

AUTODIDACTIC v. STATE SPONSORED EDUCATION

Last year, CDCR (CA Dept. of Corrections) added eTablets to the list of appliances inmates are allowed to purchase. One tablet, U-Tab7, comes with 32GB of memory that can be used for ebooks. As a member of both the National Lawyers Guild, & the SGI Buddhist org., my mission has been to acquire knowledge in both of these fields, to help myself & others. With this incentive, I put in a request to purchase my own tablet, in order to access the same amount of religious/legal ebooks as the next inmate.

Despite this, at the 2nd (of 3) level of the institutional review, I was denied this "accommodation", for: "The Appellant [me] is NOT enrolled in the VEP [Voluntary Education Program] & cannot be issued NOR can he purchase an eTablet/Reader." (Log# SQ-B-16-00239; Memo, 3/17/16) This is the exact underinclusiveness the Supreme Court, last year, UNANIMOUSLY, ruled as UNCONSTITUTIONAL under (RLUIPA). -Holt v. Hobbs, 574 U.S. (2015)- Plus, Congress mandated that a State CANNOT place its policy over a PROTECTED RELIGIOUS RIGHT, without a compelling reason; NONE was given here. (Religious study IS protected as a "Religious exercise;" Holt, supra; 42 USCS §2000cc-3(g))

For years I have taught myself using a curriculum from what we call "Soka (Value-Creating) University." This humanistic learning requires one to dig, & dig, into the great minds of the past, as well as those of the present. In 2014, I wrote a piece for my district emphasizing the phenomenal transformational effect that this UNIVERSITY has played in my life.           Following is a revision:

SOKA (Value-Creating) UNIVERSITY

All past revolutions of note had one thing in common: an organ &/or a college of some type.

Our revolution, entitled a HUMAN REVOLUTION, is a process of SELF-TRANSFORMATION where one uses Buddhist practice, & knowledge, as a way to break through our "lesser selves," & reveal our "greater selves."

Being in prison, & not able to attend regular study meetings on the streets, our organs, & other publications has been indispensable for my own Human Revolution. Actually, the epiphany, that I can acquire a Soka education anywhere, came to me while reading the following excerpt, from the May 29, 2010, issue of our World Tribune (W.T.) organ:

I know that you are forced to practice your faith under very trying circumstances. In many cases, you're separated from all other members.... But a true champion is able to stand up alone. Please do that, developing yourselves, & win the respect & trust of all, offering proof of your personal victory WHERE YOU ARE.

(Pres. Ikeda's message to the High Seas Group, p.F)

Mining for 'Moments of Clarity' like this, is what makes publications invaluable tools for INNER-TRANSFORMATION. The purpose of any revolution's organs/publications is to disseminate key knowledge, encouragement, & vital information to its supporters & sympathizers, regardless of their location.

This segues into the COLLEGE aspect. Our UNIVERSITY is not the traditional 'state-sanctioned' type [that San Quentin has privileged], but the more humanistic kind, set up by the people, for the ENLIGHTENMENT of the people. Not unlike the ones created by Occupy Wall St., or more specifically, the Freedom Schools, founded by The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) of the 60's, whose objective was:

Not to cram a prescribed amount of factual material into young minds, but to give them that first look into new worlds which would, some day if not immediately, lead them to books & people not found in [their] everyday lives.... (Zinn, p.248)

These "new worlds" allow us to envision one BEYOND one controlled by State-dogma. Every time one of our publications mentions an eminent thinker, it inspires me to learn even more about them. As a result, a deeper understanding surfaces regarding WHY this particular person was chosen for this lesson, & so on.

For instance, in the June 20, 2014, World Tribune (p.5), Sensei quoted one of my favorite such personas, Sir Francis Bacon. This guy was so enlightened, & ahead of his time, that the Royal Society named him their role-model & inspiration; Some credit him as being the ghostwriter of Shakespeare's works (the "Baconian Theory."); & others claim that his last Opus, "The New Atlantis," is the real blueprint used by the American Founders when forming this country. After going on to read it myself... I can definitely see a striking resemblance.



The New Atlantis was so clouded in esotericism, to comprehend it, having the ability to cross reference it with other books was essential. By doing so, I learned the possible intent behind Sensei exposing us to this literary Lion.

Bacon's Atlantis is governed by studious ambassadors, that closely resemble Buddhas & bodhisattvas. They do not trade in natural resources, only in Knowledge. For this reason, Bacon named them, Merchants of Light. Their "Order, or Society, is sometimes called... the COLLEGE of the 6 Days' Work...[whose] objective was to find 'the true nature of ALL things.'" (Bacon, p.308) In Buddhism we have a similar aspiration: "To perceive the TRUE NATURE OF ALL PHENOMENA" (Skt. Tathata; Jpn shinnyo).

This goal requires one to use the WORLD'S KNOWLEDGE as our "PERSONAL RELIGIOUS LIBRARY." A fact which makes 32GB of eBooks inestimable to this aim. Lastly, just because a State doesn't 'sanction' THIS UNIVERSITY, doesn't PRECLUDE it from being one:

'The Soka Gakkai is a UNIVERSITY WITHOUT A CAMPUS.' You are all STUDENTS of the 'UNIVERSITY of BUDDHISM.' That is the SGI, dedicating yourselves to creating peace & happiness. (SGI Pres. Ikeda, quoting 2nd pres. Toda; W.T., May 11, '12, p.3)

On that note, I will continue fighting this until CDCR decide to share this RAY of Prometheus's LIGHT\* with us ALL!!!

\* The U-Tab7 has a selection of more than A MILLION BOOKS to

choose from. (S.Q. News, Jan '16, p.17  
[www.sanquentinnews.com])

#### REFERENCES

Bacon, Francis. (1624) The New Atlantis (Kessinger Legacy Reprints  
Zinn, Howard. (2002) SNCC: The New Abolitionists (South End Press)