death twenty-seven years ago, reverberates an important message today. Words take on new meanings. Disproportionate thoughts are "chatter in the skull." A person is more than a financial statement.

Talking as if he is among close friends, Watts explains the "quaking mess" and finds humor in his own explanation. He expounds, "There is nothing we can do to be anything else but what we are. Wanting to overcome the quaking mess, to not be a selfish person if you are a selfish person is precisely the quaking mess. You are what you are." Only ears that truly listen will hear Watts' proclamation. Just as Watts' study took a lifetime, the study of his work will not easily absorb into a cluttered mind. It is also important to note that one may have to listen to the tape closely in this section as some words important to theory are somewhat muffled.

Watts explains the total "physical organism": how our hearts beat, our blood circulates, and our eyes see, etc., as being as much a part of us as our perception of identity. "You are no less than the universe." This last statement, nonconformist as it may sound, gives pause for a being to emerge joyous of oneself as a mirror of creation, no more and no less than trees, water, and dirt.

The mind, stilled, is now ready for meditation. Watts' gently instructs by using the example of playing a musical instrument, noting that an instrument when played without force will almost begin to play itself. Meditation, then, is done without straining; it is done with the

knowledge that nothing matters at that moment except “reality.” Laughter, which is the last sound on the tape, is a perfect summation of Still the Mind giving credence to Watts’ theories on living: “jujitsu—the gentle way.”

Vyvyan Lynn