

THE EDITION

The Mountain Spirit by Gary Snyder is limited to 60 numbered copies signed by the poet and printer, of which 50 copies are for sale and 10 are reserved. Design, hand-composition of ATF Garamond 459 and 460 foundry-types, letter-press printing on a Vandercook Universal I press, and hand-scroll binding in Japanese book-cloth and decorative papers were done by David Sellers. The frontispiece Ensō (above) and tail-piece skull image (below), by two unidentified Edo period Zen Buddhist monks, were printed from type-high magnesium photo-etchings made from the original Japanese sumi-ink scroll paintings. The type and artwork are printed on Okawara washi, 60 grs weight. The top bar and bottom rod (hyōmoku and jikugi) are red cedar. The black walnut knobs (kirijiku) are attached to the bottom rod by mortise and tenon. Each hand-scroll is fitted in a traditional paulownia (*kiri*) wood box custom-made to the binder's

specifications by Mihagi-Kougei Co., Ltd., Tokyo, Japan. Typesetting began late-1995 and final corrections were done by March 1996. After an 18 year pause, printing was done from December 2013–February 2014. The hand-scroll measures 10 ½ inches, end knob to end knob (paper = 8 ½ inches) wide by 9 feet 11 inches long. The paulownia box is 2 7/8 x 2 5/8 x 11 3/4. Price: \$1500.

THE POET

Gary Snyder is a poet, Zen Buddhist, environmental activist and educator. In the 1950s he was an early and noted member of the “Beat Generation.” He has since explored a wide range of social, environmental and spiritual matters in both poetry and prose. Snyder has looked to the Orient and to the beliefs of American Indians for positive responses to the world. His writings blend physical reality and observations of nature with insights received through the practice of Zen Buddhism. Snyder’s practice of Buddhism has been important to his poetry from early on, however, Buddhism is by no means the sole departure point for his work. Snyder’s poetry is influenced by Japanese and Chinese verse in addition to anthropological factors like oral traditions. In his writings, Snyder reveres myth and ritual as essential demonstrations of man-in-nature and nature-in-man. He sees the poet as a shaman who acts as a medium for songs, chants and incantations springing from the earth and his writings draw on these traditions of oral literature to communicate his experiences. Gary Snyder has won numerous honors and awards, including the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, American Book Award, the Bollingen Prize, a Guggenheim Foundation fellowship, the Shelley Memorial Award, Levinson Prize, and the Ruth Lilly Award. Snyder was elected a Chancellor of The Academy of American Poets, and is an inductee of the American Academy of Arts and letters and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He is a professor of English at the University of California-Davis.¹

THE POEM

The Mountain Spirit is a 197 line poem within *Mountains and Rivers Without End*, a series of poems that spans much of the poet’s career. Initially inspired by a Northern Sung hand-scroll in the collection of the Cleveland Museum of Art, *The Mountain Spirit* is a conscious effort to recreate the social function of ancient epics: “My years living in Japan and many walks in the hills and mountains of Kansai and the Japan Alps gave me the nerve to try and bring the “Old Woman of the Mountains” story to North America. In the poem “The Mountain Spirit” I draw on early intuitions of mountain spirits that came as I walked the wild peaks and ridges of North American ranges—the Cascades and the Sierra. Beyond that, I had the sense that “Yamamba”² is a story the North American landscape is ready for, whether the human people are ready for it yet or not. My redaction is significantly different from the East Asian source, though, and was in some parts virtually dictated to me as I sat one night under junipers in the timberline zone of the White Mountains of eastern California.”³

¹ Adapted from The Poetry Foundation’s biography of Gary Snyder at <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/gary-snyder>, and other sources.

² The poet has noted: “One subject of many old tales is widely known as “Yamamba” or “The Old Woman of the Mountains.” She is not really an old human woman but a timeless crone goddess, sometimes young but ragged, with a wild-haired baby boy. Her story migrated into the aristocratic Buddhist/Samurai culture of the early fifteenth century when she became the main character in the Noh play Yamamba.”

³ Excerpt from a talk given by the poet at the symposium “Occidental Civilization, Buddhism, and Zen,” held in Paris on December 7, 2002, at the Maison de la Culture du Japon, which also featured a performance of *The Mountain Spirit* with a traditional Noh musical accompaniment.

THE PRESS

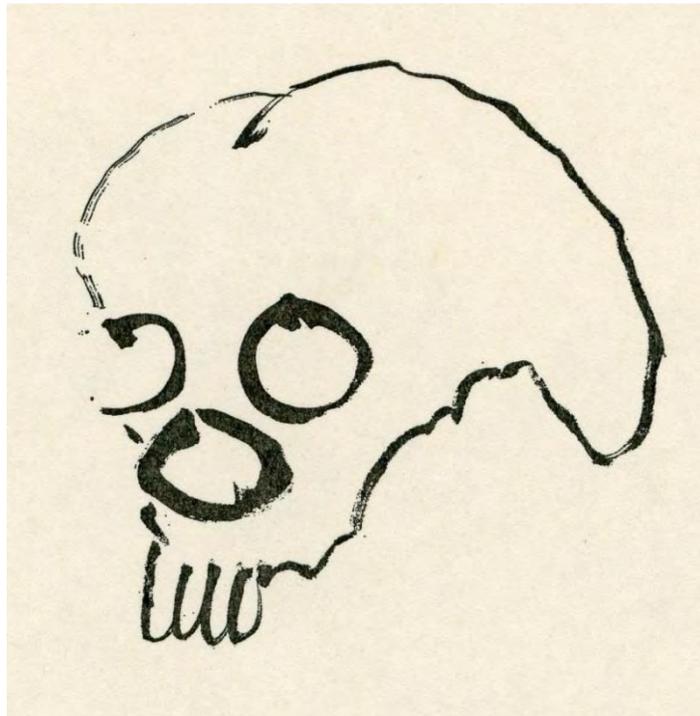
Pied Oxen Printers creates and publishes letterpress limited editions of contemporary poetry. David Sellers, the proprietor, designs, hand-sets in metal type, prints and binds each book. Titles published to date include poetry by Adrienne Rich, C. K. Williams, Gary Snyder, Clayton Eshleman, Paul Muldoon, Bei Dao, Susan Hahn, Jorge Guillén and Reginald Gibbons. The press has collaborated with a number of artists, including Nancy Grossman, Bill Paden, Diarmuid Delargy, Charles Wells, and Mary Azarian. Additional information about Pied Oxen's publications can be found at www.piedoxen.com.

The press previously published Gary Snyder's *Sixteen T'ang Poems* (1993).

Pied Oxen's titles are in the special collections of a number of institutions, including the British Library, National Library of Ireland, Biblioteca Nacional de España, The Morgan Library & Museum, New York Public Library, and university libraries at Stanford, Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Brown, Texas, University of California, among others.

Located in Hopewell, New Jersey, the fully-equipped workshop comprises a collection of foundry types, presses and related letterpress and hand-bookbinding equipment. Materials and processes conform to archival standards.

Since fall 2010, David Sellers has conducted the letterpress sections of courses in Graphic Design, as a Visiting Artist in the Visual Arts Program's Typography Studio, Lewis Center for the Arts, Princeton University, where he also produces the annual *Phi Beta Kappa* poem, including poetry by Michael Dickman (2011), Tracy Smith (2012), Paul Muldoon (2013) and Jim Richardson (2014).





Regular linen cover and gold-flecked label.



Alternate cover and paste-paper labels.

*Erosion always wearing down:
shearing, thrusting, deep plates crumpling,*

*Still uplifting—ice-carved cirques
dendritic endless fractal streambed riffs on hillsides*

*—bitter ghosts that kick their own skulls like a ball
what's it all for?"*

a meteor swift and streaking
like a tossed white pebble
arcing down the sky—

the Mountain Spirit stands there.

Old woman? white ragged hair?
in the glint of Algol, Altair, Deneb,
Sadr, Aldebaran—saying, "I came to hear—"

Awake: I read for her

The Mountain Spirit

*"Walking on walking,
under foot earth turns*

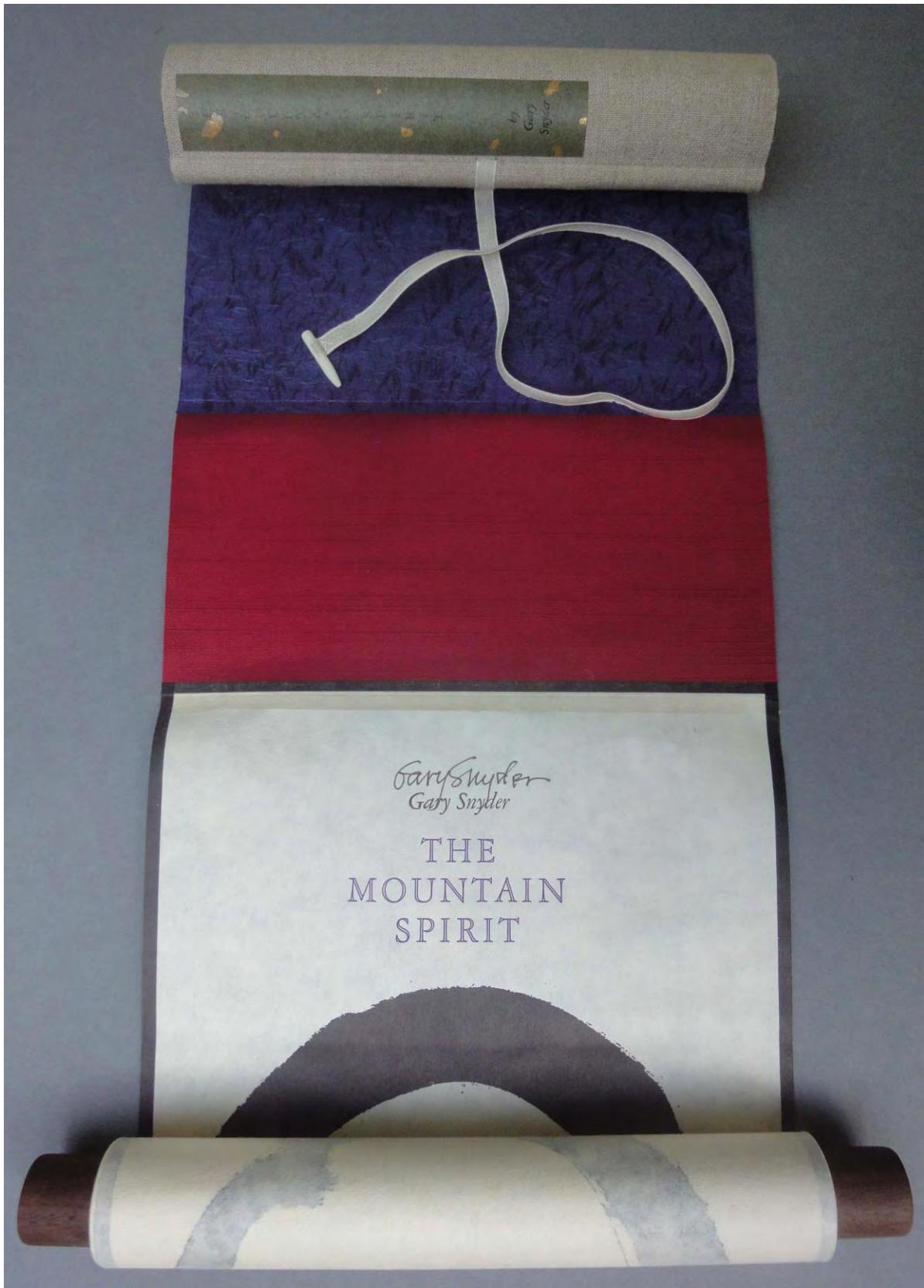
Streams and mountains never stay the same.

*"Walking on walking,
under foot earth turns*

Streams and mountains never stay the same.

Into earth rock dives.
As the mountains lift and open
underground out,
dust over seashell, layers of ooze,
display how it plays.

Detail of opening of poem within the poem.



Inside of cover.